

Eminent Muslim
Personalities of
African Origin

Compiled By:

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Transliteration key

أ- 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ṣ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ/h	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ/s	

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Foreword

By Mawlānā Faḥlur Raḥmān A'ẓamī
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In the Name of Allah, the Exceedingly Compassionate, the Excessively Merciful

We praise Him and send salutations upon his noble Messenger.

Mawlānā Ebrahim Rawat (May Allah preserve him) has prepared a book in English on the Ṣaḥābah, Tābi'īn, scholars, and elders of African origin, which will prove beneficial for African Muslims here, and will be a means of inspiration for them.

Many years back, I instructed an African student to translate an Arabic book of this nature. He did translate it but it never reached publication.

May Allah reward the author abundantly and make it a means for his success in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn. Hopefully, reading this book will serve as encouragement to all Muslim brothers and they will endeavour to serve Islam. Allah is the giver of competence and upon Him is reliance placed.

(Mawlānā) Faḥlur Raḥmān A'ẓamī

Azaadville

South Africa

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Introduction

All praise belongs solely to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, who created diversity in our forms, colours, and languages; making this a token of His Magnificence and Brilliance.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاللَّوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

*And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and **the diversity of your languages and your colours**. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.¹*

We praise Him, thank Him, implore Him for help, seek His forgiveness, believe in Him, and have full reliance on Him alone. We seek His protection from the evil lurking in our souls and from our wicked practices. Salutations and peace be upon our guide and the leader of the pious, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and upon his family, Companions, and entire ummah.

One of the primary objectives of the revelation of the Qur'ān and the Nubuwwah of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was to eradicate all forms of darkness from the world; be it disbelief, oppression, cruelty, discrimination, etc. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى announces:

الرَّكِتَابَ أَنزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ الْعَزِيزِ
الْحَمِيدِ

Alif, Lām, Rā. [This is] a Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that you might bring mankind out of darkness into the light by permission of their Lord, to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.²

The old system whereby positions of honour were awarded to people on account of their lineage and affluence was done away with. New parameters were set and a new barometer to determine a person's rank was instituted: Piety. Allah says:

1 Surah al-Rūm: 22.

2 Sūrah Ibrāhīm: 1

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
 أَتَقَاتُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. **Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.** Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.*¹

The level of every individual’s piety is hidden. Hence, we treat every believer with the utmost respect and reverence, believing him to enjoy closer proximity to Allah ﷻ than us. This attitude will erase self-supremacy, pride, and prejudice from our hearts and ultimately from the earth. This was the exact message of Rasūlullāh ﷺ during his Farewell Ḥajj, “Lo! Your Rabb is one and your father is one. Harken! An Arab holds no superiority over a non-Arab nor vice versa. A fair skinned individual is not better than a dark-skinned individual nor vice versa; except by taqwā.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ then asked, “Which day is this?” “The sacred day (Day of ‘Arafah),” came the reply. “Which month is this?” “The sacred month (Dhū al-Ḥijjah).” “Which city is this?” “The sacred city (Ḥaram).” Rasūlullāh ﷺ declared, “Certainly, Allah has made your blood, wealth, and honour sacred just as the sacredness of this day, in this month, in this city.”²

This book, through the grace of Allah ﷻ, emphasises the universal brotherhood which Islam embodies, and the manner in which Islam eradicated inequality and gave rights and honour to those who society looked down upon. Here you have Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the noblest of mankind from the noblest lineage, appointing a former African slave as his first Mu’adhin, the Imām of the Muhājirīn at Qubā’ being a former African slave, the person who Rasūlullāh ﷺ seated behind him as he rode into Makkah for the classic Conquest of Makkah was the son of a former African slave-girl, and the woman whom Rasūlullāh ﷺ referred to as his mother was an African woman. These are practical manifestations of the equality Islam brought and established.

1 Surah al-Ḥujurāt: 13.

2 *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 22978.

The African continent and its inhabitants may be justly proud of the fact that three among the first seven to openly proclaim their faith were of African origin. From the soil of Africa, came the first martyr of Islam, the land of Africa was the first land the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ made hijrah to at the command of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the first king to accept Islam was from Africa; and the list can go on.

Our focus in this book is to highlight the outstanding qualities of eminent personalities of African origin, mainly among the cream of this ummah—the honourable Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ—as an encouragement for all to imbibe within themselves their praiseworthy characteristics and emulate these remarkable personalities, so that we may share in the divine promise:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct—Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.*¹

Researching content for this book was inspirational as well as educational. Not in my wildest dreams did I envisage locating 38 names of Ṣaḥābah of African origin. Together with listing their impressive merits and achievements, their biographies were related, sourced from reliable books of the Ahl al-Sunnah. At the end, the biographies of two oceans of knowledge among the Tābiʿīn, the students of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, were included, to bring the number to 40. We pray and hope that this book develops within ourselves humility, eradicates pride and its evil offshoots: self-supremacy and racism.

After studying the lives of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ of African origin, one will come to the realisation that most of them were slaves or children of slaves. Despite their

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

humble beginnings, they rose to lofty ranks of glory and admiration. The message is loud and clear: Nobility does not lie in skin colour, lineage, beauty, or affluence. Rather, Allah ﷻ favours His righteous servants with honour. Another momentous observation one will make is that all of them were emancipated. This supports that Islam came to liberate mankind and grant them independence.

We praise Allah ﷻ in the beginning and end. It is purely His benevolence upon us worthless souls to embark on such an adventure, through the life stories of the elite of this ummah, and bring such a project to completion.

This book would not have seen the light of day had it not been for the vision and encouragement of Brother Ridwan Laher, who supported this initiative to the very end. May Allah ﷻ shower him with his choicest bounties. My heartfelt appreciation also goes out to the Mahajjah Research Institute for awarding me the opportunity to embark on this educational adventure, and for their continuous support, encouragement, and guidance. May Allah ﷻ shower His choicest blessings on them and reward them tremendously.

O Allah ﷻ, accept this through Your mercy and benevolence. Allow us to love, respect, and emulate Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his selected Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Gather us with them under the shade of Your Throne on the Fearful Day of Qiyāmah and unite us with them in the Gardens of Bliss, in Jannat al-Firdaws. Āmīn.

Ebrahim Rawat

7 Ramaḍān 1440

13 May 2019

Male *Sahābah* of African Origin

Bilāl ibn Rabāh

As the sun of Nubuwwah rose, the rays of light spread across the horizon, and the first individuals to witness and attest to its light will always be remembered. We all are aware that Sayyidah Khadījah رضي الله عنها was the first woman to embrace Islam, Sayyidunā Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه the first man, Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه the first child, and Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنه the first slave. But who was the first African to enter the faith? Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم himself informed us when he said:

بِلاَلٍ سَابِقِ الْحَبَشَةِ

Bilāl is the forerunner of the Africans.¹

What a privilege! To be the first from the second largest continent on earth to answer the call of Islam.

Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه is the son of Rabāh and Ḥamāmah, and attributed to both his father and mother. His agnomen is Abū ‘Abd Allāh. He was tall and dark in complexion. He had plenty of hair on the head with scant hair on his face. A slave of African origin, Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه was not seen as one having any value in society, but according to his Creator, he was exceptional.

He entered the fold of Islam in its early days. After embracing the faith, he was mercilessly tormented and tortured by his master, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and other polytheists. Umayyah would drag him in the scorching heat of noon and make him lie on his back in the desert sands of Makkah. He would then order a huge boulder to be placed on his chest, and would thereafter taunt him, “You will remain like this until you die or belie Muḥammad and worship Lāt and al-‘Uzzā.”²

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, vol. 3 pg. 213. Grade: Mursal Ṣaḥīḥ.

2 *Tanwīr al-Ghabash fī Faḍl al-Sūdān wa al-Ḥabash*, pg. 122.

Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was also forced to wear steel armour and left to swelter in the burning sun. But Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was unique, unlike the others who surrendered somewhat, he was absolutely resolute and relentless. So they handed him over to the children of Makkah who dragged him in the streets.¹

In the face of such excruciating torture, what slogan would be suitable to console himself and enrage his torturers? What would be the appropriate catch phrase? Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ regarded himself as worthless and insignificant, the idols of the polytheists were hopeless and helpless, the tortures and torments he was facing were impermanent and fleeting; the only Being that was Omnipotent, Supreme, and Eternal was Allah, the Almighty سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. So he chanted, “*Aḥad! Aḥad!* (The One! The Unique!)”² All the idols you are inviting me to are useless and hopeless whereas Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى alone is useful and helpful. All your persecutions are transitory, while Allah is Eternal and His blessings and rewards are everlasting. The pain I feel is meaningless, unless it is for *The One, The Unique*.

The cry, “*Aḥad! Aḥad!* (The Unique! The Exceptional!)” was furthermore a reflection of his state. He was unique in his resoluteness. He was matchless in his confidence. He was unparalleled in his determination in the face of difficulty. *Aḥad! Aḥad!* (The Matchless! The Exclusive!) And embodiment of humility coupled with dignity, and self-effacement combined with self-confidence. Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was distinctive in this remarkable excellence.

Let not the Ḥadīth Qudsī slip your mind:

فإن ذكرني في نفسه ذكرته في نفسي و إن ذكرني في مالا ذكرته في مالا خير منهم

If he remembers Me in secret, I remember him in secret; and if he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a nobler gathering.³

1 *Al-Mustadrak*, Ḥadīth: 5238; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1 pg. 149.

2 *Al-Mustadrak*, Ḥadīth: 5238; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, vol. 1 pg. 149.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 502; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 6471.

While the chants of *Aḥad Aḥad* echoed in the streets of Makkah, the honourable mention of Bilāl رضي الله عنه resounded in the heavens. He promoted Allah’s Oneness on earth, and so Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى promoted his prominence in the heavens and on the earth.

His unshakable determination to announce the Oneness of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى earned him a position of dignity by the Almighty سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and in the pages of history, which will never be forgotten. Among the great legends of Islam, his name appears in the top list of *Ṣaḥābah* رضي الله عنهم who will continue to be remembered by the Muslims till the end of time.

Despite this, Sayyidunā Bilāl’s رضي الله عنه humility was remarkable. When people would list his virtues and excellences, he would submit, “I am only an African. I was a slave yesterday.”¹

The ḥadīth aptly spells it out:

ما تواضع أحد لله إلا رفعه الله

No one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that he will be elevated by Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.²

The manifestation of this promise was soon to be realised. Such honour was to be conferred upon him that his name will live eternally and his sacrifices will become proverbial. The promoter of the slogan *Aḥad Aḥad*; the African slave Bilāl رضي الله عنه, was going to become the archetype for every Muslim faced with adversity.

While Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم would comfort the other persecuted Muslims by advising them to persevere, the torture and cruelty upon Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه was so severe and harsh, that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم expressed his desire to purchase Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه to relieve him of this torment.³

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 2 pg. 2228; *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 2 pg. 214; *Raf’ Sha’n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 284.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 6264.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1 pg. 352; *Muṣannaf’ Abd al-Razzāq*, vol. 11 pg. 234.

Allah ﷻ bestowed this exclusive honour to the cream of this ummah, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ, who purchased him for five gold coins and subsequently emancipated him. The polytheists said mockingly, “Had you refused to buy him except for a single gold coin, we would have sold him to you.” Abū Bakr ﷺ countered, “Had you refused to sell except for a hundred coins, I would have still taken him.”¹ Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ would fondly state, “Abū Bakr our master freed Bilāl our master.”² Glory be to Allah ﷻ! The second greatest individual of this ummah calls Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ his master!

After his emancipation, he lived in the close company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ during the Makkan period, benefitting spiritually from his noble qualities, and then emigrated to Madīnah Munawwarah. Madīnah, called Yathrib at the time, was filled with a certain type of infectious disease and the environment did not agree with Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ. He thus fell ill, with severe fever. Reciting poetry, he would express his desire to be in Makkah, away from the disease of Madīnah. Hearing this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ supplicated to Allah ﷻ to remove this disease from Madīnah and make Madīnah beloved to them just as Makkah was, or more beloved, and to bless them in Madīnah.³

The Nabī ﷺ contracted brotherhood between him and Sayyidunā Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh ﷺ, the trustworthy individual of this ummah.⁴ Bilāl ﷺ himself was so trustworthy and honest that Rasūlullāh ﷺ appointed him his personal treasurer and the treasurer of the public treasury as well.

The Muslims had settled in Madīnah and established a base for Islam, Masjid al-Nabawī. A counsel was held concerning the manner in which to invite the congregants for ṣalāh. Various opinions were put forward but none of them were favoured by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The next morning, Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zayd

1 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, Ḥadīth: 36589; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1 pg. 38.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3544; *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 3656.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 1803.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 pg. 326.

ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ comes rushing, full of joy, to the presence of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and relates to him his dream in which an angel taught him the words of the Adhān. Without a delay in statement, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed him to stand with Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and dictate the words to him so that the latter might call out the Adhān. “He has a sweeter and louder voice than you,” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained.¹

It was not just his loud voice that earned him this position. Rather the manifestation of Allah’s سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى promise was about to be realised. Whoever humbles himself for Allah’s pleasure will be elevated by Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى honoured Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ by making him the first Mu’adhin of Islam. The first to proclaim the Greatness of Allah, the testimony of faith, and the summons to the greatest form of worship was none other than Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

We learn from a range of traditions that the Mu’adhin will enjoy the greatest rank of distinction on the Day of Qiyāmah,² and he will receive forgiveness to the extent to which his voice reaches.³ Every moist and dry place will testify on his behalf,⁴ every human, jinn, and creation will bear witness in his favour on the Day of Qiyāmah.⁵ In addition, he will receive the reward of all those who performed ṣalāh with him.⁶ Just ponder over these virtues. Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ will receive the reward of all the ṣalāh Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed and the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ performed. Fortunate is he indeed!

He remained the Mu’adhin of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ throughout the Madīnian period and called out the Adhān for him at home and on journey. The apex of this honour was during the Conquest of Makkah. After Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ overcame the Makkans and destroyed the idols of the polytheists, he instructed Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

1 *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 189; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ḥadīth: 499.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 750.

3 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ḥadīth: 515; *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Ḥadīth: 653.

4 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ḥadīth: 515.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 638

6 *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Ḥadīth: 653; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, Ḥadīth: 6643; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhib*, Ḥadīth: 231.

to climb up onto the roof of the Ka'bah and proclaim the Oneness and Greatness of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى in his melodious and thunderous voice.¹ There, the former slave climbed up the most sacred structure on earth and stood upon it, to call out the greatest call ever, while the entire Makkah watched in awe. A moment that was profoundly inspiring to most but terrifying to the few who still resisted Islam. The one who was dragged in the streets and shoved into the dirt yet never relented from taking the name of his Lord, was now made to tower above all, while standing upon the most sanctified House on earth, proclaiming the majesty of the Almighty.

Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى displayed to the world the love and respect He conferred upon Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. A chief principal was taught: honour and respect in the eyes of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى is not obtained through wealth, knowledge, or lineage, but rather through piety. Some of the disbelievers made condescending remarks about this spectacle, but Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى revealed:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

*O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.*²

And his fortune never ended here: He was one of three to enter the Ka'bah with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on the Day Makkah was conquered, and it was he who indicated to the ummah the very spot where Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed ṣalāh in the Ka'bah.

During the khilāfah of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, when soldiers were being mobilised to strengthen the armies marching on Syria, Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ requested the

1 Al-Bidāyah, vol. 4 pg. 202; Sīrat Ibn Kathīr, vol. 3 pg. 575; Raf' Sha'n al-Ḥubshān, pg. 274.

2 Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt: 13.

khalīfah to allow him to join the reinforcements, expressing his desire to wage jihād in the path of Allah ﷻ. Again we see him seeking obscurity, rather than fame. Let me be an unknown soldier, striving in the path of Allah ﷻ, sacrificing my life for my Beloved, than live as the official Mu’adhin of the capital. The more Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ humbled himself seeking the countenance of Allah ﷻ, the more Allah ﷻ elevated his name.

The honour of calling out the Adhān in Masjid al-Nabawī was secured by someone else after his departure from Madīnah, but his name will not shine like the name of Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. The African soldier continued fighting in the Path of Allah ﷻ, and it was only when Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ came to Syria to take the keys of Bayt al-Maqdis did Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ once again call out the Adhān upon his request. His pleasant voice made people recall the happy days of the time of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and they wept, “On no other day were more people seen weeping than on that day,” the narrator explains.¹

A life spent initially enduring hardships in the path of Allah ﷻ, followed by participation in expeditions and campaigns alongside the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and calling out the Adhān, and culminating in waging jihād with the Muslim troops in Syria ended in 17/18 A.H in Damascus. Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ breathed his last at the ripe age of 65.

When he was on his deathbed he exclaimed, “Tomorrow we will meet the dear friends, Muḥammad and his comrades.” His wife mourned, “Oh! What a disaster,” so he said, “Oh! What happiness!”² Tomorrow, on the plains of Resurrection, we hope to be in the company of the beloved of Allah, Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and his faithful attendant and friend, our Master Bilāl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.



1 Raf Sha’n al-Ḥubshān, pg. 282; Tārīkh Dimashq, vol. 2 pg. 214; al-Istī‘āb, vol. 1 pg. 142.

2 Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’, vol. 1 pg. 359.

Usāmah ibn Zayd

During the final days of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, on the 26th of Šafar 11 A.H, Rasūlullāh ﷺ mobilised an army to head in the direction of Syria at Ubnā, the place where the Battle of Mu'tah had taken place against the Christian Arabs and Byzantines.¹ The army was to confront the greatest superpower on earth at the time, the mighty Roman Empire. Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave clear orders to have the horses of the Muslims tread on the lands bordering al-Balqa' and al-Darum of Palestine. His plan was clearly aimed at shaking the position of Byzantium in the minds of the Arabs, after which the Muslim troops could set out to conquer those lands as well as to implant confidence into the hearts of the Arabs who were settled at the borders of the Byzantines. Who did Rasūlullāh ﷺ select as commander-in-chief to head this formidable mission? "Go to the place where your father was slain and let your horses trample them, for I have appointed you in charge of this army," he told Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ,² An African lad around 20 years of age, *the beloved, son of the beloved*.

Some had reservations about the appointment of Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the army general and the talk of this reached the ears of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Notwithstanding his illness, Rasūlullāh ﷺ came out to clarify the matter. He announced, "If you criticise his command, then you also criticised the command of his father before him. Yes by Allah, he (Zayd) was qualified to lead, and he was one of the dearest of people to me, and this lad is one of the dearest of people to me after him."³ That is why, he is referred to as, *the beloved, son of the beloved*.

Loving Rasūlullāh ﷺ is a cornerstone of our faith. Being loved by him is the aspiration of every lover. Expressing your love for him is intrinsic. He expressing his love for you is exceptional.

1 *Sīrat al-Muštafā*, vol. 3 pg. 159.

2 *Abū Bakr al-Šiddīq, His Life & Times*, pg. 283, 284; *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 8 pg. 152.

3 *Šaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ḥadīth*: 552.

What salient qualities and envious characteristics this lad must have possessed for Rasūlullāh ﷺ to appoint him the leader of the last expedition he mobilised. What prayers and supplications of Rasūlullāh ﷺ he secured by accepting his mission.

The army began their preparations and stayed at Jurf (located 3 miles from Madīnah in the direction of Syria). However, Rasūlullāh ﷺ passed on before the army could set out. To Allah do we belong and to Him is our return.

The situation changed with the passing of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Some of the Companions felt that the army should be kept in Madīnah for the city's protection. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ on the other hand was determined to despatch this army and fulfil the decisive directive of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. "By the one in whose hand is the soul of Abū Bakr, even if I thought that wild animals would snatch me, I would still send the army of Usāmah as instructed by Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Even if there were no one left in the city but me, I would still send him."¹

The determination of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was spot on because it was the emphatic command of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and the subsequent events proved him to be right. The second issue that arose was that the Anṣār wanted a commander-in-chief who was older than Usāmah so they sent Sayyidunā 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to talk to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ about this. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ countered, "The Messenger of Allah appointed him and you are telling me to dismiss him!" So the decision was definite. An African lad will lead the first campaign after the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ against the superpower of the time.

Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ walked with the army, advising them, and then instructed Usāmah, "Do what Rasūlullāh ﷺ commanded you. Start with the land of Quḍā'ah, then go to Ābil. Do not fall short in anything that Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed you to do and do not be hasty in carrying out his commands."²

1 Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, *His Life & Times*, pg. 288 – 290; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4 pg. 45.

2 Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, *His Life & Times*, pg. 291; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4 pg. 47.

Usāmah رضي الله عنه set out with his army and did just as Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم directed him. He returned safely and victoriously after forty days, bringing booty with him.¹

News of the death of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and Usāmah's رضي الله عنه raid on some of his territory reached Heraclius at the same time. The Romans and the Christian Arabs were impressed and intimidated by this tactical move of the Muslims, their determination to fight despite the death of their Messenger. Thus, the Romans refrained from much of what they intended to do.²

This mission served as a launch pad for further conquests and invasions into the lands of the Romans. It all began with the efforts of a young African man. The first military expedition after the demise of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was led by this young African man. The appointment of Sayyidunā Usāmah رضي الله عنه as commander-in-chief, along with plenty other wisdoms, was to establish that this religion is not reserved for a particular nation or colour, but rather, it is for the entire world, all colours and races included. Rasūlullāh's صلى الله عليه وسلم idea was to promote Islam as a religion for all and sundry.

This was not the first time Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم displayed this affection to this young man and pronounced to the world the equality of all colours and races. Two and a half years before this, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم had entered Makkah al-Mukarramah, triumphantly, with no one sharing his riding animal besides the same young lad, Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه.³ The son of a freed slave, not one of the children of Hāshim or one of the nobles of the Quraysh. That action alone symbolised the justice and equality that were going to be integral parts of the new system of law in Makkah.⁴

1 Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, *His Life & Times*, pg. 291; *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4 pg. 47; *Tārīkh Khalīfah ibn Khayyāt*, pg. 101.

2 Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, *His Life & Times*, pg. 291, 292; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, pg. 20; *al-Kāmil fi al-Tārīkh*, vol. 2 pg. 227.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4289; *Sīrat al-Muṣṭafā*, vol. 3 pg. 36.

4 *The Noble Life of the Prophet*, vol. 3 pg. 1704.

It does not end there, when Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered the most sacred structure on earth, the House of Allah ﷻ, the Ka‘bah, he took along Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ.¹ He is one of three to enjoy this privilege. These are few of the privileges this young man enjoyed which each one of us yearn and long for.

Sayyidunā Abū Muḥammad (it is said: Abū Zayd) Usāmah’s ﷺ life began in Islam. Nurtured by his parents, Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah ﷺ—the adopted son of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and an individual promised Jannah by Rasūlullāh ﷺ—and Sayyidah Umm Ayman ﷺ, who Rasūlullāh ﷺ would refer to as his mother;² Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ obtained an excellent upbringing in Islam by his parents. Rasūlullāh ﷺ promises that one of the seven categories to be accommodated under the shade of Allah’s ﷻ Throne on the Day of Qiyāmah is the youth that was nurtured in the worship of Allah ﷻ.³

This extraordinary fortune actually commenced with a distressing event. During the period of Jāhiliyyah, horsemen from the Banū Qayn attacked the dwellings of the Banū Ma‘n and took his father, Sayyidunā Zayd ﷺ, who was just a child at the time. They took him to the market of ‘Ikāz and presented him for sale. Sayyidunā Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām ﷺ purchased him for 400 dirhams for his aunt, Sayyidah Khadijah ﷺ, who gifted him to Rasūlullāh ﷺ after marriage. Before Islam, Rasūlullāh ﷺ adopted him and got him married to his freed slave girl, Sayyidah Umm Ayman ﷺ. And this union bore this loveable fruit.

He spent his time in the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ from a young age and became beloved to the Beloved of Allah ﷻ. He was commonly referred to as Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ beloved.⁴ Beloved of the beloved of Allah, and beloved son of the beloved. Fortunate was he indeed.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 483; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 3071.

2 *‘Umdat al-Qāri*, vol. 16 pg. 323.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 504; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2248.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 6788; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 1688.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ further encouraged his favourite wife, Sayyidunā ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, “O ‘Ā’ishah, love him for certainly I love him.”¹ Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا would say, “It does behove anyone to hate Usāmah after what I heard Rasūlullāh ﷺ declaring, ‘Whoever loves Allah and His Messenger should love Usāmah.’”² Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would recall the joyful days when he played in the lap of Rasūlullāh ﷺ who would hold him and Sayyidunā Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and pray, “O Allah, I indeed love them so You love them too.”³

Rasūlullāh ﷺ only loved that which was pure. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself advised the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ in particular and the ummah in general to treat Sayyidunā Usāmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ well, enlightening, “For indeed he is among the best of you.”⁴ What a weighty testimony indeed.

And the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ did just that. Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ favoured a stipend of 3500 to Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ while he granted his own son, ‘Abd Allāh, with only 3000. Upon which ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ enquired the reason for this preferential treatment, despite his precedence in battles; Sayyidunā ‘Umar explained, “Because Zayd was more beloved to Rasūlullāh ﷺ than your father, and Usāmah was more beloved to Rasūlullāh ﷺ than you. So I gave preference to the beloved of Rasūlullāh ﷺ over my beloved.”⁵

He had drunk deep from the well of Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ knowledge. Eminent Companions like Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah and Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ learnt aḥādīth from him. Senior Tābi‘īn; Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī, Abū Wā’il, and others transmitted narrations from him.⁶

1 Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth: 3818; Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, Hadith 7058. Grade: Hasan.

2 Musnad Aḥmad, Hadith: 25273; Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Hadith 1527. Grade: Ṣaḥīḥ li Ghayrihī.

3 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Hadith: 3747.

4 Musnad Aḥmad, Hadith: 5848. Grade: Ṣaḥīḥ.

5 Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth: 4183.

6 Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 131.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also appreciated his views and had reliance on his intelligence. When his dearly loved wife, Sayyidunā ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was slandered, Rasūlullāh ﷺ consulted with few people regarding the way forward prior to the verses of Sūrah al-Nūr being revealed. One of these persons was Sayyidunā Usāmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ who spoke about the good reputation of Sayyidunā ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and recommended, “O Allah’s Messenger! Keep your wife, for by Allah, we know nothing about her but good.”¹ His counsel was a hundred percent in harmony with the subsequent revelation by the Knower of the Unseen سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى.

His valour and heroism can be realised from the details of the Battle of Ḥunayn. When confusion abounded and warriors sought to escape the rage of the battle, Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ—a teenager at the time—was one of the few to remain steadfast around Rasūlullāh ﷺ and continued fighting till the Muslims were triumphant.²

This African lad was extremely dark in complexion,³ but his heart was pure, brimming with faith, and his body was an embodiment of salient qualities. The purity and beautification of the internal is vital. Through it, does one become the beloved of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى and the beloved of His creation.

His father, Sayyidunā Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, on the other hand, had a fair complexion.⁴ Due the diversity of colour between father and son, the kuffār would taunt their lineage. Once, Mujazzaz al-Mudallajī—a master of lineage and ancestry and one who could tell lineage by looking at the limbs of a person—saw Usāmah and Zayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ covered in a shawl; they had covered their heads but their feet were exposed. He deduced by just looking at their feet, “Indeed, these feet; some are of the other.”⁵ This statement brought happiness to the heart of our Nabī ﷺ and he walked cheerfully and gleefully into the house of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 829.

2 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Hadith: 15069. Grade: Hasan.

3 *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 3 pg. 990.

4 *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 3 pg. 990.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Hadith: 6770; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Hadith: 1459.

and narrated what had just happened, having conviction that this would stop the polytheists from criticising his beloveds due to the polytheists' faith in Mujazzaz al-Mudallājī.¹

After the martyrdom of Sayyidunā 'Uthmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, when the strife between the Muslims began, he sheathed his sword and laid down his weapons. Despite his fearlessness, Sayyidunā Usāmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ chose to remain detached from the civil rivalry. An insightful lesson he had learnt was never going to slip his mind: *Never kill a believer!*

It was at some stage in the life of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, while on an expedition during his juvenile days, Sayyidunā Usāmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and his battalion attacked al-Ḥuraqah, a tribe of Juhaynah, in the early hours of the morning and defeated them. He and another Anṣārī caught hold of a person of the tribe, who proclaimed, "There is no deity but Allah." Hearing these words, the Anṣārī backed off, but Sayyidunā Usāmah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ attacked the man with his spear and took his life. When he returned, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him, "Usāmah, did you kill him after he had made the profession: There is no deity but Allah?" "He did it only as a shelter," Usāmah clarified. But Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ continued repeating his question until he wished he had not embraced Islam before that day, he lamented.²

This weighty lesson kept him away from the strife. He thus passed his days in Mizzah in Damascus. Thereafter, he returned and stayed in Wādī al-Qurā and finally settled in Madīnah. Towards the latter part of Sayyidunā Mu'āwiyah's رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ khilāfah in the year 54 A.H, he passed away after reaching the age of 60 in Jurf. His body was then taken to Madīnah for burial.

Amazing is the system of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. The exact place where his army camped during the final days of Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ life was where he spent his last moments. May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى be pleased with him and make him happy.

1 *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 3 pg. 990.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 568; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 177.

Sālim Mawlā Abi Hudhayfah

Experience proves that the company a person keeps has a direct impact on his qualities and values. The company of the pious develops devoutness, the company of the scholars increases one's knowledge, and the company of seniors enhances wisdom. Each of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ became guiding stars owing to their companionship with the guide for both human and Jinn; Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Direction, righteousness, and prudence develop in those who attach themselves to the Qur'ān, coupled with sublimeness and prominence.

The perfect example of this is Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Born a slave, Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ rose to the station of leading senior Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ in ṣalāh, only owing to his knowledge and devotion to the Speech of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. “By this Book, Allah will exalt people,” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ proclaimed.¹

His journey of faith began early on. He is among the early forerunners to Islam. You might notice that the humble were the first to accept the invitation of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ for pride and arrogance did not hinder their thinking and blind their sight from understanding and witnessing the light of Islam. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى praises the forerunners to the faith, pronouncing:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا
عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.²

Not only does Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى guarantee them Jannah in this verse and announce His pleasure with them, He promises the same to every individual who will follow

1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth: 1780.

2 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

them. So let us take this opportunity to study the outstanding characteristics of this forerunner to the faith, so we might emulate him and join him in the Gardens of Bliss.

After entering the faith, Sayyidunā Sālim رضي الله عنه dedicated his time to becoming proficient in the glorious Qur’ān. Arabic not being his mother tongue was not an impediment in his endeavour to rise to one of the four most knowledgeable reciters of this ummah.

“Learn the recitation of Qur’ān from four persons,” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded. You might think that they would be all of Arab origin because Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم did instruct in another ḥadīth, “Recite the Qur’ān in the tongue and voice of the Arabs.”¹ But Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم lists their names: “From Ibn Mas’ūd, Sālim—the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, Ubay ibn Ka’b, and Mu’ādh ibn Jabal.”² One of the four stands out distinctly, for he was not of Arab descent, Sayyidunā Sālim رضي الله عنه was of African origin.

His attachment to the Qur’ān earned him a position of honour and dignity in this world, and will award him a lofty rank in the Hereafter. The devotee of the Qur’ān will be directed to recite the Qur’ān and continue ascending the stages of Jannah. The last verse of his recitation will be his abode in Jannah.³

When the early Muslims made hijrah to Madīnah Munawwarah and camped at Qubā, it was none other than Sayyidunā Sālim رضي الله عنه who would lead them in prayer. Among them were senior Ṣaḥābah, the likes of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, Sayyidunā ‘Umar, Sayyidunā Abū Salamah, and Sayyidunā ‘Amir ibn Rab’īrah رضي الله عنه.⁴ His surplus knowledge and attachment to the Qur’ān earned him this station.

1 *Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī*, vol. 1 pg. 17; *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 150; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 6027.

3 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 3162; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ḥadīth: 1459.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 287; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Ḥadīth: 588.

Allāh is indeed Great! A former slave, whose greatest aspiration might have been to earn freedom and live a comfortable life, the thought of assuming a position of honour probably never crossed his mind and never featured in his wildest dreams. Yet here you have him leading the greatest men of this ummah in ṣalāh. All of this owing to him being well-versed in the glorious Qur’ān.

One night, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا came home late after performing Ṣalāt al-‘Ishā. Upon Rasūlullāh’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ enquiry, she explained that she was listening to the recitation of one of his Companions, making special mention of his melodious voice. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ got up and she got up with him to discover who it was. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was pleased to find Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reciting the Qur’ān in his melodious voice. Turning to Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, he commented, “Praise is to Allah Who has created such men among my Ummah.”¹

Not only were Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا captivated with his pleasant rendition. It attracted divine attention too. Faḍālah ibn ‘Ubayd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Allah listens more attentively to a man with a beautiful voice who recites Qur’an out loud than how a master listens to the renditions of his singing slave.”²

He lived the first years of his life as a slave and was later emancipated by his master. Abū Nu‘aym mentions that Thubaytah bint Ya‘ār, the wife of Abū Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, was his master who freed him.³

Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is referred to as Sālim *Mawlā* (freed slave of) Abī Ḥudhayfah. Sayyidunā Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn ‘Utbah ibn Rabī‘ah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is one of the fortunate ones to participate in Badr. He adopted Sālim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Initially, Sālim would be called the son of Abū Ḥudhayfah but then Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى revealed verses of the Qur’ān instructing that adopted children be attributed to their fathers. If their

1 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Ḥadīth: 1338; *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 25320.

2 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Ḥadīth: 1340.

3 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*.

fathers could not be traced, they would be attributed to their masters who freed them and regarded as brothers in faith.¹

ادْعُوهُمْ لِآبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ

*Call them by [the names of] their fathers; it is more just in the sight of Allah. But if you do not know their fathers - then they are [still] your brothers in religion and those entrusted to you.*²

Subsequent to the revelation of this verse, Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was referred to as Mawlā Abī Ḥudhayfah, as will be found commonly in ḥadīth and history compilations.

The situation became awkward in the house of Abū Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ after Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reached puberty. Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ lived in his home and would come into the presence of his wife, Sayyidah Sahlah bint Suhayl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, which caused rankling in the heart of the man of the house. His wife sensed his disturbance so she sought advice from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the matter. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ advised that she breastfeed him, making her unlawful for him, and through this the protective jealousy of her husband will be dispelled. Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ plan worked out perfectly. This was a concession given exclusively to Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Despite him being a man at the time, foster relations between him and Sahlah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا were formed.³

Sayyidunā Abū Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ later got Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ married to his brother's daughter, Fāṭimah bint al-Walīd ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, who was one of the best unmarried women of the Quraysh. Above that, she was among the first emigrants at that time.⁴

1 Muwaṭṭā' Imām Mālik, Book 30, Ḥadīth: 12; Sunan al-Nasa'i, Ḥadīth: 3225.

2 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 5.

3 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth: 3425; Sunan al-Nasa'i, Ḥadīth: 3323.

4 Muwaṭṭā' Imām Mālik, Book 30, Ḥadīth: 12; Sunan al-Nasa'i, Ḥadīth: 3225. The narration of al-Nasa'i names her Hind bint al-Walīd ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah.

Sayyidunā Sālīm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ lived his life in the shade of the Speech of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. The Qur’ān declares that the believers are deep in their love for Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ

Those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.¹

And this was exactly the state of Sayyidunā Sālīm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. As Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ lay on his deathbed, he expressed his desire to appoint Sālīm Mawlā Abī Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ as khalīfah had the latter been alive. The reason behind this was his extreme love for Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.²

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said, “Had I appointed Sālīm, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, as khalīfah, and Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, had to question me, ‘What made you do this?’ I would have replied, ‘O my Rabb, I heard Your Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ declaring, ‘He loves Allah truly from his heart.’”³

The Qur’ān compliments courage and boldness. Sayyidunā Sālīm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ displayed his courage when panic was sensed by the inhabitants of Madīnah. Sayyidunā Sālīm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Sayyidunā ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ grabbed their swords and waited to attack. After the terror disappeared, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ admonished the people saying, “Why did you not resort to Allah and His Messenger in the terror? Why did you not act like these two believing men?”⁴

Have a look at the Qur’ān and observe how it describes the victory of Badr, the setback at Uḥud, the terror of Aḥzāb, the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah which served as a launch pad to the Conquest of Makkah, the experience at Ḥunayn, and

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 165.

2 ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār: *al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn*, pg. 252; *Kashf al-Khifā’ wa Muzil al-Albās*, vol. 1 pg. 323; *Ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān min al-Ṣaḥābah al-Kirām*, pg. 140.

3 *Al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn*, pg. 252.

4 *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 17463.

the perilous march to Tabūk. Realise that Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ physically participated in these events and is deserving of the rewards promised by Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Rasūlullāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَعَالَى.

After Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise, in the storms of disbelief that raged in Arabia, Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ stood up to face the tide of apostasy. He participated in the most fearsome war of apostasy, the epic Battle of Yamāmah. In the course of the battle, the Muslims were overpowered, so Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ commented, “This is not how we would fight alongside Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.” He then dug for himself a pit and stood firmly in it and fought bravely to the end.¹

He was tasked with carrying the flag of the Muhājirīn in that fierce battle.² Some were concerned over this, thinking that he might waiver. But Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ put their fears to rest declaring that the Muslims will not face defeat from his side. “An evil bearer of Qur’ān I would be indeed if that happens,” he said. The Qur’ān commands steadfastness in battle and that is exactly what he displayed. He continued fighting fiercely reciting the verse:

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيِّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُونَ كَثِيرًا فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا
وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

*And how many a prophet [fought and] with him fought many religious scholars.
But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor
did they weaken or submit. And Allah loves the steadfast.*³

Swords glittered in the sun and the fighting intensified. Sayyidunā Sālim رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ held the flag high and stood as firm as a pillar. During the battle, his right hand was severed. Immediately, he caught the flag with his left hand and did not allow

1 Al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr, Ḥadīth: 1320; al-Istī’āb, vol. 1 pg. 194; al-Iṣābah, vol. 1 pg. 196, Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 2 pg. 147.

2 Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 3 pg. 88; Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 2 pg. 147.

3 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 146.

it to fall. But the time had come for this devotee of the Qur’ān to meet his coveted end. He continued reciting Qur’ān until he was martyred. Next to him lay his bosom friend, Sayyidunā Abū Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه, who also tasted martyrdom in that battle. This happened in the year 12 A.H.¹

The following report, one of two related by him, leaves us with a deep lesson which we should carry with us throughout our lives. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Such people will be brought on the Day of Qiyāmah who will have good deeds like the mountains of Tihāmah. However, Allah will destroy their deeds. They would pray and fast but if any ḥarām came their way, they would hurry to obtain it without reservations.”²

May Allah be pleased with this devout Companion, and allow us too to hear his melodious recitation in the best of abodes; in Paradise.



1 *Ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān min al-Ṣaḥābah al-Kirām*, pg. 142.

2 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, vol. 1 pg. 178; *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 5 pg. 67; *Ithāf al-Sādah al-Muttaqīn*, vol. 8 pg. 86.

Najāshī

The first three personalities we discussed were either slaves or sons of slaves. Despite their humble beginnings, they rose to the heights of dignity in Islam. Now we speak about a king, recognised for his justice, who earned a rare distinction in history; the king of Abyssinia, al-Najāshī.

Al-Najāshī is the title given to the kings of Abyssinia just as Amir al-Mu'minīn is the title of the khalīfah of the Muslims; Kisrā is the title of the King of Persia, and Qayṣar is the title of the Roman Emperor.¹ Aṣḥamah was his real name. An African name which meant gift², and most definitely he was a gift to the Muslims who immigrated to Abyssinia.

People who assume positions of authority are generally afflicted with the disease of pride and arrogance and are in the habit of oppressing their subordinates. But this was not the case with Sayyidunā Najāshī رضي الله عنه. He was an embodiment of humbleness and justice. His fairness in dealing with his citizens had become the talk of the day in different countries of the world.

Sayyidunā Najāshī's رضي الله عنه father was the king of Abyssinia. He passed away leaving only one small son behind, Aṣḥamah. He bequeathed the throne to his brother, stipulating that after his son reaches puberty, he will become king. His brother, however, grew greedy and sold Aṣḥamah to some traders. Allah's سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى system works in amazing ways. That night, the brother passed away. So the Abyssinians brought Aṣḥamah back, seated him on the throne, and placed the crown upon his head.¹

Meanwhile, in Makkah al-Mukarramah, the Muslims were being mercilessly persecuted by the kuffār. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم was in search for a base for Islam,

1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 222; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 104.

2 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 219; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 104.

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 82.

or at least a sanctuary for the Muslims. He examined the different kingdoms of the world at that time, but found no place suitable for his Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ besides Abyssinia. Therefore, he told them to immigrate to this African country informing them, “Lives therein a king, by whom no one is oppressed.”¹ This alone is a great accolade for Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was cognisant of his integrity and fairness and instructed his Companions to travel to his land.

Another peculiar accolade of Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is that he was the first to assist the Muslims and grant them refuge. While the entire world plotted against the Muslims, he defended them. Imagine the amount of sincere prayers he earned from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The honour that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى bestowd upon him is sufficient testimony to this. On the Day of Qiyāmah, you will see him seated in the company of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Rightly Guided Khulafā’ under the shade of Allah’s Throne. The first of the seven categories promised divine shade on that dreadful day is a just ruler.²

While the Muslims enjoyed peace and safety and the opportunity to worship Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى without restrictions in Abyssinia, the Quraysh burnt with malice. They sent two of their envoys with exquisite gifts of the finest hide of Makkah for the king to convince him to return the Muslims back to Makkah. The Qurayshī envoys first met with the patricians of the king and won them over, brain-washing them into believing that the new immigrants had invented a false new religion and must be returned back to Makkah for the people of their land know them best. The two thought that their trick will work with the king as well. However, they were in for a nasty surprise.

They presented superb gifts to Najāshī before complaining about the Muslims and requesting him to return them immediately. The patricians supported their case, but Najāshī on the other hand became upset at this unfair conduct and determined that he will not decide anything until he hears their side of the story.

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 73; *Sīrah Ibn Ishāq*, pg. 154.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 504; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 2248.

His justice had saved him from making a terrible blunder. The Muslims were thus summoned to his court together with the king’s bishops. The Muslims were resolute on speaking nothing but what Rasūlullāh ﷺ taught them.

The Muslims’ spokesperson, Sayyidunā Ja’far ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, gave Najāshī a detailed account of the unfolding of events. He firstly mentioned the wicked lives they were living, followed by the special blessing Allah ﷻ conferred upon them, His beloved Messenger ﷺ. He listed the outstanding characteristics of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and enumerated his salient and significant teachings which they follow. Finally, he spoke about the persecutions of their own people which forced them to take sanctuary in his country, highlighting the fact that no one in his land is oppressed. Najāshī requested the speaker to recite some of the new revelation. The opening verses of Sūrah Maryam were recited before him. Totally captivated by the words of the Qur’ān, Najāshī and his bishops listened attentively in silence. Tears began their journey of descent down their faces. When the reciter completed his recitation, he looked up and found that Najāshī’s beard was soaked with tears and that the bishops had wet their manuscripts opened before them with their tears. These verses of the Qur’ān correctly describe them:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ
رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ فَاتَّابَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ
جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, “Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses. And why should we not believe in Allah and what has come to us of the truth? And we aspire that our Lord will admit us [to Paradise] with the righteous people.” So Allah rewarded them for what they said with gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. And that is the reward of doers of good.¹

1 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 83 – 85.

“By Allah, certainly this and what Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ brought come from the same spring,” he exclaimed. The Qur’ān had penetrated deep into the recesses of his heart. The manifestation was to be witnessed very soon. He allowed the Muslims to live in his country and practice their religion openly and freely, assuring them that no one will harm them.

One of the envoys devised a scheme that he felt will definitely work. He decided to play on sentiments and disclose the belief the Muslims held regarding Sayyidunā ‘Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, which was contrary to what many Christians believed, thinking that this will bring the king’s wrath upon them. The Muslims were summoned for a second time to court and were more apprehensive this time round. However, they maintained their composure and explained to Najāshī what the Qur’ān had to say about Maryam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and Sayyidunā ‘Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. He was the Messenger and slave of Allah, His soul and word which He cast into the virgin Maryam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. Najāshī confirmed what the Muslims believed, as it was verbatim the words of Sayyidunā ‘Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, despite the bishops making a hue and cry over this. Again, he promised the Muslims safety, warning that anyone who troubles them shall face punishment. He then had the gifts of the Qurayshī envoys returned to them and dismissed them from his court.¹

Among the Muhājirīn to Abyssinia was the third Khalīfah of Islam, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his wife—the beloved daughter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Sayyidah Ruqayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا—two of Rasūlullāh’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ future wives, Sayyidah Umm Salamah and Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, his dear cousin, Sayyidunā Ja’far ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Sayyidunā Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām, and Sayyidunā ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Awf—two of the ten promised Jannah, Sayyidunā Muṣ‘ab ibn ‘Umayr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—the young lad brought up in the lap of luxury, who sacrificed everything for the sake of his religion, and many other early Muslims.²

Not long thereafter, a man from Abyssinia rebelled against him, contesting with him for his kingdom. The Muslims were anxious over this, fearing that he might be

1 *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 1676; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 79 – 81.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 72, 73.

overpowered. They thus implored Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى seeking aid for Najāshī. Sayyidunā Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ surfed on the Nile on a blown up water skin to witness the epic battle between Najāshī and his rival. Through the prayers of the Muslims, Najāshī was victorious and his opponent was killed. “By Allah, we never felt such joy upon anything as the joy we felt upon Najāshī’s victory,” they explain.¹

He might have lived hundreds of miles away from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, but was continuously in his supplications. Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had the great fortune of receiving two epistles from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The first correspondence was sent with Sayyidunā ‘Amr ibn Umayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to Najāshī calling him to Islam. The translation of the letter is reproduced below:

In the name of Allah, the Exceedingly Compassionate, Excessively Merciful. From Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah to al-Najāshī, king of Abyssinia. I praise Allah before you, the Sovereign, the Holy One, Giver of Peace, and the Protector. I testify that ‘Īsā ibn Maryam is the spirit of Allah and His word which He cast into Maryam, the chaste virgin, which resulted in her giving birth to ‘Īsā. I invite you to one Allah, without any partner and that you follow me and believe in what has been revealed to me, for indeed I am the Messenger of Allah. I have sent to you my cousin Ja‘far. With him are a group of Muslims. Peace be upon those who follow the guidance.²

Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ held the letter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and placed it on his eyes; a gesture of reverence and appreciation. He then descended from his throne and sat humbly on the earth. Thereafter, he embraced Islam and recited the proclamation of truth. He submitted, “Had I possessed the ability to go to him, I would have.”³ He wrote to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ his response, filled with love and admiration:

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 1676; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 81.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 90, 91 [referenced to *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 2 pg. 309]; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 105; *Raf’ Sha’n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 227, 228 with slight variation [referenced to *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2 pg. 652; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1 pg. 258, 259.]

3 *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 107.

In the name of Allah, the Exceedingly Compassionate, Excessively Merciful. To Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah from al-Najāshī. Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, and Allah’s mercy and His blessings. The being besides whom there is no deity, Who guided me to Islam. After praising Allah, indeed your epistle has reached me, O Messenger of Allah. What you have mentioned about ʿĪsā—by the Rabb of the heavens and the earth—ʿĪsā ibn Maryam ﷺ did not increase on what you said to the extent of the pericarp of a date. Indeed, the reality is as you have declared. We know of the people you sent to us; your cousin and his companions have come here.

I testify that you are the Messenger of Allah. I have pledged allegiance to you and to your cousin and I have embraced Islam at his hands, for the pleasure of Allah, the Lord of the Universe. I have sent my son to you. If you desire that I come personally, I will comply, O Messenger of Allah, for I testify that what you say is the truth. And peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings.¹

On one side, arrogance and love for authority proved an impediment for other kings, while on the other side, Sayyidunā Najāshī’s ﷺ humbleness and search for the truth bore the fruits of devoutness. He was one of the very few kings who had the great fortune to embrace Islam.

The verses which speak favourably of the adherents of Christianity and Judaism (*Ahl al-kitāb*) most definitely include Sayyidunā Najāshī ﷺ for he is one of them to answer the call of Islam after having faith in a previous divine faith. Some of these verses are quoted hereunder:

وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَاشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ؕ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 90, 91 [referenced to *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 2 pg. 309] *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 106; *Raf' Sha'n al-Hubshān*, pg. 228, 229. [Referenced to *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2 pg. 652, 653; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 1 pg. 259; *al-Sīrah of Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 2 pg. 43.]

And indeed, among the People of the Scripture are those who believe in Allah and what was revealed to you and what was revealed to them, [being] humbly submissive to Allah. They do not exchange the verses of Allah for a small price. Those will have their reward with their Lord. Indeed, Allah is swift in account.¹

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ قَالُوا إِنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظُونَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ

Those to whom We gave the Scripture before it - they are believers in it. And when it is recited to them, they say, "We have believed in it; indeed, it is the truth from our Lord. Indeed we were, [even] before it, Muslims [submitting to Allah]." Those will be given their reward twice for what they patiently endured and [because] they avert evil through good, and from what We have provided them they spend.²

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَىٰ مِثْلِهِ فَأَمَّا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُوا أُمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَهْدِيَ الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

Say, "Have you considered: if the Qur'an was from Allah, and you disbelieved in it while a witness from the Children of Israel has testified to something similar and believed while you were arrogant...?" Indeed, Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.³

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مَنْ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ

They are not [all] the same; among the People of the Scripture is a community standing [in obedience], reciting the verses of Allah during periods of the night and prostrating [in prayer].⁴

1 Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 199. Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān, pg. 226 [Referenced to al-Suyūṭī: Azhār al-'Urūsh, pg. 72, 73.]

2 Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ: 52 – 54.

3 Sūrah al-Aḥqāf: 10.

4 Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 113.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دَخَلْنَا هُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

And if only the People of the Scripture had believed and feared Allah, We would have removed from them their misdeeds and admitted them to Gardens of Pleasure.¹

Allah ﷻ attests to their faith, devoutness, and humbleness in these verses and promises them double reward coupled with forgiveness and gardens of eternity.

In the second letter, Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered him to marry Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah bint Abī Sufyān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to him and to send all the Ṣaḥābah on a ship back to him. Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ complied with these requests. Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا had immigrated to Abyssinia with her husband, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Jaḥsh. He turned Christian but she remained firm upon her faith. After her ‘iddah was completed, Sayyidunā Najāshī’s messenger, Abrahah, came to her and informed her that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had written to him ordering him to get them married. Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا appointed Sayyidunā Khālīd ibn Sa‘īd ibn al-‘Āş رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ her representative.

Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ summoned all the Muslims. After they gathered, he recited the khuṭbah and conducted the marriage of Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He gave her 400 gold coins as dowry on behalf of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He then prepared a feast for the Muslims.

The king ordered the women to send perfume to Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا with which she adorned herself and presented herself to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ sent her with Shurahbīl ibn Ḥasanah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to Madīnah.²

These are just few glimpses of how well he treated the Muslims in Abyssinia. “We lived with the best neighbour in the best country,” Umm al-Mu‘minīn Sayyidah Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا states—one of the immigrants to Abyssinia.³

1 Sūrah al-Mā‘idah: 65.

2 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Ḥadīth: 2102, 2103, 2081; Sunan al-Nasa‘ī, Ḥadīth: 3352.

3 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 1676.

Although Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not meet, they had a close relationship. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ wrote him two letters, the details of which appeared previously, and Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ sent two gifts for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The first gift was a pair of leather socks, which Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ wore and made masaḥ upon during wuḍū'.¹ The other was a garment coupled with a gold ring studded with an Abyssinian rock. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave the ring to Sayyidah Umāmah bint Abī al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا—his granddaughter—to wear.²

Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ sent his son with sixty men from Abyssinia in a ship towards Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Allah سُجَّحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى selected them to be martyrs in His path. The ship sank and they all drowned.³

Notwithstanding his major responsibilities as a king, Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ kept tabs upon the happenings in Arabia. After the Battle of Badr, he sent for Sayyidunā Ja‘far and his comrades رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ and gave them glad tidings of the victory at Badr. At the time, he was sitting on the floor, without anything under him. Upon enquiry he said, “We find in what has been revealed to ‘Īsā. It is binding upon the bondsmen of Allah that they display humility before Allah when He favours them with His bounties. Now that Allah has favoured me with assisting His Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, I have displayed this form of humility to Him.”⁴ A king with this level of humility is exceptional and unique.

Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ arranged for 40 men of his country to travel to Madīnah and accept Islam at the hands of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. These men were fortunate to participate in the Battle of Uḥud. They were injured during this battle, although none of them lost their lives.

In 6 A.H., the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ who were still by Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ requested him to allow them to immigrate to Madīnah, explaining to him that Rasūlullāh

1 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Ḥadīth: 155; Jami` al-Tirmidhī, Ḥadīth: 2820. Grade: ḥasan.

2 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Ḥadīth: 4223; Sunan Ibn Mājah, Ḥadīth: 3644. Grade: ḥasan.

3 Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 106; Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān, pg. 229. [Referenced to Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1 pg. 76.]

4 Munāsharat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah, pg. 45; Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā', vol. 1 pg. 42.

ﷺ was victorious against his enemies. With a hard heart, Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ acceded to their request. Their stay in his country had come to an end. His hospitality and generosity, however, were still ongoing. He made all necessary arrangements for their transport to Arabia and supplied them with provisions for the way. He also sent one of his men with them. Before they could leave, he expressed one desire, “Let your Messenger know that I have accepted Islam and request him to seek forgiveness on my behalf.”

The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ thus returned from the land of safety, on the rough seas, until they reached Rasūlullāh ﷺ who was at Khaybar at the time. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was elated by their return. Sayyidunā Ja'far رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ gave a detailed report to Rasūlullāh ﷺ of the welcoming and munificent behaviour of Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ towards them, not forgetting his farewell request. The man who gave sanctuary to his Companions, was asking him a favour. The only favour he ever asked from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ stood up, performed wuḍū', and supplicated thrice in his favour, “O Allah, forgive al-Najāshī.” While the Ṣaḥābah chanted, “Āmīn”. How splendid a request and how superb a fulfilment.¹

And the love and appreciation was mutual. When a delegation of Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ came to meet Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he began serving them personally. The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ said that they will do the serving, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ insisted that he will personally serve them stating, “Indeed, they honoured my Companions. So I desire to pay them back the favour.”²

The love and friendship they shared was astonishing. He passed away in a foreign land in Rajab 9 A.H, yet Rasūlullāh ﷺ announced his obituary to the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, referring to him as their brother, the righteous man of Abyssinia, Aṣḥamah. On the exact day he passed on, Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructed the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ

1 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 3 pg. 78, 79; Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 1 pg. 431. Contains some narrators who have been deemed weak. Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah, pg. 45; Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā', vol. 1 pg. 42.

2 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 3 pg. 85; [referenced to Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah, vol. 2 pg. 307. Grade: ḍa'īf.]

to seek forgiveness for him and perform his Ṣalāt al-Janāzah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ proceeded to the muṣallā for an amazing spectacle, never seen before and never to be seen thereafter. He ordered the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ to form rows and from hundreds of miles away he led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah on Sayyidunā al-Najāshī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. A speciality exclusive to him.¹

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا says, “After al-Najāshī passed away, we were told that light would be seen perpetually upon his grave.”²

Managing a kingdom with justice and humbleness was a special characteristic of Sayyidunā Aṣḥamah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the king of Abyssinia. May Allah be pleased with him and make him happy.



1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 23, Ḥadīth: 417; Book 58, Ḥadīth: 217, 220; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 4, Ḥadīth: 2077.
2 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Book 14, Ḥadīth: 2517; al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 3 pg. 83; Raf’ Sha’n al-Ḥubshān, pg. 237, [referenced to *Sīrat Ibn Ishāq*, pg. 201; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 pg. 109.]

Ammār ibn Yāsir

Jannah is the epitome of satisfaction of desires. We are all desirous of securing our admittance therein. How about an individual who Jannah desires. “Jannah desires three, ‘Alī, ‘Ammār and Salmān,” said Rasūlullāh ﷺ.¹ What are the qualities needed for Jannah to desire one? The biography of this prominent Companion will have the answer.

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ accepted Islam in his early thirties and is listed among the very first to enter its fold. Allah ﷻ had selected him for an honour, the affluent of the time were deprived of, due to their arrogance and obstinacy. He accepted Islam with Sayyidunā Ṣuhayb ibn Sinān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Actually, both of them had met at the door of Dār al-Arqaṃ coincidentally and enquired from each other the reason for their visit. They both had intended to listen to Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ speech. Accordingly, they both entered, listened to Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ presentation of Islam, and embraced Islam at his hands.²

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, like majority of the early Muslims, had an underprivileged background; he was the son of a slave woman. Hence, he had no status in society. But it was this very class of people whose hearts Allah ﷻ chose for īmān. When Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ mission began, the poor were the very first to answer his call. Being poor, or a slave, was not the criteria for admittance into Islam’s fold. Nay, rather it was the keenness of the bondsman to be connected to his Master coupled with his humbleness and sincerity.

Imām al-Bukhārī has recorded Hiraql’s statement in his magnum opus *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in the very first chapter of his book. He states, “I then asked you whether the rich people followed him (Rasūlullāh ﷺ) or the poor. You replied that it was the poor who followed him. And in fact all the Messengers have been followed by this very class of people.”³

1 *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 3797; *Musnad Abi Ya’lā*, vol. 5 pg. 164; *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 6 pg. 215; *al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 148; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 pg. 98.

2 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 890, Biography: 3805.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 6.

His father, Sayyidunā Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, was an Arab, a Qaḥṭānī and a Mudh-ḥajī from ‘Ans, a tribe in Yemen. The son Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, however, was a freed slave of the Banū Makhzūm. This is because Sayyidunā Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ married a slave girl belonging to the Banū Makhzūm who bore ‘Ammār for him. His agnomen is Abū al-Yaqzān.¹

He was brown in complexion, tall, of a restive disposition, bluish-black eyed, and had broad shoulders. He would not dye his grey hairs. It is said that the front portion of his head was bald with few strands of hair. That is his physical description. What about his spiritual description? None other than Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى knows what the deep recesses of the heart contain. However, Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى apprises His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sometimes of aspects of the unseen, like in this case. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ described his spiritual rank as, “‘Ammār’s heart overflows with Faith.”²

As was the norm of the time, the weak were persecuted and tortured to quit their religion. Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was among the weak, as he had no strong family support. Knowing full well that he would undergo torture, Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ chose to openly proclaim his faith. The polytheists caught hold of him and began their cruelty. He would be starved and made to swelter on the burning hot sands of Makkah.³ Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would advise him to persevere and would announce, “Rejoice O family of ‘Ammār and O family of Yāsir, for certainly your abode is Jannah.”⁴ His entire family were promised Jannah. A household of Islam and a household of dwellers of Jannah.

The mushrikīn brutally beat him and ruthlessly tortured him. He submitted somewhat to their demands, with aversion and disgust, just to be relieved of the

1 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 890, Biography: 3805.

2 *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Vol. 6, Book 47, Ḥadīth 5010; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Vol. 1, Book 1, Ḥadīth 147.

3 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 7 pg. 537.

4 *Al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, Ḥadīth: 1566; *Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, Ḥadīth: 6664; *al-Mustadrak*, Ḥadīth: 5666; *al-Dalā’il*, vol. 2 pg. 282; *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 pg. 249.

pain. His heart, however, was still brimming with faith. Yet, he was perturbed as to whether his action was sanctioned or not. So he resorted to the presence of Rasūlullāh ﷺ seeking consolation. He explained to Rasūlullāh ﷺ what he had done, and clarified that his heart was secure in faith. The Sublime’s words were revealed to absolve him of blame: ¹

إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّ بِالْإِيمَانِ

*Except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith.*²

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has stated in the ḥadīth, “Allah has forgiven my nation for mistakes and forgetfulness, and what they are forced to do.”³

That is the beauty of the galaxy of Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. They had diverse temperaments and assorted methodologies, making it easy upon the ummah to emulate them. When Muslims are persecuted or oppressed, there will be those who are relentless. They are reviving the Sunnah of Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Others, on the other hand, will give in somewhat. They are practicing on the lenient approach of Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

He had yet another amazing quality which Rasūlullāh ﷺ highlighted, “‘Ammār is not given a choice between two matters, except that he chooses the one with more guidance in it.”⁴ This is very similar to the quality Rasūlullāh ﷺ possessed. Never did Rasūlullāh ﷺ make a choice between two things but he adopted the easier one as compared to the difficult one. His choice for the easier one was only in cases where it did not involve any sin. If it involved sin he was the one who was the farthest from it amongst the people.⁵

1 Al-Ṭabaqāt, vol. 3 pg. 249; Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 7 pg. 524; Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, vol. 11 pg. 534.

2 Sūrah al-Naḥl: 106.

3 Sunan Ibn Mājah, Vol. 3, Book 10, Ḥadīth 2045. Grade: ṣaḥīḥ.

4 Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī, Vol. 1, Book 46, Ḥadīth 3799.

5 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 8, Book 81, Ḥadīth 777; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 30, Ḥadīth 5754.

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ then made hijrah to Madīnah, and participated in all the major battles, including Badr, Uḥud, Ḥamrā’ al-Asad, Khandaq, Ḥudaybiyyah, Khaybar, the Conquest of Makkah, and Tabūk.

You might have realised by now that this individual was blessed and is one of the renowned and distinguished Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. There’s more. He was the first to build a Masjid in Islam. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stopped in Qubā’, a town on the outskirts of Madīnah, during his hijrah journey. It was here where Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ built a Masjid for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, making him the first Muslim to build a Masjid.¹ He is also the first to designate a section of his house as a masjid for worship.²

Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ will receive his share of reward for all the Masjid that will be built till the Day of Qiyāmah, since whoever introduces a good action that is followed after him will receive the reward of all those who carry out the action, without their reward being diminished in the least.³

After Rasūlullāh’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise, he joined the armies who fought in the wars of apostasy. He fought in the epic battle of Yamāmah against the notorious, Musaylamah al-Kadhāb. His ear was cut off during the course of battle, but this did not dampen his spirit and he continued fighting like a lion. After climbing a rock, he shouted to the Muslims, “Are you running away from Jannah? Come to me, come to me. I am ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir.” Saying this, he rushed into the thick of battle and continued fighting ferociously despite his injury.⁴ Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى described the ones who opposed apostasy in the Qur’ān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

1 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 892, Biography: 3805.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 pg. 98.

3 *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth: 2675; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Ḥadīth: 212. Grade: Ṣaḥīḥ.

4 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 892, Biography: 3805.

*O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favour of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.*¹

He was beloved to Allah ﷺ. So beloved, that whoever hates him will be hated by Allah ﷺ. Once, someone had a skirmish with Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and came complaining to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The person used nasty words towards Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, which made him weep. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cautioned the man, “Whoever is an enemy to ‘Ammār is an enemy to Allah. And whoever harbours hatred for ‘Ammār, is hated by Allah.” Thereafter, nothing was more beloved to the man than ‘Ammār’s happiness.²

The list of his virtues and excellences never seem to end. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ informed us, “Act on the guidance of ‘Ammār.”³ Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ labelled him as pure and purified. Once he sought permission to enter upon Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who said, “Permit him. Greetings to the pure one, the purified.”⁴ He would speak very little and remain silent most of the time.⁵

Sayyidunā ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ had high regard for this renowned Ṣaḥābī. After appointing him governor of Kūfah, he wrote to the residents, “After praising Allah, certainly I have sent to you ‘Ammār as leader and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd as vizier. They are from the highbred Companions of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, so listen to them and emulate them.”⁶

1 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 54.

2 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 16373; *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, Ḥadīth: 6256.

3 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 1, Book 46, Ḥadīth 3805.

4 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 1, Book 46, Ḥadīth 3798; *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, Book 42, Ḥadīth 1031; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Vol. 1, Book 1, Ḥadīth 146.

5 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 3 pg. 256.

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 6 pg. 7; *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 9 pg. 86; *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, vol. 9 pg. 253.

‘Alqamah says that when he went to Shām, he enquired as to which Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were present there. He asked, “Is the person whom Allah has protected against Shayṭān (as Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said) amongst you?” The person who was given Allah’s refuge on the tongue of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.¹

When the khilāfah of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ began, he supported him to the fullest and participated in the battles alongside him. He was martyred on the side of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in the Battle of Ṣiffīn at the age of 93 in the year 37 A.H.² Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ informed him that the last thing he would drink of this world would be milk.³ And the prophecy was spot on.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said to Sayyidunā ‘Ammār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as he was digging the trench (on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench), “O son of Sumayyah, you will be involved in trouble and the transgressing party would kill you.”⁴ Another version has the wording, “Rejoice, ‘Ammār, the transgressing party shall kill you.”⁵ May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى be pleased with him and make him happy.



1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, Book 54, Ḥadīth 507.

2 Tahdhīb al-Asmā’, vol. 1 pg. 545; Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1 pg. 808; Tārīkh al-Islām, vol. 3 pg. 572; al-Iṣābah, vol. 4 pg. 575.

3 Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 18500; Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ḥadīth: 37185.

4 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 41, Ḥadīth 6966.

5 Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī, Vol. 1, Book 46, Ḥadīth 3800.

Amir ibn Fuhayrah

Elaborate preparations began for the hijrah journey. A journey that would mark the beginning of the Islamic calendar. A journey that would change the course of Islamic history, for it was the launch pad for the propagation and spread of Islam across the globe.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ came secretly to the house of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ at midday, in the scorching heat, with his face hidden behind a scarf. As soon as he enters the house, he tells him to clear out everyone from the house. “Only my two daughters are present,” Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ says, putting the heart of Rasūlullāh ﷺ at ease. He then asks, “What is the matter?” The matter was top secret. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was given permission to make hijrah.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ planned every move they would make and every turn they would take on this epic journey. Two camels were being fed by Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ for a long time now, in preparation for the perilous trip. These camels were given to ‘Abd Allah ibn Urayqit, a skilled and experienced guide from the Banū al-Dayl, in whom they had confidence, with the instruction to bring the camels along after three days to the Cave of Thawr.

In the darkness of night, Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ slipped out through the back window of the latter’s house in the direction of the Cave of Thawr where they would hide for three days. Arrangements for their food and protection had already been made. As the matter was top secret, only a select few would know about the undercover travel. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr’s son Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ—a responsible lad—would mingle with the Quraysh during the day and find out their schemes which he would report to the two at night. Sayyidunā ‘Amir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was selected to graze the sheep of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ at the pasture during the day and come with those sheep to Rasūlullāh ﷺ at night, so that they may survive on their milk. Before the sun rose, Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ would make his way back to

Makkah, followed by Sayyidunā ‘Āmir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his flock of sheep, so that the traces of ‘Abd Allah’s footsteps may be wiped out by the sheep’s trails.

Who is Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ you might be wondering. He is one of the very early Muslims. He entered the faith before Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ could enter Dār al-Arqam.

The life of this *qāri’* (proficient reciter of Qur’ān) began as a slave, a child born to a slave of the Azd tribe. The darkness of his complexion and his slavery could not take him to the lofty pedestals of glory that the Almighty سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى would raise him to—with verses of the Qur’ān being revealed in his regard as well—rather it would be his faith in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and his dedication to the Qur’ān that would.

His agnomen is Abū ‘Amr and he belonged to ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ṭufayl ibn Sakhbarah, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s uterine brother. After proclaiming the shahādah, he was cruelly persecuted in the path of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, yet he remained resolute. Finally, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ purchased him, as was his noble habit, and manumitted him. So he is reckoned as the freed slave of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

The Makkans had no regard for him, for he was a former slave, so they did not pay close attention to his movements. He was thus chosen to play a very significant role in the hijrah journey. He grazed a flock of sheep for Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and brought those sheep to them when an hour had passed after the ‘Ishā’ prayer. They would sleep soundly till Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ awakened them when it was still dark. He did this in each of those three nights and spent those nights in the company of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

The level of his credibility and sincerity can be realised from this. He was trusted by Rasūlullāh ﷺ to keep this journey secret. The bounty of a hundred camels for the head of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not shake his resolution. His faith in Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى could not be bought by worldly transitory assets.

After the three days had passed, ‘Abd Allah ibn Urayqīṭ arrived with the two riding camels. They set out and took Sayyidunā ‘Āmir bin Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ along with them. He would take turns, sometimes he would sit on the mount of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and sometimes he would sit on the conveyance of his former master, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The guide directed them below Makkah along the road leading to the sea-shore. Travelling on this secretive road, they reached Madīnah.¹

Although Sayyidunā ‘Āmir bin Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ participation in the hijrah is known, it is unnoticed. Having the distinction of travelling the most significant journey alongside the loftiest of mankind and the most superior individual after the Ambiyā’, is no ordinary excellence. Considering the amount of spiritual benefit he derived from Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the volume of divine blessings he secured, one will deduce that he was indeed a prosperous and exceptional individual.

After reaching Madīnah, Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah together with Sayyidunā Bilāl and Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ became ill, due to the climate of Madīnah not suiting them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ supplicated to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى to remove the fever of Madīnah and to bless them therein. He also prayed to make Madīnah as beloved as Makkah was to them, or more. And these prayers were granted.²

Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ benefitted tremendously from the Qur’ānic teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He learnt at the feet of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 36, Ḥadīth: 464, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 419, Book 72, Ḥadīth: 698; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 196.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, Book 58, Ḥadīth: 263.

became one of the proficient reciters of Qur’ān. He was one of the Companions of al-Şuffah, viewed as the students of Islam. They had dedicated themselves to the acquisition of knowledge of the Qur’ān and Sunnah and its dissemination. Rasūlullāh ﷺ says, “The most superior among you are those who learn the Qur’ān and teach it.”¹

He had the grand honour of participating in Badr, Uḥud, and Ḥamrā’ al-Asad. He obtained the magnificent rewards and attained the exalted ranks promised in the Qur’ān and Sunnah for their participation, coupled with Allah’s *سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ* praises for their participants. He could not participate in any other major campaign as he was martyred in the fourth year after hijrah in the month of Şafar only four months after Uḥud.

Abū Barā’ (a disbeliever) approached Rasūlullāh ﷺ and pleaded with him to send some of his Companions to the people of Najd to invite them to Islam. Rasūlullāh ﷺ was hesitant to send them for he feared that the people of Najd might harm them. However, Abū Barā’ put his fears to rest assuring him that he will protect them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ selected the exclusive students of the Qur’ān for this expedition. They were seventy in number and were called the *Qurrā’* (proficient reciters of the Qur’ān). They would gather firewood during the day, to earn a living, and would stand in ṣalāh at night reciting the Qur’ān, to earn the Pleasure of Allah *سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ*.

These 70 *Qurrā’* travelled with their guide until they reached Bi’r Ma’ūnah, from where Sayyidunā Ḥarām ibn Milḥān *رضي الله عنه* was sent with Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ epistle to the enemy of Allah *سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ*, ‘Āmir ibn al-Ṭufayl. The devil did not even look at the prophetic epistle and acted treacherously to the envoy by signalling to one of his men to kill him. “Allah is the greatest, I have triumphed by the Lord of the Ka’bah,” shouted Sayyidunā Ḥarām *رضي الله عنه* as he fell to the ground after being stabbed in the back. This sentence of his would be the cause for the acceptance of Islam of his killer, Jabbār ibn Sulmā al-Kilābī.

1 *Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, Book 61, Ḥadīth: 546.

The tribes of Ri'l, Dhakwān, 'Uṣayyah, and Banū Liḥyān then joined together and massacred those Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ to the very last of them. Only Sayyidunā Ka'b ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ survived with multiple wounds, for they left him as dead whereas he still had streaks of life in him, and 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamarī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who they took as prisoner. Later, 'Āmir ibn al-Ṭufayl freed him, for the expiation of the oath of his mother.

After butchering them, Ibn al-Ṭufayl pointing at one of the slain asked 'Amr who he was, "He is 'Āmir ibn Fuhayrah," 'Amr explained. Ibn al-Ṭufayl stated, "I saw him lifted to the sky after he was killed till I saw the sky between him and the earth, and then he was brought down upon the earth."

The devastating news of the killed Muslims reached Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and he relayed this news to Companions, "Your companions (of Bi'r Ma'ūnah) have been killed, and they have asked their Lord saying, 'O our Lord! Inform our brothers about us as we are pleased with You and You are pleased with us.'" So Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى informed them about the martyrs by revealing a verse of the Qur'ān which was later abrogated. The verse read:

أَلَا بَلِّغُوا عَنَّا قَوْمَنَا يَا أَيُّهَا رَبَّنَا لَقِينَا رَبَّنَا فَرَضِي عَنَّا وَأَرْضَانَا

Inform our people that we have met our Lord, and He is pleased with us,
and we are pleased with Him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was deeply hurt and grief stricken with their killing. He invoked curses upon the tribes of Ri'l, Dhakwān, 'Uṣayyah, and Banū Liḥyan who disobeyed Allah and His Messenger. For a full month, he invoked curses upon their murderers in the Ṣalāt al-Fajr. This was the introduction of the Qunūt in the morning prayer.¹

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 5, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 419, 421; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 4, Ḥadīth: 1433; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 4 pg. 82 – 84.

Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, the devotee of the Qur’ān, was really an exceptional person. Obscure to the dwellers on earth, recognised by the inhabitants of the heavens. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ loved him dearly and was saddened and pained at his martyrdom. The martyrs are ever living enjoying themselves in Jannah, and their legacy will continue to live on.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أحيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ

*And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision.*¹

Sayyidunā ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ left to the mercy of Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ at the age of 40. His body was not found after his martyrdom. It was believed that the angels had concealed his body.²



1 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 169.

2 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 4 pg. 83; Munāṣarāt al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah, pg. 56, 57; Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 619, Biography: 2725.

Abū Bakrah

Nufay‘ ibn Masrūḥ al-Ḥabashī was his name. He belonged to Ḥārith ibn Kaldah al-Thaqāfi. His mother, Sumayyah, was the slave girl of Ḥārith. Nufay‘ was commonly attributed to Ḥārith, as per the pagan custom, but he disapproved of this and insisted that he be attributed to his father, Masrūḥ the Abyssinian.¹

His journey to Islam began down the wall of the fort of Ṭā‘if. The year was 8 A.H and Rasūlullāh ﷺ had just conquered Makkah and defeated the Hawāzin at Ḥunayn, and then turned his attention to Ṭā‘if, where he besieged the fort of the Thaqīf. The siege was strenuous, but the Thaqīf persevered.

Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ announcer called out, “Whichever slave comes down from the fort to us is free.”² Hearing this, a group of them exited among whom was Nufay‘. He descended using the aid of a *bakrah* (winch), hence he was called Abū Bakrah. Moreover, Rasūlullāh ﷺ freed him, in accordance to the announcement, thus he is listed among the freed slaves of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He would boast over this saying, “I am from your brothers in religion and I am the freed slave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. If people insist on attributing me, then I am Nufay‘ ibn Masrūḥ.”³ His previous master requested Rasūlullāh ﷺ to return him, but Rasūlullāh ﷺ refused saying that he was the emancipated individual of Allah and His Messenger.⁴

After embracing Islam, Sayyidunā Abū Bakrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ lived in the close company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He derived maximum benefit from his piety and knowledge and passed a great amount of knowledge to the ummah. He has transmitted

1 *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 6 pg. 334, Biography: 5289.

2 *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 2118; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 5 pg. 32, 33 [referenced to *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 5 pg. 157.]

3 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1290, Biography: 5740.

4 *Musnad Ahmad*, Ḥadīth: 17076.

over 130 valuable aḥādīth.¹ Al-Bukhārī and Muslim collectively transmit 8 of his reports, al-Bukhārī transmits another 5 and Muslim another 1. His sons, ‘Abd Allāh and Muslim, as well as famous Tābi‘in, viz. Ribī ibn Ḥarāsh, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Aḥnaf narrate from him. Although his stay with Rasūlullāh ﷺ was brief, he is reckoned among the eminent and devout Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

He is responsible for transmitting the legendary ḥadīth about Sayyidunā Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He begins by relating the affection Rasūlullāh ﷺ showed to his grandson. He would look at the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ and speak to them and then turn and look at Sayyidunā Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ with fondness. Thereafter Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “This son of mine is a leader. If he lives, he will reconcile between two Muslim groups.”² In another narration, he describes how Sayyidunā Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would jump on Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ back while the latter was performing ṣalāh.³

His knowledge had proved beneficial. He reports the ḥadīth, “If two people confront each other with swords, each of them wanting to kill the other, they will both be in Hell.” It was said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, (we understand about) the killer, but what about the one who is killed?” He said, “He was determined to kill his companion.”⁴ And he recalls that on the day of the sacrifice at Minā during the Farewell Pilgrimage, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, “No doubt your blood, property, and your honour, are sacred to one another as is the sanctity of this day of yours in this month of yours.”⁵ When the turmoil began between the Muslims, he practiced diligently upon these reports and kept away from the strife. He never wished to soil his hands with the blood of any Muslim.

He simply kept to himself, just as Rasūlullāh ﷺ commanded, “There will soon be turmoil. Behold! There will be turmoil in which the one who is seated will

1 *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 59 [referenced to *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 5 pg. 49 – 69.]

2 *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 66 [referenced to *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 6 pg. 18.]

3 *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 67 [referenced to *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 6 pg. 18.]

4 *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Ḥadīth: 4125.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 105.

be better than one who stands and the one who stands will be better than one who runs. Behold! When the affliction appears, the one who has camel should stick to his camel and he who has sheep or goats should stick to his sheep and goats and he who has land should stick to the land.”¹

He involved himself in the worship of Allah ﷻ extensively until he passed away.² Sayyidunā Abū Bakrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ later on became famous for his knowledge and excellence to the extent that Ḥasan al-Baṣrī would say that Sayyidunā Abū Bakrah and Sayyidunā ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا were the two most prominent Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُم who settled in Baṣrah.³

He passed away in Baṣrah around 51 A.H. Sayyidunā Abū Barzah al-Aslamī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ performed his Ṣalāt al-Janāzah as per his bequest,⁴ as a bond of brotherhood had been contracted between them by Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.⁵



1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Ḥadīth: 6896.

2 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1290, Biography: 5740; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 4 pg. 467.

3 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1290, Biography: 5740; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 133; *Raf’ Sha’n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 294; *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 59.

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 pg. 225; *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1290, Biography: 5740.

5 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 8 pg. 225.

*Waḥshī ibn Ḥarb al-Ḥabashī*¹

Ja'far ibn 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamarī and 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Adī arrived at Ḥimṣ. 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Adī suggested to Ja'far, “Would you like to see Waḥshī so that we may ask him about the killing of Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه.” Ja'far agreed. So they made investigations about his whereabouts and arrived at his house.

'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Adī and Ja'far greeted him with salām and he replied to their greeting. The former—who was wearing a turban and only his eyes and feet were uncovered—asked Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه if he recognised him. Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه looked at him and said, “No, by Allah. But I know that 'Adī ibn al-Khiyār married a woman called Umm Qitāl, the daughter of Abū al-Ṭīṣ and she delivered a boy for him at Makkah. I looked for a wet nurse for that child. (Once) I carried that child along with his mother and then I handed him over to her, and your feet resemble that child's feet.” What a remarkable memory and amazing sense of distinction!

They requested him to narrate to them the story of the killing of Sayyidunā Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه. Going down memory lane, he recalled the happenings of that tragic day. He begins relating the development of events, by mentioning that Sayyidunā Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه killed Tu'aymah ibn 'Adī ibn al-Khiyār at Badr so his master Jubayr ibn Muṭ'im made a deal with him, that if he kills Ḥamzah in revenge for his uncle, he will be emancipated.

The people set out for Uḥud the following year and Waḥshī joined them. When the army aligned for the fight, Sibā' came out and shouted, “Is there any one to accept my challenge to a duel?” Instantly, Sayyidunā Ḥamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib رضي الله عنه stepped forward and yelled, “O Sibā'! O son of Umm 'Anmār, the one who circumcises other ladies! Do you challenge Allah and His Messenger!” Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه then attacked him ferociously and finished him in seconds, causing him to be non-extant like the bygone yesterday.

1 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 6 pg. 470; *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 308.

During the course of the battle, Waḥshī hid behind a rock with his lance. As soon as Sayyidunā Ḥamzah رضي الله عنه came close to him, he threw his lance at him, driving it into his umbilicus so that it came out through his rear, causing him to fall to the ground, lifeless. He then walked over to his victim and took his lance, to keep it for future battles.

He was now a free man. When Islam spread and reached Makkah, he ran away to Ṭā'if for safety. In Ramaḍān 9 A.H¹, the delegation of Thaqīf (from Ṭā'if) sent their messengers to Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and he was told that Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم did not harm the messengers so he went out with them.

At this meeting, Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه embraced Islam. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم asked him, “Are you Waḥshī?” “Yes,” he replied nervously. “Was it you who killed Hamzah?” was the next question. It sent a shiver down his spine. How to reply to this question? He said, “What happened is what you have been told of.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم requested him, “Can you hide your face from me?” The memory of his uncle was still fresh in his mind.

Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه returned without delay to Ṭā'if and lived there. He would avoid Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم so that the latter may not see him. His regret and remorse over his past crimes was overwhelming him.

Hardly two years later, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away. Apostasy spread across Arabia like wild fire. But the people of Ṭā'if remained resolute and did not forsake their dīn. Around that time, Musaylamah al-Kadhāb came onto the scene claiming to be a prophet.

Although his Islam had wiped out all his previous sins, Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه found a golden opportunity. “I will go out to Musaylamah and kill him, and make amends for killing Ḥamzah,” he determined. He grabbed hold of the very lance he used to slay Ḥamzah and joined the army of Sayyidunā Khālīd ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه who marched towards Yamāmah to battle against Musaylamah al-Kadhāb and his formidable force, the Banū Ḥanīfah.

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 5 pg. 94.

It was an extremely tough battle, but the Muslims managed to defeat the enemy on the battlefield. The enemy fled and took refuge in a garden, the garden of death. Sayyidunā Barā' ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه told them to hurl him over so that he might open the door from inside. His near suicidal plan worked out perfectly and after killing many of the infidels, he was successful in opening the door from the inside of the garden.

The Muslims rushed into the garden and began attacking the apostates of the Banū Ḥanīfah. Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه also entered the garden of death with the firm intent to kill the devil. He had been supplicating to Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَرَعَالِ to grant him the opportunity to kill the devil, Musaylamah. “Suddenly, I saw a man standing near a gap in a wall. He looked like an ash-coloured camel and his hair was dishevelled,” he relates. The imposter had lost his senses out of rage. When his shayṭān would possess him, he would froth at the mouth until the froth would emerge from his jaws.¹

Sayyidunā Waḥshī رضي الله عنه moved forward towards him and sized him up. He lifted his lance and with a grunt, hurled it in the direction of Musaylamah. It soared through the air and plunged into the centre of Musaylamah's chest till it passed out through his shoulders. Seconds later, an Anṣārī man, Sayyidunā Abū Dujānah رضي الله عنه, attacked him and struck him on the head with a sword, finishing him off for good.

Seeing this, a slave girl on the roof of a house said, “Alas! The chief of the believers (actually imposters) has been killed by a black slave.”²

He killed the best of people in his Jāhiliyyah and the worst of men in his Islam.

The following year, he participated in Yarmūk and thereafter settled in Ḥimṣ where he passed away.³

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 pg. 113, 114.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 4072; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 4 pg. 20 – 22.

3 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 6 pg. 470.

Aswad al-Habashī

Sayyidunā Aswad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ approached the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and enquired, “O Messenger of Allah, you have been preferred over us by form, colour, and Nubuwwah. If I believe in what you believe and practice like you practice, will I be with you in Jannah?” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied in the affirmative and then added, “By the being who controls my life, the brilliance of the dark-skinned will be seen in Jannah from a journey of a thousand years.”¹

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ further stated, “Whoever proclaims: *lā ilāha illallāhu* (there is no deity besides Allah), he will have a covenant by Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, in lieu of it. And whoever says: *subhānallāhu wa biḥamdihī* (glory be to Allah with His praise), will receive 124 000 virtues.”²

Elated with these enormous virtues, the man wondered as to how man can be destroyed. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained to him that people will come on the Day of Qiyāmah with actions enough to burden a mountain if placed upon it, yet one blessing from the blessings of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى will appear and almost eclipse all the actions, adding, “Except if Allah showers His mercy.”

Thereafter, the first 20 verses of Sūrah al-Dahr were revealed:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ
نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلَ
وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا عَنَّا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ
يَجْرُونَ بِهَا تَفْجِيرًا يُوْفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ
مَسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا
يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَمْطَرِيرًا فَوَقَاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً

1 *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 12 pg. 436; *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, Ḥadīth: 18768, referenced to al-Ṭabarānī; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'*, Ḥadīth: 4401.

2 *Ibid*.

وَحَرِيرًا مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلَالُهَا وَذُلَّتْ
فُطُوفُهَا تَدْلِيلًا وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِأَيَّةٍ مِنْ فَضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ فَوَارِيرًا فَوَارِيرًا فَوَارِيرًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا
وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ
إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَنثورًا وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ نَمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمَلَكًا كَبِيرًا

Has there [not] come upon man a period of time when he was not a thing [even] mentioned? Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may try him; and We made him hearing and seeing. Indeed, We guided him to the way, be he grateful or be he ungrateful. Indeed, We have prepared for the disbelievers chains and shackles and a blaze. Indeed, the righteous will drink from a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of camphor, a spring of which the [righteous] servants of Allah will drink; they will make it gush forth in force [and abundance]. They [are those who] fulfil [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, [Saying], “We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful.” So Allah will protect them from the evil of that Day and give them radiance and happiness and will reward them for what they patiently endured [with] a garden [in Paradise] and silk [garments]. [They will be] reclining therein on adorned couches. They will not see therein any [burning] sun or [freezing] cold. And near above them are its shades, and its [fruit] to be picked will be lowered in compliance. And there will be circulated among them vessels of silver and cups having been [created] clear [as glass], Clear glasses [made] from silver of which they have determined the measure. And they will be given to drink a cup [of wine] whose mixture is of ginger [From] a fountain within Paradise named Salsabīl. There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls. And when you look there [in Paradise], you will see pleasure and great dominion.¹

Totally entranced by the beautiful description of Jannah, the Abyssinian asked enthusiastically, “Will my eyes behold what your eyes will behold in Jannah.” “Yes,” Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied. The ecstasy that overcame his heart hearing

1 Sūrah al-Dahr: 1 – 20.

this is unexplainable. Tears of joy and excitement began to travel down his cheeks. The Qur'ānic narrative of the bounties of Jannah had captivated his mind, soul, and body. His heart could not control the joy, so his soul departed from his body.

Aspiration of Jannah had been the cause of his death. What an enviable way to pass away! Rasūlullāh ﷺ lowered him into his grave with his own hands.¹



1 *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah 76, verse 20, Abū Nu'aym: *Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 277; *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 42, Biography: 136; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 145; *Raf' Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 300.

The Battle of Badr, the epic clash between Truth and Falsehood. Allah ﷻ speaks about the details of this glorious battle so that it may serve as a lesson for the adherents of both truth and falsehood:

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَهُمْ رَأْيَ الْعَيْنِ
وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ

Already there has been for you a sign in the two armies which met - one fighting in the cause of Allah and another of disbelievers. They saw them [to be] twice their [own] number by [their] eyesight. But Allah supports with His victory whom He wills. Indeed in that is a lesson for those of vision.¹

Allah ﷻ lists the favours He bestowed on this selected group, the participants of Badr:

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النَّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيُثَبِّطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ

[Remember] when He overwhelmed you with slumber [giving] security from Him and sent down upon you from the sky, rain by which to purify you and remove from you the evil [suggestions] of Shayṭān and to make steadfast your hearts and plant firmly thereby your feet.²

The significance of this battle may be realised by the fact that Allah ﷻ dedicated an entire Sūrah—Sūrah al-Anfāl—to highlight the various stages of this battle. Indeed, the warriors of Badr were beloved to Allah ﷻ and are the cream of this ummah.

1 Sūrah Āl 'Imrān: 13.

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 11.

Sayyidunā Rifā'ah ibn Rāfi' al-Zuraqī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ (one of the Badr warriors) says that Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and enquired, “How do you look upon the warriors of Badr among yourselves?” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ replied, “As the best of the Muslims.” On that, Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said, “And so are the angels who participated in Badr.”¹

Only a select few were chosen for this great honour. The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ would say that the number of the soldiers of Badr was the same as the number of Ṭālūt's companions who crossed the river (of Jordan) with him, and none crossed the river with him but a believer, and they were over 310 men.²

This is the largest group of people promised Jannah, explicitly, in the ḥadīth: Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ declared: “Perhaps Allah looked upon the Badr fighters and said, ‘Do whatever you like, for I have ordained that you will be in Jannah.’”³ Another version has the wording, “Do whatever you like, for I have forgiven you.”⁴

Sayyidunā Mihja' رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is one of the 310 privileged soldiers of Islam to witness Badr. His good fortune does not stop there. He is among the 14 martyrs of the battle as well. You will recognise that his blessing only increases when you realise that he was the first martyr of this major contest,⁵ killed by 'Āmir ibn al-Ḥaḍramī.⁶

Sayyidunā Mihja' رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ has earned his place among the first Muhājirīn.⁷ He is the freed slave Sayyidunā 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and is originally from Yemen.⁸

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 327.

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 294; Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, Book 19, Ḥadīth: 1598. Grade: ṣaḥīḥ.

3 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 74, Ḥadīth: 276.

4 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Book 52, Ḥadīth: 314.

5 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 3 pg. 347.

6 Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 130.

7 Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 130.

8 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 3 pg. 347.

*Shuqrān al-Ḥabashī*¹

Ṣāliḥ ibn ‘Adī was his name, Shuqrān was his title, and he is the freed slave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ inherited him from his father.² Muṣ‘ab al-Zubayrī on the other hand says that he was an Abyssinian slave belonging to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who gifted him to Rasūlullāh ﷺ.³ Whatever the case may be, he has the honour of being the slave of the Leader of Mankind and has the fortune of being listed among his emancipated slaves.

Enslavement is a misfortune, but it proved to be a fortune for him. He was taken along to the Battle of Badr and participated therein. Rasūlullāh ﷺ put him in charge of looking after the captives at Badr.⁴

The rule is that slaves do not get a fixed share from the spoils of war, so he did not get a fixed share of the booty. The leader, however, has the liberty of apportioning to them something. Sayyidunā Shuqrān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was given something by every captive under his protection, and thus accumulated more wealth than the fixed share in the battle.⁵ Pleased with his services for Islam, Rasūlullāh ﷺ emancipated him after the Battle of Badr.⁶

After securing his freedom, he remained in the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and learnt from him. He disseminated the prophetic gems he learnt to the ummah. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘, Yaḥyā ibn ‘Umārah ibn Abī Ḥasan al-Māzinī, and Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn are his famous students.⁷ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, is the great great grandson of Rasūlullāh

1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 42.

3 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 43; *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

5 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 42.

6 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

7 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

صلى الله عليه وسلم. He reports the shawl narration, which will appear shortly. Imagine, a member of the Ahl al-Bayt is the student of an Abyssinian slave. Islam and knowledge award a person honour in this life and the Hereafter.

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم utilised him during the Battle of al-Muraysī in the year 6 after hijrah to look after all the booty acquired from this tribe, which included commodities, weapons, camels, and sheep.¹ Sayyidunā Shuqrān رضى الله عنه reports that he saw the Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم performing ṣalāh while riding a donkey while on his way to Khaybar, making gestures for rukū' and sujūd.² These reports prove that he was present at these important expeditions.

He was among the few who were present at the washing of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم after his demise. He also has the great fortune of lowering the body of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم into his place of rest. There was a shawl upon which Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم would pray. Sayyidunā Shuqrān رضى الله عنه placed it under Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم in his grave as he did not want anyone to wear it after Rasūlullāh's صلى الله عليه وسلم demise.³ Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم made a bequest in his favour upon his death.⁴

His lineage did not survive, however, and his last male descendant passed away in the khilāfah of Hārūn al-Rashīd.⁵



1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 43 referenced to *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 3 pg. 50.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 43 referenced to *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 3 pg. 465.

3 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2, Book 5, Ḥadīth: 1047. Grade: ḥasan; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Book 6, Ḥadīth: 1628; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 43.

4 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290.

5 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 43; *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 290; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 554, Biography: 2447.

Ayman ibn ‘Ubayd

Sayyidunā Ayman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is the son of ‘Ubayd ibn Zayd and Sayyidah Umm Ayman رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا. He is thus the uterine brother of Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Blessed was he, that his mother is a dweller of Jannah and the very woman regarding whom Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “Umm Ayman is my mother after my biological mother.”¹

He would serve Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and was in charge of his water jug, with which he made ablution.² Not much is known about his life. However, this much is certain that he participated in the Battle of Ḥunayn in the year 8 A.H. Fighting valiantly at the side of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, did this son of Islam taste martyrdom.³

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلِهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision, rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them - that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. They receive good tidings of favour from Allah and bounty and [of the fact] that Allah does not allow the reward of believers to be lost.⁴

With this glad tidings, he rejoices in Jannah. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ commentates on these verses, “The souls of the martyrs live in the bodies of green birds who have their nests in chandeliers hung from the throne of the Almighty. They eat the fruits of Jannah from wherever they like and then nestle in these chandeliers.”⁵

1 ‘Umdat al-Qārī, vol. 16 pg. 323, Ḥadīth: 3737; al-Iṣābah, vol. 8 pg. 359.

2 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 6 pg. 39.

3 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 6 pg. 39; Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah, pg. 42.

4 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 169 – 171.

5 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 20, Ḥadīth: 4651.

A ḥadīth is reported from him. He affirms that Rasūlullāh ﷺ only cut the hand of a thief if the item stolen had the value of a shield, at minimum. And a shield in those days was to the value of one gold coin.¹ This ḥadīth is corroborated by a report in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.²



1 *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, vol. 5, Book 46, Ḥadīth: 4946.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8, Book 81, Ḥadīth: 788.

Julaybīb

Sayyidunā Julaybīb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was an ally of the Anṣār. He was short in stature with not very good looks and was a bachelor as one would guess.

The practice among the Muslims during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was that when any woman was unmarried, they would first wait to see if Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would send a proposal. If he did not, only then would others send their proposals.

One day, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ met an Anṣārī man, whose daughter was unmarried, and asked him for his daughter in marriage. Elated with the honour, he immediately agreed. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained that he wants his daughter to get married to Sayyidunā Julaybīb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. “Let me consult my wife first,” the man said. His wife flatly refused when she knew who the intended groom was. The girl, however, overheard their conversation and warned them, “Are you rejecting Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? Give me to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, for he will never allow me to perish.” She reminded them of the verse:

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا

*It is not for a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter, that they should [thereafter] have any choice about their affair. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has certainly strayed into clear error.*¹

The father came back with a positive answer and the marriage was contracted by none other than Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ prayed for the girl, who was from the Banū al-Ḥārith ibn al-Khazraj, “O Allah, pour countless blessings upon her and do not make her life painful and distressful.”²

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 36.

2 Musnad Ahmad, Ḥadīth: 19367; Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān, Ḥadīth: 4125; al-Sunan al-Kubrā, Ḥadīth: 7930.

After some time, Rasūlullāh ﷺ went out on an expedition. After defeating the enemy, Rasūlullāh ﷺ sat with the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ and discussed the martyrs. “I cannot locate Julaybīb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ,” Rasūlullāh ﷺ said with concern and then instructed the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ to look for him among the martyrs.

The Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ began searching for him among the dead and finally found him in the midst of seven dead men of the enemy. They informed Rasūlullāh ﷺ about this. Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to his body and stated, “He killed seven who then succeeded in killing him. He is from me and I am from him,” repeating the last statement twice or thrice.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ placed his head on his forearms while the Companions dug a grave for him. All this time, he had no bed, besides the forearms of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Finally, he was laid to rest in his grave, without being washed.¹

Owing to Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ supplication in her favour, there was no widow from the Anṣār wealthier than his wife.² The blessed widow of the martyr, Sayyidunā Julaybīb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.



1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 31, Ḥadīth: 6045.

2 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 190, Biography: 772.

Aslam

Abū Rāfi‘ Aslam al-Qibṭī embraced Islam before Badr but could not participate in the battle since he was still living in Makkah at that time with his master, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Thereafter he emigrated and participated in Uḥud and the subsequent battles. During the reign of Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, he participated in the Conquest of Egypt.¹

He first belonged to Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who gifted him to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ freed him and married him to his freed slave girl, Salmā. He had many children with her. He was in charge of carrying Rasūlullāh’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ provisions. He was a gifted artisan who would carve bowls and was gifted at calligraphy. He wrote before Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in Kūfah.²

Just as charity is not permissible for the family of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, it is not permissible for his freed slaves. This we learn from a report which mentions that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent an individual from the Banū Makhzūm to collect zakāh. This person suggested to Abū Rāfi‘ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to accompany him so that he might also benefit from the zakāh. Before practicing on the suggestion, he consulted Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to him, “Charity is not permissible for us. The freed slave of a tribe is part of them.”³

He was present at the campaign of Khaybar as well. He speaks about the bitter cold that afflicted them. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made an announcement, “Whoever has a blanket should cover the one who does not.” Sayyidunā Abū Rāfi‘ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ says that he could not find anyone to help him out, so he came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who threw upon him a portion of his blanket. They slept like this until morning.

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 38.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 38.

3 *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 2, Book 2, Ḥadīth: 657; *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Vol. 3, Book 23, Ḥadīth: 2613; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 38. Grade: ṣaḥīḥ.

As Rasūlullāh ﷺ awoke, he saw a snake by his feet, so he yelled, “O Abū Rāfi‘, kill it, kill it!” He got up at once and killed it.¹

He passed away during the khilāfah of Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ.²



1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 38 referenced to *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Ḥadīth: 4858.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 38.

Mughīth

Love is the most cherished emotion to man. True love cannot be explained, it can only be felt and experienced. Loving someone is marvellous and to be loved is precious. However, when love is not reciprocated, it is very painful and heart-breaking. Who better to ask about this, than one who experienced this first hand, Sayyidunā Mughīth رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

He was a slave of Abū Aḥmad ibn Jaḥsh al-Asadī.¹ His name appears in the six canonical works, owing to his marriage to the lovely Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, the slave of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا.

After his wife secured her freedom, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave her the choice to live with her husband or to separate from him, and said to her, “If he has intercourse with you, then there is no choice for you.”² Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا chose to separate. This left Sayyidunā Mughīth رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ devastated.

He followed her in the streets of Madīnah, begging her to take him back, with his beard drenched in tears. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to Sayyidunā ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “O ‘Abbās ! Are you not astonished at the love of Mughīth for Barīrah and the hatred of Barīrah for Mughīth?”

Seeing his pitiable condition, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ interceded to Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, “Why do you not take him back?” reminding her of the fact that they share a child. She submitted, “O Messenger of Allah! Do you order me to do so?” “No,” Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explained, “I only intercede for him.” She submitted that she does not have any need for him.³

May Allah be pleased with Sayyidunā Mughīth رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and grant him loving spouses in Jannah.

1 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Book 12, Ḥadīth: 2228; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 7 pg. 154, Biography: 8190.

2 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Book 12, Ḥadīth: 2228.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 7, Book 63, Ḥadīth: 206; *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Vol. 6, Book 49, Ḥadīth: 5419.

Dhū Mikhbar

Dhū Mikhbar is the paternal nephew of Sayyidunā Najāshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.¹ He is among those who travelled from Abyssinia to meet Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in Arabia. He derived maximum benefit from Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ by staying permanently with him, serving him, and learning his teachings.

Later on in his life, students of knowledge would come to him to learn these teachings. He would relate to them the manner Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed wuḍū' once while on a journey. After he completed his ablution, "there was no mud on the earth," he said alluding to the little amount of water he would use. He explains that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ commanded Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to call out the adhān and he called it out unhurriedly. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then stood and offered two units of prayer (Sunnah) calmly. Then he ordered Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to call out the iqāmah. Thereafter, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ led the congregation in two rak'āt of farḍ, without rushing.² This ḥadīth teaches us to carry out the actions of dīn calmly.

His students would ask him about the peace treaty with the Romans. He would share with them the following ḥadīth, "You will secure a peace treaty with the Romans, then you and they will fight an enemy behind you, and you will be victorious, take booty, and be safe. You will then return and alight in a meadow with mounds and one of the Christians will raise the cross and say, 'The cross has prevailed.' One of the Muslims will become angry and smash it, and the Romans will act treacherously and prepare for the great battle. The Muslims will then make for their weapons and will fight, and Allah will honour that corps with martyrdom."³

1 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Book 2, Ḥadīth: 446.

2 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Book 2, Ḥadīth: 445, 446.

3 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Book 38, Ḥadīth: 4280; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, vol. 5, Book 36, Ḥadīth: 4089.

He is also responsible for narrating the ḥadīth that leadership was among the Ḥimyar. Then Allah ﷻ snatched it away from them and placed it among the Quraysh, but it will soon return to the former.¹

Dhū Mikhbar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ explains that once while travelling, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ increased the pace of the caravan. He would do this generally due to scarcity of provisions. After covering a good distance, he halted for a bit, and was informed that the rest of the caravan was far behind, so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ waited at that place until all of the people gathered there. It was very late at night and everyone was totally exhausted so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told the people to alight and spend the night at that spot.

Sayyidunā Dhū Mikhbar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ volunteered to stand guard that night so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave him his camel's halter. He led Rasūlullāh's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ camel as well as his own to one side and let them graze. While looking at them, sleep overtook him. He woke up with the rays of the sun burning his face. He woke up the first person he got to and people began waking each other up until Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ woke up. None of them had performed Ṣalāt al-Fajr yet. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ called for water and performed wuḍū' with it. Thereafter Sayyidunā Bilāl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ called out the adhān. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ performed two rak'āt unhurriedly. The iqāmah was then called out after which Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ led the people in ṣalāh calmly. Someone asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, did we overstep the bounds?" "No," he said, "Allah seized our souls until He returned them to us. Now we have performed ṣalāh."²

Abū Ḥayy al-Mu'adhin, Jubayr ibn Nufayr, 'Abbās ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Abū al-Zāhirah, 'Umar ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ḥaḍramī, Khālīd ibn Ma'dān, Rāshid ibn Sa'd, and 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥayrīz are some of his students.³ He later settled in Syria and passed away in his sixties.⁴

1 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 13 pg. 125; *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 16873; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 369, Biography: 1555.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 61, 62; *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 4 pg. 90, 91, Ḥadīth: 16824.

3 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 369, Biography: 1555; *Raf' Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 302.

4 *Raf' Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 302.

He was taken captive on the Day of Qarqarat al-Kudr with the camels of the Banū Ghaṭafān and Sulaym by the army of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. People suggested to Rasūlullāh ﷺ to take him as a slave from his share of the booty. Rasūlullāh ﷺ accepted the suggestion as he observed that the young man performs ṣalāh correctly. Rasūlullāh ﷺ subsequently emancipated him. He is thus the freed slave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.¹

Rasūlullāh ﷺ appointed him to shepherd the camels of ṣadaqaḥ, at Ḥarrah on the outskirts of Madīnah.² Meanwhile, eight people from ‘Uranah and ‘Ukl came to Madīnah and accepted Islam. They found the climate of the land uncongenial to their health and thus fell ill, so Rasūlullāh ﷺ ordered them to go to his camels outside Madīnah and drink their milk and urine. They followed the shepherd, Sayyidunā Yasār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and drank the milk and urine of the camels until their bodies became healthy. As soon as their health improved, wickedness got the better of them. They apostatised and killed the shepherd, after gouging out his eyes, and drove away the camels; thus making them guilty of highway robbery, murder, and apostasy. The punishment of such criminals has been clearly determined in the Qur’ān:

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.³

1 Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, vol. 6 pg. 47; al-Iṣābah, vol. 6 pg. 534, 535, Biography: 9359.

2 Usd al-Ghābah, pg. 1239, Biography: 5630.

3 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 33.

This is the most severe punishment revealed in the Qur'ān. When the news of their treachery reached Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he sent a group of riders in their pursuit. They were apprehended and the punishment was carried out as per the Qur'ānic instruction.¹ Sayyidunā Yasār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was the shepherd who was brutally martyred and mutilated by them.² He was taken to Qubā' where he was buried.³



1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, Book 71, Ḥadīth: 590; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 16, Ḥadīth: 4131.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 47; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1239, Biography: 5630.

3 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1239, Biography: 5630.

Aslam or Yasār¹

While Rasūlullāh ﷺ was besieging one of the forts of Khaybar, a shepherd belonging to a Jew came to him and submitted, “Present Islam to me.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ presented Islam to him and he embraced Islam on the spot.

After becoming a Muslim, he realised that the Jews, who were his former masters, are now his enemies. He thus enquired from Rasūlullāh ﷺ what to do explaining to him that he works for the owner of the sheep and as a result, the sheep are a trust by him; alluding to the fact that he cannot continue shepherding for his previous owner, nor can he take the sheep. The trustworthiness and loyalty of this man is really remarkable. Rasūlullāh ﷺ told him to turn the faces of the sheep and they will return to their owner in the fort. Accordingly, he took some sand and threw it in their faces and told them to return to their master. They complied and returned as a flock as if someone was herding them until they entered the fort.

Now since he was a Muslim, he wanted to do some action pleasing to Allah ﷻ. It was not the time for ṣalāh, so he entered into the ranks of the Muslims and began fighting. While fighting, a rock struck him and he was martyred; and he never yet performed a single ṣalāh.

He was brought to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and placed behind him, with his face covered by the cloak he was wearing. Rasūlullāh ﷺ turned around to look at him and then suddenly turned away. When asked the reason for this he explained that two of his wives from the large eyed damsels were with him.²

This Companion only performed one good action, after proclaiming his shahādah, yet his stage is among the 100 ranks reserved in Jannah for the warriors of Allah ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ mentioned, “Jannah has one hundred grades

1 *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*: Aslam. *Maʿrifat al-Ṣaḥābah*: Yasār. *Uṣd al-Ghābah*: Yasār. *Al-Iṣābah*: Aslam and Yasār.

2 *Uṣd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1239, *Biography*: 5628; *Maʿrifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 2810, *Biography*: 3079.

which Allah has reserved for the mujāhidīn who fight in His cause. The distance between each of two grades is like the distance between the heaven and the earth. So, when you ask Allah (for something), ask for Firdaws which is the best and highest part of Jannah. Above it is the Throne of the Beneficent (i.e. Allah), and from it originates the rivers of Jannah.”¹ How fortunate he was to embrace Islam moments before attaining martyrdom.



1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 4, Book 52, Ḥadīth: 48.

Yasār

How much proximity to Allah ﷻ a person enjoys cannot be determined by man. A person's affluence, beauty, and fame has no bearing whatsoever with whether he enjoys closeness to the Almighty ﷻ. Only Allah ﷻ knows what is in the heart and which heart contains His love and attachment to Him.

Sayyidunā Yasār رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was an ordinary Muslim. He was below average in common social standing, since he was a former slave who belonged to Sayyidunā Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. His face was scarred and his complexion was dark. He took up the noble work of looking after the Masjid. He would sprinkle water in the Masjid and sweep it. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "The rewards for my Ummah were displayed before me, so much so that even (the reward for) the dust that a man takes out of the Masjid."¹

In the sight of Allah ﷻ, on the contrary, he was on a lofty pedestal. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ affirmed that he was one of the seven through whom Allah removes calamities from the people of earth. Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates that he entered the presence of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who said, "O Abū Hurayrah, a man will enter my presence from this door from the seven through whom Allah removes calamities from the people of earth." Just then, an Abyssinian entered the door carrying a jar of water on his head. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Welcome, O Yasār."²



1 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Vol. 5, Book 42, Ḥadīth 2916; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Book 2, Ḥadīth 461. Grade: ḍa'īf.

2 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1239, Biography: 5628; *Ma'rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, pg. 2810, Biography: 3079; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 142; *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 307.

Anjashah

Sayyidunā Anjashah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was an Abyssinian slave of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. His agnomen was Abū Māriyah.¹ He accompanied Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on his journey to Makkah for the Farewell Pilgrimage, driving the camels carrying the wives of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.²

He had a melodious voice and would thus urge on the camels by singing. His chanting made the camels advance with speed so Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told him, “May Allah be merciful to you, O Anjashah! Drive the camels slowly, as they are carrying glass vessels!”³ His usage of a pleasant metaphor and cautioning the camel-driver speak volumes of the love and compassion Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had for the Mothers of the Believers.



1 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 1 pg. 269.

2 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 69, Biography: 240.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 8, Book 73, Ḥadīth: 170.

A Pious Sahābi

An unidentified man from Abyssinia approached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with a heart filled with remorse and regret. He had wasted his life away in rebellion and disobedience to his Creator. He committed all types of immoralities and shunned righteousness and virtue. The winds of divine mercy and guidance just began to blow in his direction, and Allah ﷻ selected his heart to be affected by these winds. At last, the time had come for him to repent.

After all, how long can a person live detached from the Almighty? Humans are created as social beings. We all desire a sense of belonging and need attachment. The greatest belonging and attachment every heart yearns for is connection with His Creator. The body might survive on earthly sustenance, but the soul needs spiritual nutrition.

Distressed and dejected, he came up to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ seeking solace. He was ready to repent to Allah ﷻ for his past life. He began his confession, “O Messenger of Allah, I used to commit immoralities.” Unsure whether the Almighty will accept his repentance, he asked apprehensively, “Is there any repentance for me?” “Definitely,” was the spontaneous reply of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as Allah ﷻ announces:

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say, “O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”¹

Not only does Allah ﷻ forgive us when we repent, He awaits our repentance. The ḥadīth teaches us that Allah ﷻ continuously showers His forgiveness at

1 Sūrah al-Zumar: 53.

night so the sinner of the day might repent and He showers His forgiveness in the morning so the sinner of the night might repent.¹ Rasūlullāh ﷺ enlightens us, “Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than anyone of you is pleased with finding his camel which he had lost in the desert.”²

Hearing Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ reply, the Abyssinian sighed with relief and turned around to leave. He had hardly taken a few steps, when he returned hurriedly and enquired whether he had been under Divine surveillance while committing those immoralities. Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied in the affirmative, as nothing is hidden from the All-Seeing, the All-Knowing. Embarrassment and fear seized him. He let out a screech and his soul departed instantly.³ To Allah do we belong and to Him is our return.

The mysterious Abyssinian will enjoy himself in the Gardens of Eternity. The fearful will have two gardens, says Allah ﷻ:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ فَيَايَ الْأُءِ رَبُّكُمْ تُكَذِّبَانِ

*But for he who has feared the position of his Lord are two gardens. So which of the favours of your Lord would you deny?*⁴

The fear of Allah ﷻ that gripped his heart, led to his demise. His soul departed leaving behind an important lesson for us all. The poet says:

*When you are in seclusion in the darkness and your carnal desires are craving for evil,
Observe shame of the Almighty’s sight and tell it: the Being who created darkness,
is truly watching me!*

1 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Book 37, Ḥadīth: 6644.

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 8, Book 75, Ḥadīth: 321.

3 Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 147; Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn, vol. 4 pg. 14.

4 Sūrah al-Rahman: 46, 47.

Female *Sahābah* of African Origin

*Umm Ayman*¹

A foreigner in Makkah, Barakah bint Tha'labah, commonly known as Umm Ayman, hailed from Abyssinia and lived as a slave in Makkah. She was taken captive from the army of Abrahah—who planned to destroy the Ka'bah—after the army was pelted with stones from above.² Even her date of birth is not recorded because no one considered her worthy of it. But Allah ﷻ divinely selected her to become the nursemaid of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

She lived the initial stages of her life as the servant girl of 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Rasūlullāh's ﷺ father.³ 'Abd Allāh passed away at a young age, prior to the birth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ so she was inherited by his unborn son. Barakah was thus fortunate to become part of the inheritance of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Sayyidah Umm Ayman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا served as Rasūlullāh's ﷺ nursemaid in his infancy.⁴ She would foster Rasūlullāh ﷺ with great love and affection.⁵ After the demise of his mother, she played the role of his mother, caring for him and nurturing him. Lucky she was to raise and care for the greatest of all mankind, nay the greatest of all creation. Rasūlullāh ﷺ would say affectionately, “Umm Ayman is my mother after my biological mother.”⁶

Rasūlullāh's ﷺ love and respect for Sayyidah Umm Ayman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا can be well imagined. She was his mother figure throughout his life. He would even address

1 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 358; *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 312.

2 *Munāṣarat al-Ṣahābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 42.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3737.

5 *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Ḥadīth: 10345.

6 *Umdat al-Qārī*, vol. 16 pg. 323, Ḥadīth: 3737; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 359.

her as his mother. Looking at her with admiration, he would comment, “She is the remnant of my household.”¹

Rasūlullāh ﷺ freed Sayyidah Umm Ayman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا when he married Khadījah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا.² She first married ‘Ubayd ibn Zayd, from the Banū al-Ḥārith ibn al-Khazraj, and gave birth to their son, Ayman. Sayyidunā Ayman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ made hijrah and participated in the battles. He was martyred during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.³

After the passing of her first husband, Rasūlullāh ﷺ announced, “Whoever desires to marry a woman from the dwellers of Jannah should marry Umm Ayman.”⁴ Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ adopted son, Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ married her. They had a child whom they named Usāmah.⁵ Here you have a family, each one of them are close to the heart of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. A blessed beloved breed.

She embraced Islam in the early stages and pledged allegiance to Rasūlullāh ﷺ. She has the great fortune of participating in both emigrations, the emigration to Abyssinia and then to Madīnah, and is reckoned among the first emigrants. Abyssinia was her home land. She emigrated there with Rasūlullāh’s ﷺ daughter, Sayyidah Ruqayyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا.⁶

While Sayyidah Umm Ayman رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was making hijrah to Madīnah Munawwarah, she passed the night at Munṣarif, before Rawḥā’. Make a mental note of the fact that she traversed the distance on foot, with no conveyance and no companion. She was extremely thirsty and had no water with her and to top it all, she was

1 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 359.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375; *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 224.

3 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 359; *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 42; *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 148.

4 *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Ḥadīth: 10345.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 2 pg. 301; *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 8 pg. 162.

6 *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 43.

fasting. The thirst became unbearable for her, and she was about to die of thirst. Her immigration was towards Allah ﷻ for the pleasure of Allah ﷻ so her attention was turned in His direction. And Allah ﷻ responded instantaneously to the plea of the one in distress:

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ إِلَهَ مَعِ اللَّهُ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ

Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember.¹

As soon as the sun set and it was time to open her fast, she heard a noise from above her head and when she looked up, she saw a water-skin filled with water hanging above her head. A miracle! Divine water arranged for an exceptional woman.

She drank from the water until she was satiated. The divine water did not only quench her thirst for that day. It extinguished her thirst for the remainder of her life. She comments, “Thirst never gripped me thereafter.” After this incident, she would fast on an extremely scorching day and walk in the heat so that she could experience thirst, but she would not.”² A rare reward for a substantial sacrifice.

Sayyidah Umm Ayman رضي الله عنها was a courageous woman. She participated in the Battle of Uḥūd, in 3 A.H. She would provide water to the warriors and nurse the injured. A few years later in Muḥarram 7 A.H., she joined in the Campaign to Khaybar.³ Her son, Sayyidunā Ayman رضي الله عنه, was martyred in this campaign.⁴

1 Sūrah al-Naml: 62.

2 Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā, vol. 8 pg. 179; al-Iṣābah, vol. 14 pg. 292.

3 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 8 pg. 361.

4 Al-Iṣābah, vol. 8 pg. 359; Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah, pg. 42. However, the author mentions that he was martyred in Ḥunayn.

In the eighth year after hijrah, the battle of Mu'tah took place, wherein her husband, Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنه was appointed the first of three commanders-in-chief to face the Roman forces and their allies, the Arab Christians. The odds were heavy against the Muslims. They were only 3000 in number while the enemy numbered 150 000 strong. Despite the heavy odds, Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Ḥārithah رضي الله عنه fought bravely as the army general to his coveted end. Sayyidah Umm Ayman رضي الله عنها thus has the fortune of being the wife of a martyr and inhabitant of Jannah.¹

One year later, she accompanied Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم to Makkah for the Conquest of Makkah and she participated in the Battle of Ḥunayn as well.² During the tough battle, confusion broke out and it was a difficult test from Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى for the Muslims. However, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم and the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم who surrounded him remained firm. Among those to remain steadfast alongside Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم was her son, Sayyidunā Usāmah رضي الله عنه.

When the Muhājirīn emigrated from Makkah to Madīnah; they came without any worldly assets. The Anṣār, owing to their generosity and brotherhood, divided their properties with the Muhājirīn. They gave them half of the produce from the orchards every year. Sayyidah Umm Sulaym رضي الله عنها—the mother of Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه—gave Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم her date-palms. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم bestowed these date palms upon Sayyidah Umm Ayman رضي الله عنها as a token of appreciation for her love and care.

Few years later, the Muhājirīn, including Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, obtained land on the outskirts of Madīnah, subsequent to the eviction of the Banū Qurayẓah and the Banū al-Naḍīr, as well as land in Khaybar after defeating the Jews. Thus, they returned to the Anṣār all the fruit gifts which they had received from them.³ Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم intended to return to Sayyidah Umm Sulaym رضي الله عنها her date-

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 4 pg. 270 – 280; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 52, Ḥadīth: 298.

2 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 361.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 799; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375.

palms. The dilemma he faced was that he had already gifted them to Sayyidah Umm Ayman رضي الله عنها.

These date-palms had sentimental value in her heart, since her beloved child, Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم gifted them. Moreover, she had a sense of motherly pride over Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم for she cared for him as a little child. So when she heard that her date-palms will be taken away, she became upset and said to Anas رضي الله عنه, “No, by Him besides Whom none has the right to be worshipped, he will not return those trees to you as he has given them to me.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم pleaded with her, “Return those trees and I will give you so much instead.” But she kept on refusing till he gave her ten times the number of her date-palms.¹

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم would visit her very often. He honoured her extensively. At the same time, he enjoyed a jovial relationship with her. She told him once to organise a conveyance for her. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم told her that he will give her a camel’s child to mount. She replied, “It will not bear me and I do not want it.” Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم commented wittingly, “I will only mount you on the child of a camel after all.”² She would also make him laugh when he would come to visit her.³

Once she mistakenly drank the urine of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم had a clay pot in which he would urinate at night. Every morning, Sayyidah Umm Ayman رضي الله عنها would dispose of the urine. One morning, she woke up and by mistake, drank the urine. We should remember that the urine of the Ambiyā’ is pure. Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم told her that her stomach will never pain ever again.⁴

Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away in 11 A.H. She lived with him and cared for him from his birth until his demise. What a fortunate woman indeed!

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 59, Ḥadīth 446.

2 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 2 pg. 225; *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah*, pg. 43.

3 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 360. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn al-Sakan*.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 360. *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn al-Sakan*.

After the demise of the Nabī ﷺ, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr told Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا, “Let us go to visit Umm Ayman just as Rasūlullāh ﷺ would visit her.” When they entered her presence, she began to weep. “What makes you weep?” they asked. “What is in store in the next world for Rasūlullāh ﷺ is better than this worldly life,” they told her. She explained, “I weep not because I am ignorant of the fact that what is in store for Allah’s Messenger (in the next world) is better than (this world). But I weep because the revelation which came from the Heaven has ceased to come.” This moved both of them to tears and they began to weep along with her.¹ Have a look at the astounding wisdom and foresight of this remarkable woman.

Another surprising statement was made by her after Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was fatally stabbed. She wept stating, “Today, Islam has become weak.”²

She relates few aḥādīth from Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Sayyidunā Anas ibn Mālik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Ḥanash ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣan‘ānī, and Abū Yazīd al-Madanī narrate from her.

She passed away five months after the death of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.³ Some historians, on the contrary, say that she passed away 20 days after the demise of Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, in the early days of the khilāfah of Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.⁴ She is buried in Madīnah Munawwarah.



1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 6009.

2 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 360. Ibn Sa‘d.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth: 4375.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 361, 362. Ibn Sa‘d.

Barīrah

Barīrah¹ bint Şafwān.² Her name appears in the six canonical works, viz. *Şahīh al-Bukhārī*, *Şahīh Muslim*, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan al-Nasa'ī*, and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. Why should it not? She is after all the freed slave of none other than the greatest female scholar Umm al-Mu'minīn, Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, whose narrations have reached more than 2000 in number and are recorded in the six canonical works and other ḥadīth compilations. In fact, there is no ḥadīth book which does not contain her reports.

Three important traditions were established because of this blessed woman, Sayyidah Barīrah رضي الله عنها.³ Some 'Ulamā' have deduced 300 points from this ḥadīth.⁴

Firstly, *walā'* belongs to the emancipator. *Walā'* is the estate of a freed slave who has no heirs. The master who freed him will inherit from the former slave if the former slave is not survived by any of his heirs.

The background behind this is that Sayyidah Barīrah رضي الله عنها belonged to a certain family of Madīnah. The family stipulated that she pay them nine ūqiyah of gold in instalments, one ūqiyah per year. Feeling this amount burdensome, she approached Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها and asked her for help. She had thus far paid nothing out of the sum stipulated in the contract.

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها was ready to pay the whole amount and set her free provided that her masters agree that she will be entitled to her *walā'*.⁵ Sayyidah Barīrah رضي الله عنها conveyed the message to them, but they flatly refused saying that

1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 322.

2 *Fiqh al-Uṣrah*, pg. 302 footnotes.

3 *Şahīh al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 7, Book 62, Ḥadīth: 34; *Şahīh Muslim*, Book 9, Ḥadīth: 3594.

4 *Al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 50, Biography: 10934.

5 *Şahīh al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 3, Book 34, Ḥadīth: 377

if Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا wants to do good to her for the sake of Allah, she may do it, but the right of inheritance will be theirs. Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا consulted Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this regard. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to her, “Buy her and emancipate her for the right of inheritance vests with one who manumits (the slave).”¹

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then stood up on the pulpit and proclaimed, “What has happened to the people that they lay down conditions which are not (found) in the Book of Allah? He who imposes a condition not found in the Book of Allah, it is not valid, even if he imposes a hundred conditions. The condition laid down by Allah is the weightiest and the most valid.”²

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا did in fact buy her and free her. Yet she chose to remain with her and serve her, so that she might learn from Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and benefit spiritually from their company. By socialising with them, she was blessed with expansion of thought, sound judgement, and eloquence.³

Secondly, she was married to Sayyidunā Mughīth رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, a slave. After she was manumitted, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave her the choice to either live on with her husband or to separate from him, and said to her, “If he has intercourse with you, then there is no choice for you.”⁴ Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا chose to separate from her husband.

Her husband went behind her in the streets of Madīnah, pleading with her to take him back, while tears flowed down his face onto his beard. Seeing his pitiable condition, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ suggested to Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to take him back reminding her of the fact that they share a child. She submitted,

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 7, Book 63, Ḥadīth: 207; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 9, Ḥadīth: 3585.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 3, Book 34, Ḥadīth: 364; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 9, Ḥadīth: 3585.

3 *Fiqh al-Urah*, pg. 303 footnotes.

4 *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, Book 12, Ḥadīth: 2228.

“O Messenger of Allah! Do you order me to do so?” “No,” Rasūlullāh ﷺ explained, “I only intercede for him.” She submitted that she does not have any need for him.¹ Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was told to observe the waiting period of three menstrual cycles.²

Islam gave rights to women. This report is a glaring example of this. Furthermore, we see the high regard she had for the command of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Had he ordered her to take her husband back, she would have complied, although she resented him.

The scene of the third principle we learn from her is that once Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered the house while some meat was being cooked in a pot. When he sat down to eat, however, only bread and some soup of the house were placed before him. He said in surprise, “Did I not just see meat in the pot?” They explained, “Yes, but that meat was given to Barīrah in charity (by someone), and you do not eat what is given in charity.” Rasūlullāh ﷺ clarified, “That meat is charity for her, but a gift for us.”³ These were the three important principles established because of her.

One night, Rasūlullāh ﷺ rose and got dressed and went out. Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا—famous for her enquiring mind and yearning heart—told her slave girl Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا to follow him to find out what good action he does at this time of night. Accordingly, she followed him until he came to al-Baqī (the graveyard of Madīnah) near which he stood for as long as Allah willed and then left. Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا left at the same time and arrived home before he did. The next morning, upon her enquiry, Rasūlullāh ﷺ explained to Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا that he was sent to the people of al-Baqī to pray for them.⁴

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 7, Book 63, Ḥadīth: 206; *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Vol. 6, Book 49, Ḥadīth: 5419.

2 *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Vol. 3, Book 10, Ḥadīth: 2477.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 7, Book 63, Ḥadīth: 202; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 9, Ḥadīth: 3594.

4 *Muwattā’ Imām Mālik*, Book 16, Ḥadīth: 57; *Sunan al-Nasa’ī*, Vol. 3, Book 21, Ḥadīth: 2040.

Being the servant of an intellectual and scholarly woman like Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا developed insight and prudence. To have a glimpse at her comprehension and discernment, you will need to have a look at the incident of *ifk* (the slander), and the manner in which Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا exonerates Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا from the slander levelled against her.

Someone suggested to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to ask the maid-servant about Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا since she knows her well and she will tell him the truth. On that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ called Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and said, “O Barīrah! Did you ever see anything which aroused your suspicion?” Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا said to him, “By Him Who has sent you with the Truth. I have never seen anything in her (i.e. ‘Ā’ishah) which I would conceal, except that she is a young girl who sleeps leaving the dough of her family exposed so that the domestic goats come and eat it.”¹

Here, she highlights the simple-mindedness of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا when it comes to worldly affairs, alluding to the fact that she is neither cunning nor deceitful. This would lead to the obvious conclusion that when this is her down-to-earth nature, it is unfathomable for her to act foxy and have an illicit affair. This observance of hers corroborates Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا alibi that her search for her necklace had detained her which resulted in her missing the caravan. Her innocence had been the cause for that, just as her innocence is the cause for the goats eating the dough, while she sleeps peacefully. Congratulations for your farsightedness, O Sayyidah Barīrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا! Marvellous is the manner you exonerated the Mother of the Believers, the chaste Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا.

It was upon her testimony that Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ got up on the pulpit and complained about ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ubay (ibn Salūl) before his Companions, saying, “O you Muslims! Who will relieve me from that man who has hurt me with his evil statement about my family? By Allah, I know nothing except good about my family and they have blamed a man about whom I know nothing except good and he used never to enter my home except with me.”²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 462.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 5, Book 59, Ḥadīth: 462.

Another incident of her intuition. ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān relates that he would sit with Sayyidah Barīrah رضي الله عنها in Madīnah. She would tell him that she observes in him many noteworthy characteristics making him eligible to become khalīfah. She cautioned him to avoid bloodshed if he does assume a position of authority, relating to him the words of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم, “A man will be pushed away from the door of Jannah after seeing it, due to unlawfully shedding a cupping glass amount of the blood of a Muslim.¹ This sitting also proves that she lived up to the khilāfah of Sayyidunā Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه.²



1 *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1485, Biography: 6780; *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, vol. 24 pg. 205.

2 *Fiqh al-Uṣrah*, pg. 303 footnotes referenced to *al-Iṣābah* and *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*.

Sumayyah bint Khubbāt

Life is treasured by all. In fact, had eternity been a commodity to buy, everyone would have sacrificed every other bounty to secure it. But we all must die. Some will die natural deaths, while others will sacrifice their lives for a noble course. It is the latter who, in essence, has given his earthly life in lieu of a much superior life. They are the martyrs in the path of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.

Sayyidah Sumayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا is recorded as the very first martyr in Islam. The entire African continent is justly proud of the fact that the first martyr for Islam came from its soil. A prestige Africans ought to be proud of. Had she had no other virtue besides this, it would have been sufficient to earn her high ranks of nobility in Islam.

Sayyidah Sumayyah bint Khubbāt رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was a slave girl of Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Muḡhīrah al-Makhzūmī. Sayyidunā Yāsir رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was an ally of his, so he got him married to Sayyidah Sumayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا who gave birth to his son, ‘Ammār. Consequently, Abū Ḥudhayfah freed her.

Only a handful were chosen by the Knower of the hearts to become the foundation of this faith. Sayyidah Sumayyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was one of these fortunate souls. In the sight of Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى, she was special. She is recorded as the seventh individual to enter the faith.

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا
عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.*¹

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100.

In fact, her entire family were divinely selected. Mother, father, and son were from the forerunners of the faith. They are a household of Islam.¹ She is also from the first seven to openly declare their Islam in Makkah along with Rasūlullāh ﷺ, Abū Bakr, Bilāl, Khabbāb, Şuhayb, and ‘Ammār.²

After declaring her faith, she was mercilessly tortured to renounce her religion. Beaten, deprived of food and water, thrown in the scorching heat of Makkah, and tortured in unbecoming ways. She was mocked and jeered at and treated like a piece of filth. Physical torture coupled with psychological torment and emotional hurt. She could bear all of this, but she could not part with her faith. As Hiraql stated to Abū Sufyān in the famous Ḥadīth recorded in *Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, “This is true faith. When its delight enters the heart and mixes with it completely, nobody can be displeased with it.”³ The faith of Sayyidah Sumayyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا only increased as the torture increased. With a heart brimming with īmān, she continued ascending the levels of proximity to Allah ﷻ. What you sacrifice for, becomes more and more beloved to you.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ would advise her and her family, “Persevere, O family of Yāsir. Your abode is Jannah.”⁴ Her faith in Allah ﷻ had reached such a high level that no amount of torture could change her conviction. Rasūlullāh ﷺ would pass by her when she was persecuted and would announce these glad tidings, “Rejoice O family of ‘Ammār and O family of Yāsir, for certainly your abode is Jannah.”⁵

Allah is the greatest! A guarantee of Jannah. They are the favoured ones of Allah ﷻ. Others will envy their lot due to their exalted ranks and aspire to reach them. Says Allah ﷻ in the glorious Qur’ān:

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 68.

2 *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 7 pg. 537.

3 *Şaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, Book 2, Ḥadīth: 49.

4 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 64 on the strength of Ibn Ishāq.

5 *Al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, Ḥadīth: 1566; *Ma’rifat al-Şaḥābah*, Ḥadīth: 6664; *al-Mustadrak*, Ḥadīth: 5666; *al-Dalā’il*, vol. 2 pg. 282; *al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 pg. 249; *Ibn ‘Asākir*, vol. 43 pg. 371; *Majma’ al-Zawā’id*, vol. 9 pg. 293.

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

*And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favour of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.*¹

Then came the fateful day when she met her covetous end. The infamous pharaoh of this ummah, Abū Jahl, began torturing her frail body. Despite her old age, she was patient. Abū Jahl in a fit of rage pierced her with his lance and she fell to the ground, as the first martyr of Islam.² May Allah ﷻ be pleased with her.

An old frail woman sacrifices her life for Allah's ﷻ sake. Her martyrdom serves as a lesson for us, who are not prepared to forsake even the forbidden for Allah's ﷻ pleasure. Indulgence in vice has blackened the heart and destroyed the senses. Let us repent and return to Allah ﷻ and develop this level of submission.



1 Sūrah al-Nisā': 69.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 64 referenced to *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah*, vol. 2 pg. 282; *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah*, vol. 8 pg. 329; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 8 pg. 264; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1535, Biography: 7024; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 7 pg. 712.

Umm Zufar al-Ḥabashiyyah

Adversity is abhorred by man and we all fancy prosperity and strive for comfortable lives. Meanwhile, Allah’s سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى special servants are those whom He tests the most. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was asked, “Which of the people is tried most severely?” He said, “The Ambiyā’, then those nearest to them, then those nearest to them. A man is tried according to his religion. If he is firm in his religion, then his trials are more severe, and if he is frail in his religion, then he is tried according to the strength of his religion. The servant shall continue to be trialled until he is left walking upon the earth without any sins.”¹

The important aspect is managing the adversity in the correct way. Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى says in the Qur’ān:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.²

A befitting example of the *patient* is Sayyidah Umm Zufar al-Ḥabashiyyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. Much is not known about her lineage and history, but her name surely does appear in the two most authentic ḥadīth compilations, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.

1 Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī, Book 10, Ḥadīth: 2398; Sunan Ibn Mājah, Book 36, Ḥadīth 4024.

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 155 – 157.

She was a dark-skinned tall African woman. Her name was Sa'īrah¹ or Shaqīrah, the freed slave of the Banū Asad.² It has been said that she is Umm Zufar, Khadijah's ﷺ handmaiden.³

Besides these details, many of which are uncertain, nothing else is recorded about her. What is special about her then, one might ask. Well, this much is explicit that she is an inhabitant of Jannah. She was assured Jannah by Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself. Many are the people who are obscure in the world, but famous in the heavens.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, "May I not inform you about the inmates of Jannah? Every obscure unimportant humble person, if he were to adjure in the name of Allah, He would fulfil it."⁴

Sayyidah Umm Zufar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا suffered from epileptic fits. She would become exposed when in this condition. So she approached Rasūlullāh ﷺ and requested him to invoke Allah ﷻ to cure her. Rasūlullāh ﷺ told her, "If you wish, you can observe patience and Jannah is yours. And if you desire, I can beg Allah to grant you relief."

Immediately, she responded, "I will observe patience." Coupled with this, she politely asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ to beg Allah ﷻ that she does not become exposed when experiencing the epileptic fits." Rasūlullāh ﷺ prayed for her accordingly.⁵

On the one hand you see her faith in the promise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. She is convinced of the guarantee of Jannah and overlooks the suffering that she will

1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 330.

2 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 330.

3 *Al-Istī'āb*, vol. 2 pg. 129; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1 Biography: 1438; *al-Iṣābah*, vol. 8 pg. 210, 211.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 73, Ḥadīth: 97; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 40, Ḥadīth: 6833.

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 70, Ḥadīth: 555; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 32, Ḥadīth: 6245.

experience for the rest of her life. On the other hand, we see her modesty and bashfulness. She is concerned about it so she begs Rasūlullāh ﷺ to beseech Allah ﷻ to protect her modesty. A model of patience and modesty for women of the world.



Barakah al-Ḥabashiyah¹

Sayyidah Barakah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا is the slave girl of Sayyidah Umm Ḥabībah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. She travelled with her to Madīnah from Abyssinia.²

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had a wooden bowl in which he would urinate at night. He would keep this bowl under the bed. Sayyidah Barakah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا came and drank the contents of the bowl. Subsequent to this, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ searched for the bowl but could not find it. He was told that Barakah drank it. “You have built a strong barrier against the Fire,” he commented.³



1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 321.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 53.

3 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 pg. 53 referenced to *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 24 pg. 205; *Usd al-Ghābah*, pg. 1480, 1484, Biography: 6773 reference to Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu'aym.

A Young Ṣaḥābiyyah

An African slave girl of one of the Arabs embraced Islam, and came to Madīnah where she lived in a little hut in the Masjid. She would visit the female Ṣaḥābiyyāt رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُنَّ and talk to them, and at the end of the gathering, she used to say, “The day of the scarf was one of our Lord’s wonderful spectacles. Verily! He has delivered me from the land of disbelief.” When she repeated the above couplet many times, Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا asked her to explain to her the details of the day of the scarf.

She explained, “Once the daughter of one of my masters went out and she was wearing a leather scarf (round her neck). The leather scarf fell from her and a kite (bird) descended and picked it up, mistaking it for a piece of meat. My masters accused me of stealing it and they tortured me to such an extent that they even looked for it in my nether regions. While they all were around me, and I was in my great predicament, suddenly the kite came over our heads and threw the scarf. My masters then picked it up. I said to them, “This is what you accused me of stealing, though I was innocent.”¹

We see the high level of gratitude this young woman possessed, instead of recalling those terrible moments in a negative way, she recalls them in a positive way by praising Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَبِحَمْدِكَ. What a spectacular formula. Combat negative emotions with positive ones and live freely, rather than allowing emotions of sadness and misery to linger in the heart and mind.

This young girl has taught us practical lessons of reliance and gratitude. The Qur’ān announces:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا

And whoever relies upon Allah; then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent.²

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, vol. 5, Book 58, Ḥadīth: 176; Tanwīr al-Ghabash, pg. 150.

2 Sūrah al-Ṭalāq: 3.

Her faith in Allah ﷻ rescued her and restored her dignity. The condition is to persevere, to be relentless, having conviction that Allah's ﷻ assistance will come. This is faith. This is reliance. Among the 70 000 of this ummah who will enter Jannah without any reckoning will be those who had full reliance on Allah ﷻ.¹



1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Vol. 8, Book 76, Ḥadīth 479; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Book 1, Ḥadīth 423.

Tābi'in

ʿAṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ

Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal رحمته الله said, “Allah bestows the treasure of knowledge to one whom He loves. If knowledge would have been kept only for a specific people then those with the noblest lineage would be most deserving of it. However, ‘Aṭā’ (ibn Abī Rabāḥ) was an Abyssinian slave, Yazīd ibn Ḥabīb was a Nubian, and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Sīrīn were both slaves.”¹

Sayyidunā ‘Aṭā’ رحمته الله is among the prominent Tābi'in in fiqh, knowledge, piety, and virtue. He has the fortune of meeting at least 200 Ṣaḥābah. He was a high ranking faqīh, prominent scholar, reliable mufti and is responsible for narrating a great number of aḥādīth. Only two people were seated on the pedestal of iftā² in Makkah, ‘Aṭā’ and Mujāhid, with ‘Aṭā’ being the more distinct of the two.³

Sayyidunā ‘Aṭā’s رحمته الله agnomen was Abū Muhammad. His father’s name was Aslam. He was born as a slave, two years after the beginning of ‘Uthmān’s khilāfah, in the year 27 A.H, and was nurtured in the sacred environment of Makkah Mukarramah. He grew up to become an outstanding scholar of Qur’ān and ḥadīth. Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رحمته الله would tell the people, “You gather around me, O people of Makkah, while you have ‘Aṭā’ in your midst.” Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Umar رحمته الله expressed similar sentiments.⁴

Among his salient qualities was that he had immense love, coupled with respect, for the words of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. He would not tolerate anyone talking while

1 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 225 referenced to *Tahdhīb al-Asmā'*, vol. 1 pg. 333.

2 *Iftā'*: The process of issuing religious edicts known as a *Fatwā*, plural *Fatāwā*.

3 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 201; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 226 referenced to *Tahdhīb al-Asmā'*, vol. 1 pg. 334.

4 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 201; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 226 referenced to *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 86.

the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ were being mentioned. Once during a lesson of ḥadīth, a person spoke out. ‘Aṭā’ became extremely angry at this. He went on to explain that knowledge increases when aḥādīth are recited. He said, “Whenever a person relates a ḥadīth to me, whether I heard it before or not, I listen to it so attentively that the relater senses that I have never heard it before.”¹ The Urdu proverb is very true: *The respectful are fortunate while those devoid of respect are deprived of fortune.*

Another excellence of his was his humility. Despite his extensive knowledge, he would not issue any ruling based on his own personal opinion. If he could not find the exact case in the collections of aḥādīth or sayings of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, he would express his ignorance on the matter. Once when he did this, people told him to express his opinion. He submitted, “I am ashamed of Allah ﷻ that my [personal] opinion be followed on His land.”²

His fiqh is accepted by all. In fact, the great jurist, Abū Ḥanīfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ attested to his fiqh saying, “I never saw anyone I met more superior to ‘Aṭā’.”³ In the era of the Banū Umayyah, an announcement was made during the Ḥajj season that no one should pass verdicts to people besides ‘Aṭā’.⁴ He had the honour of performing Ḥajj 70 times.⁵ Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ remarked, “No one remains more knowledgeable about the rituals of ḥajj than ‘Aṭā’.”⁶ Here you have the noble great grandson of Rasūlullāh ﷺ attesting to the knowledge of a man of African origin. Abū Ja‘far رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ told the people, “Stick to ‘Aṭā’. By Allah, he is better than me.”

Those who would sit in his company during the Ḥajj season would become acquainted with the rulings of Ḥajj. Once Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ went to a barber

1 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 225 referenced to *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 5 pg. 345.

2 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 226 referenced to *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol. 5 pg. 246.

3 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 201; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 227.

4 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 227 referenced to *Tahdhīb al-Asmā’*, vol. 1 pg. 334.

5 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 229 referenced to *Mukhtaṣar Ṣafwat al-Ṣalāh*, pg. 158

6 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 201.

during the season of Ḥajj, but before the barber began cutting his hair, he wished to agree on a price. The barber told him that conditions are not made in worship. Abū Ḥanīfah then sat down away from the Qiblah. The barber gestured to him to face the Qiblah. He wanted the barber to start from the left but the barber started from the right. The barber then told him to continue reciting takbīr when he noticed that he was quiet. As he got up to leave, the barber told him to perform two rak‘āt of ṣalāh and then leave. When asked where he had acquired this knowledge, the barber responded, “I saw ‘Aṭā’ ibn Abī Rabāḥ doing this.”¹

He spent his time in the worship of Allah ﷻ. He would recite 200 or more āyāt in his Tahajjud ṣalāh. No time of his was spent without the remembrance of Allah ﷻ. Even his gatherings were not devoid of dhikr. When in a gathering, he would remain silent most of the time, engaged in dhikr. However, when he spoke, those around felt as if inspiration was descending upon him.²

He studied at the feet of a number of Ṣaḥābah including Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn ‘Amr, Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayrah, ‘Ā’ishah, and Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. His students are innumerable. Some prominent men among them are Mujāhid, Zuhrī, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, A‘mash, Awzā‘ī, ‘Amr ibn Dīnār, and Ibn Ishāq.³

He passed away in 114 A.H.⁴ He was the most beloved person to the inhabitants of the earth says Awzā‘ī, may Allah be pleased with him.⁵



1 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 227, 228 referenced to *Ibn Khalikān*, vol. 1 pg. 319.

2 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 201; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 228, 229 referenced to *Mukhtaṣar Ṣafwat al-Ṣalāh*, pg. 158, *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 86.

3 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 200.

4 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 7 pg. 202; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 229 referenced to *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 86.

5 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 225 referenced to *Mukhtaṣar Ṣafwat al-Ṣalāh*, pg. 158.

Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb

Rasūlullāh ﷺ stated, “Whoever treads a path in search of knowledge, Allah will allow him to travel on one of the roads to Jannah. The angels lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge. The inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and the fish in the deep waters seek forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the scholar over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The ‘Ulamā’ are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither gold nor silver coins. They only leave knowledge, and he who takes it, takes an abundant portion.”¹

Not only did Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ tread a path in search of knowledge, he opened paths of knowledge for the entire country of Egypt. His fervour for knowledge was so strong, that it affected the hearts of those who associated with him. Following this, a thirst for religious knowledge was created in the people of Egypt who began to flock in large numbers around this great scholar of dīn. He imparted to them the sacred knowledge that he had acquired and through his being, true knowledge became manifest in Egypt. Before him coming into the arena, the people of Egypt were unaware of the volumes of knowledge contained in the aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.²

He was also proficient in fiqh and is reckoned as a great faqīh. In fact, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz seated Yazīd with two others on the pedestal of iftā’ in Egypt. Due to him, the taste for fiqh was brought alive in Egypt.³

He was born a slave to the Banū ‘Āmir ibn Lu’ayy in the year 53 A.H and is the son of a Nubian from Damqalah, Abū Ḥabīb. He began mastering the various sciences of knowledge from a tender age and grew up to become one of the most

1 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Book 25, Ḥadīth: 3634.

2 Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb, vol. 11 pg. 319; Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, vol. 1 pg. 129; Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 7 pg. 409.

3 Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz, vol. 1 pg. 129; Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah, vol. 7 pg. 409.

prominent and reliable ḥuffāz of ḥadīth in Egypt.¹ Remember the words of Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal, “Allah bestows the treasure of knowledge to one whom He loves. If knowledge would have been kept only for a specific people then those with the noblest lineage would be most deserving of it. However, ‘Aṭā’ was an Abyssinian slave and Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb was a Nubian.”²

Knowledge commands dignity and awe. Yazīd ibn Abī Ḥabīb رضي الله عنه upheld this par excellence. He would not approve of going to the affluent. Rather, the affluent were invited to come to him had they any questions to be answered. He would explain that the affluent visiting the scholars is an adornment to the former while the opposite is a tarnish to his honour.³

He boldly spoke out against oppression. Once, the governor of Egypt came to visit him and enquired from him his opinion regarding performing ṣalāh with the blood of a flea on one’s clothes. Hearing this, Yazīd shouted, “Daily you spill the blood of Allah’s creation and you now come asking about flea blood.”⁴

Towards the latter portion of his life, he adopted solitude when he saw the numbers of students increasing. He did this as a precautionary measure as he was extremely cautious in narrating aḥādīth and issuing verdicts.⁵ He passed on in 118 A.H.⁶



1 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 129; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 409.

2 *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 225 referenced to *Tahdhīb al-Asmā’*, vol. 1 pg. 333.

3 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 130; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 410.

4 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 130; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 410.

5 *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 130; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 410.

6 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 11 pg. 319; *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz*, vol. 1 pg. 130; *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7 pg. 410.

Other Eminent Personalities from the Sahābah and Ṭābi'in

Sahābah

1. Abū Laqīṭ al-Ḥabashī:

One of the freed slaves of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He lived till the khilāfah of Sayyidunā 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. It is said that he was Nubian.¹

2. Aslam al-Aswad:

A slave of a man from the Banū Nabhān from Ṭayyī'. He participated in Yamāmah with Sayyidunā Khālīd رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.²

3. 'Āṣim al-Ḥabashī:

He is the slave of Zur'ah al-Shaqrā who brought him to Rasūlullāh ﷺ to name him and pray for blessing for him.³

4. Dhū Miḥdam:

He came from Abyssinia and accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ.⁴

5. Dhū Dajan:

He came from Abyssinia and accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ.⁵

6. Dhū Manāḥib:

He came from Abyssinia and accompanied Rasūlullāh ﷺ.⁶

1 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 306.

2 *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 134.

3 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 305.

4 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 305; *Usd al-Ghaabah*, pg. 369, Biography: 1556.

5 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 305; *Usd al-Ghaabah*, pg. 369, Biography: 1556.

6 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 305; *Usd al-Ghaabah*, pg. 369, Biography: 1556.

7. Mid'am:

The slave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.¹

8. Nab'ah:

The freed slave of Umm Hāni' bint Abī Ṭālib.²

9. Rabāḥ:

The doorkeeper of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

10. Khālīd ibn al-Ḥāwārī al-Ḥabashī.³

11. Nābil al-Ḥabashī.⁴

Fabi'in and Scholars

1. Masrūḥ ibn Saburah al-Nahshalī:

The freed slave of Sayyidunā 'Umar رضي الله عنه and his Mu'adhin.⁵

2. Aslam:

The freed slave of Sayyidunā 'Umar رضي الله عنه.⁶

3. Ayman.⁷

1 *Al-Bidaayah wa al-Nihaayah*, vol. 6 pg. 45; *Mu'atta Maalik* Book 21, Hadith 25.

2 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 321.

3 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 302.

4 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 306.

5 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 10 pg. 109.

6 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 333.

7 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 335.

4. ‘Abd Allah ibn Ḥāzim al-Sulamī:

He was a grand governor over Khurāsān. He led many battles and was knowledgeable as well.¹

5. Mamṭūr Abū Sallām al-Ḥabashī.²

6. Kāfūr al-Ḥabashī.³



1 *Tanwīr al-Ghabash*, pg. 162.

2 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 343.

3 *Raf Sha'n al-Ḥubshān*, pg. 358.

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2. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* by Imām Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī.
3. *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī* by Imām Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā ibn Sawrah al-Tirmidhī.
4. *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* by Imām Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistānī.
5. *Sunan al-Nasa‘ī* by Imām Aḥmad ibn Shu‘ayb al-Nasa‘ī.
6. *Sunan Ibn Mājah* by Imām Abū ‘Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Yazīd al-Qazwīnī.
7. *Musnad Aḥmad* by Imām Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal al-Shaybānī.
8. *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* by Imām Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Ḥambal al-Shaybānī.
9. *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* by Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣbahānī.
10. *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* by Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī.
11. *Tafsīr al-Qurtubī* by Abū ‘Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurtubī.
12. *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* by Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī.
13. *Usd al-Ghābah* by Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī.
14. *Raf’ Sha’n al-Ḥubshān* by Abū al-Faḍl ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī.
15. *Tanwīr al-Ghabash fī Faḍl al-Sūdān wa al-Ḥabash* by Abū al-Farj ‘Abd al-Raḥman ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī.

16. *Munāṣarat al-Ṣaḥābah al-Afāriqah* by Ḥasan ‘Alī Shāyiqī.
17. *Al-Iṣābah* by Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.
18. *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāz* by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī.
19. *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* by Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.
20. *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Dhahabī.
21. *Ḥamalāt al-Qur‘ān min al-Ṣaḥābah al-Kirām* by Sayyid Muḥammad Sādātī al-Shanqītī.
22. *Kashf al-Khifā’ wa Muzīl al-Albās* by Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad ‘Ijlūnī.
23. *Al-Khulafā’ al-Rāshidūn* by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najjār.
24. *Fiqh al-Usrah* by Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah.
25. *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī.
26. *Sīrat al-Muṣṭafā* by Moulānā Idrīs Kandhlawī.
27. *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah* by Moulānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Kandhlawī.
28. *Siyar al-Ṣaḥābah* by Shāh Mu‘īn al-Dīn Aḥmad Nadwī.
29. *The Noble Life of the Prophet* by ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī.
30. *Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, His Life & Times* by ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Ṣallābī.

