

## Gardens of Paradise

### Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul (ra)

(Translated)

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One of the most compelling stories in the biographies of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) is the biography of the noble Companion Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul (ra). His belief in Allah (swt), His Messenger (saw), and Islam was embodied in him, while all the hypocrisy resided in his father, Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, the leader of the hypocrites in Al-Madinah. Therefore, we cannot separate the two biographies. In this article, we will examine the reality of both men together and how they dealt with a single issue: the great Deen of Islam. What is remarkable about this biography is that both the son and the father bore the name Abdullah.

Abdullah, the son, came from a house of honor and nobility, but his father's succumbing to his desires prevented him from attaining true belief. The son came with wisdom filling his heart, and his heart was guided by his beliefs.

The young Muslim was at the forefront, taking his place among the leading Muslims. From the moment he embraced Islam, he dedicated himself to its defense, his approach a unified and indivisible awareness. He was steadfast in his resistance against kufr (disbelief), just as he was steadfast in his resistance against hypocrisy. He was steadfast in his resistance of his father, just as he was steadfast in his resistance of every kaffir (disbeliever) or hypocrite who dared to attack the Dawah of Islam or its Prophet (saw).

He was the son of Malik ibn al-Harith ibn Ubayd ibn Malik ibn Salim, Salim being the one called "al-Habla" (the pregnant one) due to his large belly, ibn Ghanm ibn Awf ibn al-Khazraj, an Ansari from the Khazraj tribe. His father was known as Ibn Salul, the infamous hypocrite. Abdullah ibn Abdullah (ra) was among the most distinguished and virtuous of the Companions (ra). His original name was al-Hubab, after which his father was known, but the Prophet (saw) changed it to Abdullah.

He participated in the Battle of Badr and subsequent battles. Abu Abdullah ibn Mandah mentioned that his nose (ra) was injured at the Battle of Uhud, and the Prophet (saw) instructed him to have a nose made of gold. A similar example is what was narrated on the authority of Aisha (ra), on the authority of Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who said, **نَدَرْتُ "My front tooth fell out, so the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered me to have a replacement tooth made of gold."** أَنَأْتِئِي رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ أَنْ أَتُخَذَ ثَنِيَّةً مِنْ ذَهَبٍ

Abdullah, the father, was a man for whom crowns were woven, but the crown fell off before it even touched his head! He was transformed from a potential king into the most dangerous hidden enemy, a hypocrite.

Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul was one of the prominent figures of the Khazraj tribe in Yathrib before the Hijrah migration. His people had prepared him for kingship, even arranging beads for him to be crowned. When the Messenger of Allah (saw) migrated to Al-Madinah and the Aws and Khazraj tribes embraced Islam, Ibn Ubayy's ambitions for kingship collapsed before they even began. His heart was filled with hatred and resentment. He outwardly professed Islam while inwardly harboring disbelief, becoming the leader of the

hypocrites in Al-Madinah, where those like him, whose belief was not sincere, gathered around him.

At first, he outwardly professed Islam and performed Salah with the Muslims, but he harbored enmity and plotted against them. Allah (swt) said in describing such people, ﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ﴾ **“And of the people are some who say, “We believe in Allāh and the Last Day,” but they are not believers. They think to deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and do not perceive that”** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 8-9].

Abdullah ibn Ubay was the main leader of these people in Al-Madinah, plotting, stirring up strife, and igniting hatred among the Muslims. In the Battle of Badr, he did not go out with the Muslims. When the Muslims were victorious, his anger increased. Then, in the Battle of Uhud, he went out with the Prophet (saw) with three hundred men. When the army reached the road, he and those with him turned back and said, “If we knew that you would fight today, we would have accompanied you. However, we do not think that you will fight today.” This caused a great rift in the ranks of the Muslims. Allah (swt) said concerning them, ﴿وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكُفْرِ يَوْمِنِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ﴾ **“And that He might make evident those who are hypocrites. For it was said to them, ‘Come, fight in the way of Allah or at least defend.’ They said, ‘If we knew that you would fight today, we would have accompanied you. However, we do not think that you will fight today.’ They were nearer to disbelief that day than to Iman”** [TMQ Surah Aal-e-Imran: 167].

During the Battle of Banu al-Mustaliq, the father uttered his famous words when a dispute arose between a man from the Muhajireen and a man from the Ansar. Ibn Ubayy said, “They have outnumbered and outcompeted us in our own land. By God, our situation with them is like the saying, ‘Fatten your dog, and it will eat you.’” Then he said, “If we return to Al-Madinah, the more honorable will surely expel the more despicable,” meaning that he would expel the Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra). So Allah revealed Surah Al-Munafiqun, exposing him and revealing his intentions. Allah (swt) said, ﴿يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“They say, ‘If we return to al-Madinah, the more honored for authority will surely expel therefrom the more humble.’ And to Allah belongs all honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know”** [TMQ Surah Al-Munafiqun: 8].

As much as Ibn Ubayy desired to destroy the Deen, his son’s ambition was to strengthen its foundations. Indeed, Abdullah heard his father’s statement and knew of his father’s vehement denial of it. Then Heaven revealed the truth that intensified Abdullah’s grief and filled his heart with sorrow and despair. The Prophet (saw) called the young Zayd ibn Arqam and said to him, ﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ صَدَّقَكَ يَا زَيْدٌ﴾ **“Allah has confirmed your words, O Zayd.”** Then he recited to him the Heavenly Decree and its confirmation of him, ﴿هُمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَنْفَضُوا وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ {7} يَقُولُونَ لَئِن رَّجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْأَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْأَذَلَّ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“They are the ones who say, ‘Do not spend on those who are with the Messenger of Allah until they disband.’ And to Allah belong the depositories of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand. They say, ‘If we return to al-Madinah, the more honored for authority will surely expel therefrom the more humble.’ And to Allah belongs all honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers, but the hypocrites do not know”** [TMQ Surah Al-Munafiqun: 7-8].

The son hastened to the Prophet (saw) and uttered words that will continue to resonate throughout history, (هو والله الذليل وأنت العزيز يا رسول الله، إن أذنت لي في قتله قتلته، فوالله لقد علمت الخزرج ما كان بها أحد أبر بوالده مني، ولكنني أخشى أن تأمر به رجلاً من المسلمين فيقتله، فلا تدعني نفسي أنظر إلى قاتل أبي يمشي على الأرض) «By Allah, he is the one who is truly humiliated, and you are the one who is truly honorable, O Messenger of Allah. If you permit me to kill him, I will kill him. By Allah, the Khazraj tribe knows that no one among them was more devoted to his father than I. However, I fear that you might order a Muslim man to kill him, and I cannot bear to see my father's killer walking the earth alive until I kill him. Thus, I would be killing a believer for a disbeliever and entering Hellfire.» However, the Prophet (saw) reassured him, comforted him, and advised him to treat his father well, «بل نحسن صحبته وتترفق به ما صحبنا، ولا يتحدث الناس أن محمداً يقتل أصحابه، لكن بر أباك وأحسن صحبته» **“We will treat him kindly and gently as long as he is with us, so that people will not say that Muhammad kills his companions. Instead, be dutiful to your father and treat him well.”**

Abdullah's action provides clear proof that the bond of belief is the strongest of bonds, and that the connection of love for the sake of Allah (swt) is the most powerful of ties. Indeed, it is a mutual greatness that Islam has instilled in hearts. After meeting the Messenger of Allah (saw), Abdullah left and waited for his father until he returned to Al-Madinah. He (ra) prevented him from entering the city until he acknowledged that he was the one who was humiliated and that the Messenger of Allah (saw) was the one who was honored. He did not relent until the Messenger of Allah (saw) ordered him to cease his actions with his father.

His father played a role in the Al-Ifk slander incident when he spoke ill of the Mother of the Believers, Aisha (ra). He was among those who spread the lie, so Allah revealed her innocence in the Holy Quran in Surah An-Nur, exposing the hypocrites who spread the slander. Allah (swt) said, «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا نَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ» **“Indeed, those who came with falsehood are a group among you. Do not think it bad for you; rather, it is good for you”** [TMQ Surah An-Nur: 11]. Ibn Ubayy was the leader of this group, spreading lies and inciting discord, until Allah (swt) revealed the innocence of the Mother of the Believers, Aisha (ra), and exposed the falsehood of the hypocrites. The Prophet (saw) treated Ibn Ubayy according to his outward show of Islam. He did not kill him, oppress him, or expose him. Instead, he treated him according to his outward profession of Islam, even if it was hypocrisy, knowing his true nature. The Prophet (saw) was commanded to accept people's outward appearances and leave their inner thoughts to Allah (swt). Ibn Ubayy exploited this, increasing his treachery and deceit.

Abdullah ibn Ubayy remained the head of hypocrisy in Al-Madinah until his death. He was the most dangerous fifth column within the fledgling Islamic society, yet he was unable to inflict real harm on Islam. Allah (swt) protected His Prophet (saw) and His religion from his plots, and made his story a lesson for all who harbor enmity towards Islam while outwardly professing otherwise. Allah (swt) said, «إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا» **“Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire - and never will you find for them a helper”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisa: 145]. As for his son, Abdullah ibn Abdullah ibn Ubayy ibn Salul, Allah (swt) fulfilled His promise to him, and he died a martyr at the Battle of Yamama after a great trial and unparalleled courage, until he was severely wounded and arrows pierced his body. The son fell as a martyr in Jihad in the Path of Allah (swt), facing the enemy and not turning his back, and Allah (swt) fulfilled His promise to him.

O Allah, by Your mercy, gather us with them (Companions). And our final Du'aa' supplication is that all praise belongs to Allah (swt), Lord of all humanity.