

(R.A) was one of the first slaves to accept Islam. He was also the first person to stand on top of the Ka'abah and give the Adhan (the Muslim call for prayer).

It is also important to note that numerous Hadiths are narrated by the slaves and freed slaves that are considered as true and followed by millions of Muslims in the world today. This means that their testimony is also recognized and accepted. We can also see from the traditions that slaves would not only stand shoulder to shoulder with others Muslims during prayer but would also lead the prayers. Narrated Ibn 'Umar (R.A): ***“When the earliest emigrants came to Al-'Usba a place in Quba, before the arrival of the Prophet (S.A.W) – Salim (R.A), the slave of Abu Hudhaifa (R.A), who knew the Qur'an more than the others used to lead them in prayer. (Bukhari)***

RIGHTS OF ANIMALS

Animals and other living things are created by Allah, the Lord of the Universe. They have their own independent existences and modes of living. Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an, ***“And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures.”(55:10)*** At another place it is mentioned, ***“And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you.” (6:38)***

Allah loves every one of the creatures He has made, and therefore the principles of mercy and compassion are to be extended to every living creature. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) is reported to have said: ***“All creatures are Allah's family and the dearest to Allah are those who treat His family kindly.” (Bayhaqi)***

Allah gave us the free use of the plants and animals of this Earth. He said, ***“Allah is He who has made cattle for you so that you ride some of them and from some of them you derive food. In them there are also other benefits for you, and through them you fulfill your heartfelt need (to reach places)” (40:79-80)*** But we must balance our use of animals and plants with our primary role as a caretaker on the Earth. For example, we are not allowed to harm animals or plants for no reason.

The Blessed Prophet (S.A.W) forbade people from capturing baby birds, burning ant hills and whipping animals cruelly. A group of Companions was once on a journey with the Prophet (S.A.W) and he left them for a while. During his absence, they saw a bird with its two young, and they took the young ones from the nest. When the Prophet (S.A.W) came back, the mother bird was circling above in the air, beating its wings in grief. He said, ***“Who has hurt the feelings of this bird by taking its young? Return them to her.” (Muslim)***

If we use animals for our work, we must feed them and not overwork them. The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) once passed by a camel that was so emaciated that its stomach had almost reached its back. He said, ***“Fear Allah in these beasts who cannot speak.” (Abu Dawud)***

If we eat animals we are supposed to slaughter the animals according to ***Dhabiha*** rules which prevent all cruelty to animals. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said,

- ***“Allah has ordained kindness (and excellence) in everything. If the killing (of animals) is to be done, do it in the best manner, and when you slaughter, do it in the best manner by first sharpening the knife, and putting the animal at ease.” (Muslim)***
- ***The Prophet (S.A.W) said, “Whoever kills a sparrow or anything bigger than that without a just cause, Allah will hold him accountable on the Day of Judgement.” The listeners asked, “O Messenger of Allah, what is a just cause?” He (S.A.W) replied, “That he will kill it to eat, not simply to chop off its head and then throw it away.” (Nasa'i, Hakim).***

MUSLIM HEROES

HAZRAT FATIMA (R.A)

Birth

Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) was born in Makkah five years before her father's (S.A.W) call to Prophethood. She is given many titles by Muslims to show their admiration for her. The most used title is "*al-Zahra*", meaning "the shining one", and she is commonly referred to as *Hazrat Fatimah Zahra (R.A)*. She was also known as "*al-Batul*" (the chaste and pure one) as she spent much of her time in prayer, reciting the Qur'an and in other acts of worship.

Early life

Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) was brought up by her parents; contrary to local customs where the newborn were sent to "wet nurses" in surrounding villages. She spent her early youth under the care of her parents in Makkah in the shadow of the tribulations suffered by her father (S.A.W) at the hands of the Quraysh.

Marriage

Hazrat Fatima (R.A) got married to Hazrat Ali (R.A) in the 2nd year of migration. They had three sons, Hasan, Husain and Mohsin, and two daughters, Umm-e-Kulthum and Zainab. Their marriage lasted about ten years and ended when Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) died. Hazrat Ali (R.A) did not marry another woman while Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) was alive.

A humble life

After her marriage to Ali (R.A), the couple led a humble life. For several years after her marriage, she did all of the work by herself. The shoulder on which she carried pitchers of water from the well was swollen and the hands with which she worked the hand-mill to grind corn were often covered with blisters. Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) vouched to take care of the household work, make dough, bake bread, and clean the house; while Hazrat Ali (R.A) vouched to take care of the outside work such as gathering firewood, and bringing food. Hazrat Ali (R.A) worked to irrigate other people's lands by drawing water from the wells.

Another reference to their simple life ***Fatimah***, a divine formula that was first she asked her father for a *kaneez* (servant household chores. Her father asked her if was better than a servant and worth Upon her ready agreement, he told her *Subhan'Allah* 33 times, *Alhamdulillah* 33 This collective prayer is called the ***Tasbih***



comes to us from the ***Tasbih of Fatimah*** given to Hazrat Fatimah (R.A) when girl) in order to help her with she would like a gift instead that more than everything in the world. to recite at the end of every prayer times and *Allahu Akbar* 34 times. ***of Fatima. (Muslim)***

Death

During the last days of his illness, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) whispered something into her ear that made her cry. He again whispered something to her after which she smiled. Later, when someone asked her the reason of her weeping and smiling, she said that she had wept because the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) told her about his impending death, but when he told her that she would be the first one from his family to join him in Paradise, she smiled. **(Tirmidhi)** She died six months after her father's death.

Importance

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) had special affection for Hazrat Fatima (R.A). He would always stand up whenever she came to him. Whenever he would go on a journey, he parted from her last of all, and visited her first after arrival. Once a person asked Hazrat Ayesha (R.A), ***"Who among the people is dearest***

to the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W)?” She replied, **“Fatimah (R.A.)”** and when he asked, **“Who among men?”** She said, **“Her husband.”** (Tirmidhi)

Hazrat Fatima (R.A) would often be near her father during his stressful moments. Once, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) was performing the prayer in the Ka’abah, Amr ibn Hisham (Abu Jahl) and his men poured camel’s intestine over him. Hazrat Fatimah (R.A), upon hearing the news, rushed to her father and wiped away the filth. (Bukhari)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) once said, **“Fatima is a part of me; whoever hurts her, hurts me and whoever holds malice against her, holds malice against me.”** (Bukhari, Muslim)

HAZRAT ZAID BIN THABIT (R.A)

Zaid bin Thabit (R.A) is one of those famous companions who were considered to be most learned and whose opinions in religious matters carry much weight. He was only 11 years old when the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) emigrated to Madinah. That is why, in spite of his eagerness, he was not allowed to participate in the early battles like Badr and Uhad. However, he participated in the Battle of Trench and the Tabuk Expedition.

When writing letters to the Jews outside Madinah, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) had to use the services of the local Jews. Once he said to Zaid (R.A): **“I am not satisfied with what the Jews write and read for me. I fear mischief from them in writing or reading, I desire you to learn the Jewish language.”** Zaid (R.A) says: **“In fifteen days, I mastered Hebrew and after that I started doing all such work for the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).”** Thus he became an official interpreter and translator for the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Eventually, he became one of the official scribes of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) who used to write the Divine revelations. This enabled him to observe the circumstances of the revelations very closely, to become, later, the most important reference in Qur’anic matters after the demise of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He had memorized the Qur’an during the Prophet’s (S.A.W) life. His deep knowledge of the Qur’an made even the great Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W) resort to him and show special respect to him, despite the fact that he was much younger than most of them (being only 22 at the time of the Prophet’s (S.A.W) demise.

Compilation of the Holy Quran

During the Battle of Yamamah, a large number of the Companions of the Prophet (S.A.W) who had committed the Qur’an to memory were martyred. Hazrat `Umar (R.A) expressed his great concern regarding the preservation of the Qur’an for the coming generations. He suggested to Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) to have the Qur’an collected and compiled. Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) was hesitant in the beginning, because as he said, **“This is something not done by the Prophet (S.A.W).”** However, he was later convinced of the necessity of the action, since the source and conveyor of the revelation was living amongst them.



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The Caliph found that Zaid bin Thabit (R.A) was the man for the job. Thus he addressed Zaid (R.A): **“You are a young man who is wise and trustworthy, and you used to write the revelation for the Prophet (S.A.W). Collect the Qur’an and compile it.”** Zaid RA reports, **“I swear to Allah that had they asked me to move a mountain, it would have been easier than that task assigned to me.”**

The task assigned to Zaid ibn Thabit (R.A) was to collect the portions scattered with different people, verify the texts and put them in the order assigned to the verses and chapters by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) himself before his demise. Though Zaid (R.A) himself knew the whole Qur'an by heart, along with many others, he followed a very meticulous procedure in its compilation. Following is a brief description :

1. Everyone who knew a portion of the Qur'an came and reported it to Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit (R.A). However, no unwritten verse was accepted. It was a demand of Hazrat Zaid (R.A) that the presented verse must have been written in front of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) and that, after writing, it must have been listened and verified by the Prophet (S.A.W).
2. In order to ensure authenticity, no text was accepted unless the person who reported it brought two witnesses who testified the above principle.
2. The verses and chapters of the text were written in the order assigned to them by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

Through the above meticulous ibn Thabit (R.A) collected the Qur'an, which was then the Caliph Abu Bakr (R.A), then `Umar (R.A), who entrusted it daughter Hafsa (R.A), a wife of (S.A.W), who was also known the Qur'an besides being one of in the community.



procedure Hazrat Zaid whole text of the preserved and kept by his successor Hazrat upon his death to his the Holy Prophet for her knowledge of the few literate people

Later, by the time of the third Caliph, Hazrat Uthman (R.A), the Islamic empire had expanded far and wide. It incorporated many different nations and tribes who did not speak and understand Arabic. As a result difference in reciting the Qur'an and pronunciation began to occur. Hazrat Huzaifa bin Yaman (R.A) heard the differences in the recitation of the Qur'an by the inhabitants of Syria and Iraq. He related these concerns to Hazrat Uthman (R.A) who took action and asked Hazrat Hafsa (R.A) for the original volume of the Qur'an. Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit (R.A), having been responsible for the first compilation was appointed as the head of a committee to make exact and perfect copies of the original. The new copies were then distributed to every Muslim province with the orders that all other copies of the Qur'an, be they full or partial copies, were to be burnt and replaced by this original one.

HAZRAT JAFAR BIN ABU TALIB (R.A)

Hazrat Jafar bin Abu Talib (R.A) was the cousin of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). His father was not financially strong. He had a large family and did not have enough means to support them adequately. His poverty-stricken situation became much worse when a severe drought hit the Arabian Peninsula. During this time of drought, the Prophet's (S.A.W) another uncle, Abbas (R.A) took Jafar into his care. Jafar (R.A) stayed with his uncle until he was a young man.

He and his wife were among the first persons to accept Islam. The young Jafar (R.A) and his wife were devoted followers of Islam. They bore the harsh treatment and the persecution of the Quraysh with patience and steadfastness because they both realized that the road to Paradise was strewn with thorns and paved with pain and hardship. The Quraysh made life intolerable for them both and for their brethren in faith. They tried to obstruct them from observing or performing the duties and rites of Islam. Hazrat Jafar (R.A) eventually went to the Prophet (S.A.W) and sought permission for himself and a small group of the Companions, including his wife, to migrate to the land of Abyssinia.

The group of Muhajirin left Makkah bound for the land of Abyssinia. Soon they settled down in this new land under the care and protection of the Negus, the just and righteous ruler of Abyssinia. For the first time since they became Muslims, they enjoyed the security and freedom to worship, undisturbed. When the Quraysh learnt of the departure of the small group of Muslims and the peaceful life they enjoyed under the protection of the Negus, they made plans to secure their extradition and their return to Makkah. They sent two of their most formidable men, Amr ibn al-Aas and Abdullah ibn Abi Rabiah, to accomplish this task. They went to the Negus and presented him with gifts which he greatly admired. They said to him: **"O King, there is a group of evil persons from among our youth who have escaped to your kingdom. They practice a religion which neither we nor you know. They have forsaken our religion and have not entered into your religion. The respected leaders of their people - from among their own parents and uncles and from their own clans - have sent us to you to request you to return them. They know best what trouble they have caused."**

The Negus said: **"No. By God, I won't surrender them to anyone until I myself have called them and questioned them about what they have been accused of. If what you have said is true, then I will hand them over to you. If however it is not so, then I shall protect them so long as they desire to remain under my protection."** He then summoned the Muslims to meet him.

Before going, the Muslims consulted with one another as a group and agreed that Hazrat Jafar (R.A) should speak on their behalf. In the court, the Negus asked: **"What is this religion which you have introduced for yourself and which has served to cut you off from the religion of your people? You also did not enter my religion or the religion of any other community."** Hazrat Jafar (R.A) advanced and made a speech that was moving and eloquent and which is still one of the most compelling descriptions of Islam. He said: **"O King, we were a people in a state of ignorance and immorality, worshipping idols and eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abomination and shameful deeds, breaking the ties of kinship, treating guests badly and the strong among us exploited the weak.**

We remained in this state until Allah sent us a Prophet, one of our own people whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity were well-known to us. He called us to worship Allah alone and to renounce the stones and the idols which we and our ancestors used to worship besides Allah. He commanded us to speak the truth, to honor our promises, to be kind to our relations, to be helpful to our neighbours, to cease all forbidden acts, to abstain from bloodshed, to avoid indecency and false witness, not to usurp an orphan's property nor slander chaste women. He ordered us to worship Allah alone and not to associate anything with him.

We believed in him and what he brought to us from Allah and we followed him in what he had asked us to do and we kept away from what he forbade us from doing. Thereupon, O King, our people persecuted us to make us renounce our religion and take us back to the old immorality and the worship of idols. They oppressed us, made life intolerable for us and obstructed us from observing our religion. So we left for your country, choosing you before anyone else, desiring your protection and hoping to live in justice and in peace in your midst."

The Negus was impressed and was eager to hear more. He asked Hazrat Jafar (R.A): **"Do you have with you something of what your Prophet brought concerning God?"** "Yes," replied Hazrat Jafar (R.A). **"Then read it to me,"** requested the Negus. Hazrat Jafar (R.A), in his rich, melodious voice recited for him the first portion of Surah Maryam which deals with the story of Hazrat Esa (A.S) and his mother Maryam. On hearing the words of the Quran, the Negus was moved to tears. To the Muslims, he said: **"The message of your Prophet and that of Hazrat Esa (A.S) came from the same source."** To Amr and his companion, he said: **"Go, for, by God, I will never surrender them to you."**

That, however, was not the end of the matter. The cunning Amr made up his mind to go to the King the following day to mention something about the Muslims' belief which would certainly fill his heart with anger and make him detest them. On the morrow, Amr went to the Negus and said: **"O King, these people to whom you have given refuge and whom you protect say something terrible about Hazrat Esa (A.S). Send for them and ask them what they say about him."** The Negus summoned the Muslims once more and Hazrat Jafar (R.A) acted as their spokesman. The Negus put the question: **"What do you say about Hazrat Esa (A.S)?"**

"Regarding him, we only say what has been revealed to our Prophet (S.A.W)," replied Hazrat Jafar (R.A). **"And what is that?"** enquired the Negus. **"Our Prophet says that Esa is the servant of Allah and His Prophet, His spirit and His word which He cast into Maryam the Virgin."** The Negus was obviously excited by this reply and exclaimed: **"By God, Hazrat Esa (A.S) was exactly as your Prophet (S.A.W) has described him"**

The bishops around the Negus grunted in disgust at what they had heard and were reprimanded by the Negus. He turned to the Muslims and said: **"Go, for you are safe and secure. Whoever obstructs you will pay for it and whoever opposes you will be punished."** Turning to Amr and his companion, he instructed his attendants: **"Return their gifts to these two men. I have no need of them."** Amr and his companion left broken and frustrated. The Muslims stayed on in the land of the Negus who proved to be most generous and kind to his guests.

Hazrat Jafar (R.A) with his wife spent about ten years in Abyssinia which became a second home for them. They had three children whom they named Abdullah, Muhammad and Awn. Their second child was possibly the first child in the history of the Muslim Ummah to be given the name Muhammad after the noble Prophet (S.A.W). In the seventh year of the Hijrah, the family left Abyssinia with a group of Muslims and headed for Madinah. When they arrived the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) was just returning from the successful conquest of Khyber. He was so overjoyed at meeting Hazrat Jafar (R.A) that he said: **"I do not know what fills me with more happiness, the conquest of Khyber or the coming of Jafar."**

Hazrat Jafar's (R.A) stay in Madinah was not long. At the beginning of the eighth year of the Hijrah, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) mobilized an army to confront Byzantine forces in Syria because one of his emissaries who had gone in peace had been treacherously killed by a Byzantine governor. He appointed Hazrat Zayd ibn Harithah (R.A) as commander of the army and gave the following instructions: **"If Zayd is wounded or killed, Jafar ibn Abi Talib would take over the command. If Jafar is killed or wounded, then your commander would be Abdullah ibn Rawahah. If Abdullah ibn Rawahah is killed, then let the Muslims choose for themselves a commander."**

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) had never given such instructions to an army before and the Muslims took this as an indication that he expected the battle to be tough and that they would even suffer major losses. Despite the great odds against them, the Muslim forces engaged the Byzantines in the battle, fought at Muthah. Hazrat Jafar (R.A) mounted on his horse, penetrated deep into the Byzantine ranks and fought vigorously. He was martyred in the battle. He received ninety wounds on his body and also lost both his hands. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said, **"Allah has granted Jafar two wings in place of his two hands so that he flies about in Paradise wherever he likes."** (Bukhari)

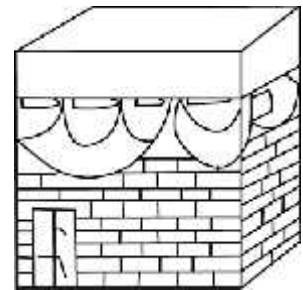
HAZRAT ABU DHAR GHIFARI (R.A)

The Ghifar tribe lived in the Waddan valley which connects Makkah with the outside world. The Ghifar existed on the meager offerings of the trade caravans of the Quraysh which plied between Syria and Makkah. It is likely that they also lived by raiding these caravans when they were not given enough to satisfy their needs.

Hazrat Abu Dhar Ghifari (R.A) was known for his courage, his calmness and his far-sightedness and also for the dislike he felt against the idols which his people worshipped. He rejected the silly religious beliefs and the religious corruption in which the Arabs were engaged. News reached him that a new Prophet (S.A.W) had appeared in Makkah. He really hoped that his appearance would help to change the hearts and minds of people and lead them away from the darkness of superstition. Without wasting much time, he sent his brother, Anis to Makkah to get information about the Holy Prophet (S.A.W).

Anis went to Makkah and met the Prophet (S.A.W). He listened to what he had to say and returned to the Waddan desert. Abu Dhar (R.A) met him and anxiously asked for news of the Prophet. ***"I have seen a man,"*** reported Anis, ***"who calls people to noble qualities and there is no mere poetry in what he says."***

Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) was not satisfied and decided to go to Makkah himself. On his arrival at Makkah, he immediately felt very apprehensive and decided to exercise great caution. The Quraysh were noticeably angry over the denunciation of their gods. Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) heard of the terrible violence they were meting out to the followers of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He therefore refrained from asking anyone about the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) not knowing whether that person might be a follower or an enemy.



At nightfall, he lay down in the Sacred Mosque. Hazrat Ali (R.A) passed by him and, realising that he was a stranger, asked him to come to his house. Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) spent the night with him and in the morning returned to the Mosque. He had asked no questions and no questions were asked of him. He spent the following day without getting to know anything. In the evening he went to the Mosque to sleep and Hazrat Ali (R.A) again passed by him and again asked him to come to his house. Again no one asked the other about anything. On the third night, however, Hazrat Ali (R.A) asked him, ***"Aren't you going to tell me why you came to Makkah?"*** ***"Only if you will give me an undertaking that you will guide me to what I seek."*** Hazrat Ali (R.A) agreed and Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) said: ***"I came to Makkah from a distant place seeking a meeting with the new Prophet and to listen to some of what he has to say."***

Hazrat Ali's (R.A) testified the prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) and went on telling Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) more about his teaching. Finally, he said: ***"When we get up in the morning, follow me wherever I go."***

In the morning, Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) followed closely in Hazrat Ali's (R.A) footsteps until they were in the presence of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). Before long, Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) pronounced the Shahadah, thus entering the new religion. He was among the first persons to accept Islam. Then he went to the Sacred Mosque. The Quraysh were sitting and talking. He went in their midst and called out, ***"O people of Quraysh, I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."*** His words had an immediate effect on them. They jumped up and began to beat him mercilessly. They clearly meant to kill him. But Hazrat Abbas (R.A), the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), recognised him. He bent over and protected him from them. He told them: ***"Woe to you! Would you kill a man from the Ghifar tribe when your caravans must pass through their territory?"***

After this, according to the instructions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), he left and went back to his people. He spread the message of Islam in his tribe and soon a large number of people became Muslims including his own brother and mother.

Hazrat Abu Dhar (R.A) moved to Madinah after the battle of Trench. After the demise of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), he could not bear to stay in Madinah and left for Syria. He was a devoted and God-fearing person. Whatever would come in his hand, he would spend it in the way of Allah. He is regarded as one of the most respectable and close companions of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He led a simple and careful life to the end. In the year 32 AH, he passed away.

HAZRAT ABU AYYUB ANSARI (R.A)

Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) was a great and close companion of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He enjoyed a privilege which many of the Ansar in Madinah hoped they would have. When the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) reached Madinah after his migration from Makkah, he was greeted with great enthusiasm by the Ansar of Madinah. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) entered Madinah on his camel. The chieftains of the city stood along his path, each one wishing to have the honour of the Prophet's (S.A.W) stay at his house. One after the other stood in the camel's way entreating, "***Stay with us, O Rasulullah.***" "***Leave the camel,***" the Prophet (S.A.W) would say, "***It is under Allah's command.***" The camel stopped in front of the house of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) stayed in his house until his mosque was completed. He moved to the rooms which were built around the mosque for himself and his family. He thus became a neighbour of Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A).

Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) had a distinguished military career. He took part in all the battles during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). He also participated in the conquest of Egypt. Later, he was appointed as the governor of Madinah by Hazrat Ali (R.A). The last campaign he took part in was against Constantinople. He was a very old man, almost eighty years old, at that time. But that did not prevent him from joining the army and crossing the seas in the path of Allah. After only a short time engaged in the battle, Hazrat Abu Ayyub Ansari (R.A) fell ill and died. He was buried in Constantinople.