

# THE UNITED COLORS OF ISLAM (PART 2 OF 3)

**Rating:** 4.4

**Description:** The racial equality espoused by Islam and practical examples from history. Part 2: Examples from the era of the Prophet.

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## Salman the Persian

Like most of his countrymen, Salman was raised a devout Zoroastrian. However, after an encounter with some Christians at worship, he accepted Christianity as 'something better'. Salman then traveled extensively in search of knowledge, from the service of one learned monk to another, the last of whom said: 'O son! I do not know of anyone who is on the same (creed) as we are. However, the time of the emergence of a Prophet is at hand. This Prophet is upon the religion of Abraham.' The monk then proceeded to describe this Prophet, his character and where he would appear. Salman migrated to Arabia, the land of the prophecy, and when he heard about and met Muhammad, he immediately recognized him from his teacher's descriptions and embraced Islam. Salman became renowned for his knowledge and was the first person to translate the Quran into another language, Persian. Once, whilst the Prophet was amongst his Companions, the following was revealed to him:

***“It is He (God) Who had sent among the unlettered (the Arabs) a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves... and (also to) others (i.e. non-Arabs) among them who have not yet joined them (as Muslims)...” (Quran 62:2-3)***

God's Messenger then placed his hand on Salman and said:

***“Even if the Faith were near (the stars of) Pleiades, a man from amongst these (Persians) would surely attain it.” (Saheeh Muslim)***

## Suhayb the Roman

Suhayb was born into privilege in the luxurious house of his father, who was a client governor for the Persian emperor. While he was still a child, Suhayb was captured by

Byzantine raiders and sold into slavery in Constantinople.

Suhayb eventually escaped from bondage and fled to Mecca, a popular place of asylum, where he soon became a prosperous merchant nick-named 'ar-Rumi', the Roman, due to his Byzantine tongue and upbringing. When Suhayb heard Muhammad preach, he was at once convinced of the truth of his message and embraced Islam. Like all the early Muslims, Suhayb was persecuted by the pagans of Mecca. So, he traded all his wealth in exchange for safe passage to join the Prophet at Medina, whereupon the Prophet, delighted to see Suhayb, greeted him thrice: 'Your trade has been fruitful, O [Suhayb]! Your trade has been fruitful!' God had informed the Prophet of Suhayb's exploits before their reunion with this revelation:

***“And there is a type of man who ransoms himself to earn the pleasure of God. And God is full of kindness to His servants.” (Quran 2:207)***

The Prophet loved Suhayb a great deal and described him as having preceded the Romans to Islam. Suhayb's piety and standing among the early Muslims was so high that when Caliph Umar was on his deathbed, he selected Suhayb to lead them until they could agree upon a successor.

## **Abdullah the Hebrew**

The Jews were another nation that the pre-Islamic Arabs held in contempt. Many Jews and Christians had been expecting a new Prophet to appear in Arabia during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Jews from the Levite tribe in particular had settled in large numbers in and around the city of Medina. However, when the much anticipated Prophet came, not as a Hebrew son of Israel, but as the Arab descendant of Ishmael, the Jews rejected him. Except, that is, for a few like Hussein ibn Salam. Hussein was the most learned rabbi and leader of the Medinan Jews but was denounced and vilified by them when he embraced Islam. The Prophet re-named Husayn, 'Abdullah', meaning 'Servant of God', and gave him the glad tidings that he was destined for Paradise. Abdullah addressed his tribesmen saying:

'O assembly of Jews! Be conscious of God and accept what Muhammad has brought. By God! You certainly know that he is God's Messenger and you can find prophecies about him and mention of his name and characteristics in your Torah. I for my part declare that he is the Messenger of God. I have faith in him and believe that he is true. I (for one) recognize him.' God revealed the following about Abdullah:

***“And a witness from the Children of Israel testified to this (Quran being from God) like (the Torah). So he believed while (most of) you (Jews) are too proud (to believe).” (Quran 46:10)***

Thus, in the ranks of the Prophet Muhammad's Companions could be found Africans, Persians, Romans and Israelites; representatives of every known continent. As the

Prophet said:

***“Indeed, my friends and allies are not the tribe of so and so. Rather, my friends and allies are the pious, wherever they may be.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)***

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