Stories from the Qur'an
Series 37

The Companions of the Trench

The Story of Ashab al-Ukhdud and the Steadfast Youth According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith



Hj Che Alim Hj Che Haron
AK (Kelantan)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

STORIES FROM THE QUR'AN

SERIES 37

THE COMPANIONS OF THE TRENCH

The Story of Ashab al-Ukhdud and the Steadfast Youth According to the Qur'an and Authentic Hadith

وَمَا نَقَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ

"And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy."

SURAH AL-BURUJ 85:8

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise is due to Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy, who witnesses all things and never lets the patience of His servants go to waste. Blessings and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who told the story of the steadfast youth to strengthen the hearts of his Companions, and upon his family and his Companions.

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**.

May Allah make our hearts firm upon faith when we are tested, and make us among those who are patient upon the truth. May this knowledge be ‘ilmun yuntafa‘u bih, knowledge that brings benefit.

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ABOUT THE COVER OF THIS EBOOK

The cover of this eBook does not depict any human being or animal. It shows the **scenery** of a **long trench** dug into rocky desert ground — now **silent and empty**, with scorched edges and **faint wisps of smoke** — at dawn.

The scene is taken from the words of Allah: ***"Cursed were the companions of the trench"*** (85:4). The cover deliberately does not depict burning fire or people being tortured, and does not depict any actual place, because the Qur'an does not name it.

The cover does not depict the king, the youth or the believers. The **dark blue band** at the bottom, framed by **fine gold lines**, is where the author's name appears.

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REFERENCES

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

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THE COMPANIONS OF THE TRENCH

Surah Al-Buruj was revealed in Makkah, when the believers were being tortured for their faith. Allah told them the story of the ***Companions of the Trench*** (Ashab al-Ukhdud) — a people who dug trenches of fire to burn the believers.

The Qur'an mentions this story briefly. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told its details in a long Hadith in Sahih Muslim: the story of a ***youth*** who stood firm before a tyrant king. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 85:4

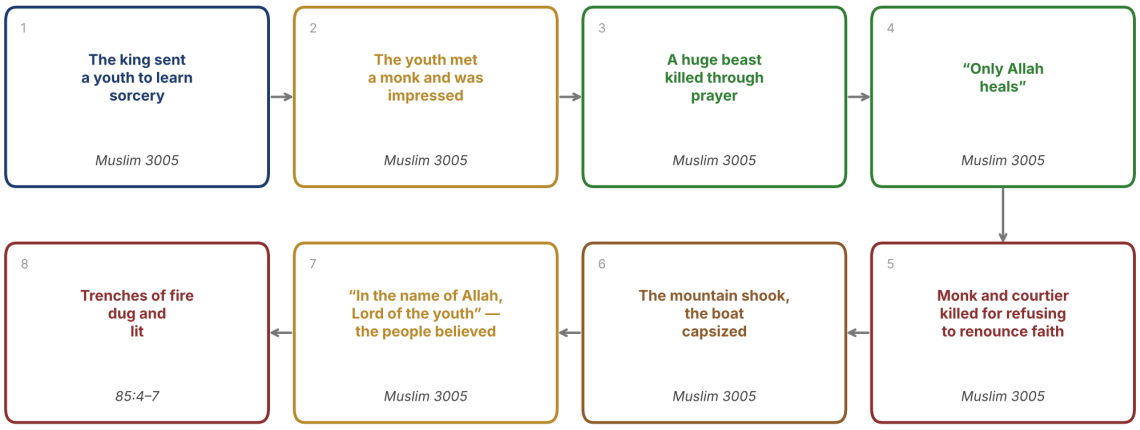


Figure 1: The flow of the story of the youth and the Companions of the Trench according to Sahih Muslim 3005 and Surah Al-Buruj 85:4–7.

Note: The translation of the Qur'anic verses in this eBook is Sahih International. The grade of every Hadith is stated in the Hadith box, with a link to sunnah.com.

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AN OATH BY THE SKY AND THE PROMISED DAY

SURAH AL-BURUJ 85:1–3

وَٱلسَّمَآءِ ذَاتِ ٱلْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾

By the sky containing great stars.

وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْمَوْعُودِ ﴿٢﴾

And [by] the promised Day.

وَشَاهِدٍ وَمَشْهُودٍ ﴿٣﴾

And [by] the witness and what is witnessed.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/85:1-3

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 85:1–3 — MIGHTY WITNESSES

First: The sky with great stars. ***"By the sky containing great stars"***. Allah swears by a mighty creation before telling of a grave event. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 85:1

Second: The promised Day. ***"And [by] the promised Day"***. Injustice in this world does not escape; there is a Day promised for judgement.

Third: The witness and what is witnessed. ***"And [by] the witness and what is witnessed"***. Nothing is hidden from Allah.

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CURSED WERE THE COMPANIONS OF THE TRENCH

SURAH AL-BURUJ 85:4–7

قُتِلَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلۡأُخۡدُودِ ٤

Cursed were the companions of the trench.

ٱلنَّارِ ذَاتِ ٱلۡوَقُودِ ٥

[Containing] the fire full of fuel.

إِذۡ هُمۡ عَلَيۡهَا قُعُودٞ ٦

When they were sitting near it?

وَهُمۡ عَلَىٰ مَا يَفۡعَلُونَ بِٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ شُهُودٞ ٧

And they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/85:4-7

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 85:4–7 — INJUSTICE WITNESSED

First: A curse upon them. ***"Cursed were the companions of the trench"*** **—** ***"the fire full of fuel"***. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 85:4

Second: Sitting and watching. ***"When they were sitting near it"***, ***"And they, to what they were doing against the believers, were witnesses"***. They did not only torture; they made it a spectacle.

Third: Who were they? The Qur'an does not name them, their place or their era. The authentic details come from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in the next section.

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THE KING, THE SORCERER, THE MONK AND THE YOUTH

THE STORY TOLD BY THE MESSENGER OF ALLAH ﷺ

Imam Muslim placed this Hadith under the chapter ***the story of the Companions of the Trench, the sorcerer, the monk and the youth***:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 3005

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا حَمَّادُ بْنُ سَلَمَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « كَانَ مَلِكٌ فِيمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ وَكَانَ لَهُ سَاحِرٌ فَلَمَّا كَبِرَ قَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ إِنِّي قَدْ كَبِرْتُ فَابْعَثْ إِلَىَّ غُلاَمًا أُعَلِّمْهُ السِّحْرَ. فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ غُلاَمًا يُعَلِّمُهُ فَكَانَ فِي طَرِيقِهِ إِذَا سَلَكَ رَاهِبٌ فَقَعَدَ إِلَيْهِ وَسَمِعَ كَلاَمَهُ فَأَعْجَبَهُ فَكَانَ إِذَا أَتَى السَّاحِرَ مَرَّ بِالرَّاهِبِ وَقَعَدَ إِلَيْهِ فَإِذَا أَتَى السَّاحِرَ ضَرَبَهُ فَشَكَا ذَلِكَ إِلَى الرَّاهِبِ فَقَالَ إِذَا خَشِيتَ السَّاحِرَ فَقُلْ حَبَسَنِي أَهْلِي. وَإِذَا خَشِيتَ أَهْلَكَ فَقُلْ حَبَسَنِي السَّاحِرُ. فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ كَذَلِكَ إِذْ أَتَى عَلَى دَابَّةٍ عَظِيمَةٍ قَدْ حَبَسَتِ النَّاسَ فَقَالَ الْيَوْمَ أَعْلَمُ آلسَّاحِرُ أَفْضَلُ أَمِ الرَّاهِبُ أَفْضَلُ فَأَخَذَ حَجَرًا فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ أَمْرُ الرَّاهِبِ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَمْرِ السَّاحِرِ فَاقْتُلْ هَذِهِ الدَّابَّةَ حَتَّى يَمْضِيَ النَّاسُ. فَرَمَاهَا فَقَتَلَهَا وَمَضَى النَّاسُ فَأَتَى الرَّاهِبَ فَأَخْبَرَهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ الرَّاهِبُ أَىْ بُنَىَّ أَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ أَفْضَلُ مِنِّي. قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنْ أَمْرِكَ مَا أَرَى وَإِنَّكَ سَتُبْتَلَى فَإِنِ ابْتُلِيتَ فَلاَ تَدُلَّ عَلَىَّ. وَكَانَ الْغُلاَمُ يُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ وَيُدَاوِي النَّاسَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الأَدْوَاءِ فَسَمِعَ جَلِيسٌ لِلْمَلِكِ كَانَ قَدْ عَمِيَ فَأَتَاهُ بِهَدَايَا كَثِيرَةٍ فَقَالَ مَا هَا هُنَا لَكَ أَجْمَعُ إِنْ أَنْتَ شَفَيْتَنِي فَقَالَ إِنِّي لاَ أَشْفِي أَحَدًا إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللَّهُ فَإِنْ أَنْتَ آمَنْتَ بِاللَّهِ دَعَوْتُ اللَّهَ فَشَفَاكَ. فَآمَنَ بِاللَّهِ فَشَفَاهُ اللَّهُ فَأَتَى الْمَلِكَ فَجَلَسَ إِلَيْهِ كَمَا كَانَ يَجْلِسُ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ مَنْ رَدَّ عَلَيْكَ بَصَرَكَ قَالَ رَبِّي. قَالَ وَلَكَ رَبٌّ غَيْرِي قَالَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ. فَأَخَذَهُ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الْغُلاَمِ فَجِيءَ بِالْغُلاَمِ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ أَىْ بُنَىَّ قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنْ سِحْرِكَ مَا تُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ وَتَفْعَلُ وَتَفْعَلُ. فَقَالَ إِنِّي لاَ أَشْفِي أَحَدًا إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللَّهُ. فَأَخَذَهُ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الرَّاهِبِ فَجِيءَ بِالرَّاهِبِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ. فَأَبَى فَدَعَا بِالْمِئْشَارِ فَوَضَعَ الْمِئْشَارَ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ فَشَقَّهُ حَتَّى وَقَعَ

شَقَّاهُ ثُمَّ جِيءَ بِجَلِيسِ الْمَلِكِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ. فَأَبَى فَوَضَعَ الْمِنْشَارَ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ فَشَقَّهُ بِهِ حَتَّى وَقَعَ شِقَّاهُ ثُمَّ جِيءَ بِالْغُلَامِ فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ. فَأَبَى فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى نَفَرٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فَقَالَ اذْهَبُوا بِهِ إِلَى جَبَلِ كَذَا وَكَذَا فَاصْعَدُوا بِهِ الْجَبَلَ فَإِذَا بَلَغْتُمْ ذُرْوَتَهُ فَإِنْ رَجَعَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَإِلاَّ فَاطْرَحُوهُ فَذَهَبُوا بِهِ فَصَعِدُوا بِهِ الْجَبَلَ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ. فَرَجَفَ بِهِمُ الْجَبَلُ فَسَقَطُوا وَجَاءَ يَمْشِي إِلَى الْمَلِكِ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ قَالَ كَفَانِيهِمُ اللَّهُ. فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى نَفَرٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ فَقَالَ اذْهَبُوا بِهِ فَاحْمِلُوهُ فِي قُرْقُورٍ فَتَوَسَّطُوا بِهِ الْبَحْرَ فَإِنْ رَجَعَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَإِلاَّ فَاقْذِفُوهُ. فَذَهَبُوا بِهِ فَقَالَ اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِيهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ. فَانْكَفَأَتْ بِهِمُ السَّفِينَةُ فَغَرِقُوا وَجَاءَ يَمْشِي إِلَى الْمَلِكِ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ قَالَ كَفَانِيهِمُ اللَّهُ. فَقَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ إِنَّكَ لَسْتَ بِقَاتِلِي حَتَّى تَفْعَلَ مَا آمُرُكَ بِهِ. قَالَ وَمَا هُوَ قَالَ تَجْمَعُ النَّاسَ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ وَتَصْلُبُنِي عَلَى جِذْعٍ ثُمَّ خُذْ سَهْمًا مِنْ كِنَانَتِي ثُمَّ ضَعِ السَّهْمَ فِي كَبِدِ الْقَوْسِ ثُمَّ قُلْ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْغُلاَمِ. ثُمَّ ارْمِنِي فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَلِكَ قَتَلْتَنِي. فَجَمَعَ النَّاسَ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ وَصَلَبَهُ عَلَى جِذْعٍ ثُمَّ أَخَذَ سَهْمًا مِنْ كِنَانَتِهِ ثُمَّ وَضَعَ السَّهْمَ فِي كَبِدِ الْقَوْسِ ثُمَّ قَالَ بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْغُلاَمِ. ثُمَّ رَمَاهُ فَوَقَعَ السَّهْمُ فِي صُدْغِهِ فَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ فِي صُدْغِهِ فِي مَوْضِعِ السَّهْمِ فَمَاتَ فَقَالَ النَّاسُ آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلاَمِ آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلاَمِ آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلاَمِ. فَأُتِيَ الْمَلِكُ فَقِيلَ لَهُ أَرَأَيْتَ مَا كُنْتَ تَحْذَرُ قَدْ وَاللَّهِ نَزَلَ بِكَ حَذَرُكَ قَدْ آمَنَ النَّاسُ. فَأَمَرَ بِالأُخْدُودِ فِي أَفْوَاهِ السِّكَكِ فَخُدَّتْ وَأَضْرَمَ النِّيرَانَ وَقَالَ مَنْ لَمْ يَرْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَأَحْمُوهُ فِيهَا. أَوْ قِيلَ لَهُ اقْتَحِمْ. فَفَعَلُوا حَتَّى جَاءَتِ امْرَأَةٌ وَمَعَهَا صَبِيٌّ لَهَا فَتَقَاعَسَتْ أَنْ تَقَعَ فِيهَا فَقَالَ لَهَا الْغُلاَمُ يَا أُمَّهِ اصْبِرِي فَإِنَّكِ عَلَى الْحَقِّ ».

TRANSLATION:

Suhaib رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"There was a king among those before you, and he had a sorcerer. When the sorcerer grew old, he said to the king: I have grown old, so send me a youth whom I may teach sorcery. So he sent him a youth. On his way there was a monk; the youth sat with him, listened to his words and was impressed. After that, whenever he went to the sorcerer, he would stop by the monk... One day he came upon a huge beast that had blocked the people's way. He said: Today I will know whether the sorcerer is better or the monk. He took a stone and said: O Allah, if the matter of the monk is dearer to You than the matter of the sorcerer, then kill this beast so that the people may pass. He threw it and killed it... The monk said: My son, today you**

are better than me, and you will be tested; if you are tested, do not point to me. The youth would heal the born-blind and the leper. A blind courtier of the king came to him. The youth said: I do not heal anyone; only Allah heals. If you believe in Allah, I will pray to Allah and He will heal you. He believed, and Allah healed him. The king asked the courtier: Who restored your sight? He said: My Lord. The king said: Do you have a lord other than me? He said: My Lord and your Lord is Allah. The king tortured him until he pointed to the youth, then tortured the youth until he pointed to the monk. The monk and the courtier were ordered to renounce their religion; they refused and were killed with a saw. The youth was taken to a mountain summit to be thrown off; he prayed: O Allah, suffice me against them however You will. The mountain shook and they fell. He was taken to the middle of the sea in a boat; he prayed again, the boat capsized and they drowned. Each time he walked back to the king. The youth said to the king: You will not be able to kill me until you do what I command you: gather the people on one plain, crucify me on a tree trunk, take an arrow from my quiver, then say: In the name of Allah, the Lord of the youth — then shoot me. The king did so; the arrow struck his temple, he placed his hand on it and died. The people said: We believe in the Lord of the youth! We believe in the Lord of the youth! We believe in the Lord of the youth! Then the king ordered trenches to be dug at the entrances of the roads, and fires were lit. He said: Whoever does not turn back from his religion, throw him into it. They did so, until a woman came with her infant; she hesitated to go in. Her infant said: O mother, be patient, for you are upon the truth."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid, from Hammad ibn Salamah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Laila, from Suhaib ar-Rumi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening of Hearts, chapter on the story of the Companions of the Trench, the sorcerer, the monk and the youth, Hadith No. 3005. (The translation above is abridged in a few places marked "…".)

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:3005

"IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE LORD OF THE YOUTH"

LESSONS FROM THE HADITH OF SAHIH MUSLIM 3005

First: Seeking the truth from a young age. The youth was sent to learn sorcery, but his heart was drawn to the monk who taught tawhid. He tested it with a prayer: "O Allah, if the matter of the monk is dearer to You…"

Second: Tawhid in healing. "I do not heal anyone; only Allah heals." The youth took no glory for himself, but made it a door for calling to Allah.

Third: "My Lord and your Lord is Allah." The newly believing courtier openly declared his faith before the king, though the result was torture and death.

Fourth: The prayer of the oppressed. "O Allah, suffice me against them however You will." The mountain shook and the boat capsized — Allah protected the youth until his time came.

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Fifth: Sacrificing himself for the faith of the people. The youth himself taught the king how to kill him: by saying ***"In the name of Allah, the Lord of the youth"*** before the people. His death became the cause of the whole people's faith.

Sixth: Patience to the very end. A mother hesitated, and her infant said: "O mother, be patient, for you are upon the truth."

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THEIR ONLY "CRIME" WAS FAITH

SURAH AL-BURUJ 85:8–9

وَمَا نَقَمُوا۟ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّآ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ ٱلْعَزِيزِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ ﴿٨﴾

And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.

ٱلَّذِى لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٩﴾

To whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. And Allah, over all things, is Witness.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/85:8-9

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 85:8–9 — THE ONLY "CRIME"

First: No other reason. ***"And they resented them not except because they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy"***. Their only "crime" was faith. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 85:8

Second: Allah is Witness. ***"And Allah, over all things, is Witness"***. The king watched from the edge of the trench; Allah witnesses everything.

Third: The sweetness of faith. Those believers chose the fire of this world over returning to disbelief. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described the feeling of one who has tasted the sweetness of faith:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 16

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْوَهَّابِ الثَّقَفِيُّ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَيُّوبُ، عَنْ أَبِي قِلاَبَةَ، عَنْ أَنَسٍ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ « ثَلاَثٌ مَنْ كُنَّ فِيهِ وَجَدَ حَلاَوَةَ الإِيمَانِ أَنْ يَكُونَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا سِوَاهُمَا، وَأَنْ يُحِبَّ الْمَرْءَ لاَ يُحِبُّهُ إِلاَّ لِلَّهِ، وَأَنْ يَكْرَهَ أَنْ يَعُودَ فِي الْكُفْرِ كَمَا يَكْرَهُ أَنْ يُقْذَفَ فِي النَّارِ ».

TRANSLATION:

Anas رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: **"Whoever has three qualities will taste the sweetness of faith: that Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else; that he loves a person only for the sake of Allah; and that he hates to return to disbelief as he hates to be thrown into the fire."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from 'Abd al-Wahhab ath-Thaqafi, from Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani, from Abu Qilabah, from Anas ibn Malik رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Faith, chapter on the sweetness of faith, Hadith No. 16. Also narrated by Muslim (No. 43).

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:16

THOSE BEFORE YOU WERE TESTED TOO

A STORY THAT STRENGTHENED THE COMPANIONS

First: The Companions' complaint. When the Companions were being tortured in Makkah, they complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He reminded them of the believers before them:

HADITH — SAHIH AL-BUKHARI, NO. 3612

حَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى، حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى، عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ، حَدَّثَنَا قَيْسٌ، عَنْ خَبَّابِ بْنِ الأَرَتِّ، قَالَ شَكَوْنَا إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم وَهْوَ مُتَوَسِّدٌ بُرْدَةً لَهُ فِي ظِلِّ الْكَعْبَةِ، قُلْنَا لَهُ أَلاَ تَسْتَنْصِرُ لَنَا أَلاَ تَدْعُو اللَّهَ لَنَا قَالَ « كَانَ الرَّجُلُ فِيمَنْ قَبْلَكُمْ يُحْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الأَرْضِ فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهِ، فَيُجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ، فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيُشَقُّ بِاثْنَتَيْنِ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَيُمْشَطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ، مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ مِنْ عَظْمٍ أَوْ عَصَبٍ، وَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ، وَاللَّهِ لَيُتِمَّنَّ هَذَا الأَمْرَ حَتَّى يَسِيرَ الرَّاكِبُ مِنْ صَنْعَاءَ إِلَى حَضْرَمَوْتَ، لاَ يَخَافُ إِلاَّ اللَّهَ أَوِ الذِّئْبَ عَلَى غَنَمِهِ، وَلَكِنَّكُمْ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ».

TRANSLATION:

Khabbab ibn al-Aratt رضى الله عنه said: We complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while he was reclining on his cloak in the shade of the Ka'bah. We said: Will you not seek help for us? Will you not pray to Allah for us? He said: **"Among those before you, a man would have a pit dug for him in the earth and be placed in it; then a saw would be brought and put on his head and he would be split in two, yet that would not turn him away from his religion. He would be combed with iron combs that reached beneath his flesh to bone and sinew, yet that would not turn him away from his religion. By Allah, Allah will complete this matter until a rider travels from San'a' to Hadramawt fearing none but Allah, or the wolf for his sheep. But you are hasty."**

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari: from Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, from Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, from Isma'il ibn Abi Khalid, from Qais ibn Abi Hazim, from Khabbab ibn al-Aratt رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam al-Bukhari in Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Virtues, chapter on the signs of Prophethood in Islam, Hadith No. 3612.

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:3612

Second: "But you are hasty." Victory will surely come, but at the time Allah decrees. The believer's task is to be firm and patient.

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THE DOOR OF REPENTANCE AND THE GREAT ATTAINMENT

SURAH AL-BURUJ 85:10–11

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ فَتَنُواْ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمۡ يَتُوبُواْ فَلَهُمۡ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابُ ٱلۡحَرِيقِ ١٠

Indeed, those who have tortured the believing men and believing women and then have not repented will have the punishment of Hell, and they will have the punishment of the Burning Fire.

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَهُمۡ جَنَّٰتٞ تَجۡرِي مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَٰرُۚ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡفَوۡزُ ٱلۡكَبِيرُ ١١

Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds will have gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment.

Translation: Sahih International — quran.com/85:10-11

COMMENTARY ON VERSES 85:10–11 — TWO OUTCOMES

First: The door of repentance is still open. ***"and then have not repented"***. Ibn Kathir quotes al-Hasan al-Basri: look at the generosity of Allah — they killed His friends, yet He still calls them to repentance. Tafsir Ibn Kathir 85:10

Second: The true victory. ***"That is the great attainment"***. In people's eyes, the believers lost; in Allah's sight, they were the victors.

Third: Every affair of the believer is good. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, through the same narrator as the story of the youth (Suhaib رضى الله عنه), said:

HADITH — SAHIH MUSLIM, NO. 2999

حَدَّثَنَا هَدَّابُ بْنُ خَالِدٍ الأَزْدِيُّ، وَشَيْبَانُ بْنُ فَرُّوخَ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ، - وَاللَّفْظُ لِشَيْبَانَ - حَدَّثَنَا سُلَيْمَانُ، حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ أَبِي لَيْلَى، عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم « عَجَبًا لأَمْرِ الْمُؤْمِنِ إِنَّ أَمْرَهُ كُلَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَلَيْسَ

ذَاكَ لأَحَدٍ إِلاَّ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ إِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ سَرَّاءُ شَكَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ ضَرَّاءُ صَبَرَ فَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُ ».

TRANSLATION:

Suhaib رضى الله عنه said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"How wonderful is the affair of the believer!**

His whole affair is good, and that is for no one except the believer. If something pleasing befalls him, he is grateful, and that is good for him. And if hardship befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him."

CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Haddab ibn Khalid al-Azdi and Shaiban ibn Farrukh, from Sulaiman ibn al-Mughirah, from Thabit al-Bunani, from 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Abi Laila, from Suhaib ar-Rumi رضى الله عنه.

REFERENCE: Narrated by Imam Muslim in Sahih Muslim, Book of Asceticism and Softening of Hearts, chapter: the believer's affair is all good, Hadith No. 2999.

GRADE: SAHIH — contained in Sahih Muslim, the second most authentic book of Hadith after Sahih al-Bukhari.

Source: https://sunnah.com/muslim:2999

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WHAT THE QUR'AN DOES NOT TELL

The Qur'an and authentic Hadith do not name the king, the youth, the place or the era of this event — the Hadith only says "among those before you". Guided by Sahih al-Bukhari 4485 (Series 1), we add no outside details.

POPULAR STORIES AND WHAT REVELATION STATES

THE POPULAR STORY	WHAT THE QUR'AN AND AUTHENTIC HADITH STATE
This took place in Najran under the Himyarite king Dhu Nuwas.	The Qur'an and authentic Hadith do not name the place or the king. It is the view of Ibn Ishaq and some commentators.
The youth's name was 'Abdullah ibn ath-Thamir.	Not mentioned in authentic Hadith.
Twenty thousand people were burned.	Not mentioned in the Qur'an or authentic Hadith.
The fire rose and burned the king and his men.	The Qur'an mentions the punishment of Hell and the Burning Fire (85:10). The burning of the king in this world is not established by authentic Hadith.
The youth's grave was found in the time of 'Umar with his hand on his temple.	A report in books of sirah, without an authentic chain.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE: THE BI'R HIMA INSCRIPTIONS NEAR NAJRAN

Sabaic inscriptions at **Bi'r Hima**, about 85 km from Najran (including **Ja 1028**), dated **523 AD**, record the campaign of a Himyarite king against the people of Najran, including killings and the burning of their church (Beeston, 1985).

Claim not included. The claim that the events of 523 AD are the story of the Companions of the Trench, or that the "al-Ukhdud" site in Najran is that trench, is **not included** — the inscriptions do not mention a trench of fire, and the Qur'an and authentic Hadith do not name the place or era of the event.

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STEADFAST UPON THE TRUTH

The story of the Companions of the Trench is the story of ***the victory of faith*** even as bodies burned. The king won in people's eyes, but Allah called the believers the owners of ***the great attainment***.

	Stance	Outcome and Lesson
The king	Opposed and burned the believers	Hell if they do not repent (85:10)
The youth	Sacrificed himself for tawhid	The people believed
The monk and the courtier	Refused to renounce faith, even unto death	Firm upon faith
The believers	Chose fire over disbelief (al-Bukhari 16)	"The great attainment" (85:11)
The mother and her infant	"Be patient, you are upon the truth"	Patience is good for him (Muslim 2999)

Figure 2: The stance and outcome of each party in the story of the Companions of the Trench according to the Qur'an and authentic Hadith.

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

First: Injustice does not escape the promised Day. (85:1–3).

Second: Only Allah heals and benefits. (Sahih Muslim 3005).

Third: A young person can be the cause of guidance for many. (Sahih Muslim 3005).

Fourth: The sweetness of faith is worth more than life. (85:8; Sahih al-Bukhari 16).

Fifth: Be patient and do not be hasty. (Sahih al-Bukhari 3612).

Sixth: The door of repentance is open even to the worst of oppressors. (85:10).

Seventh: The true victory is Paradise. (85:11; Sahih Muslim 2999).

CONCLUSION

The youth did not seek fame, yet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told his story, and we still tell it today without knowing his name. May Allah make us firm like the mother who heard those words: ***"Be patient, for you are upon the truth."*** Amin.

In sha Allah, the series **Stories from the Qur'an** will continue with the next story — with the same method: the Qur'an, authentic Hadith, and solid archaeological findings only.

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ADDITIONAL HADITH CITED IN THE TEXT

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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."

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."

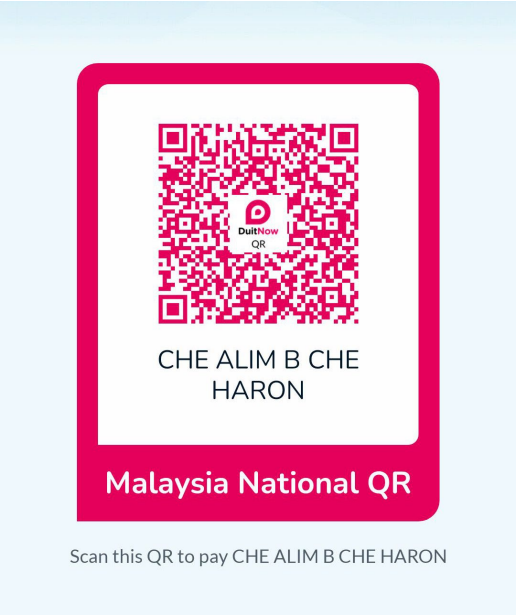
CHAIN OF NARRATION: Narrated by Imam Muslim: from Yahya bin Ayyub, Qutaibah bin Sa'id and 'Ali bin Hujr, from Isma'il bin Ja'far, from al-'Ala' bin 'Abd al-Rahman, from his father 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ya'qub, from Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه .

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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