

Heroes of Islam
Series 11

Nusaybah bint Ka'b

Heroine of Uhud and Shield of the Messenger ﷺ, According to the Qur'an and Hadith

Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

HEROES OF ISLAM

SERIES 11

NUSAYBAH BINT KA'B

Heroine of Uhud and Shield of the Messenger ﷺ, According to the Qur'an and Hadith

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Surah An-Nahl 16:97

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, who never lets the deeds of any worker be lost, whether male or female. May blessings and peace be upon our master, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and upon his family and Companions — and especially upon Nusaybah bint Ka'b رضى الله عنها, the woman who pledged allegiance at 'Aqabah and shielded the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at Uhud.

This eBook is specially dedicated to my beloved wife,

ZAHARAH MOHD LATIF;

my dear children,

MUHAMMAD HAFIZ, NOOR HAZWANI, ABDUL HAKIM, NOOR HIDAYAH, NOR AQILA and **NOR ATIQAH**;

and my sons- and daughters-in-law,

FAZILAH, MALEK, HANIN, FAIRIZAL and **FIRWAN**.

This eleventh book of Heroes of Islam tells the story of Nusaybah bint Ka'b (Umm 'Umarah) رضى الله عنها: one of the two women who pledged allegiance on the night of 'Aqabah, whose question is reported as the occasion for the revelation of Al-Ahzab 33:35, who stood to shield the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at Uhud, a narrator of hadith, mother of fighters, and a fighter at al-Yamamah. May this knowledge be 'ilmun yuntafa'u bih — knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

This eBook's cover does not depict any human being or animal. It shows ***Mount Uhud***, north of Madinah, in the early morning: reddish granite peaks lit by golden rays breaking through the ridges. At the foot of this mountain the Battle of Uhud was fought in 3 AH.

In the foreground, on the rocky ground, lies a ***qirbah*** (leather water skin) — a reminder that Nusaybah went out to Uhud to give water to the wounded. Beside it lie a ***shield, a sword and arrows***, symbols of her courage in standing to shield the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when many had retreated.

The soft morning light symbolises Allah's promise in the Qur'an: believing men and women who do righteous deeds will be granted a good life and their full reward (An-Nahl 16:97).

The ***dark blue band*** at the bottom, framed by ***fine gold lines***, is where the author's name appears — the same as on the covers of Series 1 to Series 10, so that all the covers of Heroes of Islam match.

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Colour guide: green box = verses of the Qur'an; gold box = Hadith; brown box = sirah note (report from the books of sirah); blue table = comparison. Underlined blue narrator names can be clicked to open the narrator's page on sunnah.com.

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NUSAYBAH BINT KA'B

On the day of Uhud, when the Muslim ranks broke and many retreated, a woman of the Ansar put down her water skin and stood before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with sword and bow, warding off the blows aimed at him. That woman was ***Nusaybah bint Ka'b***, better known as ***Umm 'Umarah*** رضى الله عنها.

She was one of the two women who pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night of ***'Aqabah***. She was present at ***Uhud***, ***al-Hudaybiyah***, ***Khaybar***, ***Hunayn*** and ***al-Yamamah***. Her question to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the place of women is reported as the occasion for the revelation of ***Al-Ahzab 33:35***.

This eBook is the eleventh in the ***Heroes of Islam*** series. As in the earlier books, her story is gathered first from the Qur'an and Hadith, and then from the books of sirah and history. Many accounts of Nusaybah's courage in battle are narrated only through historical sources with weak chains, and this is explained honestly in every chapter.

The story of Nusaybah proves that men and women are equally promised reward by Allah, and that sacrifice for Islam knows no gender.

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WHO WAS NUSAYBAH BINT KA'B?

Her full name was ***Nusaybah bint Ka'b ibn 'Amr*** al-Ansariyyah, of Banu Mazin ibn an-Najjar, a branch of the tribe of ***Khazraj*** in Madinah. Her kunyah was ***Umm 'Umarah***, and it is by this name that she appears in the books of hadith.

Her first husband was ***Zayd ibn 'Asim***, by whom she had two sons who became Companions: ***Habib ibn Zayd*** and ***'Abdullah ibn Zayd***. She later married ***Ghaziyyah ibn 'Amr***, by whom she had Tamim and Khawlah. Her grandson, ***'Abbad ibn Tamim***, was a trustworthy narrator of hadith.

NAME AND TITLES

NAME OR TITLE	EXPLANATION
Nusaybah bint Ka'b	Her real name
Umm 'Umarah	Her kunyah, used in the books of hadith
Al-Ansariyyah al-Maziniyyah	From Banu Mazin ibn an-Najjar, Khazraj
Narrator of hadith	Her reports are in Sunan Abi Dawud and Jami' at-Tirmidhi

LESSONS

A believing family of the Ansar: a mother, two sons and a grandson, all serving Islam with their lives, wealth and knowledge.

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THE PLEDGE ON THE NIGHT OF 'AQABAH

In the Hajj season of the 13th year of prophethood, seventy-three men and two women from Madinah met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in secret at ***'Aqabah***, in Mina, and pledged to protect him.

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE TWO WOMEN AT 'AQABAH

Ibn Ishaq mentions that the two women who pledged allegiance that night were ***Nusaybah bint Ka'b (Umm 'Umarah)*** and ***Asma' bint 'Amr (Umm Mani')***. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not shake hands with women; their pledge was accepted by word.

Status of the report: The list of those who pledged on the night of 'Aqabah is well known in the books of sirah.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (narrated from Ibn Ishaq); Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra.

Allah describes believing men and women as allies of one another:

SURAH AT-TAWBAH 9:71

وَٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ يَأْمُرُونَ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥٓ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allāh and His Messenger. Those - Allāh will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/9:71

LESSONS

Women carried the trust of da'wah from the very first day of Islam in Madinah. Nusaybah pledged allegiance while Islam was still weak and that pledge could invite the enmity of all the Arabs.

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"I DO NOT SEE WOMEN MENTIONED"

Nusaybah was not shy to ask the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the place of women in the Qur'an:

HADITH — JAMI' AT-TIRMIDHI, NO. 3211

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ كَثِيرٍ، عَنْ حُسَيْنٍ، عَنْ عِكْرِمَةَ، عَنْ أُمِّ عُمَارَةَ الأَنْصَارِيَّةِ، أَنَّهَا أَتَتِ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَتْ مَا أَرَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ إِلاَّ لِلرِّجَالِ وَمَا أَرَى النِّسَاءَ يُذْكَرْنَ بِشَيْءٍ فَنَزَلَتْ هَذِهِ الآيَةُ : (إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ) الآيَةَ .

TRANSLATION:

Umm 'Umarah al-Ansariyyah came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: ***"I see that everything is for men, and I do not see women mentioned in anything."*** Then this verse was revealed: ***"Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women..."*** to the end of the verse.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi: from 'Abd ibn Humayd, from Muhammad ibn Kathir, from Sulayman ibn Kathir, from Husayn ibn 'Abd ar-Rahman, from 'Ikrimah, from Umm 'Umarah al-Ansariyyah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi in Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book of Tafsir, Chapter: Surah al-Ahzab, Hadith No. 3211.

GRADE: HASAN — graded hasan by Darussalam; at-Tirmidhi said: hasan gharib, and al-Albani graded its chain authentic.

Source: https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3211

SURAH AL-AHZAB 33:35

إِنَّ ٱلْمُسْلِمِينَ وَٱلْمُسْلِمَٰتِ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ وَٱلْقَٰنِتِينَ وَٱلْقَٰنِتَٰتِ
وَٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ وَٱلصَّٰدِقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ وَٱلصَّٰبِرَٰتِ وَٱلْخَٰشِعِينَ وَٱلْخَٰشِعَٰتِ
وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَٱلْمُتَصَدِّقَٰتِ وَٱلصَّآئِمِينَ وَٱلصَّآئِمَٰتِ وَٱلْحَٰفِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ
وَٱلْحَٰفِظَٰتِ وَٱلذَّٰكِرِينَ ٱللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَٱلذَّٰكِرَٰتِ أَعَدَّ ٱللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا
عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allāh often and the women who do so - for them Allāh has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/33:35

This verse names ten qualities of the believers, and for each one men and women are mentioned together. Their reward is the same: forgiveness and a great reward.

LESSONS

Asking in order to understand the religion is a praiseworthy trait. The sincere question of one woman is reported as the occasion for a verse the Muslims will recite until the Day of Judgement.

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MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL BEFORE ALLAH

Al-Ahzab 33:35 is not the only verse that guarantees the same reward for men and women. Allah says:

SURAH AN-NAHL 16:97

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُۥ حَيَوٰةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/16:97

And about those who emigrated, struggled and were harmed in the way of Allah:

SURAH ALI 'IMRAN 3:195

فَٱسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّى لَآ أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَٰمِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ ۖ
بَعْضُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْضٍ ۖ فَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ وَأُخْرِجُوا۟ مِن دِيَٰرِهِمْ وَأُوذُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِى
وَقَٰتَلُوا۟ وَقُتِلُوا۟ لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّـَٔاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن
تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عِندَهُۥ حُسْنُ ٱلثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

And their Lord responded to them, "Never will I allow to be lost the work of [any] worker among you, whether male or female; you are of one another. So those who emigrated or were evicted from their homes or were harmed in My cause or fought or were killed - I will surely remove from them their misdeeds, and I will surely admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow as reward from Allāh, and Allāh has with Him the best reward."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/3:195

This verse of Ali 'Imran speaks of the reward of those who "fought and were killed" in the way of Allah, and it begins with the promise: "Never will I allow to be lost the work of any worker among you, whether male or female." The story of Nusaybah is a living example of this verse.

LESSONS

The measure of honour before Allah is faith and righteous deeds, not gender. Every sincere deed, however small, will never be lost.

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GOING OUT TO UHUD WITH WATER

In Shawwal of 3 AH, the Muslims went out to ***Uhud*** to face the army of Quraysh. Some women also went out to give water and tend the wounded. Anas ibn Malik narrated that he saw 'A'ishah and Umm Sulaym carrying water skins on their backs on the day of Uhud and pouring water into the mouths of the fighters (Sahih al-Bukhari 2880).

HISTORICAL NOTE: NUSAYBAH, HER HUSBAND AND TWO SONS AT UHUD

Ibn Sa'd narrates that Nusaybah went out to Uhud with her husband Ghaziyyah ibn 'Amr and her two sons, Habib and 'Abdullah. Early in the day she carried a ***qirbah*** (water skin) to give water to the wounded.

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra (biography of Umm 'Umarah); Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah.

LESSONS

Everyone has a role in the struggle. Giving water to the thirsty and tending the wounded is a jihad of great reward.

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SHIELD OF THE MESSENGER ﷺ AT UHUD

When the archers left the hill and the Quraysh attacked from behind, the Muslim ranks broke. Only a small group of Companions remained around the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

HISTORICAL NOTE: "I DID NOT TURN RIGHT OR LEFT..."

Ibn Sa'd narrates that Nusaybah put down her water skin and stood with her husband and two sons before the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, warding off attacks with the sword and shooting with the bow. She received ***twelve wounds*** that day; the worst was a wound to her shoulder from a blow by Ibn Qami'ah, which left a deep scar. It is reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"I did not turn right or left on the day of Uhud except that I saw her fighting in my defence."***

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'.

LESSONS

True courage is tested when many retreat. Nusaybah did not think of her own safety, but of the safety of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

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"MAKE US YOUR COMPANIONS IN PARADISE"

One historical report describes a moving moment in the midst of the Battle of Uhud.

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE PROPHET'S PRAYER FOR ONE FAMILY

It is reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw this family fighting before him and prayed for blessings upon them. Nusaybah said: "Pray to Allah that we may be your companions in Paradise." He prayed: ***"O Allah, make them my companions in Paradise."*** Nusaybah said: "After that I did not care whatever befell me in this world."

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'.

LESSONS

The highest aspiration of a believer is Paradise and being with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ there. When that goal is clear, the hardships of this world become light.

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WOUNDS THAT DID NOT HOLD HER BACK

The day after Uhud, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ ordered those who had fought at Uhud to go out in pursuit of the Quraysh as far as ***Hamra' al-Asad***, though many were still wounded.

HISTORICAL NOTE: HAMRA' AL-ASAD

It is reported that Nusaybah wanted to go out too, but the wound in her shoulder was so serious that she was treated throughout the night. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ returned from Hamra' al-Asad, he sent 'Abdullah ibn Ka'b al-Mazini to ask about her before entering his house, and he was glad to hear she was safe.

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah.

LESSONS

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ cared for every one of his Companions, men and women. Nusaybah's sacrifice was valued by him.

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THE PLEDGE OF RIDWAN AND THE BATTLES AFTER

In 6 AH, Nusaybah went out with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ to perform 'umrah, which ended with the Treaty of ***al-Hudaybiyah***. Beneath a tree, the Companions pledged allegiance to him — the event known as the ***Pledge of Ridwan***. Her son, 'Abdullah ibn Zayd, was also present:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 4167

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، عَنْ أَخِيهِ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ يَحْيَى، عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ تَمِيمٍ، قَالَ لَمَّا كَانَ يَوْمُ الْحَرَّةِ وَالنَّاسُ يُبَايِعُونَ لِعَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ حَنْظَلَةَ فَقَالَ ابْنُ زَيْدٍ عَلَى مَا يُبَايِعُ ابْنُ حَنْظَلَةَ النَّاسَ قِيلَ لَهُ عَلَى الْمَوْتِ. قَالَ لاَ أُبَايِعُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ أَحَدًا بَعْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم. وَكَانَ شَهِدَ مَعَهُ الْحُدَيْبِيَةَ.

TRANSLATION:

'Abbad ibn Tamim said: On the day of al-Harrah, when the people were pledging allegiance to 'Abdullah ibn Hanzalah, Ibn Zayd asked: "On what is Ibn Hanzalah taking the people's pledge?" He was told: "On death." He said: ***"I will not pledge allegiance on that to anyone after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ."*** And he had been present with him at al-Hudaybiyah.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Isma'il ibn Abi Uways, from Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Hamid (his brother), from Sulayman ibn Bilal, from 'Amr ibn Yahya al-Mazini, from 'Abbad ibn Tamim, from 'Abdullah ibn Zayd al-Mazini رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Military Expeditions, Chapter: The Expedition of al-Hudaybiyah, Hadith No. 4167.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:4167

Allah was pleased with those who pledged beneath that tree:

SURAH AL-FATH 48:18

۞ لَّقَدْ رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ ٱلشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنزَلَ ٱلسَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَٰبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿١٨﴾

Certainly was Allāh pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/48:18

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HISTORICAL NOTE: KHAYBAR AND HUNAYN

Ibn Sa'd mentions that Nusaybah was also present at al-Hudaybiyah, Khaybar, 'Umrat al-Qada', the conquest of Makkah and Hunayn. On the day of Hunayn, when many retreated, she once again stood firm.

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah.

LESSONS

A mother's pledge was inherited by her son. 'Abdullah held fast to his pledge to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ until the end of his life.

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THE PROPHET'S VISIT TO HER HOME

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once visited Nusaybah at her home. This was narrated by her grandson, Habib ibn Zayd:

HADITH — JAMI' AT-TIRMIDHI, NO. 785

حَدَّثَنَا مَحْمُودُ بْنُ غَيْلاَنَ، حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو دَاوُدَ، أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ حَبِيبِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ مَوْلاَةً، لَنَا يُقَالُ لَهَا لَيْلَى تُحَدِّثُ عَنْ جَدَّتِهِ أُمِّ عُمَارَةَ بِنْتِ كَعْبٍ الأَنْصَارِيَّةِ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا فَقَدَّمَتْ إِلَيْهِ طَعَامًا فَقَالَ " كُلِي " . فَقَالَتْ إِنِّي صَائِمَةٌ . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " إِنَّ الصَّائِمَ تُصَلِّي عَلَيْهِ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ إِذَا أُكِلَ عِنْدَهُ حَتَّى يَفْرُغُوا " . وَرُبَّمَا قَالَ " حَتَّى يَشْبَعُوا " .

TRANSLATION:

Umm 'Umarah bint Ka'b al-Ansariyyah narrated that the Prophet ﷺ entered upon her and she offered him food. He said: "Eat." She said: "I am fasting." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"Indeed, for the fasting person, the angels send blessings upon him when others eat in his presence until they finish."*** And perhaps he said: "until they are full."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi: from Mahmud ibn Ghaylan, from Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi, from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Habib ibn Zayd al-Ansari, from Layla (their freedwoman), from Umm 'Umarah bint Ka'b رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam at-Tirmidhi in Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Book of Fasting, Chapter: The Virtue of the Fasting Person When Others Eat in His Presence, Hadith No. 785.

GRADE: HASAN — graded hasan by Darussalam and hasan sahih by at-Tirmidhi; however al-Albani graded it weak because the narrator Layla is unknown.

Source: https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:785

LESSONS

Nusaybah was devoted to worship and observed voluntary fasts. This hadith also teaches the etiquette of hosting guests and the virtue of the fasting person.

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NARRATOR OF A HADITH ON WUDU'

Nusaybah was not only a fighter but also a narrator of hadith. She observed how the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed wudu' and passed it on to her grandson:

HADITH — SUNAN ABI DAWUD, NO. 94

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ بَشَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، حَدَّثَنَا شُعْبَةُ، عَنْ حَبِيبٍ الأَنْصَارِيِّ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ عَبَّادَ بْنَ تَمِيمٍ، عَنْ جَدَّتِهِ، وَهِيَ أُمُّ عُمَارَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم تَوَضَّأَ فَأُتِيَ بِإِنَاءٍ فِيهِ مَاءٌ قَدْرُ ثُلُثَيِ الْمُدِّ .

TRANSLATION:

'Abbad ibn Tamim narrated from his grandmother, Umm 'Umarah, ***that the Prophet ﷺ performed wudu',***

and a vessel was brought to him containing water amounting to two-thirds of a mudd.

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud: from Muhammad ibn Bashshar, from Muhammad ibn Ja'far (Ghundar), from Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, from Habib ibn Zayd al-Ansari, from 'Abbad ibn Tamim, from Umm 'Umarah رضى الله عنها.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Abu Dawud in Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of Purification, Chapter: The Amount of Water Sufficient for Wudu', Hadith No. 94.

GRADE: SAHIH — graded authentic by al-Albani in Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud.

Source: https://sunnah.com/abudawud:94

A mudd is roughly what two cupped hands of an adult hold — about two-thirds of a litre. So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ performed wudu' with less than half a litre of water. The scholars take this hadith as evidence that wasting water in wudu' is forbidden.

LESSONS

Knowledge learned from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was passed down in Nusaybah's family: from grandmother to grandson, and then to the whole ummah.

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TWO SONS WHO INHERITED THE STRUGGLE

Nusaybah's son, ***'Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn 'Asim al-Mazini***, is the Companion who narrated the description of the Prophet's wudu' in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. He is different from 'Abdullah ibn Zayd ibn 'Abd Rabbih, the Companion who saw the words of the adhan in a dream. Among the hadith he narrated:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 1195

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَالِكٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ، عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ تَمِيمٍ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ الْمَازِنِيِّ ـ رضى الله عنه ـ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " مَا بَيْنَ بَيْتِي وَمِنْبَرِي رَوْضَةٌ مِنْ رِيَاضِ الْجَنَّةِ ".

TRANSLATION:

'Abdullah ibn Zayd al-Mazini narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ***"What lies between my house and my pulpit is a garden from the gardens of Paradise."***

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from 'Abdullah ibn Yusuf, from Malik ibn Anas, from 'Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr, from 'Abbad ibn Tamim, from 'Abdullah ibn Zayd al-Mazini رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of the Virtue of Prayer in the Mosques of Makkah and Madinah, Hadith No. 1195.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih al-Bukhari, the most authentic book of Hadith after the Qur'an by consensus of the Hadith scholars.

Source: https://sunnah.com/bukhari:1195

Her other son, ***Habib ibn Zayd***, would be martyred in an event that shook a mother's heart, as told in the next chapter.

LESSONS

A believing mother raises a believing generation. Nusaybah's sons became fighters and narrators of hadith whose knowledge has reached us today.

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THE MARTYRDOM OF HABIB IBN ZAYD

Towards the end of the Prophet's life, ***Musaylimah the Liar*** claimed prophethood in al-Yamamah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Habib ibn Zayd with a letter to him.

HISTORICAL NOTE: "I DO NOT HEAR"

Ibn Ishaq narrates that Musaylimah seized Habib and asked: "Do you testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah?" Habib said: "Yes." Musaylimah asked again: "Do you testify that I am the messenger of Allah?" Habib said: "I do not hear." Musaylimah then cut off his limbs one by one, and each time the question was repeated Habib's answer remained the same, until he was martyred. When the news reached Nusaybah, she bore it with patience and resolved to witness Musaylimah's downfall.

Status of the report: Well known in the books of sirah and biographies of the Companions; narrated without a connected chain.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Hisham, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyyah (narrated from Ibn Ishaq); Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Isti'ab.

LESSONS

Habib chose martyrdom over affirming falsehood. Nusaybah's patience at the loss of her son was a mother's heaviest trial.

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AL-YAMAMAH: A HAND SACRIFICED

In the time of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, the Muslim army under ***Khalid ibn al-Walid*** went out to fight Musaylimah at ***al-Yamamah*** (11–12 AH). Nusaybah, who was by then advanced in years, asked permission to go out with them.

HISTORICAL NOTE: IN THE GARDEN OF DEATH

Ibn Sa'd narrates that Nusaybah fought at al-Yamamah alongside her son 'Abdullah ibn Zayd. She received eleven wounds and ***her hand was cut off***. Musaylimah was killed in that battle, and it is mentioned that 'Abdullah ibn Zayd was among those who struck him. It is also reported that Khalid ibn al-Walid himself tended Nusaybah's wounds after the battle.

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; at-Tabari, Tarikh ar-Rusul wal-Muluk; Ibn Hajar, al-Isabah.

LESSONS

Nusaybah's struggle did not end with age. From 'Aqabah to al-Yamamah, she remained true to her pledge.

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HONOURED BY THE CALIPH, AND HER FINAL YEARS

HISTORICAL NOTE: THE FINEST GARMENT FOR UMM 'UMARAH

Ibn Sa'd narrates that in the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab some costly garments were brought to the Caliph, among them one of great quality. Some suggested it be given to his son's wife. 'Umar said: "I will send it to one more deserving of it — Umm 'Umarah," and he mentioned what the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had said about Nusaybah on the day of Uhud.

Status of the report: Narrated by Ibn Sa'd through al-Waqidi, whom the hadith scholars graded weak (*matruk*). Nusaybah's courage at Uhud is well known in the books of sirah and accepted by historians, but the details of the wording do not reach the level of authentic.

REFERENCES:

Ibn Sa'd, at-Tabaqat al-Kubra; adh-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'.

The date of Nusaybah's death is not known with certainty. The biographical books only mention that she lived until after al-Yamamah and was buried in Madinah.

LESSONS

The caliphs valued the sacrifice of the Companions. Nusaybah's true honour is Allah's promise in Al-Ahzab 33:35.

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THE CHARACTER OF NUSAYBAH BINT KA'B

The story of Nusaybah portrays a believing woman who combined courage, knowledge and worship.

QUALITY	EXAMPLE FROM HER LIFE
Early faith	Pledged allegiance on the night of 'Aqabah
Courage to ask	Her question about women (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3211)
Bravery	Shielded the Messenger ﷺ at Uhud
Worship	Voluntary fasting (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 785)
Knowledge	Narrator of a hadith on wudu' (Sunan Abi Dawud 94)
Patience	The martyrdom of her son Habib
Steadfastness	From 'Aqabah to al-Yamamah

LESSONS

Nusaybah proves that a woman can be a fighter, a scholar and a worshipper all at once, and that all of this is valued by Allah and His Messenger.

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SOURCES OF THE STORIES OF NUSAYBAH

This table summarises the source and grade of each story, so that readers can distinguish the authentic from the merely famous.

STORY	SOURCE	GRADE
Her question about women; Al-Ahzab 33:35	Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3211	Hasan
Wudu' with two-thirds of a mudd	Sunan Abi Dawud 94	Sahih
The visit and the virtue of the fasting person	Jami' at-Tirmidhi 785	Disputed
'Abdullah ibn Zayd at al-Hudaybiyah	Sahih al-Bukhari 4167	Sahih
"Between my house and my pulpit"	Sahih al-Bukhari 1195	Sahih
Women giving water at Uhud	Sahih al-Bukhari 2880	Sahih
The pledge of 'Aqabah	Ibn Ishaq	Sirah
Shielding the Messenger ﷺ at Uhud	Ibn Sa'd (al-Waqidi)	Weak
The prayer "my companions in Paradise"	Ibn Sa'd (al-Waqidi)	Weak
The martyrdom of Habib ibn Zayd	Ibn Ishaq	Sirah
Al-Yamamah and the severed hand	Ibn Sa'd (al-Waqidi)	Weak
The garment from 'Umar	Ibn Sa'd (al-Waqidi)	Weak

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PEOPLE IN THE STORY OF NUSAYBAH

PERSON	ROLE
Zayd ibn 'Asim	Her first husband
Ghaziyyah ibn 'Amr	Her second husband, present at Uhud
Habib ibn Zayd	Her son, martyred by Musaylimah
'Abdullah ibn Zayd al-Mazini	Her son, narrator of the wudu' hadith, present at al-Hudaybiyah
'Abbad ibn Tamim	Her grandson, a narrator of hadith
Asma' bint 'Amr (Umm Mani')	The second woman who pledged at 'Aqabah
Musaylimah the Liar	The false prophet of al-Yamamah
Khalid ibn al-Walid	Commander of the army at al-Yamamah (Series 3)
'Umar ibn al-Khattab	The Caliph who honoured her

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PLACES IN THE STORY OF NUSAYBAH

PLACE	EVENT
Madinah	Her birthplace, home and burial place
'Aqabah, Mina	The Second Pledge of 'Aqabah
Uhud	Shielding the Messenger ﷺ (3 AH)
Hamra' al-Asad	Unable to go out because of her wounds (3 AH)
Al-Hudaybiyah	The Pledge of Ridwan (6 AH)
Khaybar and Hunayn	Present with the Messenger ﷺ (7–8 AH)
Al-Yamamah	Fighting Musaylimah; her hand was cut off (11–12 AH)

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TIMELINE OF NUSAYBAH'S LIFE

YEAR	EVENT
13th year of prophethood	Pledged allegiance on the night of 'Aqabah
3 AH	Uhud; twelve wounds; Hamra' al-Asad
6 AH	Al-Hudaybiyah and the Pledge of Ridwan
7–8 AH	Khaybar, 'Umrat al-Qada', the conquest of Makkah and Hunayn
10–11 AH	Martyrdom of her son Habib ibn Zayd
11–12 AH	Al-Yamamah; her hand was cut off
Caliphate of 'Umar	Honoured by the Caliph 'Umar

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT NUSAYBAH

This chapter answers questions often asked about Nusaybah bint Ka'b رضى الله عنها. The answers are brief; details are in the earlier chapters.

1. WHAT WAS NUSAYBAH'S FULL NAME?

Nusaybah bint Ka'b ibn 'Amr al-Ansariyyah, of Banu Mazin ibn an-Najjar; her kunyah was Umm 'Umarah.

2. HOW MANY WOMEN PLEDGED ALLEGIANCE AT 'AQABAH?

Two: Nusaybah bint Ka'b and Asma' bint 'Amr (Umm Mani').

3. WHICH VERSE WAS REVEALED BECAUSE OF NUSAYBAH'S QUESTION?

Al-Ahzab 33:35, according to Jami' at-Tirmidhi 3211.

4. WHAT WAS NUSAYBAH'S ROLE AT UHUD?

Giving water to the fighters, then shielding the Messenger ﷺ when many retreated.

5. HOW MANY WOUNDS DID NUSAYBAH RECEIVE AT UHUD?

Ibn Sa'd mentions twelve wounds, but the chain is weak.

6. WHICH HADITH DID NUSAYBAH NARRATE?

Among them the hadith of wudu' with two-thirds of a mudd of water (Sunan Abi Dawud 94).

7. WHO WERE NUSAYBAH'S CHILDREN?

Habib ibn Zayd and 'Abdullah ibn Zayd, as well as Tamim and Khawlah.

8. HOW WAS HABIB IBN ZAYD MARTYRED?

He was killed by Musaylimah for refusing to affirm his prophethood.

9. WHAT HAPPENED TO NUSAYBAH AT AL-YAMAMAH?

She fought and her hand was cut off, according to Ibn Sa'd.

10. ARE ALL THE STORIES OF NUSAYBAH AUTHENTIC?

No; many details of her battles come through al-Waqidi, who is weak, though their outline is well known.

11. WHEN DID NUSAYBAH DIE?

The date is not known with certainty; she lived until after al-Yamamah.

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12. WHAT IS THE GREATEST LESSON FROM THE STORY OF NUSAYBAH?

Men and women are equally promised reward by Allah for faith and righteous deeds.

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LESSONS AND CONCLUSION

The story of Nusaybah bint Ka'b رضى الله عنها begins with the pledge of a young woman at 'Aqabah, and ends with an elderly mother sacrificing her hand at al-Yamamah.

LESSON	FROM THE STORY OF NUSAYBAH
Reward knows no gender	Al-Ahzab 33:35 and An-Nahl 16:97
Courage to ask	A question reported as the occasion of a verse
Bravery	Shielding the Messenger ﷺ at Uhud
Knowledge and worship	Narrator of hadith and observer of fasts
Raising a generation	Sons who became fighters and narrators
Patience	Accepting the martyrdom of her son
Steadfastness	True to her pledge until the end of her life

May we, men and women alike, take lessons from Nusaybah: holding firm to faith, standing bravely for the truth, and always hoping for Paradise with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

In sha' Allah, the Heroes of Islam series will continue with the story of another hero of Islam.

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SURAH AL-BAQARAH 2:261

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/2:261

SURAH SABA' 34:39

قُلۡ إِنَّ رَبِّي يَبۡسُطُ ٱلرِّزۡقَ لِمَن يَشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهِۦ وَيَقۡدِرُ لَهُۥۚ وَمَآ أَنفَقۡتُم مِّن شَيۡءٖ فَهُوَ يُخۡلِفُهُۥۖ وَهُوَ خَيۡرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ٣٩

Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/34:39

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2588

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، وَابْنُ، حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - وَهُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ وَمَا زَادَ اللَّهُ عَبْدًا بِعَفْوٍ إِلاَّ عِزًّا وَمَا تَوَاضَعَ أَحَدٌ لِلَّهِ إِلاَّ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Charity does not decrease wealth.

Allah does not increase a servant who forgives except in honour. And no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises him in rank."

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CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Virtue, Good Manners and Joining the Ties of Kinship (Kitab al-Birr wa al-Silah wa al-Adab), chapter on the encouragement of forgiveness and humility, Hadith No. 2588.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2588

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 1631

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ أَيُّوبَ، وَقُتَيْبَةُ، - يَعْنِي ابْنَ سَعِيدٍ - وَابْنُ حُجْرٍ قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ، - هُوَ ابْنُ جَعْفَرٍ - عَنِ الْعَلاَءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « إِذَا مَاتَ الإِنْسَانُ انْقَطَعَ عَنْهُ عَمَلُهُ إِلاَّ مِنْ ثَلاَثَةٍ إِلاَّ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him."

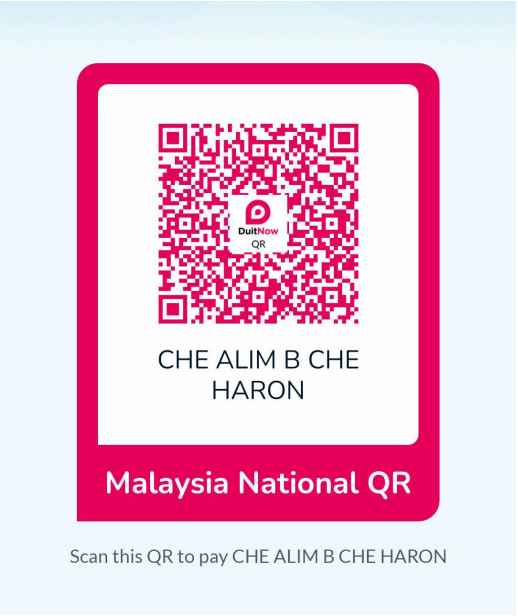
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Wills (Kitab al-Wasiyyah), chapter on the reward that reaches a person after his death, Hadith No. 1631.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:1631

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