

ABDULLAH IBN SALAM (PART 2 OF 2): A MAN FROM THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE

Rating: 2.4

Description: Abdullah Ibn Salam's knowledge of the Torah led him to the religion of Islam.

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In the new city of Medina relations between all political affiliations were tense. The fabric of society was held together by tribal and political alliances and any change threatened to plunge the area into chaos. The advent of Islam was one such change. Prophet Muhammad and his followers were invited to relocate to Yathrib (now known as Medina) with Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him,



assuming leadership of the immediate area. The Prophet's diplomatic skills and trustworthiness were well known and admired, however some groups, particularly some Jewish groups did not want any change to their tenuous yet profitable alliances. Such was the Median political landscape; into this mix came Abdullah Ibn Salam.

In part 1 we learned that Husain Ibn Salam was a Jewish scholar, well respected and trusted by his community. Because of his study Ibn Salam was convinced that Prophet Muhammad was the prophet predicted in the Torah. When Prophet Muhammad arrived in Medina ibn Salam rushed into his presence and declared his belief in the teachings of Islam and Muhammad's Prophethood. Prophet Muhammad changed Ibn Salam's name from Husain to Abdullah (the slave of God).

Abdullah Ibn Salam was excited to be in the company of Prophet Muhammad. He spent as much time as possible with him asking questions, talking about both Islam and Judaism and enjoying the company of the man the Torah had predicted so very long ago. Abdullah Ibn Salam wanted very much for his people to accept Islam as their religion and Muhammad as their Prophet however he was afraid of how they would react if he informed them of his conversion. Ibn Salam was known amongst the Jews to be a righteous, well educated man and he discussed his problem with Prophet Muhammad; they agreed upon a plan.

One day, when he was in the company of the respected Jewish elders of Medina, Prophet Muhammad asked them their thoughts and opinions about the character of Ibn Salam. They replied that, "he is the best of us, the son of the best of us, the most

knowledgeable and the son of the most knowledgeable”^[1] Prophet Muhammad continued to question them and asked what their opinion would be if Ibn Salam came to learn about and accept Islam. The Jews reacted with horror. Never would he do such a thing they cried! At that moment Ibn Salam entered the room and declared his conversion to Islam. The Jews reacted angrily, but Ibn Salam knew that the Jewish revealed books had predicted the coming of Prophet Muhammad.

Although alliances were tenuous all political factions in Medina, at least in the beginning, accepted the leadership of Prophet Muhammad. They even referred matters of religious law to him. On one occasion when a group of Jews requested that Prophet Muhammad pass sentence on an adulterous couple, he immediately asked what the ruling according to the Torah was. They replied, “We make their wrong action known and flog them”.

Ibn Salam knew that the correct punishment was stoning and he insisted that the Torah itself be used to confirm their words. A copy of the Torah was bought before them thus we discover that an incorrect answer was given to deliberately mislead the Prophet. Abdullah Ibn Salam pointed to the correct passages that were deftly hidden under the hand of the Jewish man holding the parchment. The punishment in the Torah was stoning, Ibn Salam read the correct passages and Prophet Muhammad ordered that this rule be upheld.

Abdullah Ibn Salam loved being in the company of Prophet Muhammad. He spent as much time with him as possible and delighted in their talks and companionship. He was devoted to the Quran and was often in the mosque praying, learning and teaching. He was known amongst the Muslims as an effective and dedicated teacher and his study circles were popular and well attended. Abdullah Ibn Salam was also known amongst the Muslims of Medina as a man destined for Paradise. Among the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad is a story explaining exactly why Abdullah Ibn Salam was considered to be among the people of Paradise.

Qays ibn `Abbad said, “I was in the mosque when a man whose face showed signs of humbleness came to pray. The people said, `This is a man from among the people of Paradise. When he left, I followed him and spoke with him. I said to him, `When you entered the mosque the people said you were from the people of Paradise.’ He said, `All praise is due to God! No one should say what he has no knowledge of. I will tell you why they said that. I had a dream during the time of the Messenger of God and I narrated it to him. I saw that I was in a green garden, ‘ and he described the garden’s plants and spaciousness, `and there was an iron pole in the middle of the garden affixed in the earth and its tip reached the sky. On its tip, there was a handle, and I was told to ascend the pole. I said, `I cannot.’ Then a helper came and raised my robe from behind and said to me, `Ascend.’ I ascended until I grasped the handle and he said to me, `Hold on to the handle.’ I awoke from that dream with the handle in my hand. I went to the Messenger of God and told him about the dream and he said, “The garden represents Islam, the pole, it represents the pillar of Islam, and the handle represents the most trustworthy handhold. You shall remain Muslim until you die.”^[2]

Footnotes:

[1] Saheeh Al-Bukhari

[2] Imam Ahmad

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