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See also: ANGELS; DESCENT OF THE QUR‘ĀN; HYPOCRISY AND HYPOCRITES; ISRAELITE ACCOUNTS; OCCASIONS OF REVELATION; RESURRECTION; RHETORIC AND ELOQUENCE.

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AL-ANŞĀR

This article comprises the following sections: i. Identification, Etymology, and Usage; ii. Genealogy and Pre-Islamic History of the Anşār; iii. The Beginning of Islam amongst the Anşār: The First Pledge of ‘Aqaba, The Second Pledge of ‘Aqaba; iv. The Anşār after the Hijra; v. Merits of the Anşār; vi. Tests and Struggles of the Anşār; vii. Some Eminent Anşār; viii. Bibliography.

Identification, Etymology, and Usage

Al-Anşār is the abbreviated form of *Anşār al-Nabī*, the “Helpers of the Prophet”; it is the collective noun used for “those of the Madinans who helped and supported the Prophet against his enemies and gave shelter to his Companions” (Baghawī, *sub* Q 9:100). It is especially used for believers from amongst the Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj tribes (Fayrūzābādī; Ibn Sīda, *Muḥkam*; Zabīdī, *sub* n-ṣ-r). The term was later applied to their progeny, their allies, and those who were under their protection (al-‘Aynī, *‘Umdat al-Qārī* on Bukhārī, Īmān, ‘alāmat al-īmān ḥubb al-Anşār).

The plural noun *anşār* (sing. *naşīr*, pl. of pl. *anāşīr*) is derived from the root n-ṣ-r, which yields the transitive verb *naşara*, meaning “he aided or helped,” that is, “he

aided a person wronged or treated unjustly” (Rāghib; Fayrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*). Of this root 16 forms occur 158 times in the Qur‘ān; the noun *anşār* appears 11 times, twice referring to the Anşār of Madina (Q 9:100, 117), for whom the term acts like the name of a tribe (Ibn Sīda, *Muḥkam*). Ghaylān b. Jarīr (d. 129/746), a Successor (*ṭābi‘ī*), once asked the Anşārī Companion Anas b. Mālik (d. 91/709), “See, this name ‘al-Anşār’: did you give it to yourselves or did Allah give it to you?” He replied: “Indeed, Allah has given us this name” (Bukhārī, Manāqib al-Anşār, manāqib al-Anşār).

Banū Aws and Banū Khazraj were jointly called Banū Qayla during the pre-Islamic era, because they were descendants of al-Aws and al-Khazraj, the two sons of Tha‘laba by his wife Qayla. They had lived in Yathrib (*q.v.*) for many generations before the Hijra (*q.v.*) of the Prophet to their city in 622CE. The Anşār and Muḥājirūn were two distinct groups of the first Islamic polity in Madina (*q.v.*) which came into existence through the fusion of these two communities, establishing spiritual kinship, mutual support, and friendship. In addition to Q 9:100 and 117, where the name Anşār appears, the Qur‘ān directly refers to them in five other verses as those who sheltered and helped the Muḥājirūn (Q 8:72, 74), whom they love and for whom they have a self-sacrificing disposition (Q 59:9); those in whose hearts Allah has instilled love for each other (Q 8:63) (see “Genealogy and Pre-Islamic History of the Anşār” below); and in the last part of Q 33:6, which abrogated the mutual right of Anşār and Muḥājirūn to inherit from one another because of the fraternal bond (*mu‘ākhāt*) formally established between them shortly after the Hijra (see “The Anşār after the Hijra” below). The distinctive features of this bond between the two communities are reflected in the Qur‘ānic description of the two groups as protectors and allies (*awliyā‘*, sing. *walī*) of one another—in contradistinction to those who believed but did not emigrate: *Surely those who believed and migrated and strove hard in the way of Allah with their possessions and their lives, and those who sheltered and aided them—they alone are true friends and protectors (awliyā‘) of each other, whereas to those who believed but did not migrate you are under no obligation of walāya until they migrate; but should they seek help from you in the matter of religion, it is incumbent upon you to provide help, unless it be against a people with whom you have a pact (Q 8:72). The right of fraternal inheritance (walāya fi-l-dīn) (see INHERITANCE AND PATRIMONY) was thus limited to those Muslims who had emigrated, whereas those who*