

ABDULLAH IBN SALAM (PART 1 OF 2): WHAT IS IN A NAME?

Rating: 5.0

Description: A Jewish scholar recognises events predicted in the Torah and accepts Islam.

Category: [Articles](#) [The Prophet Muhammad](#) [Stories of His Companions](#)

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In 622CE Prophet Muhammad, may the ~~Abdullah Ibn Salam~~ (part-1.jpg) mercy and blessings of God be upon him, and most of the Muslim community migrated from Mecca to Medina. At that time Medina was known as Yathrib. It was not so much a city as a series of fortresses and strongholds where various political factions were united by tenuous alliances. Medina was ruled by two large Arab tribes, the Khazraj and Aws.

A group of influential leaders invited Prophet Muhammad and his followers to Medina. When Prophet Muhammad reached there several of the Jewish clans were troubled, to say the least. In these first troublesome years the Prophet established the first Islamic state. During this time some individual Median Jews accepted Islam, the most famous of which is Abdullah Ibn Salam, a well respected and liked religious scholar and rabbi.

Husain Ibn Salam, as he was then known was a religious man, dedicated to study and contemplation. He also worked on his small orchard/date plantation but organised his time in such a way that his religious study and devotion always took precedence. He studied the Torah in great detail, although historical records seem to indicate that the study of the Talmud played a very small part in Judaism in the Arabian Peninsula at the time. Never the less because of his study Husain was aware of the verses in the Torah mentioning a prophet who would complete the message of all previous prophets. When he heard the reports of a man in Mecca claiming to be such a man, the messenger of God, he took an immediate interest.

In authentic traditions and in the translation of Husain /Abdullah's own words we find the following passage. *"When I heard of the appearance of the Messenger of God, I began to make enquiries about his name, his genealogy, his characteristics, his time and place and I began to compare this information with what is contained in our books. From these enquiries, I became convinced about the authenticity of his prophet-hood and I affirmed the truth of his mission."*

For some time, possibly years, Husain Ibn Salam continued to study his scripture and listen to news of Prophet Muhammad. Then, in 622 CE, Messengers rushed into the streets of Medina announcing that the Messenger of God was in Quba, only a short distance away. The stories relate that Husain was in his date plantation, high up in one

of the date palms. When he heard the news he shouted *Allahu Akbar* – God is great. His elderly aunt could hear the excitement in his voice and remonstrated with him declaring that he could not be more excited if Moses himself was about to enter the town.

Those words were correct for Husain Ibn Abdullah was of the opinion that Muhammad was the brother of Moses, since they were both Prophets. Without hesitation Husain joined the crowds thronging into the streets, waiting to meet and greet Prophet Muhammad. Husain relates that he pushed in amongst the crowd longing to be close to the man he had been waiting for. The first words Husain heard from Prophet Muhammad's lips were, 'O people! Spread peace...Share food...Pray during the night while others sleep... and you will enter Paradise in peace...' [1]

Husain looked into the eyes of the Prophet of God, he scrutinised his face and said with complete certainty, "There is no god worthy of worship but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". Upon hearing the words come so spontaneously from the man's lips the Prophet turned to him and asked in a gentle yet strong voice, "What is your name?" Husain replied, "Husain Ibn Salam". "From this day forward", Prophet Muhammad said, "you will be known as Abdullah Ibn Salam".

Footnotes:

[1]

At-Tirmidi & Ibn Majah

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