

## **Khalifa Umar bin al-Khattab - Expansion of Islam and Military Campaigns**

### ***Exploits Of Abu Mihjan***

Abu Mihjan belonged to the Saqeef clan. He was a cousin of Abu Ubaid who had commanded the Muslim forces in Iraq and was martyred at the battle of the Bridge.

The home town of Abu Mihjan was Taif. When the Muslims under the Holy Prophet besieged Taif after the fall of Mecca, Abu Mihjan fought against the Muslims. His arrow mortally wounded Abdullah son of Hazrat Abu Bakr.

Later when the Saqeef submitted to the Holy Prophet and accepted Islam, Abu Mihjan also became a Muslim. He was staunch in his faith in Islam, but he had weakness for liquor, and sometimes secretly drank wine.

At the battle of the Bridge, Abu Mihjan was the commander of the cavalry. He drove back the elephant which had crushed Abu Ubaid to death. After the disaster of the battle of the bridge, Abu Mihjan stayed on with Muthanna at Ulleis for some time. Then he returned to Madina.

At Madina, Umar caught him drinking and as a punishment he was exiled to Yemen. Later he was forgiven and was allowed to join the Muslim forces in Iraq under Saad. In camp, Abu Mihjan drank again, and on discovering his offence Saad had him whipped and thrown into a cellar in fetters. His cell was in the palace at Qadisiyya where Saad was lodged and from where he commanded the war operations.

From his cellar, Abu Mihjan saw the battle waging in great fury. Abu Mihjan was a born soldier, and when the other Muslims were locked up in life and death struggle, he pined to be free to wield the sword against the enemy. He approached Saad, and asked for permission to fight. Saad rebuked him and ordered him back to his cellar.

While returning to his cellar, Abu Mihjan met Salma the new wife of Saad. He wanted her to help him, but Salma was not inclined to interfere.

Back in his cellar, Abu Mihjan burst into pathetic verses:

"It is sufficient sorrow when you see a cavalier,

Deprived, abandoned and bound in shackles,

While I stand these fetters detain me,

While others are fighting.

I was once a man with wealth and kinsmen,

But I am now left entirely alone.

By Allah, I give the pledge,

If freed, I will never drink again."

Salma heard the song and was moved. She wanted to know what she could do for him. He said:

"Release me so that I may go and fight. I promise that if I am not killed I will return to the cellar at night. Lend me a horse so that I may ride to the battle-field."

Salma released him. She also got for him the horse of Saad. Fully armed Abu Mihjan rode to the battle-field. He rode through the Muslim ranks and then with the cry of "Allah-o-Akbar" hurled himself at the Persian front killing a man. He galloped back to the Muslim ranks and after a while again lashed at the Persian front killing another man. He thus went to and fro and killed about a dozen Persians.

The Muslims marvelled at the sight of Abu Mihjan. "Who this warrior" they asked. Saad saw him from the top storey his palace. He thought that the man was Abu Mihjan but then he knew that Abu Mihjan was in the cellar. He felt that the horse that the unknown warrior rode appeared to be his own horse, but he dismissed the thought as he knew that his horse was in the stable.

At night after his triumph at the battle field, Abu Mihjan turned to his cellar and his fetters. Back in the cellar, Abu Mihjan burst into song:

"Have you ever known the Saqeef without honour?

I am the finest of them with the sword

And the most steadfast of them.

On the night of Qadisiyya they did not know me

Or of my escape from the prison to the battle-field."

When the battle of Qadisiyya was over and Salma and Saad were reconciled Salma told Saad how she had released Abu Mihjan and how Abu Mihjan after performing daring exploits at the battle-field had in keeping with his promise returned to the cellar. Now Saad recalled that the unknown warrior whom he had seen performing wondrous exploits and riding Saad's horse was indeed Abu Mihjan.

Saad was in a mood of appreciation. He released Abu Mihjan and said, "By Allah, after seeing what you did at the battlefield I will not whip you again."

And Abu Mihjan said, "I shall never drink again."

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*Source : Alim.org-Umar bin al-Khattab History*