**MUS'AB IBN `UMAIR**The First Envoy of Islam

This man among the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), how good itis for us to start with him. He was the flower of the Quraish, the most handsomeand youthful! Historians and narrators describe him as "The most charmingof the Makkans".

He was born and brought up in wealth, and he grew up with its luxuries.Perhaps there was no boy in Makkah who was pampered by his parents like Mus`ablbn `Umair. This mirthful youth, caressed and pampered, the talk of the ladiesof Makkah, the jewel of its clubs and assemblies: is it possible for himto be one of the legends of faith?

By Allah, how interesting a tale, the story of Mus`ab Ibn `Umair or Mus`abthe Good, as he was nicknamed among the Muslims! He was one of those madeby Islam and fostered by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

But who was he? His story is a pride of all mankind. The youth heard oneday what the people of Makkah had begun to hear about Muhammad the Truthful,that Allah had sent him as bearer of glad tidings and a warner to call themto the worship of Allah the One God. When Makkah slept and awoke there wasno other talk but the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his religion, and thisspoiled boy was one of the most attentive listeners.

That was because, although he was young, the flower of clubs and assemblies,the outward appearance of wisdom and common sense were among the traits ofMus`ab.

He heard that the Prophet (PBUH) and those who believed in him were meetingfar away from the dignitaries and great men of the Quraish at As-safaa inthe house of Al-Arqam lbn Al-Arqam daar Al-Arqam. He wasted no time. He wentone night to the Daar Al Arqam, yearning and anxious. There, the Prophet(PBUH) was meeting his Companions, reciting the Qur'aan to them and prayingwith them to Allah the Most Exalted. Mus`ab had hardly taken his seat andcontemplated the verses of Qur'aan recited by the Prophet (PBUH) when hisheart became the promised heart that night.

The pleasure almost flung him from his seat as he was filled with a wildecstasy. But the Prophet(PBUH) patted his throbbing heart with his blessedright hand, and the silence of the ocean's depth filled his heart. In thetwinkling of an eye, the youth who had just become Muslim appeared to havemore wisdom than his age and a determination that would change the courseof time!

Mus`ab's mother was Khunaas Bint Maalik, and people feared her almost tothe point of terror because she possessed a strong personality. When Mus`abbecame a Muslim, he was neither careful before nor afraid of anyone on theface of the earth except his mother. Even if Makkah, with all its idols,nobles,and deserts were to challenge him, he would stand up to it. As for a disputewith his mother, this was an impossible horror, so he thought quickly anddecided to keep his Islam secret until Allah willed. He continued to frequentDaar Al-Arqam and take lessons from the Prophet (PBUH). He was satisfiedwith his faith and avoided the anger of his mother, who had no knowledgeof his embracing Islam.

However, Makkah at that time kept no secret, for the eyes and ears of theQuraish were everywhere,very alert and checking every footprint in its hotsands. Once, `Uthmaan Ibn Taihah saw him steadily entering alarm's house,then he saw him a second time praying the prayer like Muhammad. No soonerhad he seen him than he ran quickly with the news to Mus`ab's mother, whowas astonished by it.

Mus`ab stood before his mother, the people, and the nobles of Makkah whoassembled around him,telling them the irrefutable truth and reciting theQur'aan with which the Prophet (PBUH) cleansed their hearts and filled themwith honor, wisdom, justice, and piety. His mother aimed a heavy blow athim, but the hand which was meant as an arrow soon succumbed to the powerfullight which increased the radiance of his face with innocent glory becauseit demanded respect with its quiet confidence. However,his mother, underthe pressure of her motherliness, spared him the beating and the pain, althoughit was within her power to avenge her gods whom he had abandoned. Insteadshe took him to a rough corner of her house and shut him in it. She put shackleson him and imprisoned him there until he heard the news of the emigration(hijab) of some of the believers to Abyssinia. He thought to himself andwas able to delude his mother and his guards, and so escaped to Abyssinia.

There he stayed in Abyssinia with his fellow emigrants and then returnedwith them to Makkah. He also emigrated to Abyssinia for the second time withthe Companions whom the Prophet (PBUH)advised to emigrate and they obeyed.But whether Mus`ab was in Abyssinia or Makkah, the experience of his faithproclaimed itself in all places and at all times.

Musa became confident that his life had become good enough to be offeredas a sacrifice to the Supreme Originator and great Creator. He went out oneday to some Muslims while they were sitting around the Prophet (PBUH) , andno sooner did they see him than they lowered their heads and shed some tearsbecause they saw him wearing worn out garments. They were accustomed to hisformer appearance before he had become a Muslim, when his clothes had beenlike garden flowers, elegant and fragrant.

The Prophet (PBUH) saw him with the eyes of wisdom, thankful and loving,and his lips smiled gracefully as he said, "I saw Mus`ab here, and therewas no youth in Makkah more petted by his parents than he. Then he abandonedall that for the love of Allah and His Prophet!"

His mother had withheld from him all the luxury he had been overwhelmedby, when she could not return him to her religion. She refused to let anyonewho had abandoned their gods eat of her food, even if he was her son. Herlast connection with him was when she tried to imprison him for a secondtime after his return from Abyssinia, and he swore that if she did that,he would kill all those who came to her aid to lock him up. She knew thetruth of his determination when he was intent and decided to do something,and so she bade him good bye weeping.

The parting moment revealed a strange adherence to infidelity on the partof his mother, and the greater adherence to faith on the part of her son.When she said to him, while turning him out of her house, "Go away, I amno longer your mother," he went close to her and said, "O mother, I am advisingyou and my heart is with you, please bear witness that there is no god butAllah and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger." She replied to him,angrily raging, "By the stars, I will never enter your religion, to degrademy status and weaken my senses!"

So Mus`ab left the great luxury in which he had been living. He became satisfiedwith a hard life he had never seen before, wearing the roughest clothes,eating one day and going hungry another. This spirit, which was groundedin the strongest faith, adorned with the light of Allah, made him anotherman,one who appeals to the eyes of other great souls.

While he was in this state, the Prophet (PBUH) commissioned him with thegreatest mission of his life, which was to be his envoy to Al-Madiinah. Hismission was to instruct the Ansaar who believed in the Prophet (PBUH) andhad pledged their allegiance to him at `Aqabah, to call others to Islam,and to prepare Al-Madiinah for the day of the great Hijrah. There were amongthe Companions of the Prophet(PBUH) at that time others who were older thanMus`ab and more prominent and nearer to the Prophet(PBUH) by family relations.But the Prophet (PBUH) chose Mus`ab the Good, knowing that he was entrustingto him the most important task of that time, putting into his hands the destinyof Islam at Al-Madiinah. The radiant city of Al-Madiinah was destined tobe the home of Hijrah, the springboard of Islamic preachers and the liberatorsof the future. Mus`ab was equal to the task and trust which Allah had givenhim and he was equipped with an excellent mind and noble character. He wonthe hearts of the Madinites with his piety, uprightness and sincerity. Andso they embraced the religion of Allah in flocks. At the time the Prophet(PBUH) sent him there, only twelve Muslims had pledged allegiance to theProphet (PBUH) at the Pledge of `Aqabah. He had hardly completed a few monthswhen they answered to the call of Allah and the Prophet (PBUH). During thenext pilgrimage season, the Madinite Muslims sent a delegation of 70 believingmen and women to Makkah to meet the Prophet (PBUH).

They came with their teacher and their Prophet's envoy, Mus`ab Ibn `Umair.Mus`ab had proven, by his good sense and excellence, that the Prophet (PBUH)knew well how to choose his envoys and teachers.

Mus'ab had understood his mission well. He knew that he was a caller toAllah and preacher of His religion, which calls people to right guidanceand the straight path. Like the Prophet (PBUH) in whom he believed, he wasno more than a deliverer of the message. There he stood fast, with As`adIbn Zoraara has host, and both of them used to visit the tribes, dwellings,and assemblies, reciting to the people wha the had of the Book of Allah,instilling in them that Allah is no more than One God.

He had confronted certain instances which could have put an end to his lifeand that of those with him but for his active, intelligent, great mind. Oneday, he was taken by surprise while preaching to the people to find Usaidlbn hudair, leader of the `Abd Al-Ashhal tribe, at Al-Madiinah confrontinghim with a drawn arrow.

He was raging with anger and animosity against the one who had come to corruptthe religion of his people by telling them to abandon their gods and talkingto them about the idea of only One God Whom they did not know before andhad never heard of. Their gods were to them the center of their worship.Whenever any of them needed them, he knew their places. They would invokethem for help. That was how they thought and imagined!

As for the God of Muhammad, to whom this envoy was calling, nobody knewHis place, nor could anybody see Him! When the Muslims who were sitting aroundMus`ab, saw Usaid lbn hudair advancing in his unbridled anger, they werefrightened, but Mus`ab the Good stood firm. Usaid stood before him and As`adlbn Zoraarah shouting, "What brought you here? Are you coming to corruptour faith? Go away if you wish to be saved!"

And like the calmness of the sea and its force, Mus`ab started his finespeech saying, "Won't you sit down and listen? If you like our cause, youcan accept; and if you dislike it, we will spare you of what you hate."

Allah is the Greatest! How grand an opening whose ending would be pleasant!Usaid was a thoughtful and clever man, and here he saw Mus`ab inviting himto listen and no more. If he was convinced he would accept it, and if hewas not convinced, then Mus`ab would leave his neighborhood and his clan,andmove to another neighborhood without harm, nor being harmed. There and thenUsaid answered him saying, "Well, that is fair," and he dropped his arrowto the ground and sat down listening.

Mus`ab had hardly read the Qur'aan, explaining the mission with which Muhammadlbn `Abd Allah(PBUH) came, when the conscience of Usaid began to dear andbrighten and change with the effectiveness of the words. He became overwhelmedby its beauty. When Mus`ab finished speaking,Usaid lbn Hudair exclaimed tohim and those with him, "How beautiful is this speech, and how true!How canone enter this religion?" Mus`ab told him to purify his body and clothesand say, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah." Usaid retired forsome time and then returned pouring clean water on his head and standingthere proclaiming, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and thatMuhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

The news spread like lightning and then Sa`d Ibn Mu`aadh came and listenedto Mus`ab, and he was convinced and embraced Islam. Then came Sa`d lbn `Ubaadah.

There and then blessings came with their entering Islam. The people of Al-Madiinahcame together asking one another, "If Usaid lbn Hudair, Sa`d Ibn Mu`aadhand Sa`d Ibn `Ubaadah have embraced Islam, what are we waiting for? Go straightto Mus`ab and believe. By Allah, he is calling us to the truth and the straightpath!"

The first envoy of the Prophet (PBUH) succeeded without comparison. It wasa success which he deserved and to which he was equal.

The days and years passed by. The Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions emigratedto Al-Madiinah,and the Quraish were raging with envy and their ungodly pursuitafter the pious worshippers. So the Battle of Badr took place, in which theywere taught a lesson and lost their strong hold. After that they preparedthemselves for revenge, and thus came the Battle of Uhud. The Muslims mobilizedthemselves,and the Prophet (PBUH) stood in their midst to sort out amongtheir faithful faces and to choose one to bear the standard. He then calledfor Mus`ab the Good, and he advanced and carried the standard.

The terrible battle was raging, the fighting furious. The archers disregardedthe orders of the Prophet(PBUH) by leaving their positions on the mountainwhen they saw the polytheists withdrawing as if defeated. But this act oftheirs soon turned the victory of the Muslims to defeat. The Muslims weretaken at unawares by the cavalry of the Quraish at the mountain top, andmany Muslims were killed by the swords of the polytheists as a consequence.

When they saw the confusion and horror splitting the ranks of the Muslims,the polytheists concentrated on the Prophet of Allah to finish him off. Mus`absaw the impending threat, so he raised the standard high, shouting, "allahuAkbar! Allah is the Greatest!" like the roar of a lion. He turned and jumpedleft and right, fighting and killing the foe. All he wanted was to draw theattention of the enemy to himself in order to turn their attention away fromthe Prophet (PBUH). He thus became as a whole army in himself. Nay, Mus`abwent alone to fight as if he were an army of giants raising the standardin sanctity with one hand, striking with his sword with the other. But theenemies were multiplying on him. They wanted to step on his corpse so thatthey could find the Prophet (PBUH).

Let us allow a living witness to describe for us the last scene of Mus`abthe Great. Ibn Sa`d said: Ibraahiim lbn Muhammad lbn Sharhabiil Al-'Abdriyrelated from his father, who said: Mus`ab lbn`Umair carried the standardon the Day of Uhud. When the Muslims were scattered, he stood fast untilhemet lbn Qumaah who was a knight. He struck him on his right hand and cutit off, but Mus`ab said, "and Muhammad is but a Messenger. Messengers havepassed away before him " (3:144). He carried the standard with his left handand leaned on it. He struck his left hand and cut it off, and so he leanedon the standard and held it with his upper arms to his chest, all the whilesaying, "And Muhammad is but a Messenger. Messengers have passed away beforehim". Then a third one struck him with his spear, and the spear went throughhim. Mus`ab fell and then the standard.

Nay, the cream of martyrdom had fallen! He fell after he had struggled forthe sake of Allah in the great battle of sacrifice and faith. He had thoughtthat if he fell, he would be a stepping stone to the death of the Prophet(PBUH) because he would be without defense and protection. But he put himselfin harm's way for the sake of the Prophet (PBUH). overpowered by his fearfor and love of him, he continued to say with every sword stroke that fellon him from the foe, "and Muhammad is but a Messenger. Messengers have passedaway before him "(3:144). This verse was revealed later, after he had spokenit. After the bitter battle, they found the corpse of the upright martyrlying with his face in the dust, as if he feared to look while harm fellon the Prophet (PBUH). So he hid his face so that he would avoid the scene.Or perhaps, he was shy when he fell as a martyr, before making sure of thesafety of the Prophet of Allah, and before serving to the very end, guardingand protecting him.

Allah is with you, O Mus`ab! What a great life story!

The Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions came to inspect the scene of the battleand bid farewell to its martyrs. Pausing at Mus`ab's body, tears drippedfrom the Prophet's eyes. Khabbaab lbn Al-Aratnarrated: We emigrated withthe Prophet (PBUH) for Allah's cause, so our reward became due with Allah.Some of us passed away without enjoying anything in this life of his reward,and one of them was Mus`ab Ibn`Umair, who was martyred on the Day of Uhud.He did not leave behind anything except a sheet of shredded woolen cloth.If we covered his head with it, his feet were uncovered, and if we coveredhis feet with it, his head was uncovered. The Prophet (PBUH) said to us,"Cover his head with it and put lemon grass over his feet."

Despite the deep, sad pain which the Prophet (PBUH) suffered over the lossof his uncle Hamzah and the mutilation of his corpse by the polytheists ina manner that drew tears from the Prophet (PBUH)and broke his heart; despitethe fact that the field of battle was littered with the corpses of his Companions,all of whom represented the peak of truth, piety and enlightenment; despiteall this, he stood at the corpse of his first envoy, bidding him farewelland weeping bitterly. Nay, the Prophet(PBUH) stood at the remains of Mus`ablbn `Umair saying, while his eyes were flowing with tears, love and loyalty,"Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah" (33:23).

Then he gave a sad look at the garment in which he was shrouded and said,"I saw you at Makkah,and there was not a more precious jewel, nor more distinguishedone than you, and here you are bareheaded in a garment!" Then the Prophet(PBUH) looked at all the martyrs in the battlefield and said,"The Prophetof Allah witnesses that you are martyrs to Allah on the Day of Resurrection."Then he gathered his living Companions around him and said, "O people, visitthem, come to them, and salute them. By Allah, no Muslim will salute thembut that they will salute him in return."

Peace be on you, O Mus`ab. Peace be on you, O Martyrs. Peace and blessingsof Allah be upon you!