

**Module 4****Class Title:** Heroes & Stars - Part 1 - Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) (1<sup>st</sup> part of a 3 lesson series)**Aim of Lesson:** To appreciate the importance of *sahaba* as our role-models.**Category:** Muslim Heroes**Class Format:** Narration & Discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Ta'awwudh*) *Aoodhubillahi min As Shaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verses 25-28)

Our topic today is Heroes & Stars.

Let's see what kind of stars these are. Given the age that you girls are at, all of you must have read romantic novels or seen romantic movies right? I am sure you have; so what happens when you fall in love? You become obsessed with the lover. Oh what did he wear? What does he like? What are his dislikes? You want to know everything about the person. What does he like to eat? For example, when you Google these film stars what do you click on? What are their favourite colors, what are their favourite dresses? When you are interested in someone these are the kind of things you want to know. You want to know everything; every tiny, itsy bitsy detail about the person you are interested in.....

Humans are imitative by nature and if you like somebody and admire them, you end up copying them as well. You want to do what they are doing; that's how these companies advertise their products. They use people like Federer; do you know who he is? He's a tennis star. All the young boys will wear Adidas shoes because he was wearing them. If another celebrity whom they admire was wearing a Nike T-Shirt, they think its "cool" and they'll wear that too. The same way, girls say so and so actress was wearing a blue shaded outfit in that movie and it was looking so beautiful and that's the kind of dress I want for *Eid*. It's human nature; and that's how big companies make their sales and attract people to buy their products.

I am going to read you a list and I want you to put up your hands at every name that you recognize:

Justin Beiber, Lady Gaga. Lindsay Lohan, Madonna,

This is a well-informed class!

Hannah Montana, Amy Winehouse, Shahrukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan.

Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, Britney Spears, Ok. Everyone knows everybody on the list!

Now let's go down another list:

Uthman bin Affan (ra). Ok, that's good.

Zubair bin Awam (ra), Mu'adh bin Jabal (ra), Huzaifa bin Awam (ra), Asma Bint Abi Bakr (ra), Ramla Bint Abu Sufyan (ra), Ja'far ibn Abi Talib (ra).

Isn't it a little sad that everybody knew all those other names that I called out and just a handful knew these names?

All the pop stars, models, film stars and actors are so familiar to us but the companions of the Prophet (pbuh), our true heroes, are strangers to us. We don't know anything about them. Sometimes just the fact that it's an Arab sounding name, and *Bin* or *Bint* is a part of it, gives us a clue that they must be one of the Prophet's (pbuh) companions.

We have these parallel streams of information which are available to us. On the one hand we have the so called icons of our modern world; people like Paris Hilton who are so revered. What do you call a 30 year old woman who says my favourite person is Barbie? And I quote "She (i.e. Barbie) may not do anything but she sure looks great doing it". I couldn't believe it myself! She said that Barbie was her favourite person. I call this arrested development!!!

On the other hand there is Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who said, "The people of my generation are the best, then those who follow them, and then those who follow the latter." [Bukhari]

These are the stars who will guide us through our lives. Many of you may have heard this couplet in your school:

"Two people look through the glass,/ One sees the mud, and the other the stars."

The choice is yours; what are you going to see when you look out of the window? Are you going to look at the mud, which is the pop stars or are you going to look up to the real stars?

But you can only follow someone if you know them well. If you don't know about their existence, their names or what they do, how can you follow them?

Every era has had heroes; all you girls go to school and have studied history. There was Alexander the Great and many others; but in every age there was one or maybe two heroes. When one lost his power, he was replaced by another.

When we study the life and the times of the Prophet (pbuh) however, you will realize something amazing; with the advent of Islam, there came a nation full of heroes and heroines. It was not just one person.

You can say that Abu Bakr (ra) was a great person. But 'Umar and Ali (ra) were outstanding personalities too; there were so many of them. Each and every companion of the Prophet (pbuh) that you can think of has an amazing and inspiring story attached.

What happened? How did all these people get transformed? We all know how the Arabs were at the time of the *Jahiliyyah* (pre Islamic ignorance). You have all studied in *Islamiyat* (Islamic studies) about how ignorant they were; how they killed their daughters, etc. What changed them?

Who can define a *sahaba* for me? Who are the *sahaba*?

They were the companions of the Prophet (pbuh). What was special about them? Tell me some special quality about the companions. They adored the Prophet (pbuh) and were willing to lay down their lives for him. They followed him in every aspect of their lives; nothing was too small to emulate.

What is the definition of a hero? Why do you look up to him? Because they are motivated by a higher purpose that we cannot see. They achieve something that an ordinary person cannot even think of. We can't even conceive of things that they go ahead and execute. Isn't that what a hero is? Someone who can do what others cannot.

Most of the *sahaba* (ra) had one quality that was common amongst them; passion. They were passionate about their religion, they were passionate about the Prophet (pbuh), and they were passionate about their emotions regarding Islam.

When we study the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh), we see a lot of them were young people. They were the trail blazers of that time. They were not just old retired men sitting in their houses with nothing to do, so they decided to become Muslims. No.

When you study the companions (ra) you will find there were so many different personalities. Each one was a different person, for example Umar (ra); what quality comes to mind when you talk of Umar (ra)? He was a warrior and he was a great fighter and he was very just; these are the things that we have heard about him.

Abu Bakr (ra) was very soft-natured and kind; he was an extremely good person and very brave. There was Hassan bin Thabit (ra), who was a poet. There was Abu Hurayrah (ra) who was a scholar, an intellectual.

There was 'Ayesha (ra) who was extremely intelligent, very spirited and a brilliant orator. She knew so much of the *deen* and she was so intelligent that after the Prophet (pbuh)'s death, the *sahaba* (ra) used to consult her for advice when in doubt and for education.

There is someone in this array of heroes and stars for every bent of mind. Everyone has a different personality, a different character; all of us are different. All the members of your family, brothers and sisters, are not identical.

Similarly, the companions were not the same either but they had a common binding factor.

What was the common factor? Can you tell me?

Allah (swt) says in *Surah Al-Fath*,

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيَاهُ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَآزَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوْقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَغِيظَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

“Muhammad, the Rasool of Allah, and those with him are strong against the unbelievers and kind to each other among themselves. When you see them you will find them making *Ruk’u* and *Sujud*, and craving for the blessings from Allah and His good pleasure. They have the marks of *Sujud* on their foreheads, the traces of their prostration ..... (Surah Al- Fath 48: verse29)

This means that they are particular about their prayers and for the blessings of Allah (swt) and His pleasure. This *ayah* goes on to say that this description of the *sahaba* (ra), has come in the Torah and the Bible; it was a prediction that was given to the people even before the Prophet (pbuh) came.

So the common binding factor was their faith.

If you had two wishes, what would you wish for? Let’s have realistic wishes. Let’s think something of the *duniya* (worldly) which is what people would generally wish for. What can you think of? What would you wish for? Generally, people wish for wealth and fame, right? If you get the student of the year award, that means fame. Wow! She is the one who got the world distinction! And what if you have both already?

Let’s take a case study; you have fame and you have wealth, what are you going to be? An arrogant person! Generally actors, actresses, pop stars, whoever they are, they are people who have wealth and fame, and they are very arrogant people aren’t they? They are so full of themselves. There may be exceptions but more likely this would be the case.

Now let’s take this case study of a man from Makkah. This young man was extremely stylish, every elegant and had enormous wealth. He was very good looking; all the young girls desired him and dreamed of marrying him. It was known that he had the best colognes in town; he had special signature colognes such that people could identify that he had walked past because they could smell his special perfume. His outfits came from overseas. Imagine!

Can you imagine the character that is being formed? Sounds like a film star; he had all this going for him and he was his mother’s favourite amongst all his brothers and sisters. He got whatever he wanted, everyone used to pander to him because on top of it he had a very dynamic personality and like I said, was very good looking too.

Life was wonderful and he was having a great time and then one day what happened? He met a man who changed his life; he took a 180 degree turn, a U-turn; and his life totally changed.

He lost everything, all that was dear to him; his stature and elegance, all his money and everyone's admiration too. His mother, that same mother who could not bear to say no to him, who spoiled him from the day he was born, had him tortured, beaten up and locked without food and water, just to bring him back to his senses. This torture did not work so she threw him out of the house with nothing but the clothes on his back, what calamitous event had occurred?

What do you think came over this young man one day? What made him leave that life of luxury and leisure and allow himself to be tortured?

He accepted Islam! Islam was the great motivating factor for him, for which he **willingly** gave up his pampered and luxurious existence. Once he accepted Islam and understood what Islam was about, he didn't even give his decision a second thought; while we on the other hand, are not prepared even to give up 10 minutes of our sleep in the mornings so that we can offer our *Fajr* prayers.

When you are young, you are willing to take risks; you have the energy to work hard, you are prepared to take bold steps. Similarly, if you are in love, the world can be given up for love. You are willing to lose anything because you hope to get something better; because you have that conviction about your feelings. The same was for this young man and his love for Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh). Has anyone guessed who this young man was?

It was Mus'ab bin Umair (ra). After Mus'ab bin Umayr accepted Islam, there was nothing and nobody of greater importance for him than the Prophet (pbuh); how to serve him and what he could do for him was all that mattered.

As the persecution of Muslims in Makkah grew worse, Allah (swt) allowed them to make the first migration to Abyssinia. Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) was part of that migration; he went to Abyssinia. While he was there, he got information which turned out to be false, that his brothers and sisters had also accepted Islam. He returned in the hope that he would be allowed to live in Makkah because they had all become Muslims; it's not easy to leave your home and your country and go off to a totally different place. When he returned however, he found that they had not accepted Islam and he was tortured by the people of *Quraysh* and the Makkans, all over again.

This went on for a while and then finally the pledge of 'Aqaba took place and the people of Medina accepted Islam. They came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked him to send someone to teach them Islam in Medina. Mus'ab bin Umayr was chosen for this job by the Prophet (pbuh) considering his background; he was an aristocrat, an educated and cultured person, a charismatic personality with great leadership qualities. He had to travel 400 km away, which in those days was a very, very long distance. He left everything and went to this strange place all by himself. That makes him a trail blazer, because he was the first one who went to Medina. He received

*thawab* (reward) for everyone who accepted Islam because of his teachings in Medina. Imagine the *Sadqa-e-Jariah*.

Do you know what *Sadqa-e-Jariah* is? *Sadqa-Jariah* is when you pass on any good teaching to someone else; like your younger sibling or cousins. All of you must be having someone like that or even your friends. You teach them something, like the *Kalimah*, or some small *sunnah*; you teach them and for the rest their lives, whenever they follow that, you will get the *thawab* for that as well. If they teach it further to other people, then you will also get the *thawab* for those people. Can you imagine, just one little good deed! Even if you teach your little brother or sister *Alhamdulillah* or *SubhanAllah*, every time they say *SubhanAllah*, you will get *thawab* for that.

Have you heard of Muhammad Bin Qasim. We all studied about Muhammad bin Qasim while we were in school; he was a 17 year old and the head of the expeditionary force that was sent from the Arabs to the subcontinent. They are the first ones who conquered Sind; he paved the way for Muslims to come to Sind. And that is how Islam came to the subcontinent.

Imagine all the people of the subcontinent who are Muslims today, you and me, Muhammad bin Qasim gets a share of our *thawab*. He was only 17 years old; do any one of you have 17 or 18 year old brothers? Can you imagine them leading an expeditionary force anywhere? This is how the Muslims of that time were. This is how we can be too. Why should we be any less than them? We are from the same *ummah* aren't we?

Anyway, to get back to Mus'ab bin Umayr, he was an extremely charismatic person and he had a very beautiful voice. Whenever he would recite the Qur'an, people would always gather around and listen to what he was saying. Then of course the magic of the Qur'an would work its charm on the people. Every time there was a *Majlis* (a gathering), he would recite the Qur'an or tell people something about the *deen*, people would accept Islam. However, this does not mean that all of Medina accepted Islam immediately. There were enemies; there were people who fought against Islam. But this is where his diplomacy stood him in good stead and that is why the Prophet (pbuh) had sent him there in the first place. He was able to balance these things.

There was a story that once some people of Medina came to him and questioned him for teaching at a certain place. They claimed that it was their land and asked him to leave. Instead of getting angry, he invited them to come and join the gathering and listen to what he was saying. He promised to leave and never return to this particular land again if they disliked his teachings. The people agreed to give him a chance and then he recited the Qur'an. He read some verses from it and those people accepted Islam *Alhamdulillah*; the beauty of Islam went into their hearts. Because he spoke to them politely and diplomatically and because he had a cultured background, he came across as an educated person and they listened to him.

Then of course came the migration and after that the Battle of *Badr* in which he participated and after that we know was the battle of *Uhud*. During the battle of *Uhud*, he was the flag bearer for the Prophet (pbuh). During this battle he lost his right arm but he didn't retire immediately. He just transferred the flag to his left hand and he carried it into the battle again. Imagine; he'd just lost his hand and he just carried on. Later he lost his left arm as well. He still clutched the flag

close to his chest with the stumps of his arms and he carried on in battle, constantly urging the Muslims to fight. As you know, in *Uhud*, there was a reversal; you have studied all that in *Islamiyat* (Islamic Studies).

Meanwhile, because the Prophet (pbuh) got hurt in the battle of *Uhud*, a rumor spread among the Muslims that he had been martyred. At that the Muslims immediately lost their morale and were ready to give up, because they were so upset. But Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) determinedly carried the flag back into the thick of the battle, inspiring the Muslims. He kept saying words to the effect that Muhammad (pbuh) is a *Rasool* (prophet); *Rasools* have come and gone but one cannot give up because this is our *deen*. Islam is a way of life and one cannot give it up even if the Prophet (pbuh) is gone. Later Abu Bakr recited the same *ayah* to the *sahaba* when the Prophet (pbuh) actually passed away. (Surah Al-'Imran: verse 144) He urged them to keep fighting as well as they could.

At the end of the day, the Prophet (pbuh) saw a man in the shape of Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) carrying the Muslim banner so he called out to him "Advance O Mus'ab". The man called back that he was not Mus'ab and that is when the Prophet (pbuh) realized that it was actually an angel in the shape of Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) who was sent by Allah (swt) to carry the Muslim flag as Mus'ab bin Umayr had been martyred. The Prophet (pbuh) was very upset and he quoted an *ayah* from Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 23, which conveys that among the *mu'mineen* there are men who are true to the pledge that they make to Allah (swt). What is the pledge? That they'll do Jihad in the way of Allah (swt) until they die; and he fulfilled his pledge, he was martyred. Those who are waiting have not changed their resolve in the least. This is of course, in comparison to the hypocrites who deserted the Muslims in the beginning of *Uhud*.

Well anyway, at the end of the day it was a very difficult time for the Muslims as they were gathering all the martyrs and their companions who had died that day and they were being buried.

When a martyr dies he is not bathed; he is just wrapped in his own clothes and buried; that is part of Allah's orders. When Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) was to be buried, he just had a *chadar* (sheet) that he was wrapped up in. When they wound it around him, it was too short. If it covered his face, it left his feet bare and if they covered his feet, his face was uncovered. So the companions asked the Prophet (pbuh) what they should do. The Prophet (pbuh) said to cover his face with the sheet and cover his feet with leaves, then bury him like that.

This was a man who used to wear designer outfits in the days of Makkah; can you imagine what all he had given up and what became of him in the end. He had just that one *chadar* which was not even enough to cover him properly.

The Prophet (pbuh) wept when he buried him and after that this *ayah* was revealed which is in Surah Al-'Imran, verse 144; it practically repeated the same words that Mus'ab bin Umayr (ra) had been saying in the battle.

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَى أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَى  
عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

Allah (swt) put down in the Qur'an that Muhammad (pbuh) is but a *Rasool* of Allah (swt). Indeed many *Rasool* have passed before him. If he passed away or is martyred, would the Muslims turn back on their heels and forsake Islam? This is the same *ayah* that Abu Bakr (ra) repeated to the Muslims when the Prophet (pbuh) actually passed away.

Thus, this noble young man met his end in the same way that he had lived; with complete and absolute dedication to Allah (swt) and the Prophet (pbuh). He lived in a blaze of glory and he died in the same way. It was never a mediocre life; everything was special.

Whatever these companions did, was done wholeheartedly and it was this great love that gave these *sahaba* (ra) their collective identity.

We lack this identity today unfortunately because we don't know enough about our religion, about our heroes. We don't know who they are; we don't know who we should look up to.

The *sahaba* (ra) knew that life is not just meant to eat, drink and be merry; they had a purpose. They had come to this world for a mission and that was to release man from the bondage of man and bring him to the worship of the Lord of men.

Do you understand what that means? If you do not worship Allah (swt), then you are worshipping the *duniya* (world). And if you are worshipping the *Duniya*, then there is always something or somebody who you are bowing to. Sometimes it's money or fame, or even a person you are running after. If you worship Allah (swt) and you are pursuing Allah (swt), then you are not afraid of anybody else.

That is what happened with the companions. Later on, came the glorious years of the Muslim Era which seem hard to imagine these days, when you think of what we have landed ourselves into. The Muslims of that age conquered most of the known world and had a vast empire. The major discoveries of that age were made by Muslims and Muslim Scholars.

If they could do it then, we can do it now. We are the same people. We are the same Muslims but unfortunately today we have lost our identity; we have forgotten the vast heritage of Islam and that is why we have become directionless.

All of you must have seen footage on TV of the floods that ravaged our part of the world; the debris, the scum that floats on top of the water, taking it wherever it pleases. That is how we have become; the Muslim *ummah* has become directionless. We have forgotten where we are supposed to be going because we are running after the wrong things.

We need to re-acquaint ourselves with these great heroes. We need to find out about them; you can't even imagine how many of them there are. Instead of running after all the useless icons, we



just have to think that if these young men and women can achieve such great wonders after Islam touched their lives, we have been born into Islam; we can also achieve those wonders.

Why should we make up excuses like “I am too young right now and this is my time to have fun, I will do it when I am older.” etc? It will not work when you are old because you don’t have the same level of energy. Sometimes, you are so sick your legs don’t work, your back hurts. There is always some problem or the other.

When you are young, you have the energy to do extraordinary feats. That’s what you have to understand and that is what you have to try to aim for. When we were in school, we had this Urdu poem and the one main line was:

*uth baandh kamar kya darta hai* (get up and brace yourself, don’t be scared)  
*phir dekh khuda kiya karta hai* (then see what the Lord does to help you)

I have forgotten the rest but that’s the main theme; just get yourself together and think what you can do. Don’t think that the world owes you everything; don’t think about what the world can give you, what people can give you. Rather think about what YOU can give the world. That’s how they recruited the Americans for war. This became a very famous poster in the World War II. That is what you also need; that is what you also have to think, your country needs you. Your Muslim *ummah* needs you. But you say, oh I am too young I can’t do anything. The conditions in the city are not good and my mother will never let me go out of the house alone. I am not allowed to go to the market to get my stationery alone. How can I do anything? All this is true, but there is still a lot that you CAN do.

You can do something in school; you can get together as friends and do something. I think that’s what we need to think about a little bit; about what we CAN do.....

(Du’a for end of a gathering) *SubhanaRabbikaRabbullzzati ‘ammayasifunwasalamun  
‘alalmursaleen, walhamdulillahiRabbil ‘alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *AssalamalaikumwarahmatullahiwaBarakatuh*