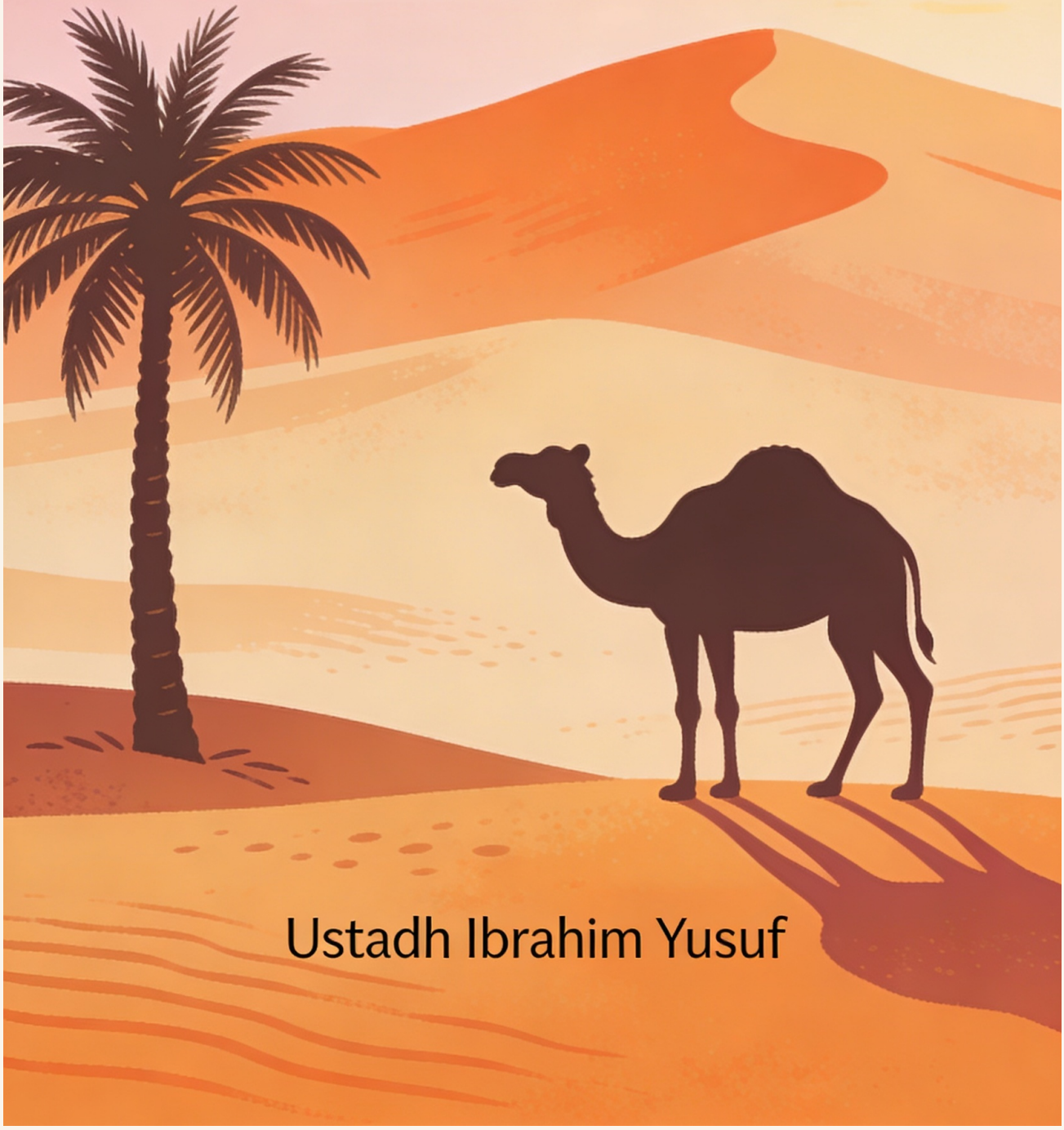
Stories of the Companions

The Friends of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ for Young Readers



Ustadh Ibrahim Yusuf

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CONTENTS

I Chapter 1: The Truthful Friend — Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA)

II Chapter 2: The Lion Who Changed — Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA)

III Chapter 3: The Generous One — Uthman ibn Affan (RA)

IV Chapter 4: The Brave Heart — Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)

V Chapter 5: The First Believer — Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA)

VI Chapter 6: The Scholar of the Ummah — Aisha bint Abi Bakr (RA)

VII Chapter 7: The Flower of the Prophet ýú — Fatimah bint Muhamm

VIII Chapter 8: The Guardian of the Qur'an — Hafsah bint Umar (RA)

IX Chapter 9: Ahad! Ahad! — Bilal ibn Rabah (RA)

X Chapter 10: The Seeker Who Found Home — Salman al-Farsi (RA)

XI Chapter 11: A Profitable Trade — Suhaib ar-Rumi (RA)

XII Chapter 12: The Ambassador — Mus'ab ibn Umayr (RA)

XIII Chapter 13: The Patient One — Khabbab ibn al-Aratt (RA)

XIV Chapter 14: The Sword of Allah — Khalid ibn al-Walid (RA)

XV Chapter 15: The First Arrow — Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (RA)

XVI Chapter 16: The Keeper of Hadith — Abu Hurayrah (RA)

XVII Chapter 17: The Boy Who Served with Joy — Anas ibn Malik (RA)

XVIII Chapter 18: The Ocean of Knowledge — Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA)

XIX Chapter 19: The Shield — Talhah ibn Ubaydullah (RA)

XX Chapter 20: The First Sword Drawn — Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (RA)

CHAPTER I

Chapter 1: The Truthful Friend — Abu Bakr As-Siddiq (RA)

A Friend Before There Were Words for It

Abu Bakr knew Muhammad ﷺ long before anyone called him a prophet. They old-fashioned, bone-deep way — the kind where you know a man's character before he opens his mouth. Abu Bakr was a merchant, calm and sharp-minded, well-respected in Makkah. He had dealt with dishonest traders his whole life. And he had watched Muhammad ﷺ his whole life.

The difference was obvious.

So when the Prophet ﷺ came to Abu Bakr and described what had happened on words, the trembling — Abu Bakr did not pause. He did not ask for proof. He said yes. Right there. Just like that.

According to Ibn Hisham's Sira, the Prophet ﷺ later reflected that everyone l hesitation — except Abu Bakr. He was the first free adult man to believe. No delay. No doubt.

"If He Says It, I Believe It"

Years passed. Islam grew slowly, painfully, in the shadow of Quraysh hostility. Then came the night that shook Makkah to its roots.

The Prophet ﷺ told his Companions something astonishing: in a single night, al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa in Jerusalem — and then lifted upward through the heavens. Allah says in the Quran: "Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Haram to al-Masjid al-Aqsa." (Quran 17:1)

Makkah erupted. People laughed out loud. Jerusalem and back in a single night? Impossible. Even some who had been leaning toward Islam turned away.

The news reached Abu Bakr. Someone told him — perhaps hoping he, too, would be shocked into doubt.

He was not.

"If he says it," Abu Bakr said, "I believe it."

No argument. No calculation. Just trust, clean and absolute, in a man he had known his entire life.

The Prophet ﷺ heard what his friend had said. And he gave him a new name f
As-Siddiq. The Truthful One. The One Who Believes Without Hesitation. (Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira Al-Nabawiyya; Mubarakpuri, Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum)

That name has followed Abu Bakr RA across fourteen centuries. It will follow him until the Last Day.

The Cave

The most dangerous night came later, when the Prophet ﷺ had to leave Makka to kill him at dawn — sending one armed man from every tribe so the blame would spread and no single clan could be punished. The Prophet ﷺ slipped out of his house in the dark and ma

Together, they fled south toward a mountain called Thawr. They climbed through the night and hid inside a narrow cave near the summit.

Three days. They sat in that cave for three days while search parties combed the hills just below.

Abu Bakr was afraid — not for himself. For the Prophet ﷺ. Mubarakpuri desc down from the cave entrance and see the trackers below, his heart hammering in his chest. At one point he whispered that if any one of them looked down at their feet, they would be seen.

The Prophet ﷺ placed his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Do not grieve," he said quietly. "Indeed, Allah is with us." (Quran 9:40)

Those words are preserved in the Quran forever. Spoken to Abu Bakr. To this one man. Because he was the one who was there.

What This Friendship Teaches You

Abu Bakr had wealth. He had a name in Makkah. He had every reason to keep his head down and stay comfortable. He gave it all up. Every bit. Because real friendship does not switch off when things become difficult. It does not ask, what is safe for me? It asks, where does my friend need me to stand?

You will meet people in your life who believe in things others laugh at. Good things. True things. The question is whether you will have the courage to stand beside them when the crowd walks away.

The Prophet ﷺ once said: "The most faithful of people to me in his companio Bakr." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

No one in history has been a better friend. Not one.

CHAPTER II

Chapter 2: The Lion Who Changed — Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA)

The streets of Makkah baked under the midday sun. It was around the sixth and the city was splitting apart. Families had turned against one another. People whispered in doorways. And the Muslims — still small in number, still meeting in secret — were being hunted.

On a day like this, one man buckled on his sword.

His name was Umar ibn al-Khattab.

The Lion of Makkah

Umar was enormous — tall, broad-shouldered, with a voice that carried across a crowded marketplace without effort. People stepped aside when they saw him coming. Even the chiefs of the Quraysh thought twice before crossing him. He had never been afraid of anything in his life.

And he was certain that Islam was a disease spreading through his city. That afternoon, he had made his decision. He would find Muhammad ﷺ and finish this.

Sword at his side, he set out.

He didn't get far.

A man named Nu'aym ibn Abdullah crossed his path. Nu'aym looked at Umar's face — at the jaw set like stone, at the hand already near the hilt — and said quickly: "Before you go anywhere, Umar. Did you know your sister Fatimah and her husband Sa'd have become Muslim?"

Umar stopped.

His sister. His blood.

He turned around and marched straight to her house.

The Parchment

He heard it before he reached the door. A low, melodic voice reciting words he didn't recognise. Inside, Khabbab ibn al-Aratt was teaching Fatimah and her husband Sa'd from a parchment of the Quran. When the knock thundered against the door — they all knew that knock — Khabbab slipped behind a curtain. Fatimah folded the parchment under her robe.

Umar burst in. "What was that sound?"

"Nothing," said Fatimah.

He grabbed Sa'd. He struck him. Fatimah rushed forward and took the blow meant for her husband. A cut opened on her face. Blood ran down her cheek.

She stood straight. She looked her brother in the eye and did not move.

"Yes, Umar," she said quietly. "We are Muslim. Do what you want."

Something cracked in the room. It wasn't a sound. It was something in Umar.

He looked at his sister — the blood on her face, the steadiness in her eyes — and he felt something he had no name for. He looked down at his hand.

"Show me what you were reading," he said.

She handed him the parchment. He read:

"Ta, Ha. We have not sent down to you the Qur'an that you be distressed. But only as a reminder for those who fear Allah — a revelation from He who created the earth and the highest heavens... Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance." (Quran 20:1–4, 14)

He read it once. Then again. The words didn't argue with him. They didn't shout. They simply landed — somewhere deep behind his ribs — and something he had spent years armoring shut began, very slowly, to open.

Tears came to his eyes. This man who had never wept in public, never softened, never bent.

"Take me to Muhammad," he said.

The House on the Slope of Safa

The Prophet ﷺ had once made du'a: "O Allah, strengthen Islam with one of th
Jahl or Umar ibn al-Khattab." (Jami at-Tirmidhi, hasan)

That prayer was about to be answered.

The companions gathered at the house of al-Arqam heard the knock. Hamzah looked out. "It's Umar," he said.
"With his sword." Nobody moved. The Prophet ﷺ said simply: "Let him in."

Umar entered. The room was silent. Every pair of eyes watched him.

The Prophet ﷺ stepped forward. He took Umar by his robe and pulled him clo

The lion of Makkah — the man who had set out to silence Islam forever — said: "I come to believe in Allah and His Messenger and what he has brought from Allah."

The room erupted. The companions shouted "Allahu Akbar!" so loudly, Ibn Hisham records, it echoed out into the street.

From that day, everything changed. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, one of the Prophet' said: "We have always been in strength since Umar embraced Islam." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Before Umar, the Muslims prayed in corners, in secret, in fear. After Umar, they lined up at the Ka'bah and prayed in rows — openly — for the very first time.

Here is what you should hold onto from Umar's story: he was the last person anyone expected. The most feared, the most stubborn, the one with the sword already drawn. If his heart could be cracked open by fourteen lines of Quran — then no heart is too hard, and no moment is too late.

He set out to destroy something that afternoon.

He came back weeping, holding it in both hands like something precious.

That is the power of truth, meeting a heart that — even without knowing it — was ready.

CHAPTER III

Chapter 3: The Generous One — Uthman ibn Affan (RA)

Uthman ibn Affan (RA) was the kind of man who whispered when he could have shouted. Who gave before anyone thought to ask.

He was born into one of the wealthiest families in Makkah, and by the time he was a young man, his trading caravans crossed the Arabian Peninsula loaded with cloth, perfume, and fine goods. He could have spent his entire life adding to what he already had. Instead, the moment he heard the P about Islam, he opened his hands — and never really closed them again.

The Prophet ﷺ loved Uthman (RA) with a deep, particular love. He once said, of whom the angels themselves are shy?" (Sahih Muslim, 2401) Think about what that means for a moment. The Prophet ﷺ gave Uthman his daughter Ruqayyah (RA) in marriage. When R him his daughter Umm Kulthum (RA) too. No other man in all of history ever married two daughters of a prophet. This is why Uthman earned a title unlike any other: Dhun-Nurayn — the Possessor of Two Lights.

But Uthman's most famous light was the one that came from his open hand.

The Well That Was Never Locked Again

In the early years in Madinah, the city had one good well — the Well of Rumah. The man who owned it sold the water for profit, and the Muslims, many of them poor and far from home, often went thirsty. The Prophet ﷺ made an announcement: "Who will buy the Well of Rumah and give its wate receive something better than it in Paradise?"

Uthman (RA) bought it. Right away. He paid from his own wealth, threw open the gate, and told everyone — Muslim and non-Muslim alike — to draw water freely from that day on. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

He never made a speech about it. It was just done.

The Army That Had Nothing

In the year 9 AH, word reached Madinah that the Byzantine Empire — the mightiest military power on earth — was massing a huge army near the northern border, at a place called Tabuk Muslims to march north. Through summer desert. Hundreds of miles. In punishing heat.

There was one enormous problem. The army had nothing.

It was harvest season, and families in Madinah were already stretched thin. The soldiers who wanted to fight had no camels to carry their food, no horses for battle, not enough provisions to survive a desert crossing. The companions looked at one another. The courage was there. The equipment was not.

The Prophet ﷺ stood before them and asked: "Who will equip the Army of Ha

Uthman (RA) stood up.

He went home and returned carrying more than anyone had expected. Nine hundred camels, saddled and loaded. One hundred horses. And one thousand gold dinars, poured directly from his hands into the cause of Allah. (Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya; Mubarakpuri, Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum; Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

Stop and picture nine hundred camels. Standing in rows. Packed with food and water and supplies. That is a small city moving across the sand. That is an army brought back from the edge of impossible.

Uthman (RA) did not do this because someone forced him. He did not do it to be praised or remembered. He did it because he loved Allah and he loved His Prophet ﷺ, and in that momen

The Prophet ﷺ was so moved that he raised his hands and made du'a for Uthm
He turned the gold coins over in his fingers and said:

"Nothing Uthman does after today can harm him." (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

He said it twice.

What the Open Hand Teaches

Uthman (RA) later became the third Caliph of all the Muslims. Even then, he lived simply — fasting often, praying long into the night, completing his recitation of the whole Qur'an with quiet devotion. He had given away the kind of wealth most people only dream about, and he carried himself as though he had done nothing unusual at all.

That, perhaps, is the most remarkable thing.

When you give for the sake of Allah — not for applause, not for a thank-you, not so people will remember your name — the gift becomes something bigger than you. Nine hundred camels crossed a desert. An army reached Tabuk. And a quiet, gentle man with open hands became one of the most beloved figures in all of Islamic history. Not because of what he kept. Because of what he gave away.

CHAPTER IV

Chapter 4: The Brave Heart — Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)

The plan was set. Forty men. One house. One dawn.

The leaders of the Quraysh had chosen one warrior from every tribe in Makkah — forty swords, forty hands. If they all struck together, no single clan could be blamed. The Prophet Muh the sun climbed high. They were certain of it.

They gathered in the dark outside his door and waited.

Inside, the Prophet ﷺ already knew. Allah had told him. Now he turned to the cousin, who had lived under his roof since childhood, who had been among the very first people on earth to believe in him — and made a request most people would never dare ask of anyone.

"Will you sleep in my bed tonight?" the Prophet ﷺ said. "Wrapped in my gree am still here."

Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) said yes. Right away.

Ali had been close to the Prophet ﷺ for as long as he could remember. When around five or six years old — the Prophet ﷺ had brought him home to live w on Ali's father Abu Talib, who had many children and little money. Growing up in that house meant watching the Prophet ﷺ rise before dawn to pray, watching him speak gently, watching When the Prophet ﷺ first called his close family to Islam, Ali — only about very first to stand up and say he believed (Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira Al-Nabawiyya).

He had known nothing but love for this man. And now that love was asking something of him.

So Ali wrapped himself in the green Hadhrami cloak and lay down in the Pro Al-Makhtum, Mubarakpuri). Outside in the darkness, forty armed men breathed quietly, watching the door. The Prophet ﷺ, reciting the opening of Surah Ya-Sin under his breath, walke away into the night.

Ali lay still.

He knew about the forty swords. He knew what dawn would bring. He was perhaps twenty-two years old, alone in the dark, with nothing between himself and those men but a wooden door and the mercy of Allah.

He did not run.

When the men burst through at daybreak and ripped back the cloak, they found Ali sitting up — calm, looking straight back at them. The Prophet ﷺ was gone. Miles away. Safe. Th Prophet ﷺ had promised Ali he would be unharmed, and so he was (Ibn Hisha

Ali then spent three more days in Makkah doing something quiet and important. He returned every single trust — every item, every belonging — that people had left with the Prophet kept back. Only once every debt had been honoured did he walk the long desert road to Madinah.

This kind of courage followed Ali (RA) his whole life. At the Battle of Khaybar — a great fortress that had resisted every attempt to take it — the Prophet ﷺ gathered his companions ar this flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and whom Allah and His Messenger love. At his hands, Allah will grant us victory." (Sahih Bukhari 2975; Sahih Muslim 2405)

Every companion hoped it would be him. The next morning, the Prophet ﷺ ca

The flag changed hands. The fortress fell.

The Prophet ﷺ once told him: "You are to me as Harun was to Musa — except after me." (Sahih Bukhari 3706; Sahih Muslim 2404). Harun stood beside his brother at the most frightening moments of the mission. That is who Ali was to Muhammad ﷺ.

Here is what that night in Makkah teaches, if you sit with it long enough.

Bravery is not having no fear. Fear is human — even the bravest hearts feel it. Bravery is looking at the fear, feeling it fully, and then choosing someone else over yourself anyway.

Ali (RA) was young. He was surrounded. He could have said no.

He said yes.

That yes helped the Prophet ﷺ reach Madinah. That yes helped Islam survive that yes has been remembered, with wonder and gratitude, for over fourteen hundred years.

CHAPTER V

Chapter 5: The First Believer — Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA)

The cave on Mount Hira was silent the way only mountains can be. Just bare rock, a single man, and the dark sky above Makkah. It was the year 610 CE. Muhammad ﷺ had been climbing t sitting alone, thinking about the world, about why people were cruel and why no one seemed to know the truth anymore.

Then everything changed.

The angel Jibril appeared and commanded: "Read!" Muhammad ﷺ felt himself he might break. "I cannot read," he gasped. Three times it happened. Three times. And then the first words of the Quran poured into his ears:

> *"Read in the name of your Lord who created — created man from a clinging substance." (Quran 96:1–2)*

Then the angel was gone. And Muhammad ﷺ ran.

He ran down the mountainside, trembling all over, and burst through the door of his home crying: "Zammiluni! Zammiluni!" — Cover me! Cover me!

She covered him. She held him close. She did not panic.

That steady, loving response was the very first gift the world of Islam ever received.

The Woman Who Stood Like a Mountain

Her name was Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA). Long before she became the Pro one of the most respected people in all of Makkah. Traders knew her name. Her caravans rolled north to Syria and south to Yemen, carrying cloth and spices across the great desert roads. She was so honest and so generous that the people of Makkah gave her the name at-Tahira — the Pure One. She had been widowed twice and raised her children with quiet strength, and still her trading business was the finest in the city.

It was her caravan that a young man named Muhammad had led to Syria — and he had managed it with such honesty and skill that her servant Maysarah returned in amazement, telling Khadijah everything he had witnessed along the way. She had already been watching this man: his truthfulness, his gentleness, the way he treated everyone around him with respect.

She proposed marriage to him herself. He was twenty-five. She was forty. They were married for twenty-five years, and in all that time the Prophet ﷺ never took another wife. She was hi

home.

"Allah Will Never Disgrace You"

So when he came through the door trembling that night — when he told her what had happened on that mountain, the angel, the squeeze, the words he had not expected — she did not doubt him for a single breath.

She said: "By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your family. You speak the truth. You help those who cannot help themselves. You honour your guests and stand by people when they need you most." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3)

Write those words somewhere. When everyone in Makkah was mocking or threatening or simply shaking their heads — Khadijah had already said yes. She was the first human being on earth to believe in the prophethood of Muhammad ýú.

She took him to her elderly cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a man who had studied the ancient scriptures carefully. Waraqah listened, leaned close, and said: "This is the same angel that Allah sent to Moses!" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 3)

The years that followed were hard ones. The Quraysh mocked and threatened. Early Muslims were beaten in the streets. Khadijah gave her wealth freely — to protect believers, to feed the hungry, to hold the fragile new community together — without complaint and without hesitation. She bore th
Abdullah, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatimah (RA). Both boys died young. That grief sat heavy on them both.

Khadijah (RA) passed away in 619 CE — just three years before the great migration to Madinah. The Prophet ýú never stopped honouring her memory. Long after she was gone, whenever a
home, he would set aside portions and send them to her closest friends. Just to remember her. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Aisha (RA) once asked, with a small hint of jealousy, why he still spoke of Khadijah so often. He answered simply: "She believed in me when people rejected me, she testified to my truth when others called me a liar, and she supported me with her wealth when others denied me." (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

That is what believing in someone truly means.

Not when it is easy. Not when the whole crowd agrees. But in the moment a person comes running down a mountain, frightened and trembling, and you already know — before anyone else in the world does — that they are telling the truth.

Khadijah knew. She said yes first.

And Islam found its very first home in her arms.

CHAPTER VI

Chapter 6: The Scholar of the Ummah — Aisha bint Abi Bakr (RA)

The Prophet ﷺ passed away on a Monday morning, in the month of Rabi' al- old. And Aisha (RA) — his beloved wife, the daughter of his closest friend Abu Bakr (RA) — was still a young woman.

Young. And already carrying more knowledge than most scholars gather in a lifetime.

She had lived beside the Prophet ﷺ for nine years. She had watched him pray his feet aching from standing so long in the night. She had seen him come home and go quietly about the household, helping, serving, never sitting idle. She had heard him laugh — a gentle, soundless laugh that lit his whole face — and heard him weep so deeply in du'a that his beard grew wet with tears. Every detail, every word, every small habit pressed itself into her memory like a seal pressed into warm wax.

And now he was gone.

The Companions came to her. Quietly at first, then in steady streams — men and women both, carrying questions the way people carry heavy bundles on a long road. How did the Pr prayer? What did he recite? How did he treat the people who lived under his roof? She answered every question. Clearly. Precisely. Without a moment's hesitation.

The Woman Behind the Curtain

After the Prophet's ﷺ passing, Aisha (RA) stayed in Madinah, in the small ro the very room where he now lay buried. She taught from behind a curtain, as befitting her rank as Umm al-Mu'minin, Mother of the Believers — a title Allah gave to the wives of th (Quran 33:6). Scholars and students would settle on the other side of that curtain and ask. She answered. And when a Companion passed along something she knew was mistaken, she said so — firmly, but with the warmth of someone who genuinely wanted the truth to be told correctly.

She corrected great men. She did it with respect. And they listened.

Al-Dhahabi, the great biographer of the scholars, recorded that Aisha (RA) narrated 2,210 hadiths (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala). More than almost any Companion in the whole history of Islam. She knew medicine and was sought out for it. She knew Arabic poetry and could quote verses from memory without pause. She knew the genealogies of the Arab tribes better than many elders. And Urwah ibn al-Zubayr — her own nephew, son of Az-Zubayr (RA) — sat at her feet as a young student and grew into one of the leading scholars of the next generation in Madinah.

What She Remembered

Think of your favourite memory of someone you love. Maybe it is the sound of their voice, or the way they always made time for you, or some small ordinary thing they did every single day.

Aisha (RA) remembered everything.

She remembered that the Prophet ﷺ always entered his home with a smile. Sh
the household — keeping himself busy serving his family, doing whatever needed doing, until the time of prayer called him outside (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Good Manners). She remembered the sound of his recitation in the night prayer, rising and falling like water moving over quiet stones. When someone once asked her about his character, she did not give a long list of noble qualities. She said simply: "His character was the Quran." (Sahih Muslim)

Six words. And somehow they said everything.

The Gift That Only Grows

Knowledge is not like bread. Share bread, and there is less. Share knowledge, and there is more — because it lives on in every person who receives it, and again in every person they teach.

Aisha (RA) knew this the way she knew the verses of the Quran by heart. She gave and gave and kept giving,
teaching for decades after the Prophet ﷺ passed, until she left this world in
are still here — in your salah, in your home, in everything a Muslim knows t
actually prayed, actually laughed, actually lived.

She started young.

So the question for you is not "Am I old enough to learn?"

The question is: what will you do with what you already know?

CHAPTER VII

Chapter 7: The Flower of the Prophet bint Muhammad (RA)

Her name means "one who weans" — one who turns away from what is harmful. But to her father, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, she was simply his flower. His heart. The piece of him earth.

Fatimah bint Muhammad (RA) was the youngest of the Prophet's ﷺ daughters, Khadijah (RA). She grew up in a house full of faith — but also full of difficulty. She watched her father mocked in the streets of Makkah. She saw him come home with dirt thrown on his shoulders by cruel men who wanted Islam gone. And more than once, it was young Fatimah who knelt beside him, brushed him clean, and held his hand.

When Khadijah (RA) — her mother, her warmth, the very first believer — passed away, Fatimah was still a child. She stepped up quietly. She cooked. She cared. The Prophet ﷺ called h her father. That name says everything.

She grew into a woman of extraordinary grace. Gentle. Serious. Devoted. The is a part of me. Whoever angers her, angers me." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3767 — sahih)

When she was grown, she married Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) — her brave cousin, the one who had risked his life lying in the Prophet's ﷺ bed on the most dangerous night of the Hijrah. It wa not an easy one.

Their home was small. Their life was simple. No servants. No cushions. No hired help. Fatimah (RA) did everything herself — cooking, cleaning, hauling water. She ground grain by hand every single day, pressing and turning a heavy stone mill to make flour for bread. Day after day. Week after week. Until her palms — the soft palms of the Prophet's ﷺ own daughter — were rough, blistered, and

She never complained. Not once.

But one day she heard that prisoners had arrived in Madinah and that her father might have someone to spare — a helper to ease the grinding. She went to him. He wasn't there. She left a message with Aisha (RA) and returned home.

That night, as Fatimah and Ali (RA) lay resting, they heard a gentle knock at the door.

It was him.

The Prophet ﷺ had come to them.

"Do not get up," he said softly, and sat close beside them. He took their hands. And then he offered something they would carry for the rest of their lives.

"Shall I not teach you something better than what you asked for?"

He taught them the tasbeeh of Fatimah.

Before you sleep, he told her, say SubhanAllah thirty-three times. Say Alhamdulillah thirty-three times. Say Allahu Akbar thirty-four times. One hundred words in the quiet dark. That is better for you than a servant.

(Sahih al-Bukhari, 5361; Sahih Muslim, 2727 — sahih)

Ali (RA) later said he never once abandoned this practice after that night. Not a single night.

Think about what just happened. Fatimah (RA) had blistered hands and an aching body. She was the daughter of the most honoured man on earth. She could have felt sorry for herself. She could have expected an easier life — fine clothes, soft bread already made, someone else doing the hard work. But when her father came with words instead of a servant, she accepted them with full and open hands.

That is who she was.

She did not ask for comfort. She asked for strength. And Allah — through th gave her something that outlasted every servant who ever lived. The tasbeeh of Fatimah has been whispered by hundreds of millions of Muslims every single night for over fourteen hundred years.

Her calloused palms ground grain for one small family.

Her patient heart, and those hundred words before sleep, still feed the whole Ummah.

She passed away only six months after her father ýú — the first of his family had once whispered to her through his tears, smiling. (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3433 — sahih)

Noble. Simple. Radiant.

The Flower of the Prophet ýú.

CHAPTER VIII

Chapter 8: The Guardian of the Qur'an — Hafsah bint Umar (RA)

The year was twelve after the Hijrah. In a valley called Yamama, a terrible battle had just ended — and when the counting was done, the Muslims felt a fear they had never felt before. Seventy reciters of the Qur'an had been killed. Seventy men who had carried the words of Allah inside their chests, word by word, verse by verse. Gone in a single battle.

Umar ibn al-Khattab went straight to Abu Bakr, the Caliph. "I am afraid," he said, "that more reciters will die in other battles and much of the Qur'an will be lost." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Abu Bakr listened. He acted. He called for a man named Zayd ibn Thabit — o trusted scribes — and gave him the most important task anyone had ever been given: gather every single verse of the Qur'an, from palm-leaf stalks, from flat white stones, from the hearts of men who carried it in memory, and write it all together in one bound copy.

Zayd worked with great care. When every verse had been checked and double-checked and the pages were finally bound, one question remained: who should keep this?

They chose Hafsah.

But who was Hafsah?

She was Umar's daughter, which already tells you something. Sharp. Serious. Brave in a quiet way. And she had something rare for anyone in seventh-century Arabia: she could read and write. Most people in Makkah could do neither. That mattered enormously.

She had been married once before. Her first husband, Khunays ibn Hudhafah al-Sahmi, was one of the earliest Muslims — a man who fought in the first battles of Islam and came home wounded, dying not long after from those wounds. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi) Hafsah was young when he died. Young, and grieving, and alone.

Her father Umar did what a loving father does. He looked for a new husband for her. He went to Uthman ibn Affan, who had just lost his own wife and gently said no. He went to Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr said nothing at all — which frustrated Umar tremendously — until Abu Bakr explained later: he had already heard that the Prophet ﷺ himself was considering proposing to Hafsah. He had not wanted t al-Bukhari)

The Prophet ﷺ did propose. Hafsah became his wife — one of the Mothers of household full of knowledge and light.

She made the most of every moment.

Hafsah fasted often. She rose before dawn to pray while the city still slept. Al-Dhahabi described her as deeply devoted in worship, a woman who took her faith quietly and seriously, never as an afterthought. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala) She memorised. She asked questions. She held close everyth her home — his words, his habits, his way of moving through the world.

When the Prophet ﷺ passed away, and then Abu Bakr passed away two years l Qur'an pages moved from Abu Bakr's keeping to Umar's. And when Umar was martyred in 23 AH, those same sacred pages came to rest with his daughter. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Hafsah. The young widow who could read. The daughter of the man who had first urged the whole compilation to begin. The woman who prayed through the night.

The world's most precious written document was now in her hands.

Years later, when Uthman became Caliph and needed to make uniform copies for the whole Muslim world, he sent word to Hafsah: please send us the pages. She sent them. Copies went to Makkah, Kufah, Basra, Syria, and beyond. The original was returned to her, and she kept it carefully until the end of her life. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Every Qur'an you have ever held traces back to those pages. And for years — many, many years — those pages lived in Hafsah's home.

Being trusted with something precious is not only an honour. It is a weight. It means careful hands every single day. It means living in a way that is worthy of the trust placed in you.

Hafsah was worthy of it. She earned it, fast by fast, prayer by prayer, year by year.

The next time you pick up the Qur'an, hold it gently. Someone who rose before dawn and took precious things seriously held it first.

CHAPTER IX

Chapter 9: Ahad! Ahad! — Bilal ibn Rabah (RA)

The sun in Makkah does not ask permission. By midday it hammers the black volcanic rock until the ground shimmers and the air itself seems to burn. It was into that heat — that merciless, relentless heat — that a man named Umayyah ibn Khalaf dragged his enslaved man, Bilal.

Every single day.

Bilal ibn Rabah (RA) was the son of an Abyssinian mother named Hamamah. He had grown up knowing chains. But the day he heard about Islam, something cracked open inside him — wide and certain — and he said yes. Fully. Without looking back.

Umayyah was furious.

He took Bilal to the open desert outside Makkah at the hottest hour. He forced him onto his back on scorching rock. Then he heaved a great boulder and pressed it down onto Bilal's chest until breathing itself became a battle.

"Renounce Muhammad," Umayyah demanded. "Say the names of our gods."

Bilal could barely speak. The stone crushed the air out of him. The sand burned his skin. And yet from somewhere deep — somewhere no boulder could ever reach — he found a word.

"Ahad."

One.

"Ahad! Ahad!"

One God. Only One. That was all he said. Not a single name of their idols passed his lips. Umayyah raged and pressed harder, and the word kept coming. Cracked. Gasped. Unbreakable.

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (RA) — whose own story opens this very book — passed by one afternoon and saw Bilal lying there on the rock. He stopped. He could not keep walking. He went to Umayyah and asked how much it would cost to buy Bilal's freedom. Umayyah, thinking he was making a fine deal, named a steep price. Abu Bakr paid it on the spot and walked Bilal away from that rock forever. Ibn Hisham records this moment in the Sira, and Mubarakpuri notes in Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum that Abu Bakr freed seven enslaved Muslims in total — Bilal among them.

Free.

That word must have felt enormous.

The Prophet ﷺ loved Bilal with a love that shows up in the most beautiful pl
"O Bilal, tell me of the most hopeful act you have done since embracing Islam — I heard your footsteps ahead of me in Paradise." Bilal thought carefully. He said that every time he performed wudu, day or night, he prayed whatever Allah made easy for him afterward. (Sahih al-Bukhari, 1149 — sahih.)

Footsteps in Paradise. That is what Umayyah could not torture out of him.

When the Muslims settled in Madinah and the question arose of how to call people to prayer, it was the Prophet ﷺ who chose Bilal. Not a wealthy chieftain. Not a man of famous fam
Ahad in the sand. His voice — deep and far-carrying, described by those who heard it as unlike any other — rang out over Madinah five times every day: Allahu Akbar. Allahu Akbar. Ash-hadu an la ilaha ill-Allah...

Whole neighbourhoods stopped what they were doing.

Children put down their games. Merchants paused mid-trade. The city breathed together toward one direction.

And it was Bilal's voice that called them there.

Al-Dhahabi, in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, writes of Bilal's immense standing among the Companions and his deep, inseparable closeness to the Prophet ﷺ. After the Prophet ﷺ passed awa
could barely bring himself to give the adhan anymore. He had called people to the Prophet's prayer for years. Without him, the call felt different. Incomplete.

Some things belong to the person who earned them in the hardest way.

You might wonder sometimes whether holding on is worth it. Whether it matters — when everything is pressing down on you — to keep saying what you believe.

Ask Bilal.

He said one word in the burning sand, and over a thousand years later, you are still reading his name.

That is what faith looks like when it has nowhere left to hide — and refuses to run.

CHAPTER X

Chapter 10: The Seeker Who Found Home — Salman al-Farsi (RA)

The fire had burned in Salman's home since before he was born. Not the fire of anger or war — the sacred fire his father tended in the village of Isfahan, in the land of Persia, a flame that Zoroastrian families like his believed carried the breath of their god. His father was the chief of their village, wealthy and respected, and Salman was the son he loved most in all the world.

For a long time, that was enough.

Then one afternoon, everything changed.

Salman's father sent him on an errand past a Christian church. He heard voices inside — prayers, soft and rising. He stepped closer. Then closer. Then he sat down and listened for the rest of the day, completely forgetting his errand, his father, his home. Something in those prayers pulled at a part of him he hadn't known existed.

When he finally came home, his father was frantic. Salman tried to explain: I heard these people praying and I think their religion might be truer than ours. His father was horrified. He locked Salman in the house, afraid of what his son was becoming.

But you cannot lock away a question once it has woken up inside you.

Chasing the Truth Across the World

Salman found a way to reach the Christians of Syria. He sat at the feet of their bishop and learned. When that bishop died, he recommended another in Mosul. Then another in Nisibis. Then another in the Byzantine town of Amuriyya. Salman followed each teacher carrying nothing but his hunger for truth and whatever small work he could find to sustain himself.

The priest in Amuriyya was old and dying when Salman arrived. In his final days, Salman sat beside him. One question burned: If you know of anyone who still carries the purest religion, tell me before you leave this world.

The old man said: I don't know of anyone left. But the time is near. A prophet will arise in the land of the Arabs — in a land of black volcanic rocks. He will accept gifts but never take charity for himself. And between his shoulders, he will carry the seal of prophethood.

Then the old man closed his eyes. He never opened them again.

Salman paid for passage with an Arab trading caravan heading south. He had no wealth, only hope. The caravan betrayed him. He was seized and sold as a slave in Wadi al-Qura, then sold again to a Jewish master who brought him to a city of date palms and warm, dusty air — a place called Yathrib.

He had spent years searching. Now he was enslaved, far from home, far from everyone who had ever loved him. He had no idea that the very city his master brought him to was the city a prophet would one day call home.

The Three Signs

When news swept through Yathrib that a man named Muhammad ﷺ had arrived hammered in his chest. He gathered some food and brought it to the Prophet ﷺ charity for those in need. The Prophet ﷺ passed it to his companions. He did

First sign.

Salman came back with more food, this time calling it a gift. The Prophet ﷺ others to share with him.

Second sign.

Salman then walked slowly around behind him. The Prophet ﷺ understood — g his robe to reveal the space between his shoulders.

There it was. The seal. Exactly as the old priest in Amuriyya had described, decades ago, in a different country, in what felt like a different lifetime.

Salman (RA) wept. He could not stop. He had crossed great distances and oceans of grief, been enslaved and betrayed, buried teacher after teacher — and here, at last, was the truth he had spent his whole life chasing.

He embraced Islam right there.

Later, the Prophet ﷺ helped Salman (RA) earn his freedom. He asked his com seedlings — thirty from this man, twenty from that one — until three hundred were gathered. Then the Prophet ﷺ planted every single one with his own blessed hands. Not one of th At the Battle of the Trench, it was Salman (RA) who suggested the brilliant Persian tactic of digging a defensive ditch around Madinah, a strategy that protected the entire Muslim city.

And the Prophet ﷺ — that man who had shared Salman's food as a gift and qu his shoulder — looked at this Persian man from Isfahan and said something no one forgot:

"Salman is one of us — the People of the House." (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

No bloodline required. No country. No tribe. Only a lifetime spent refusing to stop looking.

The truth does not always come quickly. Salman (RA) spent decades searching — through fire temples, through churches, through slavery and loss. He traveled further and suffered more than almost any other companion. He could have stopped any number of times. He didn't.

And he didn't just find the truth in the end. He found a home.

That is what the search for truth does, if you hold on long enough. It doesn't only answer your questions. It brings you somewhere you finally belong.

CHAPTER XI

Chapter 11: A Profitable Trade — Suhaib ar-Rumi (RA)

A Boy the Romans Stole

Suhaib's story begins far from Makkah. Far from Arabia, even.

He was born near al-Ubullah, in a land of rivers and date palms, to a family of Arab nobility. His father served as a governor in the region. But when Suhaib was still a small boy — young enough that the world felt enormous and frightening — a Byzantine Roman raiding party swept through and took him. Captured. Carried off across land and sea to the Roman Empire, where he was enslaved and raised among strangers who spoke a different tongue.

He grew up speaking Latin and Greek before he fully mastered Arabic. That accent never quite left him. The Arabs of Makkah would later call him ar-Rumi — the Roman — not to mock him, but because it was simply true. He had been shaped by two worlds.

Eventually Suhaib made his way to Makkah and rebuilt his life with his bare hands. He became a merchant. A sharp one. Over years of trading, buying, selling, and negotiating in the busy markets of Makkah, he saved up a considerable fortune — gold coins buried carefully for safekeeping, camels, goods, a life he had constructed from nothing.

Then he met the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

He heard the message of Islam and his heart recognized something it had been searching for through every year of captivity and every year of building and every year of wandering. He became Muslim early. Among the first. And with that came danger, because the Quraysh of Makkah did not welcome those who left their old ways.

The Road Out of Makkah

When the Prophet ﷺ gave permission for the Muslims to emigrate to Madinah, packed what he could. He was ready.

He did not get far.

A group of Qurayshi men spotted him on the road and blocked his path. They were angry. They had watched this foreign-born man grow rich in their city, and now he meant to leave and take that wealth to the Prophet's ﷺ new community in Madinah? Absolutely not.

"You came to us poor," one of them said, roughly. "You grew rich here among us. You think you can just walk away with all of it?"

Suhaib stopped. He looked at the men in front of him. He looked at the road stretching toward Madinah behind them — toward the Prophet ﷺ, toward his brothers and sisters in faith mattered.

He made a decision so fast it might surprise you.

"What if I tell you where my gold is buried?" he said. "All of it. Every coin. You take it — and you let me pass."

They agreed.

He told them exactly where to dig. Then he walked through them, head up, with nothing in his pockets and everything in his chest.

What a Profitable Trade

When Suhaib reached Madinah and the Prophet ﷺ saw him coming down the ro had owned, but alive and free — the Prophet ﷺ broke into the biggest smile. filled the whole street:

"Ribhu al-bay', Abu Yahya!"

"What a profitable trade, O Abu Yahya!"

(Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya; Mubarakpuri, Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum)

And it was a profitable trade. Think about it. Suhaib had given away gold that would run through your fingers and vanish. He had arrived in a place where he belonged, among people who loved him, beside the man whom Allah had sent as a mercy to all the worlds. He had purchased his own freedom — real freedom, the kind no raiding party could take, no captor could chain, no threat could dissolve — with coins buried in the Makkan sand.

Allah spoke of people like Suhaib in the Quran: "And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah. And Allah is kind to His servants." (Quran 2:207, Sahih International)

The Lesson

Some things cannot be weighed on any scale. Suhaib had learned that the hard way, as a stolen child, as a slave, as a man who built something from nothing and then gave it all away without blinking.

Wealth is useful. Gold is real. But faith — and the people you love and the truth you hold — those are worth every coin you will ever have.

The wisest trade is the one made for the sake of Allah.

CHAPTER XII

Chapter 12: The Ambassador — Mus'ab ibn Umayr (RA)

The streets of Makkah had seen many fine young men. None quite like Mus'ab.

His robes were Yemeni cloth, the softest money could buy. His perfume arrived by caravan and lingered in every room he entered long after he had gone. Merchants knew his family. His mother, Khunnas bint Malik, dressed him the way some mothers bake — with tremendous love and no sense of when to stop. According to al-Dhahabi in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, he was the most handsome and best-dressed young man in all of Makkah. The kind of person everyone noticed.

Then one quiet afternoon, everything changed.

He slipped away to the house of al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam, tucked near Mount Safa, where a small secret gathering listened to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ speak. Mus'ab sat. He listened inside him that no silk robe could ever fill. He accepted Islam that same day.

Getting home without being noticed — that was the tricky part.

For a while he managed it. He visited the Prophet ﷺ in secret, returned to hi perfumed as usual, said nothing unusual. But Makkah was a small city and secrets had short lives. Someone spotted him. Word reached his mother. She locked him up, tried everything she could think of to make him renounce Islam. He refused. Every single time.

Simple answer. Unbreakable.

He eventually slipped away to Abyssinia with the first group of Muslim emigrants, then returned to Makkah. His family had cut him off completely by now. No more fine robes. No more perfume. He wore rough, patched garments — and those who had known him in his days of luxury wept seeing him walk past in the street. He did not weep. He was exactly where he wanted to be.

The First Ambassador

After the first pledge of Aqabah — when a group of men from Yathrib came to Makkah and accepted Islam — the Prophet ﷺ needed someone to travel back with them. A teacher. Someo to pray, how to recite Qur'an, how to live as Muslims together.

He chose Mus'ab.

Not a senior elder. Not a battle-hardened general. A young man in patched cl exactly what he was doing.

Mus'ab arrived in Yathrib and stayed with As'ad ibn Zurarah (RA). He did not shout. He did not argue. He sat with people, spoke gently, and recited the Qur'an — and let the words do their own work.

One afternoon, a powerful tribal chief named Usayd ibn Hudayr came striding toward him, spear in hand, face like an approaching storm. He had been sent to throw this stranger out of the neighbourhood. Mus'ab looked up calmly and said: sit with me for a moment. If you dislike what you hear, tell me and I'll leave.

Usayd sat. He listened.

He never left Islam after that day.

When Usayd returned to his friend Sa'd ibn Mu'adh — an even greater chief — something in Usayd's eyes had changed. Sa'd went himself to confront Mus'ab. He too sat. He too listened. He too said the shahada. And when Sa'd ibn Mu'adh walked back to his own tribe, Banu Abd al-Ashhal, he stood before them and told every man and woman to enter Islam. Ibn Hisham records that by that evening, there was not one household in the tribe that had not done so.

An entire tribe. Because one young man sat quietly and told the truth.

The Grass over His Feet

Mus'ab carried the Muslim banner at the Battle of Uhud. When he fell — struck down still holding that flag — the Muslims had barely enough cloth to bury him. When they pulled the garment over his head, his feet showed. When they covered his feet, his head showed.

Khabbab ibn al-Aratt (RA) narrated this with his own grief still fresh in the them to cover his head, and to lay idhkhir — a fragrant desert grass — over his feet. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Funerals)

The same man whose perfume had once drifted through the halls of Makkah. Buried under grass.

The Prophet ýú stood over him and recited: Among the believers are men who with Allah. (Qur'an 33:23)

No silk robe could have earned that.

You may never own Yemeni cloth or carved perfume jars. It does not matter. What you do in service of others will shine long after everything you ever owned turns to dust. Mus'ab ibn Umayr left Makkah with nothing but his faith — and carried it all the way into history.

CHAPTER XIII

Chapter 13: The Patient One — Khabbab ibn al-Aratt (RA)

The blacksmith's hammer rang before sunrise.

In a narrow workshop near the heart of Makkah, a young man named Khabbab ibn al-Aratt bent over a forge, shaping iron in the orange glow. His hands were calloused. His arms were strong. But Khabbab had no freedom — captured as a boy, far from his home in the lands of Banu Tamim, sold into slavery before he was old enough to understand what was being taken from him.

He owned nothing. Not even his own time.

Then one day, something changed everything.

Word reached Khabbab about a man in Makkah — a man named Muhammad ýú — justice, of truth. Khabbab listened. He thought. He felt something stir in his chest like warm iron being shaped into something beautiful. And he walked to that man and said: I believe.

He was among the very first. Scholars count him as the sixth or seventh person to embrace Islam — before there were even forty Muslims in all the world.

He paid for it immediately.

The Fire That Would Not Break Him

Khabbab's enslaver, a Qurayshi woman named Umm Anmar, discovered his faith and was furious. To her, a slave who chose his own God was a slave with dangerous ideas. She decided to beat those ideas out of him.

She had iron rods heated in the fire until they glowed white. Then she pressed them against Khabbab's head. Against his skin. Her companions from the Quraysh joined in. They would heap real coals — red, blazing, spitting sparks — and press Khabbab's bare back down onto them, holding him there, waiting for him to say the three words they needed: I leave Islam.

He never said them.

The coals burned until they went cold. Khabbab's flesh put them out. The scars that formed on his back were deep and permanent, the kind that don't fade with years. But the faith in his heart — untouched. Not once did it flicker.

He was not special in the way people usually mean. No chieftain's son. No powerful tribe behind him. No uncle to stand up and threaten his abusers into stopping. He was a slave, completely alone, facing people who

legally owned him.

And still. He held on.

The Shade of the Ka'bah

One afternoon, Khabbab and some of the early Muslims came to the Prophet ﷺ the Ka'bah, his cloak folded beneath him. They were exhausted. Raw. They said: O Messenger of Allah, will you not ask Allah to help us? Will you not pray for us?

The Prophet ﷺ sat up. His face was serious, his eyes steady and clear.

He said: "Among the nations before you, a man would be seized and a ditch dug for him in the earth, and a saw placed upon his head and he would be cut in two — yet that would not make him leave his religion. Iron combs would be dragged through his flesh down to the bone — and still he would not abandon his faith. By Allah, this religion will be completed until a traveller rides from Sana'a to Hadramawt fearing nothing but Allah, or a wolf attacking his sheep. But you are being hasty." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Hasty. He was telling them: You will be all right. Keep going.

Short words. But they carried the weight of mountains.

Khabbab kept going.

Scars That Told the Story

Years later, after the Muslims had reached Madinah and the worst of the persecution was behind them, Khabbab lifted his shirt and showed the Prophet ﷺ his back. The skin was rid coal, every burning rod, every single day he had refused to break. Al-Dhahabi records in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala that his back was almost entirely scarred over.

The Prophet ﷺ looked at those marks. And his eyes filled with tenderness.

Those scars were not a sign of defeat. They were proof. Proof that a person could stand in the middle of unbearable pain and still hold on to what was true. Khabbab ibn al-Aratt did not survive that torture because he felt nothing. He survived it because something inside him was stronger than pain.

That something was sabr — patience. Not the soft, comfortable kind. The iron kind. Forged in fire. The same fire he worked beside every morning at his forge.

You will face hard things in your life. Not coals on your back — but hard things, real things. And on those days, remember the blacksmith who went home with burn scars and a heart that nobody could touch. His patience was not forgotten by Allah.

It never is.

CHAPTER XIV

Chapter 14: The Sword of Allah — Khalid ibn al-Walid (RA)

The best soldiers in Makkah all knew one thing: do not stand between Khalid ibn al-Walid and his enemy.

He was born into the Makhzum clan — one of Quraysh's most powerful families — and from boyhood he understood horses and battle lines the way some children understand stories or songs. He could read a battlefield the way you or I might read a face. Danger here. Weakness there. Strike now.

For years, that brilliant mind was aimed at the Muslims.

The Day the Battle Turned

The year was 3 AH. The Quraysh marched out of Makkah with three thousand fighters to crush the small Muslim community, and the two armies met at the foot of Mount Uhud.

The Prophet ﷺ had placed fifty archers on a rocky ridge to guard the Muslims' was absolute: stay at your post. No matter what happens.

The Muslims began winning. The Qurayshi lines broke and soldiers ran. Then the archers spotted glittering spoils on the ground below — and most of them climbed down to collect.

Khalid saw the opening instantly.

He swung his cavalry around the hill, struck the Muslim rear from behind, and what had been a victory crumbled in minutes. Seventy companions were martyred that day. The Prophet tooth chipped, blood running down his face. It was one of the hardest days the early Muslim community had ever known. (Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya; Mubarakpuri, Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum)

Khalid had not used brute force. He had used his mind.

But something was already shifting inside that same mind.

The Crack in the Wall

Khalid watched Islam grow. He was at Hudaybiyyah in 6 AH, standing with the Qurayshi delegation as they faced the Prophet ﷺ across the treaty boundary. He watched the stillness on t He thought.

The questions came faster than he could push them away. What if this man truly is a prophet from Allah? What if I have spent years fighting the very truth I was searching for?

He could not silence them.

In Safar of 8 AH, Khalid made his choice. He rode to Madinah.

The Prophet ﷺ greeted him with warmth and with joy. "Praise be to Allah wh
Khalid gave his pledge of faith. "I had hoped Allah would direct your mind towards what is good." (Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya; Mubarakpuri, Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum)

Years of fighting the wrong battle were behind him. The best was still ahead.

The Sword Unsheathed

Only months after his conversion, Khalid stood at Mu'tah — one of the most desperate moments in early Islamic history.

A Muslim army of three thousand had marched to face a Byzantine force many times their size. Three commanders fell in battle, one after another: Zayd ibn Harithah (RA), then Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (RA), then Abdullah ibn Rawahah (RA). Each time a commander fell, the banner passed to another hand — until Khalid ibn al-Walid grasped it.

He did not charge blindly forward. He reorganised the lines. In the darkness of night he shifted his columns, bringing fresh soldiers to the front so the enemy would face a different formation at dawn and hesitate. He pulled the Muslim forces out — not crushed, but intact and alive.

In Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ had already told the companions what was unfoldi
gave him — his eyes filling with tears as he named each fallen commander. Then he said that Khalid had taken the banner and fought, and Allah had granted relief through him. The P
from the swords of Allah." (Sahih al-Bukhari, al-Maghazi; Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

Sayfullah. The Sword of Allah.

From that day forward, in every campaign he led for Islam, Khalid was never once defeated.

The Gift, Rightly Aimed

When Khalid lay dying in his bed — an old warrior, his chest and arms mapped with scars — he wept. He had fought in more battles than he could count, yet Allah had chosen for him to die in peace, not on the field. He had wanted so badly to give everything. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

That longing tells you who he had become.

The same genius that broke a Muslim army at Uhud spent the rest of his life defending those very same people. Nothing changed about Khalid's mind. Only its direction.

Your gifts work the same way. Courage pointed the wrong way makes a bully. Pointed rightly, it makes someone who shields others from harm. A sharp mind used for selfish ends causes damage. Placed in service

of something greater, it moves mountains. Khalid ibn al-Walid (RA) is proof that the greatest moment in a person's life is not the day they discover what they are good at — it is the day they finally choose what to use it for.

CHAPTER XV

Chapter 15: The First Arrow — Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (RA)

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas was seventeen years old when he became a Muslim.

Seventeen. In a world that measured men by their battles and their beards, he was barely past boyhood. But something in Sa'd had always burned with a quiet certainty that the truth was worth more than comfort. When Abu Bakr (RA) came to him and spoke of the message the Prophet ﷺ had rece listened carefully — then walked straight to the Prophet ﷺ himself and said very first Muslims in all of Makkah, before the news had spread through most of the city. (Ibn Hisham, al-Sira al-Nabawiyya; al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala)

The Prophet's ﷺ mother, Aminah, had come from the same clan: Banu Zuhra. of the Arabs, the Prophet's ﷺ maternal uncle — a title the Prophet ﷺ would m Sa'd close to his side as if that kinship were a gift.

Sa'd's own mother did not share that warmth. Not at first.

She loved her son completely, the way good mothers do. And when she heard he had left the religion of their fathers for this new faith, she decided love would be her weapon. She announced she would not eat, would not drink, and would not shelter from the sun until Sa'd returned to her old ways. Days passed. She grew pale and thin. Neighbours who saw her begged Sa'd to give in.

He knelt beside her and held her hands gently. "By Allah," he told her, "if you had a hundred souls and they left your body one by one, I would not abandon this religion." He wept for her. He begged her to eat. But he would not let go of what he knew was true. She finally relented. And the Quran spoke to this very moment, instructing every believer to honour their parents with love and kindness — but never to follow them away from the truth. ("But if they strive against you to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them but accompany them in this world with appropriate kindness." Quran 31:15, Sahih International; narrated by Sa'd, Sahih Muslim)

Then came the arrow.

It was an early expedition — a small patrol sent toward Rabigh, led by Ubayda ibn al-Harith (RA). (Ibn Hisham, al-Sira al-Nabawiyya) The Quraysh appeared on the road ahead. The Muslims raised their weapons. And Sa'd, still young, still the teenager from Makkah, drew his bow, steadied his breath, and released.

The first arrow ever fired in defence of Islam.

He would say it himself, years later, without any boasting — just matter-of-factly, the way you describe something that simply happened to be true: "I was the first among the Arabs to shoot an arrow in the way of Allah." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

One arrow. And history shifted.

The Prophet ﷺ loved Sa'd with a particular tenderness. At Uhud, when arrows and the battlefield had turned to chaos, the Prophet ﷺ stood at Sa'd's shoulde again: "Shoot, Sa'd — may my father and mother be your ransom!" (Sahih al-Bukhari) Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) later told people he had never heard the Prophet ﷺ offer both his parents as Just him. Just this boy who had once raised a bow at Rabigh and refused, absolutely refused, to be afraid.

The greatest chapter of Sa'd's life came decades later, in the flat desert east of Arabia.

Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA), now the Caliph, needed a commander to face the Sassanid Persian Empire — rulers of half the known world for centuries, with war elephants, armoured cavalry, and an army that had never truly been broken. He chose Sa'd. The Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, in 636 CE, lasted four grinding days. Sa'd was so ill he could not stand; he directed his forces from an upper room overlooking the battlefield, watching through a window, praying between commands. (Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum, Mubarakpuri) His army held. The Persians broke. The gates of Iraq swung open to Islam.

All of that — the collapse of an empire, an entire people turning toward the light — traces back to one young man, one raised bow, one released arrow on a dusty road near Rabigh.

You may feel like your courage is small, like your actions are too ordinary to matter. Sa'd was seventeen when he chose truth over everything. His first arrow is still echoing.

CHAPTER XVI

Chapter 16: The Keeper of Hadith — Abu Hurayrah (RA)

His real name was Abd ar-Rahman. But nobody called him that.

Everyone called him Abu Hurayrah — Father of the Little Kitten — because even as a boy back in Yemen, he wandered around with a tiny cat tucked under his arm, never quite willing to put it down. Al-Dhahabi records this small, affectionate detail in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, and it tells you something right away about the man: warm, tender, the kind of person that animals trust.

He arrived in Madinah in the seventh year after the Hijrah — around the time of the campaign at Khaybar — with nothing on his back and very little in his stomach. No house. No family nearby. No money. He walked into the Prophet's mosque and found a group of men just like him: the Ahl as-Suffah, the People of the Bench. They slept on the raised veranda at the back of the mosque, fed by charity, with the sky above them and the cool stone floor beneath. Abu Hurayrah joined them.

He was hungry most of the time. Not a little hungry. The kind of hungry that makes the edges of your vision go dark.

He described it himself: he would sometimes collapse between the Prophet's pulpit and the room of Aisha (RA), and people passing by would press their feet against his head, thinking he was having a seizure. He wasn't. He was starving. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

He could have fixed this. The markets of Madinah were open every day. Men hired workers every morning. But Abu Hurayrah had made a choice — and it was not the choice you might expect from a hungry young man with an empty belly.

He chose to stay close to the Prophet ﷺ.

Every other companion had something pulling them away. The Ansar had date orchards and farms to tend. The Muhajirun had trades and businesses to rebuild. Abu Hurayrah had none of it, and so he had something no one else had quite so much of. Time. Every morning, every afternoon, every evening — he was there, listening. Pressing each word into his memory like a man storing grain for a long winter.

"I was a poor man," he said later. "I used to keep the company of the Messen
only." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

But the simplicity of those words hides something extraordinary.

One day he went to the Prophet ﷺ carrying a worry. "O Messenger of Allah,"
from you — and I am afraid I will forget them." The Prophet ﷺ looked at him

cloak."

Abu Hurayrah spread it out on the ground.

The Prophet ﷺ moved his hands as though gathering something — something i
— and gestured toward the cloth. "Now wrap it around yourself," he said.

Abu Hurayrah pulled the cloak up to his chest and held it there.

"After that," he said, "I never forgot a single thing." (Sahih al-Bukhari, 119)

Sit with that for a moment. A man with no pen. No paper. No way to write anything down. Just a cloak, a prayer from the most beloved of all creation, and a heart that refused to let go.

Al-Dhahabi counted the hadiths attributed to Abu Hurayrah in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala: 5,374. Five thousand, three hundred and seventy-four narrations. More than any other companion in all of history. And he only spent roughly four years in the Prophet's company before the Prophet ﷺ passe

Four years. 5,374 narrations.

He lived to be an old man, and to the very end of his life he kept teaching. Children, scholars, governors — they all came and sat beside Abu Hurayrah, and he gave them what he had been given. Every hadith he passed on was another thread of light stretching forward through time, through generations, all the way to right now.

When you hear a hadith that begins "Abu Hurayrah reported..." — and you will, because they are everywhere in Islamic learning — remember the hungry man who chose to stay. Who held his cloak to his chest. Who decided that the words of the Prophet ﷺ were worth more than any meal, any
could have offered.

That is what true love looks like. It listens. It remembers. And it never stops passing the light along.

CHAPTER XVII

Chapter 17: The Boy Who Served with Joy — Anas ibn Malik (RA)

His mother made a decision that would change his life forever.

Anas ibn Malik was ten years old — the same age you might be right now — when his mother Umm Sulaym took him by the hand and walked him to meet the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ had just arrived in Madinah, having made the great Hijrah from Makkah, and the whole city buzzed with excitement. People were bringing gifts. Families were offering hospitality. Umm Sulaym, one of the earliest Muslim women of the Ansar, brought something more personal than dates or gold.

She brought her son.

"O Messenger of Allah," she said, "here is your servant Anas, to serve you."

And so it began. Ten years. A full decade of mornings and evenings inside the household of the Prophet ﷺ, watching him eat, pray, laugh, counsel, and lead. Anas was young enough to absorb everything and old enough to remember it perfectly. Every gesture. Every word. Every kindness stored away like something precious.

What Anas witnessed would take the rest of his very long life to describe.

He lived to nearly a hundred years old, dying around 93 AH in Basra, long after most of the other Companions had gone. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi) Right up until the end, people would travel from distant cities to sit at his feet and ask: What was the Prophet ﷺ really like? And Anas would tell them again and again. He narrated more than two thousand hadith that Muslims still learn and live by today.

But the story Anas told most often — the one that surfaced whenever anyone asked what the Prophet ﷺ was truly like as a person — was not about a battle or a miracle.

It was about the way the Prophet ﷺ spoke to him.

"I served him for ten years," Anas said, "and he never once said uff to me." (Sahih al-Bukhari; Sahih Muslim)

Uff. That tiny sound — barely even a word, more a puff of impatient air — the sound a parent makes when a child spills something for the third time, or a teacher makes when the same mistake happens again. In ten years, the Prophet ﷺ never made that sound at Anas. Not once.

He never said, "Why did you do that?" He never said, "Why didn't you do this?" (Sahih al-Bukhari; Sahih Muslim)

Think about that. Ten years. One young boy, underfoot in a busy household, in a community growing and struggling and facing war. And not a single cold word. Not a single flicker of impatience ever directed at him.

There was one afternoon when the Prophet ýú sent Anas on an errand. Simple he passed a group of boys playing in the street. He was ten. He stopped. He played. Time slipped pleasantly away. When the Prophet ýú later found him, he asked gently where he had bee

Anas told him the truth.

The Prophet ýú smiled, gave him a soft pat, and called him ya bunayya — my cheerfully on his way. (Sahih Muslim) Not a lecture. Not a heavy silence that makes a child's stomach drop. Just warmth, and those two small words: my little son.

And the Prophet ýú prayed for him. "O Allah," he said, hands cupped toward t his children, and bless him in whatever You have given him." (Sahih al-Bukhari) Anas lived to see every word of that prayer answered in ways he could not have imagined as a small boy in Madinah. Wealth came. A great many children and grandchildren followed. He watched Islam spread across half the known world.

But the greatest gift was those ten years themselves.

What Anas showed us — without even trying, just by remembering out loud — is that the way you treat someone younger and smaller than yourself says everything about who you tr leader, a prophet, a man carrying the weight of revelation. He had nations to guide and enemies to face. And still, he had patience for one boy's afternoon of street games. Still, he had gentleness for every small mistake.

That is not a small thing. That is the size of a truly great heart.

CHAPTER XVIII

Chapter 18: The Ocean of Knowledge — Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA)

Three years before the Hijrah, a baby boy was born into the family closest Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib — the Prophet's ﷺ own uncle — which made little cousin. He grew up in the same orbit as greatness, close enough to hear the Qur'an recited in the next room.

But nearness alone does not make a scholar.

What made Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) unlike almost anyone before or after him was something no bloodline could give: a hunger for knowledge so relentless, so alive, that it never once rested.

A Hand on His Head

When Abdullah was still very small, the Prophet ﷺ drew him close, placed hi and raised his palms to Allah. The du'a he made was simple, and it landed like a seed in fertile ground: "O Allah, teach him wisdom and give him understanding of the religion." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

That prayer was a door. Walking through it was up to Abdullah.

The Prophet ﷺ passed away when Abdullah was around thirteen years old. Thi some children are mostly thinking about what to eat after school. Abdullah spent those years pressing every memory into his heart — every prayer he had witnessed, every word he had heard, every moment beside the man whom angels visited. He sealed them like a keeper sealing a treasury.

Still, he knew it wasn't enough.

The Boy Who Sat in the Dust

In Madinah, the senior Companions carried knowledge that no scroll could contain. Each of them had lived beside the Prophet ﷺ for years. Each of them was a living library.

Abdullah wanted everything on every shelf.

So he did something remarkable. He woke before the city stirred, walked to the home of a Companion he wished to learn from, and sat outside the door. And waited. Sometimes the ground was hard. Sometimes the sun climbed high before anyone appeared. He sat anyway, quiet and patient, with no trace of impatience on his face.

One morning he arrived at the home of Zayd ibn Thabit (RA) — one of the Pr
man whose knowledge ran deep. When Zayd came out and found the Prophet's
dust outside his door, he was astonished. He asked why Abdullah had not simply sent for him. He would have come.

Abdullah's reply was as plain as water: he was the one who needed to learn. It was only right that he come to the one who knew. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

That kind of humility, in a boy that young.

He moved from door to door, from Companion to Companion, collecting hadith the way a gardener collects seeds — carefully, one at a time, protecting each one from being dropped or forgotten. If he heard that a particular Companion had witnessed something, or knew the meaning behind a verse, he would not sleep easy until he had sat with them and listened.

He never once thought: I am the Prophet's cousin — they should come to me.

Al-Bahr

The years passed. The boy grew. And the knowledge grew faster than he did.

By the time Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) was a young man, scholars were making long journeys just to sit at his feet. He would stand in the mosque and answer questions about Qur'anic verses — questions that had kept senior scholars awake — and make each answer so clear and vivid that complicated truths felt suddenly as obvious as daylight.

His people gave him two names that have never been forgotten. Tarjuman al-Qur'an — the Interpreter of the Qur'an. And al-Bahr — the Sea.

Not a pond. Not a river. A sea. Something without visible edges, full in every direction you look.

The Companion Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (RA) said that had Ibn Abbas lived to the full age of the elders, not one among them could have rivalled him. That is a breathtaking thing to say about a young man — and al-Dhahabi recorded it because it was simply the truth. (Siyar A'lam al-Nubala)

What It Teaches You

You do not have to be old to love learning. You do not have to wait until you are grown, or fluent, or impressive.

Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) had a famous father and the most honoured cousin in human history — and he still chose to sit in the dust. He chose to wait before he spoke. He chose to ask rather than assume he already knew.

The Prophet ýú made du'a for him when he was barely old enough to stand. Bu
a shortcut. Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) walked toward that du'a every single morning before the sun came up.

If you love something — a question, a verse, an idea — chase it the way he did. Sit in the dust if you must. Wait. Listen before you speak. Ask again.

That is how an ocean fills.

CHAPTER XIX

Chapter 19: The Shield — Talhah ibn Ubaydullah (RA)

Some people love quietly. Small gestures. A kind word here, a hand held there. And then there are people like Talhah ibn Ubaydullah (RA). He loved with his whole body. Literally. His hand still tells the story.

The Boy Who Heard a Question He Could Not Forget

Talhah grew up in Makkah, born into the Banu Taym clan — the same noble tribe as Abu Bakr (RA). Handsome, sharp, already a confident merchant by the time he reached young manhood, he travelled north to the markets of Syria on business. In the busy town of Busra, a Christian monk approached him.

The monk had spent his life studying old scriptures. He looked at Talhah and asked something strange: "Has Ahmad appeared yet among the people of the Sacred Sanctuary?" Ahmad — one of the Prophet's names, the one the ancient books foretold.

Talhah didn't know. But he could not forget the question.

He hurried home to Makkah. People were already talking. A man named Muha
everyone to worship one God alone. Talhah went straight to his friend Abu Bakr (RA), who took him by the hand and led him to the Prophet ýú. That same day, Talhah became Muslim — Islam had no mosque, no army, nothing but truth to offer.

(Ibn Hisham, Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya)

The Day the Arrows Fell

Third year after Hijrah. The mountain of Uhud rose north of Madinah, red and massive, and below it, three thousand Qurayshi soldiers had come for one purpose: to finish Islam.

At first, the Muslim forces held. But then it broke. The archers on the hillside abandoned their positions, chasing the enemy's scattered belongings, and Khalid ibn al-Walid's cavalry swept around from behind. Chaos. Arrows everywhere. Companions scattered in every direction.

And the Prophet ýú was exposed.

Talhah did not move his feet. He planted himself between the Prophet ýú and — sword blows, arrows, the crush of men. When an arrow came screaming straight at the Prophet's face, Talhah threw up his bare hand.

It struck.

His fingers were destroyed on the spot — paralysed forever, from that moment on. He did not stop. He kept shielding the Prophet ﷺ, kept absorbing blows, kept pushing him toward safe
Wound after wound after wound. He would not fall, and he would not leave.

Years later, a man named Qays ibn Abi Hazim saw Talhah's hand — still withered, still frozen — and what he saw has been preserved in Sahih al-Bukhari ever since.

A hand that gave up its use so that a prophet could live. Sit with that for a moment.

What He Gave When the Fighting Was Over

Talhah's love did not only show itself on battlefields. He was one of the most generous people Madinah had ever seen. Al-Dhahabi records in Siyar A'lam al-Nubala that Talhah (RA) would distribute entire fortunes — the full proceeds of trade shipments — among his community, keeping nothing back for himself. Not as a performance. Quietly, the way he did everything.

He gave because giving was simply who he was.

And because of all of this — the courage, the sacrifice, the open hands — th
the ten companions promised Paradise. Ten names, out of thousands. Talhah ibn Ubaydullah (RA) was one of them. (Ar-Raheeq Al-Makhtum, Mubarakpuri; Siyar A'lam al-Nubala, al-Dhahabi)

What His Hand Teaches You

Here is the truth about Talhah. He did not calculate, before he threw his hand in front of that arrow, whether it was worth it. He did not pause, weigh his options, or think about what use he would lose. He just moved — because the person he loved was in danger, and that was enough reason.

Real love doesn't count the cost. It doesn't ask, what will this take from me? It only asks, what does this person need right now?

Talhah's fingers never worked again.

He never once seemed to mind.

CHAPTER XX

Chapter 20: The First Sword Drawn — Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (RA)

The rumour flew through Makkah like fire through dry grass.

The Prophet has been captured.

Nobody could say exactly where it started. But by the time those words had passed from mouth to mouth through the city's winding stone alleys, a fifteen-year-old boy had already done the thing that everyone else was still only thinking about.

He drew his sword. And he ran.

His name was Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam. And that sprint through the streets of Makkah made him the first person in all of history to ever draw a sword for the sake of Islam.

Before that day, Az-Zubayr was already someone worth knowing. His mother was Safiyyah bint Abd al-Muttalib — the Prophet's ﷺ own aunt — which made Az-Zubayr his cousin was Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA), the Prophet's ﷺ beloved first wife. This people who loved the Prophet ﷺ most in the world.

That kind of love rubs off.

Az-Zubayr accepted Islam when he was still a boy — young enough that the Quraysh were already making life painful and dangerous for any Muslim they could find. He chose faith anyway. No hesitation. No half-measures.

That was Az-Zubayr.

So back to that afternoon.

When the rumour reached him — the Prophet has been seized, something terrible has happened — Az-Zubayr did not sit down to think it through. He did not wait for someone older to take charge. He did not ask: what can one boy really do against a whole city?

He just moved.

He pulled out his sword — the first sword ever raised for this faith — and ran through Makkah, eyes scanning every corner and alleyway. He was looking for the Prophet ﷺ, or fo

not stopped to decide which.

He found the Prophet ﷺ unharmed and well.

The Prophet ﷺ looked at this breathless, wild-eyed teenager and asked what h
him everything: the rumour, the sword, the running. The Prophet ﷺ smiled. H
beautiful prayer — for Az-Zubayr. And he made du'a for the sword still in Az-Zubayr's hand.

That blessing. Imagine receiving it at fifteen.

But this was barely the beginning.

Az-Zubayr spent the rest of his life the same way he spent that afternoon — fully present, fully committed,
never hanging back when the Prophet ﷺ needed someone. He was at Badr. He
arms burned. He was at the digging of the Trench, at Khaybar, and at the Conquest of Makkah itself — the very city he had once sprinted through as a teenage boy with a drawn sword and no plan at all.

He was always there.

And the Prophet ﷺ saw it. All of it.

One day, standing before his companions, the Prophet ﷺ said something Az-Z
for the rest of his days: "Every prophet has a Hawari — a devoted disciple — and my Hawari is Az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Hawari. His special disciple. His man. Out of all the great companions gathered around him — scholars,
seasoned warriors, wise elders — the Prophet ﷺ gave this particular title to
through dusty streets with nothing but a sword and a heart too full to stay still.

Think about that for a moment.

Az-Zubayr was not a scholar when he drew that sword. Not a general. He had not memorised hundreds of hadith or led any expedition. He was fifteen years old, probably frightened, and almost certainly without a plan.

What he had was love. Love fierce enough to move his feet before his mind could say wait.

You do not have to be old to be brave. You do not need a title, or a crowd cheering you on, or the perfect moment to finally arrive. Az-Zubayr had none of those things when he ran.

He just loved someone more than he loved his own safety, and he could not stand still.

The angels were watching that afternoon in Makkah. They are always watching. And acts like that — fierce, honest, uncalculating — are exactly the kind they never forget.