

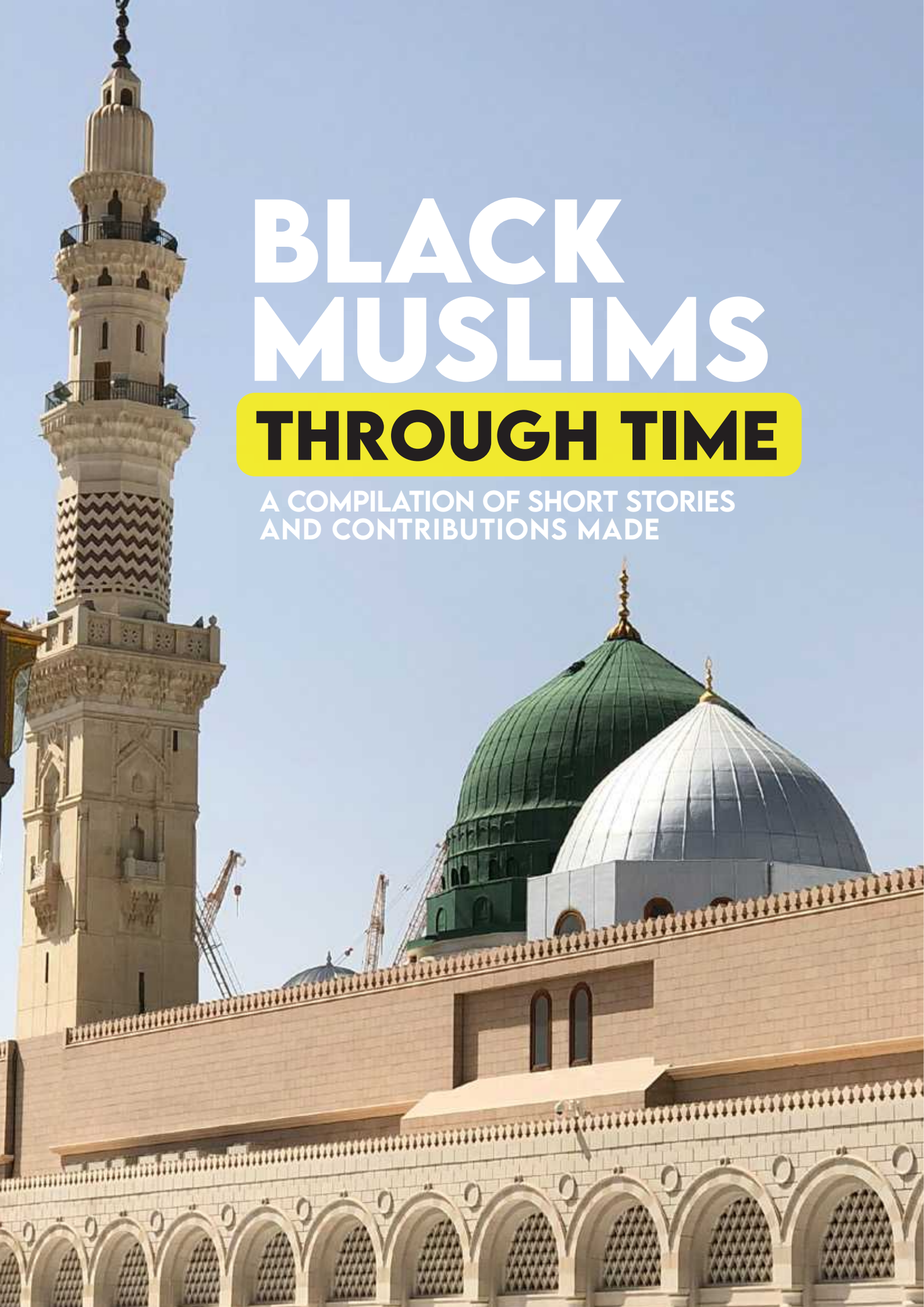


# BLACK MUSLIMS

## THROUGH TIME

A COMPILATION OF SHORT STORIES  
AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE





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AND CONTRIBUTIONS MADE

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## PREFACE

In the 7th Century, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) was sent with a message of unity and equality. At a time when racism and tribalism was rife, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared that no person is above another by virtue of race and ethnicity. For centuries Black people have faced discrimination and experienced racism from the wider community.

Unfortunately, within pockets of the Muslim Ummah today, racism still exists despite the teachings of Islam on equality. Due to the lack of education and resources in the Muslim community regarding the history of Black Muslims, we find Black Muslims are not seen or treated the same as a Muslim belonging to another racial or ethnic group. For this reason, we sought to find a solution and decided it was essential that we create a resource through which we can educate Muslims and non-Muslims of all ages about the rich history and great achievements of key Black Muslims.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team at Raising Explorers After School Club in Bradford for volunteering their time to research and write this content and the team at MEND for partnering with us in producing this beneficial resource. I pray that the Almighty accepts this work and makes it a means of education for Muslim communities for years to come. Ameen

**Aweis Asghar (Abu Mustafa)**  
**Principal CEO, Raising Explorers Bradford**



# FOREWORD

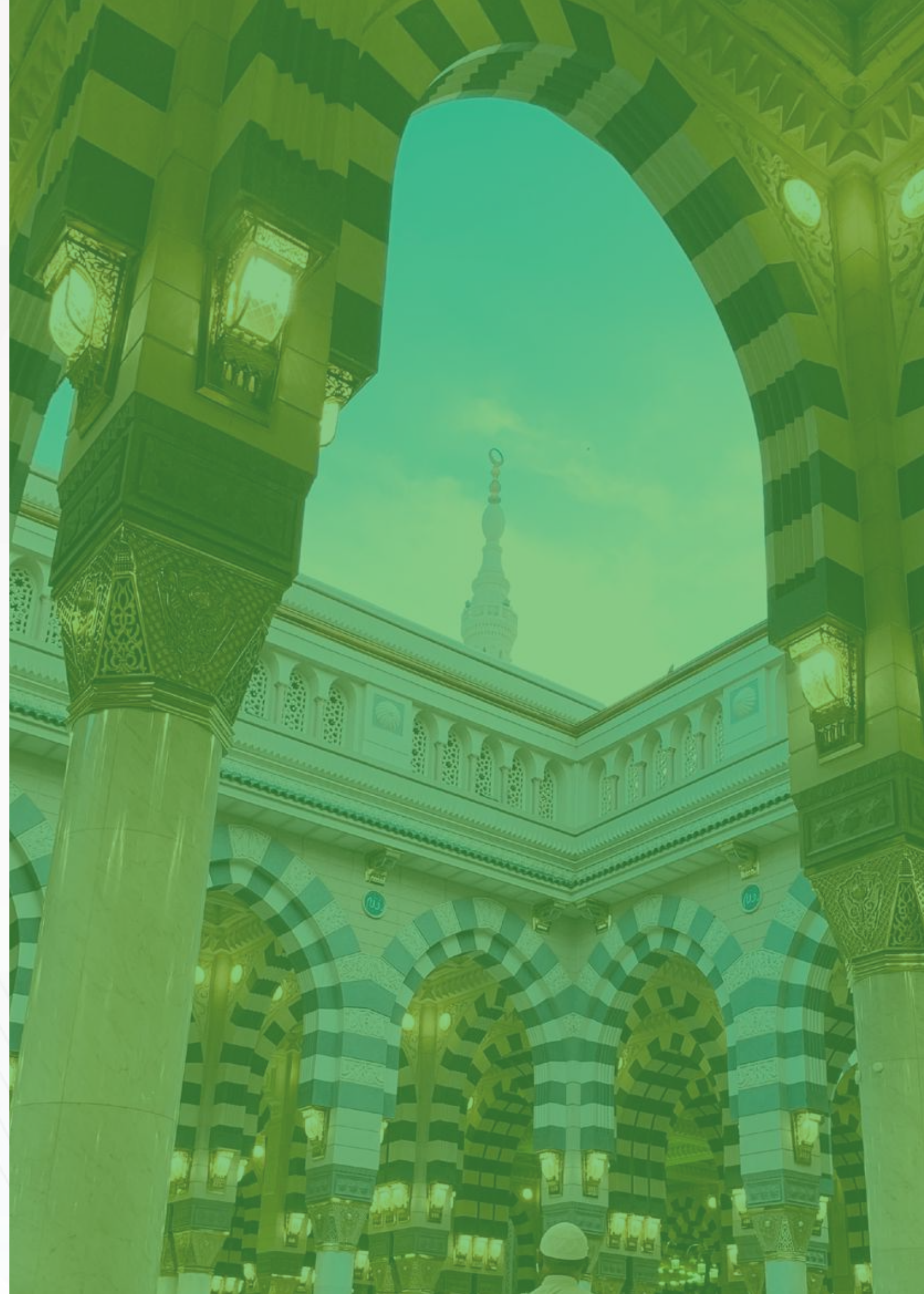
As we enter the month of October and celebrate Black History Month, we are reminded of the great contributions made by Black communities across the UK, both past and present.

Black Muslims have a rich history and culture with longstanding roots in the UK. However, the challenges they face persist and the intersectional nature of their struggles must not be ignored.

At MEND we want to highlight the positive contributions made by Black Muslims in the UK but at the same time highlight the changes we want to see in society to overcome the barriers and exclusions that Black Muslims often face. To take one example, many Black Muslim women face a triple penalty in terms of exclusion and discrimination in their daily lives on account of being women, being Black, and being Muslim. We want to eradicate this inequality and work towards a society where Black Muslims don't have to face the daily struggles they currently experience.

Throughout the month of October, MEND will be hosting several webinars and events to celebrate Black History Month, and we are also very proud to release our educational booklet to help empower others within Muslim communities to do likewise.

**Azhar Qayum**  
**CEO, Muslim Engagement and Development**

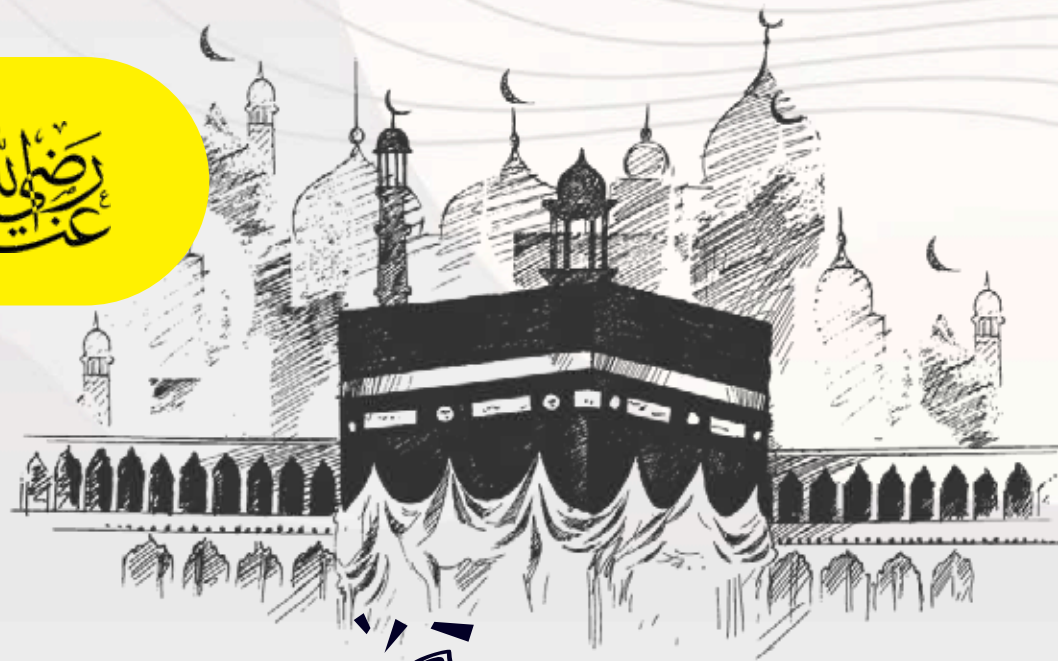




# BILAL IBN RABAH



Bilal (RA) was born in Makkah in the late sixth century. An African black slave who was a distinguished and loyal companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).



*"O Bilal, what special deeds have you done that I heard sounds of your walking steps ahead of me in paradise?"*

- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Bilal (RA) was empowered by the Prophet (PBUH) and was appointed as the first mu'adhin of Madinah. After the Prophet (PBUH) passed away, Bilal (RA) stopped calling the adhan due to his immense sadness upon the great loss.



## VIRTUE

Once the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"O Bilal, what special deeds have you done that I heard sounds of your walking steps ahead of me in paradise?"*

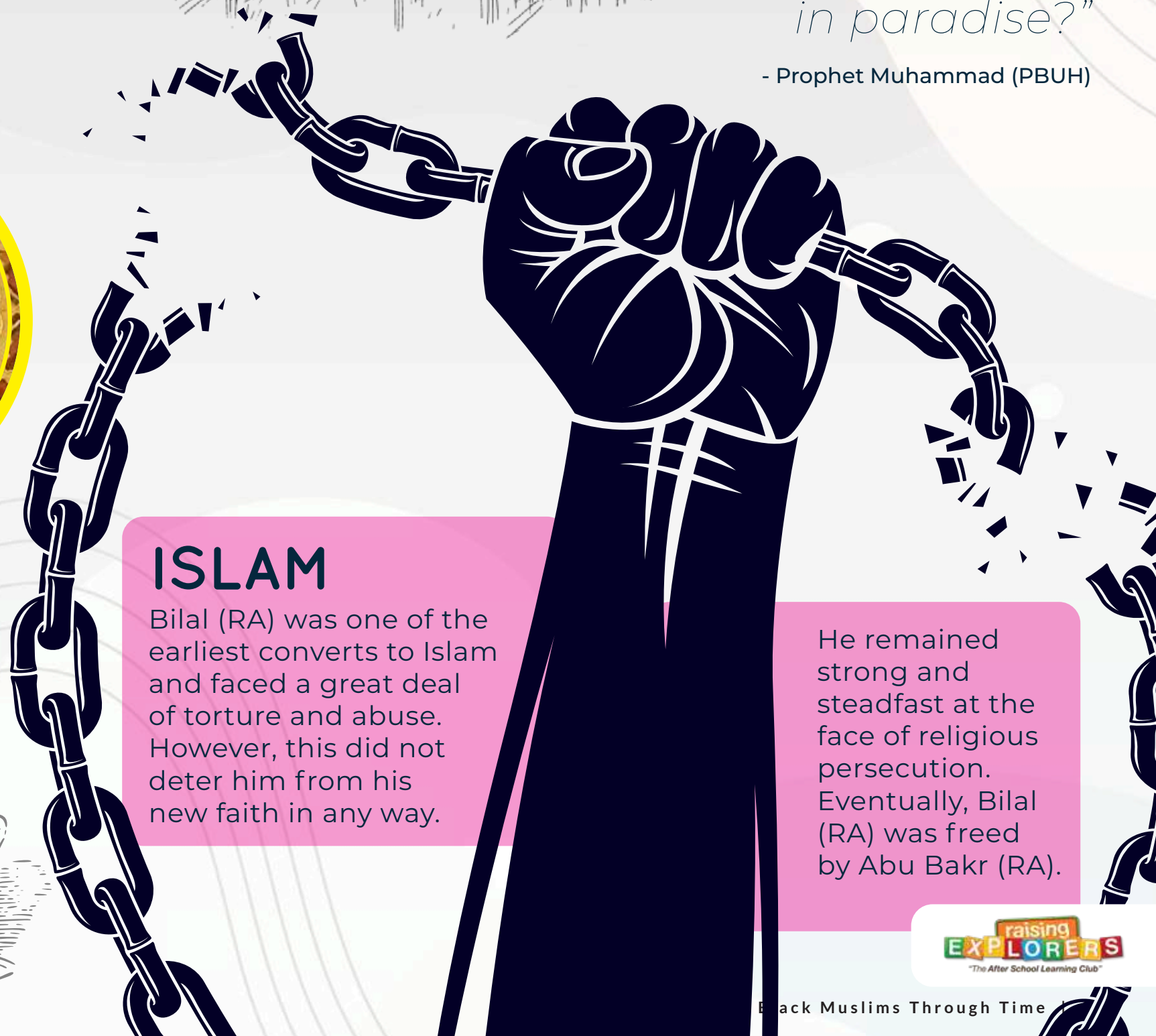
Bilal said, *"I did not do anything worth mentioning except that whenever I performed wudhu during the day or night, I prayed after that as much as was written for me."* [Bukhari]



## ISLAM

Bilal (RA) was one of the earliest converts to Islam and faced a great deal of torture and abuse. However, this did not deter him from his new faith in any way.

He remained strong and steadfast at the face of religious persecution. Eventually, Bilal (RA) was freed by Abu Bakr (RA).





# UMME AYMAN



Barakah bint Tha'alaba was her actual name but was commonly known as Umme Ayman. She was an Abyssinian slave of the father of the Prophet (PBUH). Umme Ayman (RA) is predominantly known as one of the first carers of the Prophet (PBUH). She was the primary source of support when the Prophet (PBUH) lost his mother at the tender age of 6 at a place called Abwa.

## ISLAM

Umme Ayman (RA) was one of the early Muslims and due to this faced persecution from the Quraysh. She had a particularly close relationship with the family of the Prophet (PBUH).

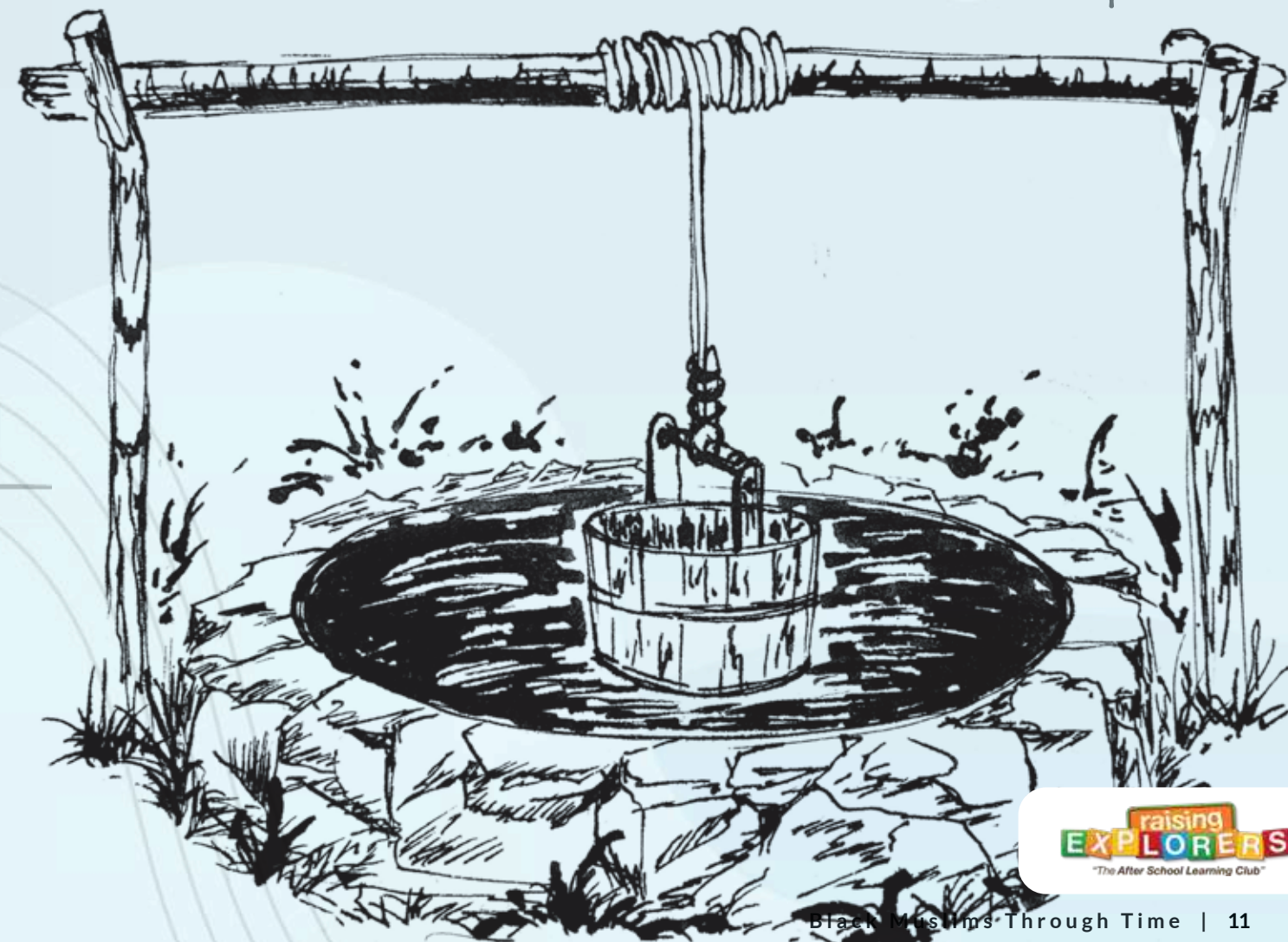
## ACHIEVEMENTS

Umme Ayman (RA) participated in the battle of Uhud and Khaybar by giving water to the soldiers and tended to the injured. She had the honour of witnessing the sublime character of the Prophet (PBUH) from the first day of his life.

*Prophet (PBUH) respected and honoured Umme Ayman (RA) throughout his life.*

## VIRTUE

Prophet (PBUH) respected and honoured Umme Ayman (RA) throughout his life. He (PBUH) said to the companions that if anyone wanted to marry a lady from the people of paradise then marry Umme Ayman. [Ibn Sa'd]





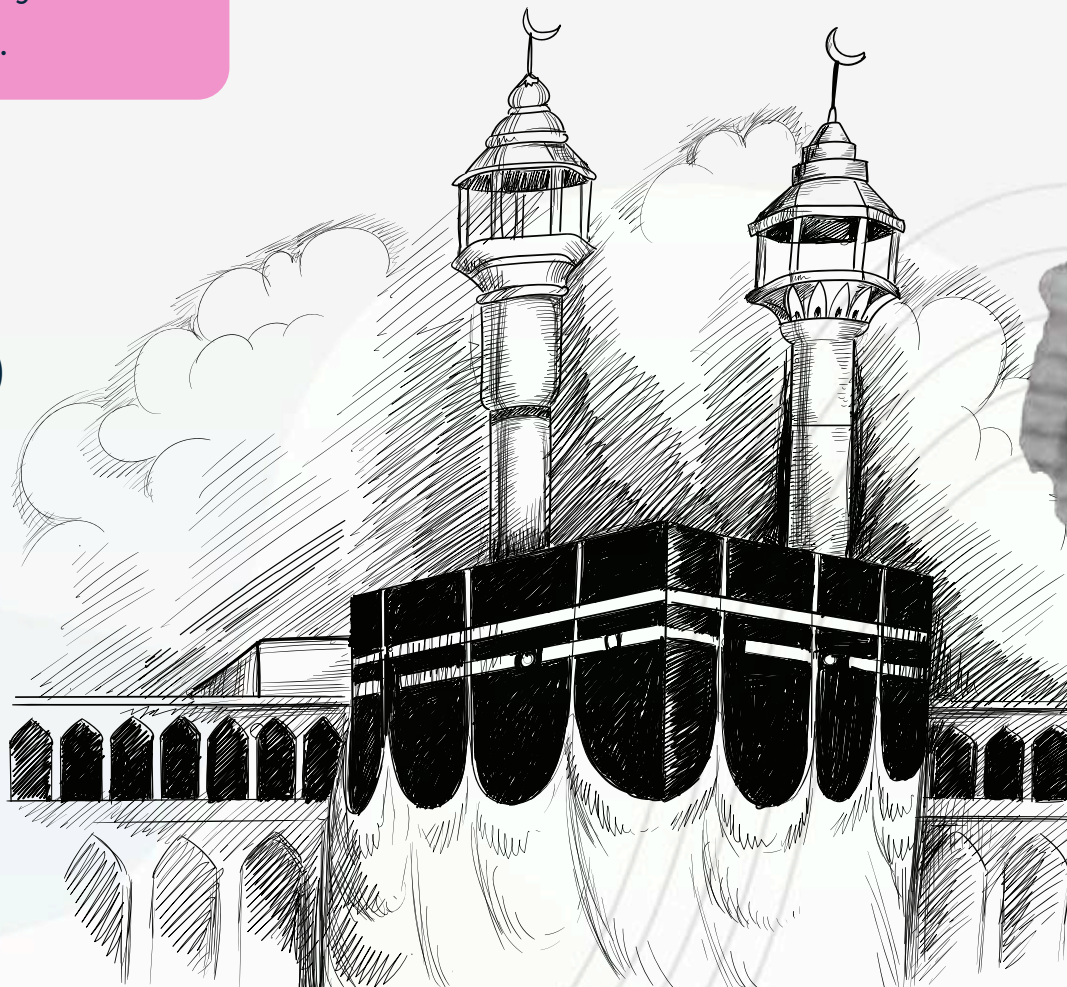
# USAMAH IBN ZAYD



Usamah ibn Zayd (RA) was the son of two noble and distinguished companions, Zayd ibn Harithah (RA), the adopted son of the Prophet (PBUH) and Umme Ayman (RA). He was born in Makkah, a few years before the migration.

## ISLAM

Usamah (RA) was born to parents who had strong connections with the household of the Prophet (PBUH) and were prominent members of the early Muslim community.



## VIRTUE

Usamah (RA) narrates that the Prophet (PBUH) used to take him and Hasan (RA), and used to say, *“O Allah! I love them, so please love them.”* [Bukhari]

*“O Allah! I love them, so please love them.”*  
[Bukhari]



## ACHIEVEMENTS

After the farewell pilgrimage, the Prophet (PBUH) appointed Usamah (RA) as the commander of the army which was being sent to Syria. The Muslims spoke unfavourably about Usamah (RA) as he was young and there were older companions present who were deemed more worthy in their eyes. The Prophet (PBUH) said, *“I have been informed that you spoke about Usamah (RA). Let it be known that he is the most beloved of all people to me.”* [Bukhari]



# UMME MAHJAN

Umme Mahjan (RA) was an African convert who lived in Madinah during the time of the Prophet (PBUH). Very little is known about her apart from two key points:

1. She would clean the masjid of the Prophet (PBUH)
2. She had a mental illness which caused her a great deal of distress

*Prophet (PBUH) went to her grave and offered the funeral prayer for her*

## VIRTUE

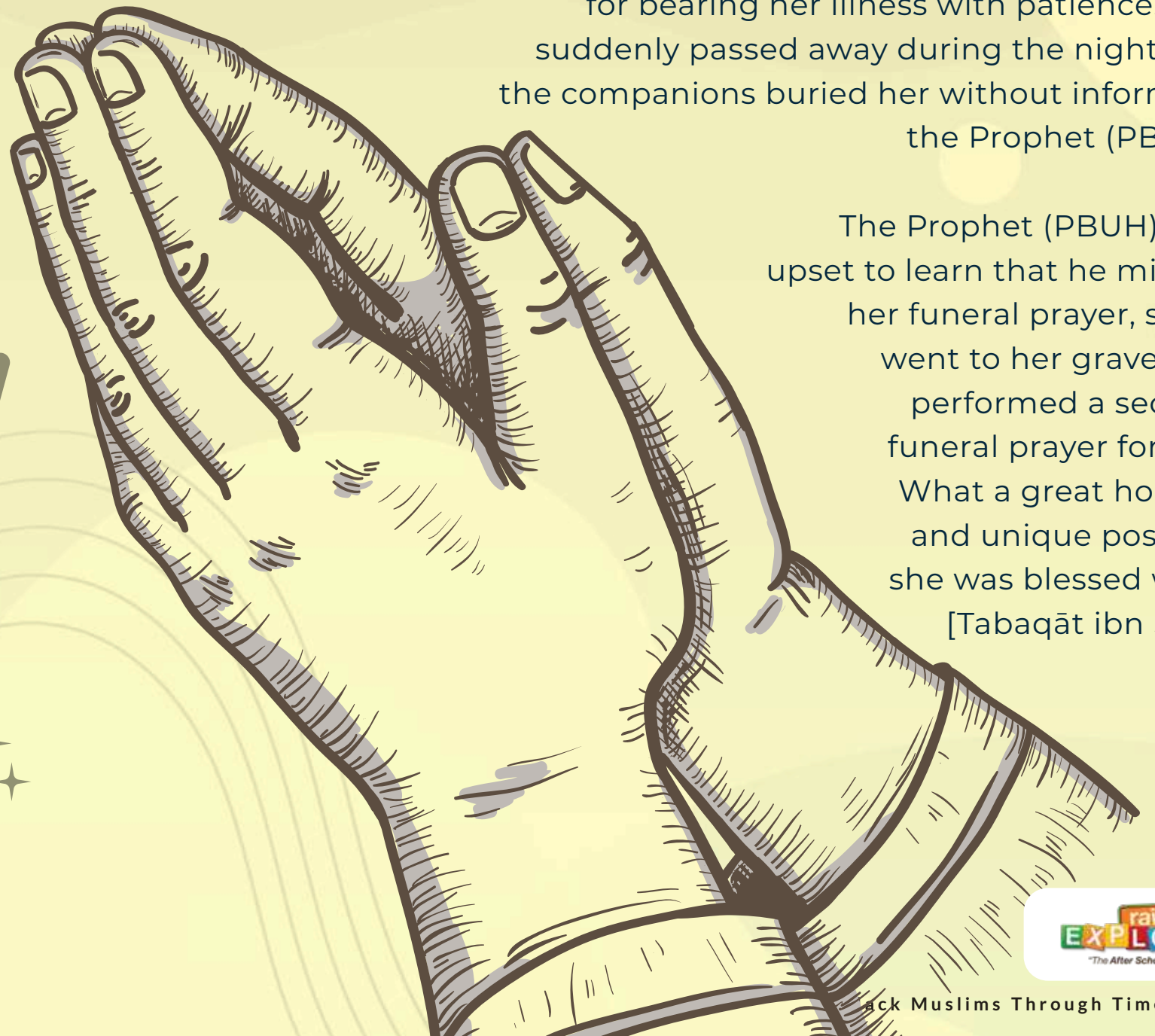
It was narrated from Abu Huraira (RA) that a black woman used to sweep the masjid. The Prophet (PBUH) noticed that she was missing and asked about her after a few days. He was told that she had died. He said, *“Why did you not tell me?”* Then he went to her grave and offered the funeral prayer for her. [Ibn Majah]



## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Prophet (PBUH) promised her Paradise for bearing her illness with patience. She suddenly passed away during the night and the companions buried her without informing the Prophet (PBUH).

The Prophet (PBUH) was upset to learn that he missed her funeral prayer, so he went to her grave and performed a second funeral prayer for her. What a great honour and unique position she was blessed with. [Tabaqāt ibn Sa'd]





# SA'D AL-ASWAD



Sa'd al-Aswad (RA) was from the Ansār of Madinah and was from amongst the early Muslims. Sa'd (RA) faced discrimination from his community due to cultural and racial differences and due to this he had difficulty getting married. The Prophet (PBUH) interceded on his behalf and helped him find a righteous wife.

## VIRTUE

Sa'd al-Aswad (RA) was martyred in a battle and it is narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) held him in his arms and cried for the loss of his beloved companion.

[Al-Isabah - Ibn Hajar]



*The Prophet (PBUH) held him in his arms and cried for the loss*



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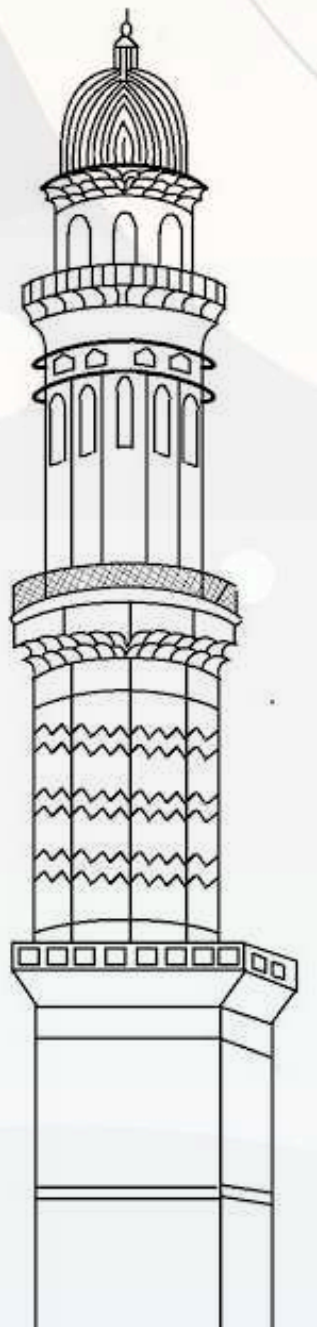
# MIHJA IBN SALIH



Mihja Ibn Salih (RA) was an early convert to Islam and was a slave who was freed by Umar ibn Khattab (RA). Being a black Arab in Makkah and an ex-slave, led to Mihja (RA) receiving a lot of persecution from the Quraysh. However, he bared this with upmost patience and integrity and continued to bravely represent Islam.

## VIRTUE

Mihja (RA) migrated to Madinah and was honoured to be a martyr in the Battle of Badr.





# SUMAYYAH BINT KHABBAT

رضي الله عنها

Sumayyah bint Kabbat (RA) was one of the first to openly display Islam. Born into slavery, she later gained freedom and married Yasir Ibn Amir (RA). As she was a former slave, she did not have any tribal protection, therefore, faced brutal torture and oppression from the Quraysh for her conversion to Islam.

*She was a brave woman who stood up to the greatest tyrant in her community*

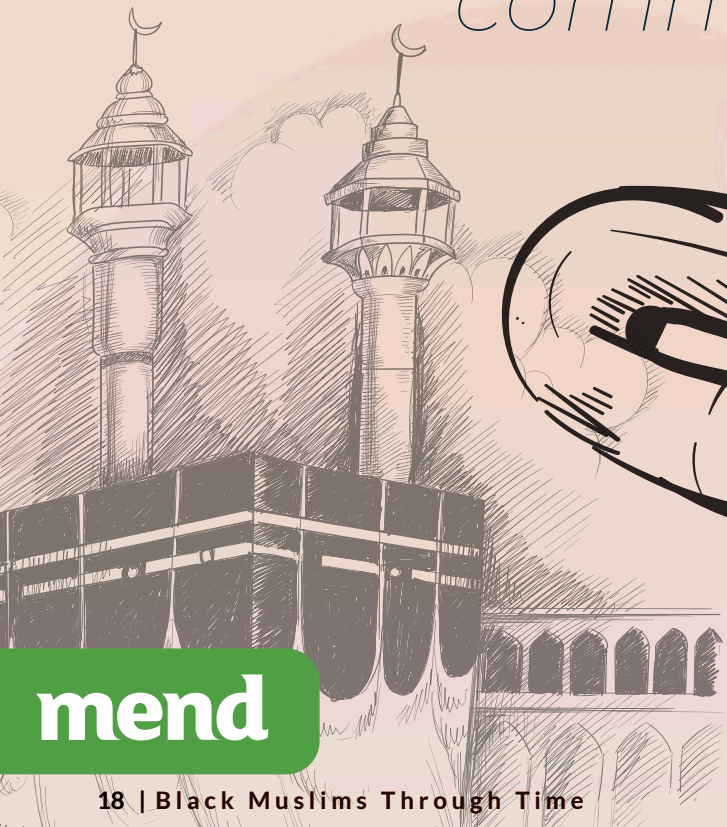


## ACHIEVEMENTS

Her son Ammār (RA) grew into one of the most important companions of the Prophet (PBUH) and lived a long life in the service of Islam before also passing away as a martyr.

## ISLAM

Abu Jahl tortured her mercilessly but despite this she refused to give up Islam until one day she was martyred by Abu Jahl and was honoured to become the **first martyr of Islam**. She was a brave woman who stood up to the greatest tyrant in her community with firm conviction in Islam.





# ABU DHARR AL-GHIFĀRI

رضي الله عنه

Jundab ibn Junādah was the actual name of Abu Dharr (RA). He was one of the early converts to Islam who led a simple and humble life. He was known for his courage, calmness and wisdom and also for the dislike he felt against the idols which his people worshipped.

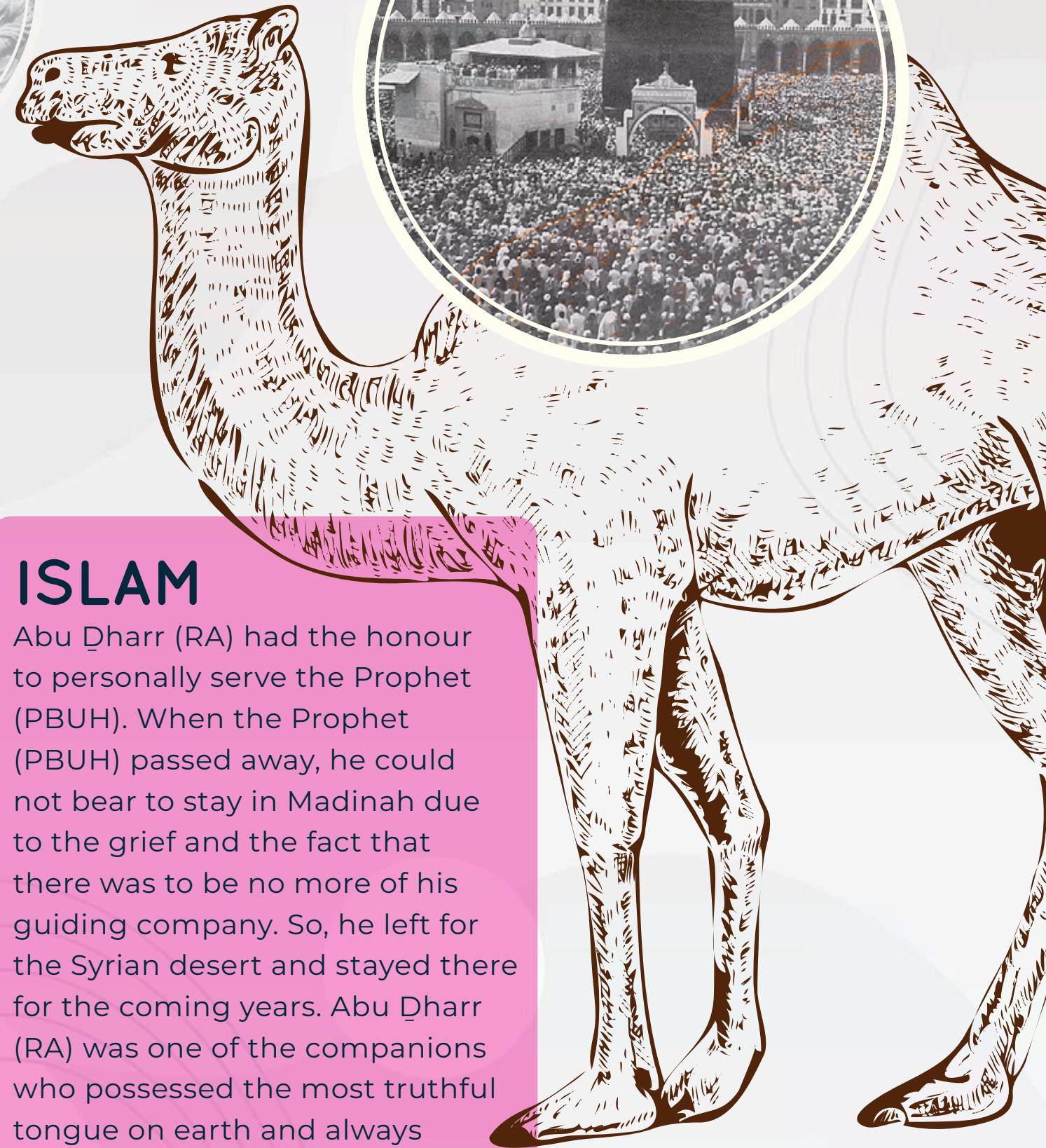
## VIRTUE

During the Expedition of Tabuk, Abu Dharr (RA) had fallen behind the rest of the soldiers as his camel was moving very slowly. The Muslims stopped at a place and waited for Abu Dharr (RA). The Prophet (PBUH) made a prayer hoping for Abu Dharr (RA) to arrive. Abu Dharr (RA) urged his camel to speed up but when it failed to do so, he set out on foot, carrying his luggage on his back. He was then spotted and the Prophet (PBUH) was informed of his arrival. The Prophet (PBUH) then prayed for him, *“May Allah have mercy on Abu Dharr; he is walking alone and he will die alone and be raised alone.”* [Ibn Hisham]



## ISLAM

Abu Dharr (RA) had the honour to personally serve the Prophet (PBUH). When the Prophet (PBUH) passed away, he could not bear to stay in Madinah due to the grief and the fact that there was to be no more of his guiding company. So, he left for the Syrian desert and stayed there for the coming years. Abu Dharr (RA) was one of the companions who possessed the most truthful tongue on earth and always proclaimed what he believed in.





# WAHSHI IBN HARB

Wahshi (RA) was an African-Arab slave from Makkah. In the Battle of Uhud his owner offered him freedom in exchange for killing a leading Muslim Companion, Hamzah (RA), the uncle of the Prophet (PBUH).

## ISLAM

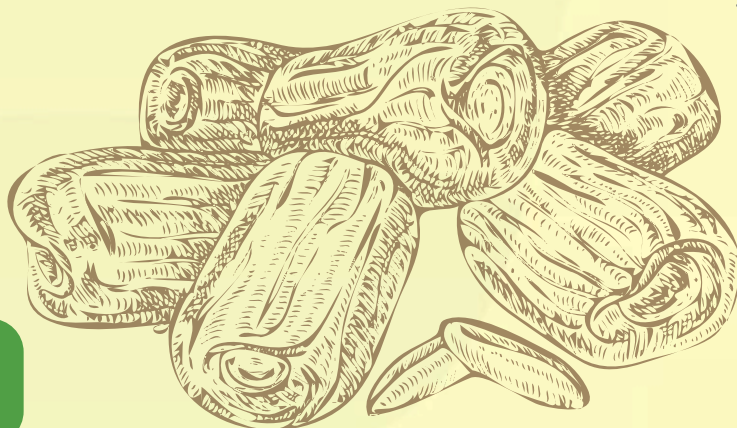
He martyred Hamza (RA) during this battle and gained his freedom. Many years later, at the Conquest of Makkah, Wahshi (RA) repented and became a Muslim. Despite committing such a major crime against the family of the Prophet (PBUH), he was accepted into the Muslim community without any form of discrimination and joined the Muslim army.

*He was accepted into the Muslim community without any form of discrimination*



## ACHIEVEMENTS

Wahshi (RA) dedicated the rest of his life in serving and defending Islam. He played a significant role in the victory of Yamama against the false prophet Musailama. He, therefore, serves as a clear example of redemption and repentance.





# NAJĀSHI (ASHAMAH)

Najāshi was a just and fair Christian king, who later became a Muslim. When the early Muslims were being tortured in Makkah, the Prophet (PBUH) instructed some of them to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) and seek protection from Najāshi. He allowed the Muslims to stay in His country and practise their religion with freedom.

## ISLAM

After the treaty of Hudaibiyah the Prophet (PBUH) sent letters to leading kings and rulers of the region, inviting them to Islam. King Najāshi received the letter with great honour and respect and accepted the message of Islam.

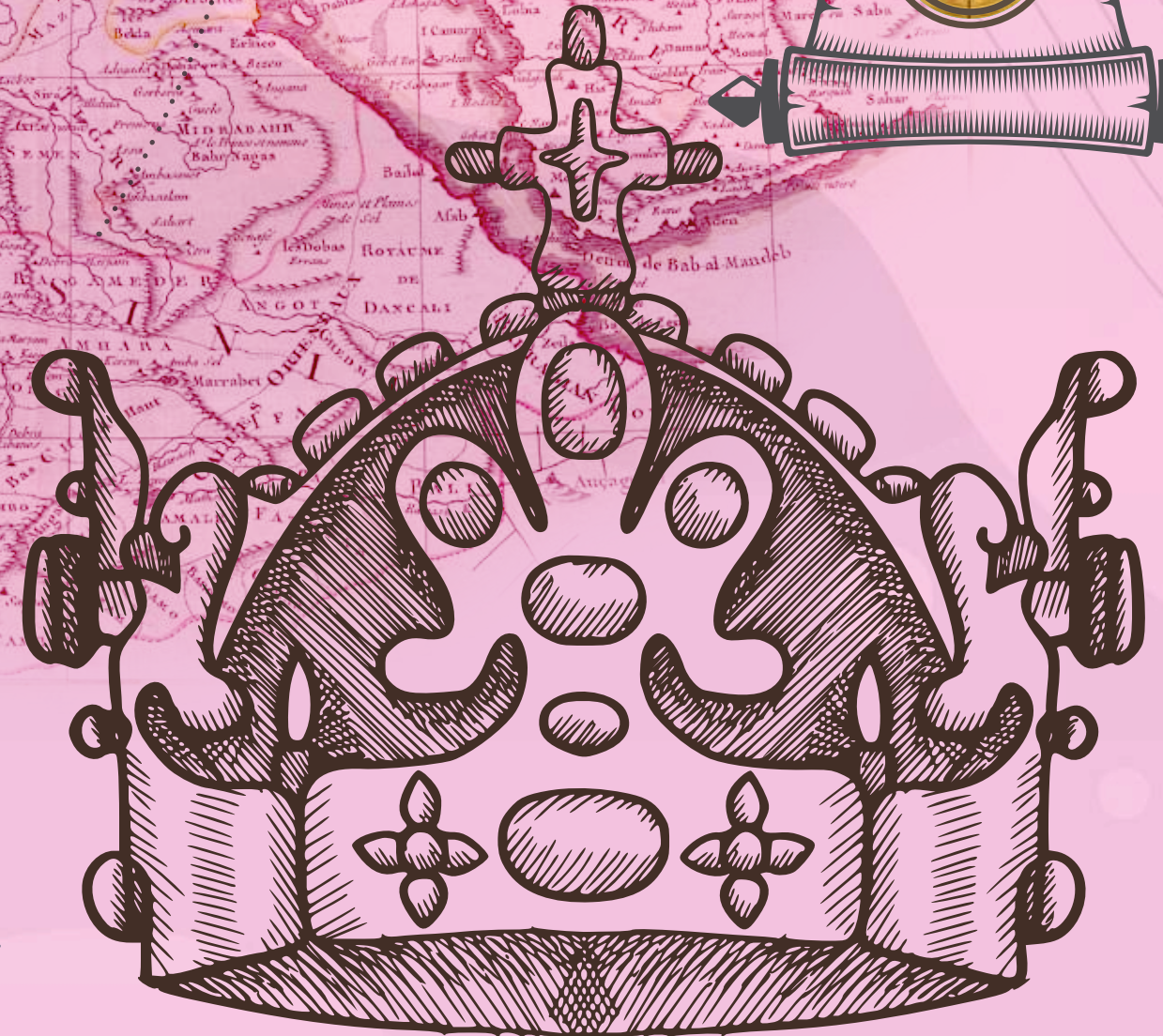
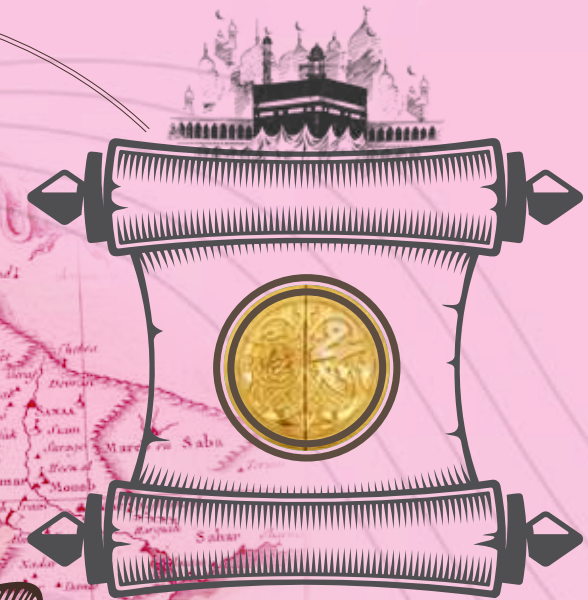
## ACHIEVEMENTS

He gave shelter to the Muslims at a time when nobody else would and eventually became a Muslim himself. The Prophet (PBUH) prayed his funeral Salāh in his absence.

## VIRTUE

The Prophet (PBUH) instructed His Companions to supplicate for him. 'The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) told us about the Negus, the ruler of Abyssinia, on the day he died. The Prophet (PBUH) said to us, **"Seek forgiveness for your brother."** [Bukhari & Muslim]

KING OF ETHIOPIA  
WHO SUPPORTED  
MUSLIM EMIGRANTS



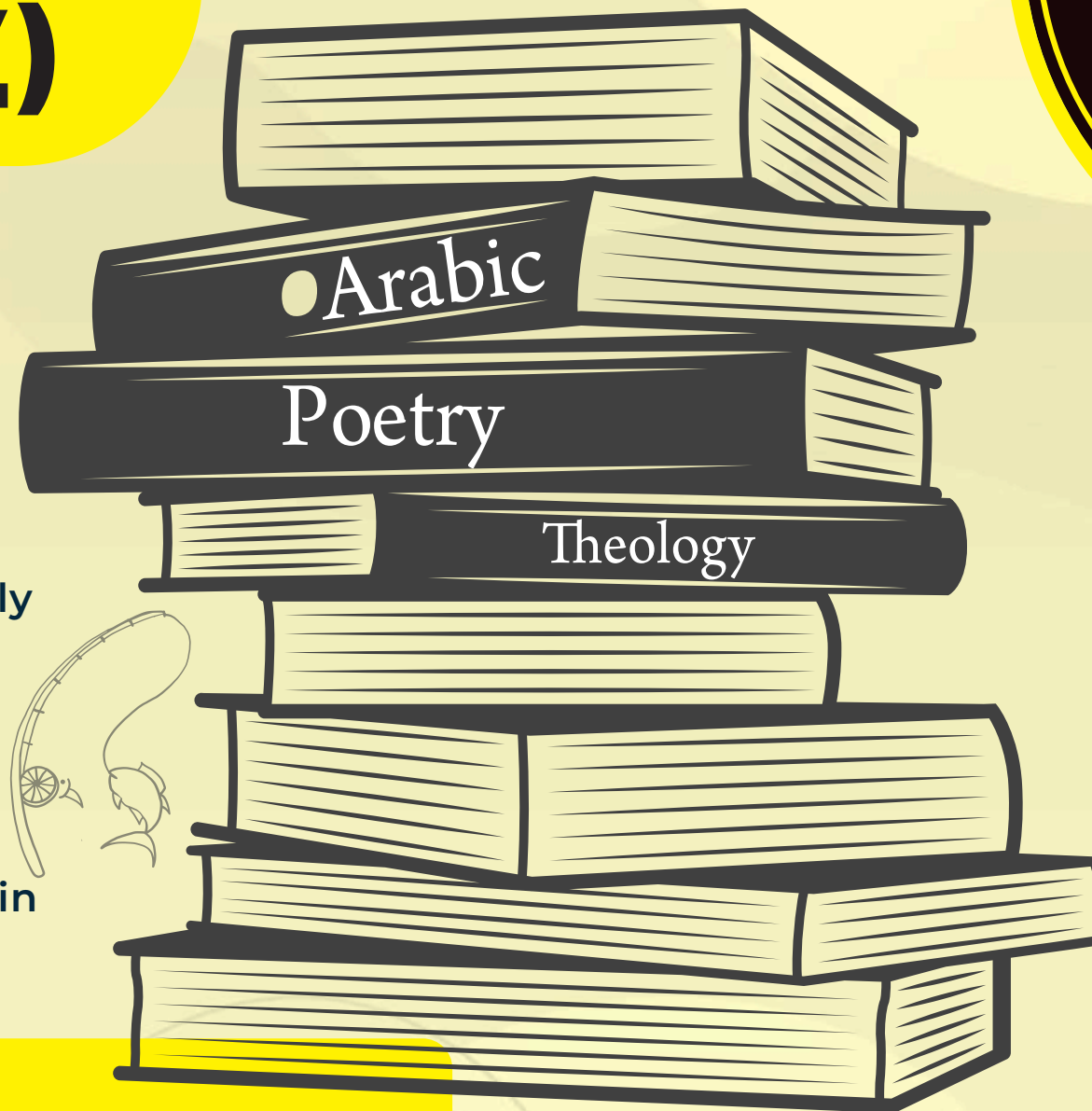


# ABU UTHMĀN AMR (AL-JĀHIZ)

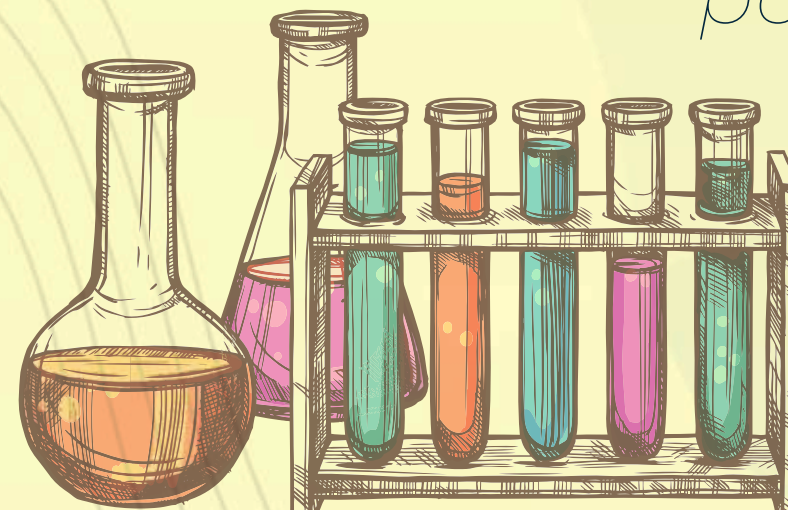
Abu Uthman Amr, also known as Al-Jāhiz, was a renowned theologian and one of the most important writers in Islamic history. Born in Basra and living through the 9th century. Al-Jāhiz sold fish along one of the canals in Basra to help his family. Financial difficulties, however, did not stop al-Jāhiz from continuously seeking knowledge. He used to gather with a group of other youths at Basra's main mosque, where they would discuss different scientific subjects. Over a 25-year span studying, al-Jāhiz acquired a considerable amount of knowledge in numerous subjects.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

Al-Jāhiz went on to write over 200 books over the course of his life, on subjects that included Arabic grammar, zoology, poetry, theology and politico-religious polemics. He also wrote a famous book on Black Africans, praising their courage, generosity, nobility and cheerfulness, also discussing how the colour of skin was simply a natural outcome of environmental circumstance, dispelling racist myths on why Africans had darker skin.



*Wrote over 200 books over the course of his life, on subjects that included Arabic grammar, zoology, poetry, theology and politico-religious polemics*





# MANSA MUSA

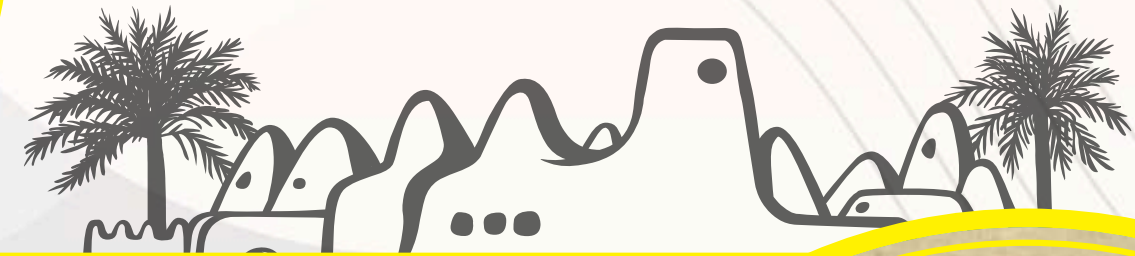
Mansa Musa was an African Muslim king, the ruler of the kingdom of Mali from 1312 C.E. to 1337 C.E. During his reign, Mali was one of the richest kingdoms of Africa, and Mansa Musa is considered to be the wealthiest man in history.

## ISLAM

Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim and made pilgrimage to Makkah between 1324 and 1325. When he embarked on his Hajj, he travelled thousands of miles across treacherous terrain with 60,000 people, 21,000 kilograms of gold, 100 elephants and 80 camels.

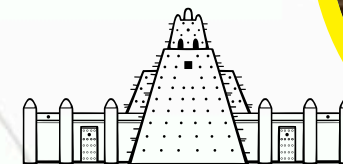
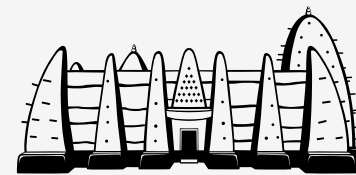


## THE RICHEST MAN WHO EVER LIVED

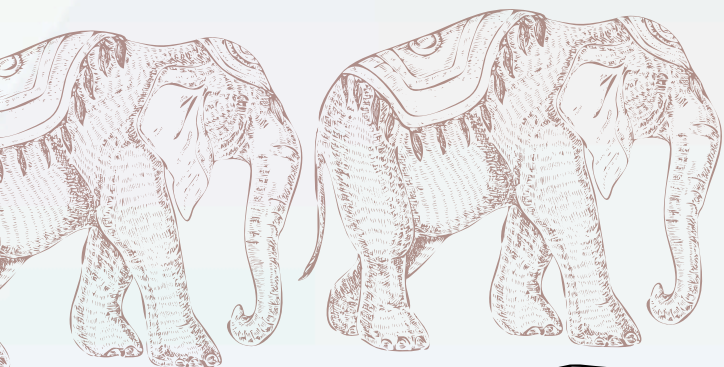


## ACHIEVEMENTS

Musa gave a great deal to the poor and less fortunate. During his pilgrimage to Makkah, Mansa Musa gave away such a significant amount of gold that the economy of Cairo was affected for years after. Historian Al-Umari says, *"he flooded Cairo with his kindness"*.



Mansa Musa established a revolutionary centre of learning in Timbuktu. His construction included madaaris, libraries, archives and mosques. Timbuktu held hundreds of thousands of texts and became one of the most prominent cities in West Africa. It was also reported that he built a mosque every Friday.





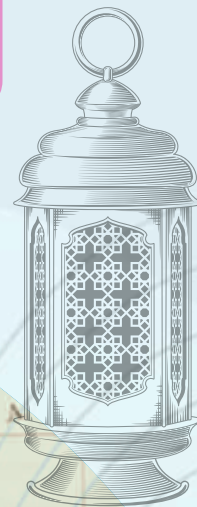
# SAYYIDA AL-HURRA (1485-1561)

Sayyida Al-Hurra was born in 1485 and was the daughter of Ali ibn Rashid, emir of the town of Chefchaouen.

Sayyida Al-Hurra was famously known for becoming the governess of Tétouan after the passing of Prince Ali al-Mandri, her husband.

## ISLAM

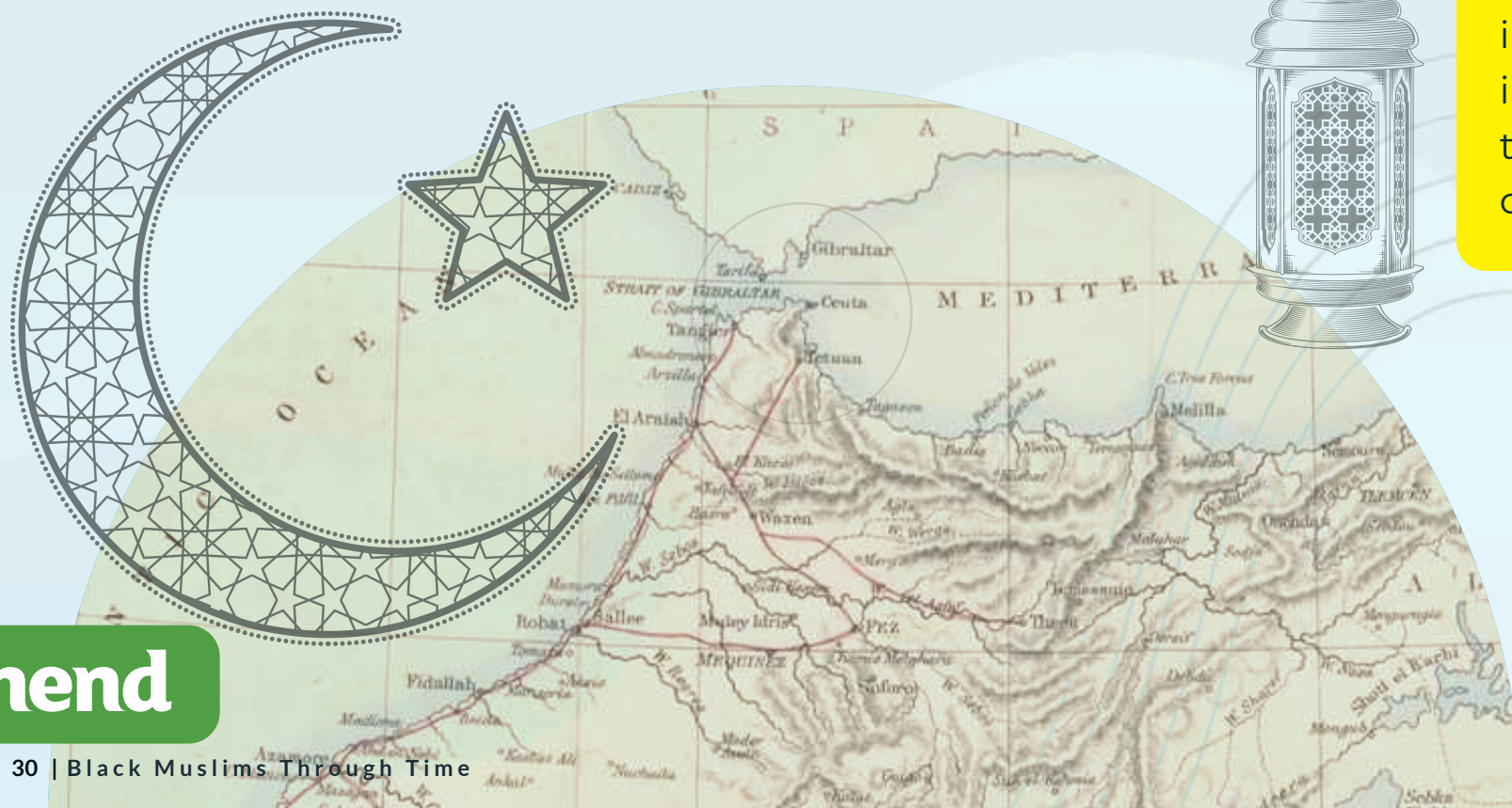
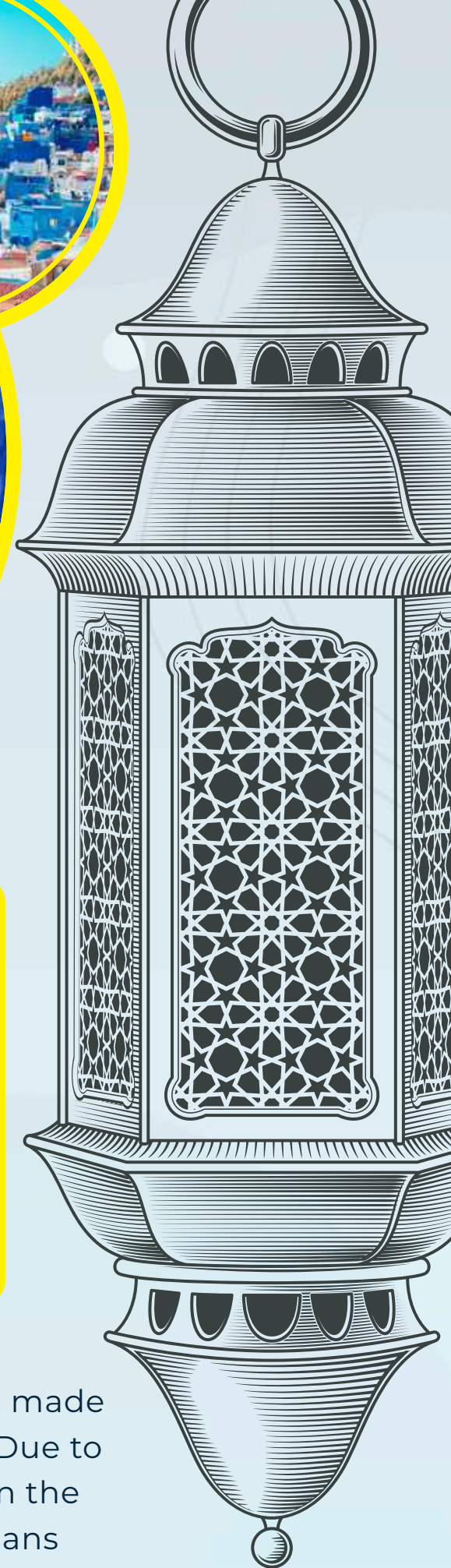
Her expertise in Islamic theology alongside her respected rulership cements Sayyida Al-Hurra as one of the most influential Black Muslim women of the Islamic West.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

Amongst Sayyida Al-Hurra's accomplishments was that she was fluent in Portuguese and Castilian, effective in decision making, and excelled in theology, learning from some of the most outstanding scholars of her time.

Sayyida Al-Hurra had all the qualities that made her an outstanding leader to her people. Due to her exceptional traits, she was able to gain the trust of her male relatives. As such, historians have noted that her diplomacy and strength earned respect and recognition.





# AYUBA SULEIMAN DIALLO

Ayuba Sulayman Diallo was born in Senegal, West Africa in 1701 into a wealthy Fulani family. He received a very good Islamic education and had a family of religious leaders. He memorized the entire Quran, was an expert in Maliki fiqh and possessed an immaculate intelligence. In 1730, enemies captured him, shaved his beard and sold him to work as a slave in America.



Portrait of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, called Job ben Solomon (1701-1773) in African dress, with the Qu'ran around his neck. William Hoare, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

## ISLAM

Throughout his difficult time as a slave, Diallo upheld his daily prayers and Islamic diet. He ran from the family who owned him because praying became difficult. When the children of the family would see him pray, they threw dirt on him and mocked him. But soon after fleeing, Diallo was again captured and this time, taken to prison.

Ayuba managed to attain his freedom, left America and journeyed to Britain. On his way there, he managed to learn English, so that by the time he got to London he could start telling his story. During his stay, Ayuba made good use of his time. Acquiring the ability to translate Arabic to English, he helped the founder of the British Museum, by organizing the collection of Arabic manuscripts. He later returned to his homeland in 1734 and lived for another 40 years.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

His Memory was extraordinary; for when he was fifteen Years old he could recite the whole Qur'an by heart, and while he was in England he wrote three copies of it without the assistance of any other copy.





# NANA ASMA'U



Asma'u bint Shehu Usman dan Fodio, better known as Nana Asma'u, was a Fula princess, Islamic scholar, poet, teacher, and the daughter of the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate, Usman dan Fodio. She was born in 1793 and named after Asmā', the daughter of Abu Bakr (RA).

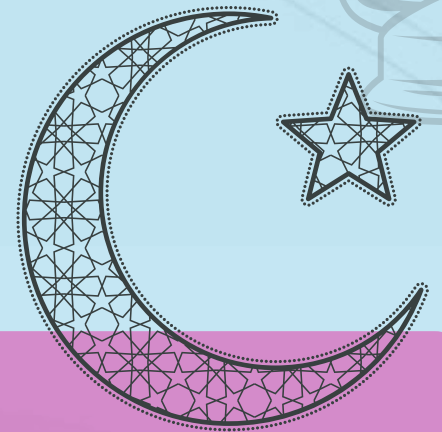
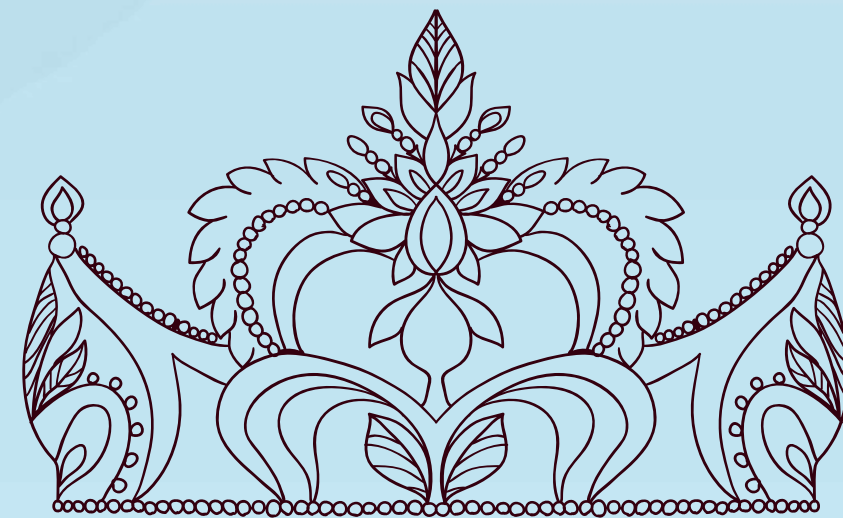
*A Princess, Islamic Scholar, Poet and Exceptional Teacher*

As one of the longest surviving members of Shehu's family and of the Degel community, her prolific literary output and enduring presence helped shape the reputation of the Shehu, Muhammad Bello, and early 21st-century scholarship of the Sokoto Caliphate.



## ACHIEVEMENTS

Nana Asma'u used her writings to help the Shehu (ruler) in his quest to break the syncretistic practice of Islam in Hausaland, convert more people to Islam, and help the newly reformed community of faithful Muslims maintain their religious practice.



## ISLAM

As a member of a Fulani scholarly family of long standing, Nana Asma'u benefitted from an early childhood education taught by the scholarly Fulani women of her family. She was devoted to the education of Muslim women. Her works emphasise on women's rights under Sunnah of the Prophet and Islamic law. She also transformed the tradition of women as the first teachers of Islamic religious knowledge. Nana Asma'u educated not only children but men and women and established the yan-taru (the associates or disciples), a school of women teachers who travelled to rural areas to improve Hausa women's education.





# FATIMA SOUDI BINT ABDERREMANE (1837-1878)

Born into the Merina of Madagascar royal family, Fatima Soudi bint Abderremane, or Djoumbe (Queen) Fatima, succeeded her father to the throne at the mere age of five in 1842.

She became Queen of Mwali, the smallest island of the Comoros archipelago, where she struggled with an arising conflict between France and the Sultanate of Zanzibar. This caused her to eventually break relations with the French authorities in 1851, who had formally arranged her crowning two years earlier for her to marry the cousin of the Sultan of Zanzibar.



## ISLAM

Like most inhabitants within the Mwali region, Djoumbe Fatima was a Muslim and did not leave her religion despite attempts by missionaries to convert the people to Christianity.



In favour of her son, she stepped down from the throne in 1867, but his throne only lasted two years after being assassinated in 1869. The French then later reinstated her role as Queen of Mwali in 1871.

History records a moment when at the age of 12, Djoumbe Fatima was visited by the French Government to turn Mwali into a French colony. They tried to impress her, but she resisted and continued her reign until she died in 1878.



# MALCOLM X

Malcolm X, an African American Muslim and human rights activist was born in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. In 1939 his father, an outspoken Baptist minister, had been killed by a streetcar. There were rumours that he had been murdered by white supremacists. Malcolm's mother experienced a nervous breakdown and was placed in a mental hospital. Malcolm and his siblings were removed from their home and placed in foster care. Malcolm dropped out of school and lived a rough and troubled life, moving between the different states of America.

## 1946

In 1946, Malcolm was sent to prison for a string of burglaries. Whilst in prison he converted to the Nation of Islam and took on the name Malcolm X. Malcolm's conversion to Islam changed his outlook on life, and he began to educate himself in order to learn more about his new faith.

He improved his reading and writing by studying the dictionary, page by page. He read every book in the prison library about philosophy, history, literature, and science.



## 1952-1963

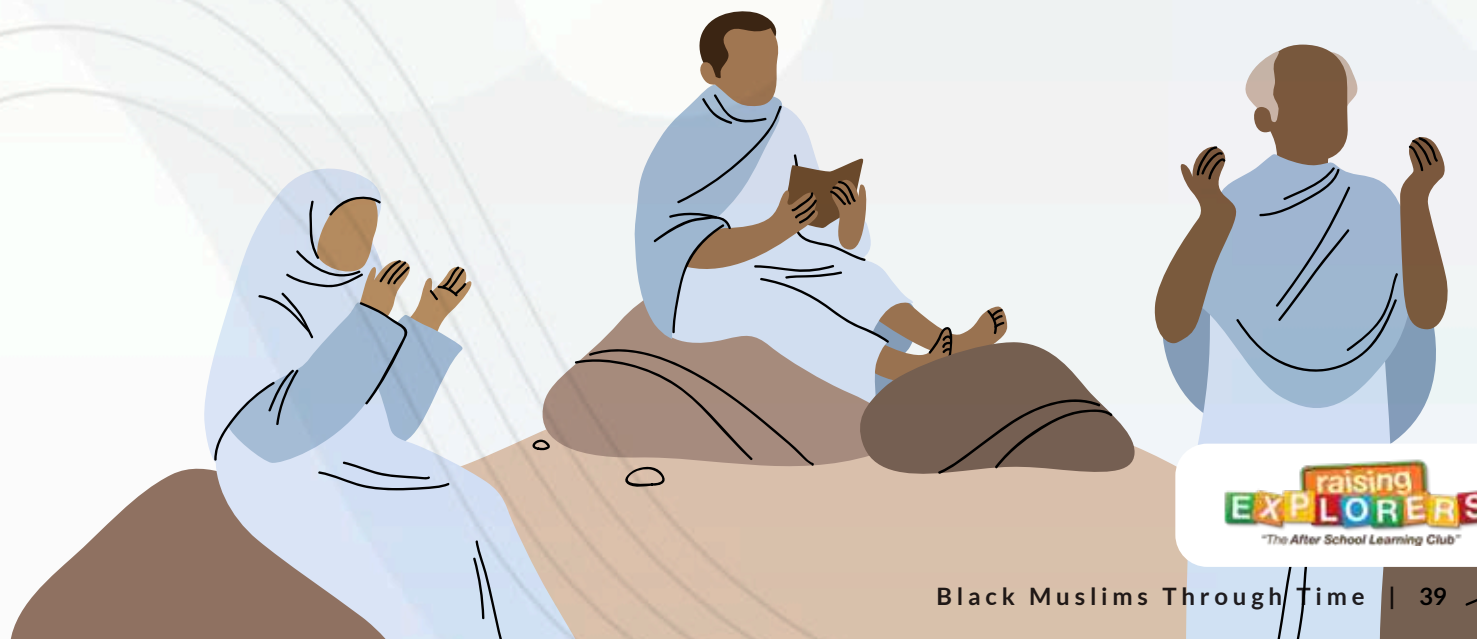
In 1952, Malcolm X, now 27 years old, was released from prison. He began actively protesting for the rights of black Americans and rose quickly through the ranks of the Nation of Islam. He became the public face of the organisation and led the recruitment of tens of thousands of new members. He focused on the empowerment of black Americans.

In 1963, Malcolm X learned that Elijah Muhammad, the leader of The Nation of Islam, had abused his power and violated the Nation of Islam's teachings. This caused Malcolm great distress.



## 1964-1965

In 1964, Malcolm X made a life-changing journey to Makkah. There, he met other pilgrims of different cultures, races, and beliefs. This experience transformed his outlook completely. When he returned to the United States, he publicly renounced the Nation of Islam's teachings. He began to speak to all races and his stance on integration softened. In 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated by three members of the Nation of Islam. He was 39 years old.



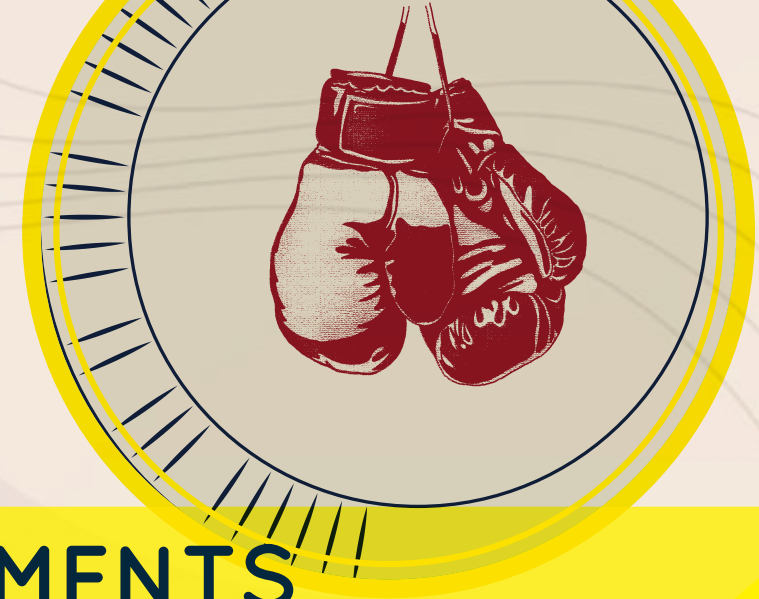


# MUHAMMAD ALI

Muhammad Ali, born Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr, was an American professional boxer, activist, entertainer, poet, and philanthropist born in 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky. He is not only deemed as the greatest boxer of all time but was also a vocal activist. He is widely regarded as one of the if not the most significant sports figure of the 20th century. Muhammad Ali was brought up as a Baptist Christian. Muhammad Ali grew up amid racial segregation. His mother recalled one occasion when he was denied a drink of water at a store, *“they wouldn’t give him one because of his colour. That really affected him.”*

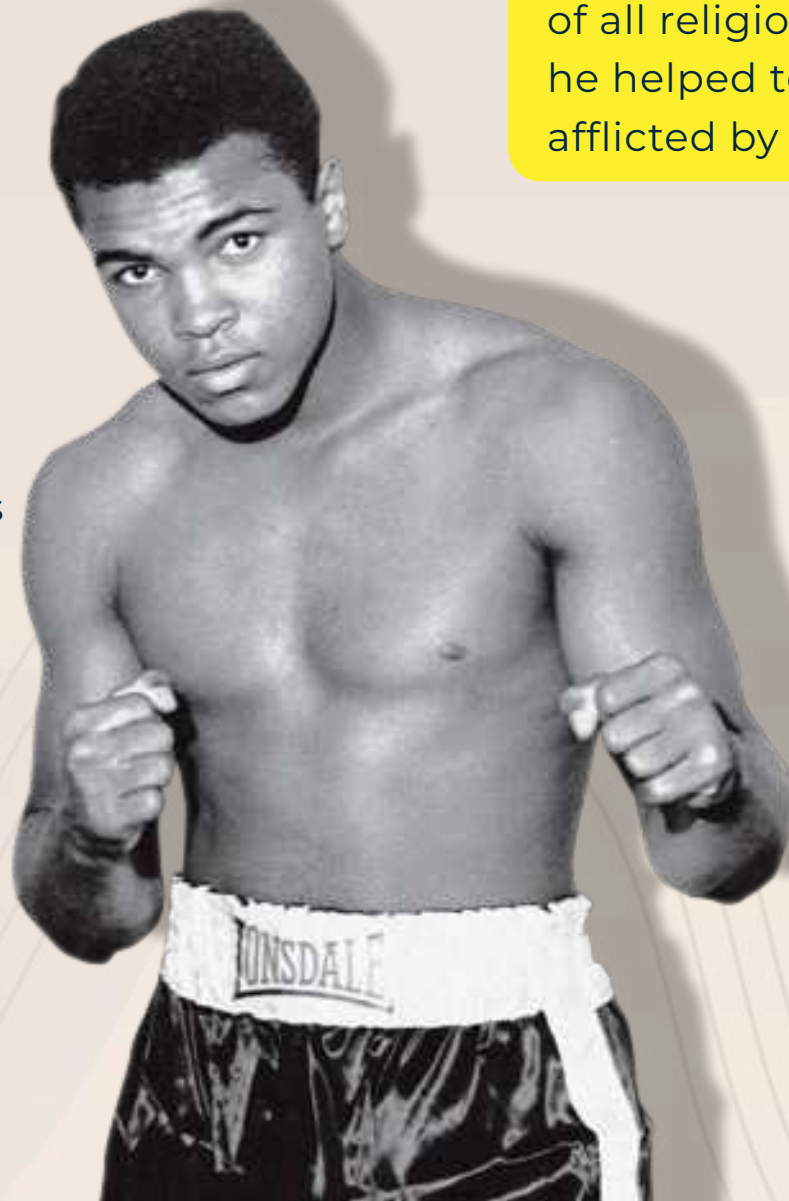
Muhammad Ali attributed his conversion to mainstream Sunni Islam to Warith Deen Muhammad, who assumed leadership of the Nation of Islam upon the death of his father Elijah Muhammad, and persuaded the Nation’s followers to become adherents of Sunni Islam. Muhammad Ali had gone on the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah in 1972, which inspired him in a similar manner to Malcolm X, meeting people of different colours from all over the world giving him a different outlook and greater spiritual awareness. He went on another Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah in 1988.

*“I believe in the religion of Islam. I believe in Allah and peace”*



## ACHIEVEMENTS

Muhammad Ali became a student of the Quran and a devout Muslim. He received guidance from Islamic scholars such as Imam Zaid Shakir, Hamza Yusuf and others and focused on practicing his Islamic duty of charity and good deeds, donating millions to charity organisations and disadvantaged people of all religious backgrounds. It is estimated that he helped to feed more than 22 million people afflicted by hunger across the world.



## ISLAM

Although Muhammad Ali attended his first Nation of Islam meeting in 1961 and in 1962, met Malcolm X, who soon became his spiritual and political mentor, it was only in 1964 that he publicly announced his conversion to Islam and it was then that his new name, Muhammad Ali, was announced on radio. He stated that his earlier name was a *“slave name,”* and a *“white man’s name”* and added that *“I didn’t choose it and I don’t want it”*. He was never shy to express his religious identity, even at the peak of his fame.



The background of the entire image is a high-angle, wide shot of the Kaaba in Mecca. The Kaaba is a large, black, cuboid structure with gold-colored bands and a door, situated in the center-right of the frame. It is surrounded by a massive, dense crowd of pilgrims, mostly men wearing white ihram clothing, filling the courtyard. In the background, the multi-tiered, arched architecture of the Grand Mosque is visible under a bright, hazy sky. The overall color palette is dominated by the white of the pilgrims' clothing and the black of the Kaaba, with some green and red accents from the crowd.

# THANK YOU

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