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The Sagacious Youth, Abūn ibn ‘ūs

Abūn, the son of Sa‘ūd ibn ‘ūs, came from the tribe of Banū Umayyah. Although the enmity and hostility of Banū Umayyah towards the tribe of Banū Hāshim is not hidden from anyone, there were still individuals coming from this family who converted to Islam and struggled in the way of religion.

One of these people is Abūn. Abūn had fallen under the influence of his father’s beliefs and was scared of him. He could not gather enough courage to study the newly-established religion of Islam. But one event took place that transformed him and opened new avenues in his life.

On one of his business trips to Syria, Abūn met a Christian monk who had read books about the former prophets, and was well-versed in the prophecies therein. Abūn told the Christian monk, “A person has arisen from among the Quraysh claiming to be a Prophet of Allah. He says that he is a prophet of Allah just like Moses (‘a) and Jesus (‘a) were Allah’s prophets (S).” The monk asked Abūn, “What is this man’s name?” Abūn answered, “His name is Muhammad (S).” The monk said, “I will mention and cite for you the attributes and signs of the last prophet of Allah. If this man has any one of these signs, then know with certainty that he, indeed, is that same prophet about whom good tidings have been given regarding his coming.” After that, the monk mentioned all the signs of the last prophet of Allah. Abūn said, “All the signs and attributes you have mentioned are found in him.” The monk said, “He will be triumphant over all the Arabs. His religion will spread all over the world.” Then, the Christian Monk added, “Convey my greetings to that blessed man when you return to Mecca.”¹

A soul and spirit that is ready for transformation will need just one spark to set the fire of revolution alight within him. That is why, no matter how insignificant this meeting might appear, it produced profound effects in Aban’s soul. From thence onwards, Abūn was never the same youth that he had been before. On the contrary, he started feeling in himself a mysterious pull towards the forerunner of monotheism, the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S).

His father, the only obstacle in his way, passed away at a place called Zarbah, one of the regions of Tā’if. Abūn, now free to do as he wished, immediately stopped vilifying Allah’s Prophet (S) and the Muslims in the poems that he used to compose, and the words that he used to utter.

His brothers named Khalid and 'Amr, who were among the Muslims that had migrated to Ethiopia, returned to Medina in 6 AH. When they were informed about Abūn's spiritual revolution, they invited him to convert to Islam by means of a letter that they wrote to him. Abūn joyously responded to their invitation. He migrated to Medina and managed to join the Muslims before the battle of Khaybar.[2](#)

Some historians have recorded the year of his conversion to Islam to be 7 AH.[3](#)

[Abūn, a soldier and a scholar](#)

After converting to Islam, Abūn soon displayed his vast natural abilities by accepting important responsibilities. When the Noble Prophet (S) was informed about Abūn's tremendous talents, he sent Abūn to go and crush a group of people that had settled at a place called Najd and had raised flags that carried detrimental messages against Islam.[4](#)

Abūn was not only a man of war, but was endowed with intelligence and great sagacity as well. He was gifted with many different talents and abilities; abilities which very few of the Prophet's (S) companions [*sahābah*] possessed.

One of Abūn's invaluable talents was the ability to read and write. Literacy was rare and considered very precious in those days. When Allah's Prophet (S) was raised to the prophetic mission in Mecca, the number of literate people was not more than seventeen. One of them was Abūn.[5](#)

After conversion to Islam, he became one of the Noble Prophet's (S) writers of the revelation and the scribes of the Holy Qur'an.[6](#) This mark of distinction added to Abūn's social standing and greatness.[7](#)

[The Governorship of Bahrain](#)

When Islam was flourishing and spreading fast, the Noble Prophet (S) used to send governors to different cities after careful selection. He used to appoint individuals of good character and conduct according to the divine precepts of Islam, so that they may become examples and models for newly-converted Muslims. It is for this reason that a minor transgression from these individuals could not be overlooked and forgiven.

The Prophet had appointed 'Alī ibn Hadram to the governorship of Bahrain, an area that had fallen under the fold of Islam. However, after a short duration the Noble Prophet (S) relieved 'Alī ibn Hadram of his duties and dispatched Abūn to replace him. Abūn stayed in the governor's office up to the time of the Prophet's (S) departure from this world.

After the Prophet's (S) death, he left Bahrain without being recalled by the central government and returned to Medina. In spite of the Caliph's insistence that he should continue in his post as governor of Bahrain, Abūn refused to take orders from anyone the Holy Prophet (S) had not appointed, just for the sake of material benefits.[8](#)

Yes, Abūn was truly a liberated Muslim who had accepted this post when he was appointed by the Noble Prophet (S), because he considered it a service to the Islamic community, and, therefore, a moral and religious duty. He refused to accept any responsibility in a government he considered illegitimate, and did not pay allegiance to them. On the contrary, he publicly and explicitly opposed the usurpers. He looked with hope towards the Banū Hāshim for leadership, and followed their guidance.

Along with his brother Khālid, Abūn used to go to the house of Banū Hāshim and say, “You, the Banū Hāshim, are the fertile garden of revelation and the high tree of the prophetic mission; a tree that yields pure fruit on its branches. We will obey your orders and follow your leadership, and consider as best whoever you consider being the best and pledge to follow whomever you prefer.”⁹

A year after the sad demise of Allah’s Prophet (S), Abūn continued as an indefatigable struggler [*mujāhid*] until he passed away in the month of Rajab in 12 AH after being given poisoned juice at a place called Yarmūk, one of the regions of Syria. He was buried right there.¹⁰

¹. Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1, p. 46.

². Al-Isbah, vol. 1, p. 13; Zarkulī, Al-A‘lām, vol. 1, p. 27.

³. Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām, vol. 2, p. 382.

⁴. Al-Isbah, vol. 1, p. 14; Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1, p. 46.

⁵. Futūh al-Buldān, p. 459.

⁶. Ibn Athār, Al-Kāmil, vol. 2, p. 313.

⁷. Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1, p. 48.

⁸. Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1, p. 46.

⁹. Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 3, p. 476.

¹⁰. Usd al-Ghābah, vol. 1, p. 47; Zarkulī, Al-A‘lām, vol. 1, p. 27; Ibn ‘Asqir, Mukhtasar Tārīkh Damishq, vol. 2, p. 124.

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