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Supervised by
ABDUL MALIK MUJAHID

Headquarters:

P.O. Box: 22743, Riyadh 11416, KSA
Tel: 00966-1-4033962/4043432
Fax: 00966-1- 4021659
E-mail: darussalam@naseej.com.sa
Website: [http:// www.dar-us-salam.com](http://www.dar-us-salam.com)
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Urdu Bazar, Lahore
Tel: 0092-42-7120054 Fax: 7320703

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- Houston: P.O. Box: 79194 Tx 77279
Tel: 001-713-722 0419 Fax: 001-713-722 0431
E-mail: Sales @ dar-us-salam.com
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Khabbab bin Al-Aratt

The Teacher

By

Abdul Basit Ahmad

Edited by

Aqeel Walker

Muhammad Ayub Sapra



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*In the Name of Allâh,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

“Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allâh [i.e. they have gone out for *Jihâd* (holy fighting), and showed not their backs to the disbelievers]; of them some have fulfilled their obligations (i.e. have been martyred); and some of them are still waiting, but they have never changed (i.e. they never proved treacherous to their covenant which they concluded with Allâh) in the least.”
(33:23)

Publishers Note

All praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists. May Allâh’s peace and blessings be upon His final Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

Darussalam is pleased to present this valuable series, “*The Golden Series of the Prophet’s Companions*”, to the Muslim youth. The purpose of these books is to enlighten our youth about the lives of the greatest heroes of Islam, the Prophet’s Companions. Also, we wish to increase the enthusiasm of the Muslim youth for following and adhering to their religion. In this way, these books achieve two very important tasks: educating our youth and encouraging them to be good Muslims.

The story you are about to read, ‘*Khabbab bin Al-Aratt* ﷺ – *The Teacher*’, is an inspiring story of the life of one of Islam’s earliest converters. He was one of the weak and oppressed slaves who accepted Islam in its early days in Makkah. He patiently persevered through the tortures and persecution he received for the cause of Islam. He was one of the few people who could read,

and thus he used his knowledge to teach Muslims how to read the Noble Qur'ân. He truly dedicated his entire life to support the cause of Allâh and His Messenger ﷺ.

We hope that these books are beneficial to our Muslim youth, as they are the future of Islam. We at Darussalam realize the importance of good Islamic literature for Muslim youth, especially in the West where non-Islamic influences are so strong. For this reason, we feel that the availability of this series will be a valuable aid in instilling a genuine love for Islam in our youth. We would like to thank the author, Mr. Abdul Basit Ahmad, the editors, Mr. Aqeel Walker and Mr. Muhammad Ayub Sapra for their diligent work in preparing this series. As Allâh says:

“Is there any reward for good other than good?” (55:60)

And our final word is that all praises are due to Allâh, the Lord of all that exists.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
General Manager

Foreword

Gloom and injustice dominated the Pre-Islamic era in the Arabian Peninsula in particular and the whole world in general. Many human beings were treated very badly and even not allowed to live freely. The rich and powerful were able to take as many slaves as they wished. Slaves were treated with cruelty. Their masters and mistresses used and abused them. During those days, slavery had its markets where human beings, sometimes prisoners of war, were sold to whoever paid a good price for them. Slave traders, on the other hand, were roaming everywhere to add to the agonies of humanity. No free man could consider himself secure against being taken as a slave. The invasions and retaliations of tribes could turn a master into a slave within no time.

The bad treatment of slaves was very common. Hard work, humiliation and oppression were some of the things that no slave escaped. Boys, girls, women and men were subjected to torture and hardships to make them submit to the orders of their masters.

Most houses of Makkah and other major cities contained one or more slaves to serve a master or a mistress. Some of these slaves were professionals and were forced to work hard in order to pay a share of their earnings to their masters or mistresses.

One of those slaves is our hero, Khabbab bin Al-Aratt ؓ. He was taken as a slave while he was still a boy and sold in the slave market to a midwife in Makkah. When he became a young man, he was spending most of his day before a furnace melting steel to make swords and spears.

When Islam entered his heart, he became an example of sacrifice and devotion in defending the message of Islam.

Let us read about this great man, and try to learn a lesson through his struggle. We are in great need to learn how such great men built a state and civilization that ruled many parts of the world for hundreds of years.

Abdul Basit Ahmad

Introduction

In this introduction, I would like to shed some light on the life of the Arabs before the advent of Islam in order that our readers may know the differences between the society of the Muslims and the way Arabs used to live before Islam.

Illiterate Nation

Arabs were mostly illiterate. A few numbers of Arabs knew how to read and write. The Prophet ﷺ was even illiterate. Therefore, they knew nothing of the teachings of Christianity and Judaism and had no knowledge of any sciences. They were mainly Bedouins following their flocks in the desert in quest of water and food.

Slaves before the rise of Islam

Allâh created human beings as free men and women. However, these same human beings abused each other in violation of divine teachings. The number of slaves increased with every new war waged among nations, tribes and clans.

The practice of enslaving human beings was something common over history. All nations, including the Arabs, took slaves to serve them free of charge. They also inflicted all kinds of torture on them. The Arabs and other nations established slave markets everywhere. Slaves were sold as anything else to whoever paid the highest price.

In response to the Prophet's call to Islam, many slaves believed in him and accepted the message of Islam. They found justice and equality in the principles preached by the Prophet ﷺ. Bilal, Khabbab and many others were among the slaves who received cruel treatment at the hands of their masters when they abandoned the worship of idols and converted to the true religion of Allâh.

The rich Companions of the Prophet ﷺ helped in freeing their brother Muslims from the grip of disbelievers. Many Verses in the Noble Qur'ân encouraged the Muslims to free slaves, especially as repentance from sins that they might have committed. They were also requested by Allâh to agree with their slaves on

a certain compensation for their freedom.

Women before and after Islam

Before the rise of Islam, women were treated very badly. Some Arabs considered them as part of the inheritance left by their dead husbands. They were not given any share of the inheritance of their dead fathers, mothers or husbands. Moreover, many people feared that the newborn girls would bring shame to their names and families. Hence, fathers tried their best to get rid of daughters born to them. The cruelest way was to bury these girls alive. In addition, a man could marry an unlimited number of women. When Islam established firm roots in the Arabian Peninsula, it gave women due dignity and rights. The Qur'ân always mentioned male and female believers together as related to rights and duties and as related to reward in this life and the Hereafter. It gave women the right to inherit their dead husbands, fathers, mothers and even sons and daughters. Several Muslim women shared in building the state of Islam. They were prominent among the Companions of the

The Slave

Background

In the desert of Arabia and under the glaring sun, the people of the Arab tribes led miserable lives. Their whole lives were shrouded with gloom and ignorance. They moved with their camels and tents from one place to another searching for food and water to survive. They had no fixed place to live at and they had to struggle to find a place where they could graze their animals. This was the type of life many Arabs used to lead.

Lack of Respect to Humanity

Children of both sexes were taught nothing but to care for camels, invade other tribes, or defend their own tribes against invaders. Sometimes the children themselves were taken as slaves by those who could snatch them away from their people. This was exactly how Khabbab bin Al-Aratt spent most of his childhood. He was a child who spent most of his life suffering because of the harsh and cruel ways of life the people lived.

None of the historians who recorded the biographies of the Companions of the Prophet mentioned anything about the place Khabbab was from. However, it was reported that he was taken as a slave while he was a young child and sold in Makkah to a woman named Umm Anmar Al-Khuza'iyah who mainly worked as a midwife.

The Professional

This woman bought Khabbab so that he would earn for her a living during the day, and serve her during the night. When Khabbab grew up a young man, she built a shop for him so that he could make swords and spears, for these were the main weapons used during those days.

Khabbab had a weak body and skinny face. He spent most of his day in front of the furnace melting iron over red blocks of coal, moving them to the anvil and shaping them into sharp swords and spears. The flames of the fire in the furnace were very uncomfortable for his eyes and face. Unfortunately, this was the life the

of the enemies of Islam.

Heresies about the Prophet ﷺ

Khabbab learnt from the people passing by his shop that Muhammad ﷺ was claiming to have received revelation from Allâh. The people of Makkah were saying different things about him. Some falsely claimed he was a lunatic and others alleged he was a magician. A few people believed that he was indeed a Messenger sent by Allâh to save mankind from the miserable and false lives they were leading.

Introduction to Islam

Khabbab thought deeply regarding what he was hearing about the Prophet ﷺ and Islam. Being unsatisfied with the things he heard from people, he decided to hear the message of Islam directly from the man who was preaching it. He felt that change was near, and that the teachings of Muhammad ﷺ were like a powerful light paving the way for him in utter darkness.

His mind was full of different thoughts.

Sometimes, he would think of his miserable condition and the light the new religion could bring to his life. Yet other times he would think that his mistress would make his life more difficult if he would follow the new religion.

Khabbab spent the whole night haunted by such thoughts. Dawn was about to break. Khabbab was still awake. He had not slept a wink. As he made his way to his shop, he passed by some slaves who were chained to rocks. Their lips were dry and desperate for a drop of water. The disbelievers had beaten them severely for abandoning the worship of idols and following the religion that Muhammad ﷺ had been sent with. For a moment he thought he could help them, but then he immediately turned back with tears rolling down his cheeks. He opened the door of his shop with his shivering hand and supported his body against the wall. He let out a sigh full of sorrow. He felt that the people who were passing outside his shop were shadows. It seemed to him as though he was in an unreal world. He closed his eyes for a moment, and

Migration to Abyssinia

The pagans of Makkah had made life very difficult for the Muslims. The Muslims eventually had to leave their hometown and settle in another place to escape the Quraish's oppression and to be able to worship Allâh in peace.

Khabbab ؓ and some other Muslims had no choice but to leave the land of oppression and agonies. They asked the Prophet ﷺ to allow them to move to another place where they would be safe to worship Allâh.

The Prophet ﷺ allowed some of his Companions to migrate to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). He told them that the king of Abyssinia was a just Christian ruler. He did not allow any injustice in his land. The Prophet ﷺ told his Companions that the king would treat them with justice and would never allow anyone to harm them.

Escaping the Torture

Khabbab ؓ and some other Muslims left

Makkah while it was dark. When the pagans found out that some of the Muslims had left Makkah and gone to settle in Abyssinia where they would be safe from their oppression, they became very angry. They tried their best to stop them, but it was too late. The Muslims had already gone too far.

The Quraish on their Heels

The Quraish then decided to send a delegation to Najâshi, king of Abyssinia, asking him to send the Muslims back to Makkah. 'Amr bin Al-'Aas, who was the king's friend, was sent to Abyssinia to undertake this mission. The Quraish sent some very expensive presents for the king, hoping that he would expel the Muslims from his land.

'Amr bin Al-'Aas went to Abyssinia and met the king. He told him that some rebels had sought shelter in his land and that these rebels had left the religion of their people for a strange religion.

After hearing what 'Amr bin Al-'Aas had to say, the king being a very fair judge, said that

listened carefully to the last commandments given by the Prophet ﷺ at Mina.

The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions returned to Al-Madinah after completing the pilgrimage. The Prophet ﷺ passed away and left the Muslims to continue their struggle to spread the light of Islam all over the world. Khabbab ؓ fought the apostates who rebelled against the Muslims and brought them back to Islam. He also continued his efforts to spread the light of Islam under the rule of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman bin 'Affan ؓ.

The Last Days

Khabbab ؓ spent his life fully devoted to the cause of Islam. He did whatever he could to support Islam, and he wished he could spread Islam all over the world. He had never cared about the pleasures of this short life. He wanted to have the pleasures of the Hereafter. Even though he was leading a life of poverty and hardship, he was always afraid that he might have lived a life of pleasure.

Khabbab ؓ was very sad when he saw the Prophet ﷺ and some of his Companions leave this world. He always prayed to Allâh to be with them in Paradise.

Khabbab ؓ continued his way of life as he used to during the life of the Prophet ﷺ. He did not change one little bit, even though the Islamic State was much wealthier during the rule of Abu Bakr, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab and 'Uthman bin 'Affan ؓ.

During the rule of 'Ali bin Abi Talib ؓ, Khabbab left to Kufah in Iraq. In Kufah he stood by the Caliph and supported him against