

Abu Lahab ibn Abdul Muttalib (part 1) **Uncle of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam)**

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had four paternal uncles. Two of them accepted Islam and two of them rejected and opposed Islam. As for the ones who accepted Islam, they were: Abbas and Hamza (radhiAllahu anhuma). Allah Ta`ala blessed them till the Day of Judgment. As for those who rejected Islam; they were Abu Lahab and Abu Talib.

Abu Lahab's Upbringing and Early Days

Abu Lahab grew up in Makkah Mukarramah which was a bustling center of business. It was also the center of the Hajj. People from all around Arabia and other parts would come to Makkah for the pilgrimage of the Ka`bah.

In his youth, Abu Lahab would help his father, Abdul Muttalib in serving and looking after the Hujjaaj (pilgrims of the Ka`bah). He would also join his father and uncles on the business trips to Yemen, Syria, Abyssinia, and Persia which were great centers of civilization in those times. This is where he learned and gained mastery in trade and business and eventually became a wealthy and intelligent businessman.

Through his wealth and status he gained a lot of respect and high position amongst his tribe: the Quraysh. When he spoke people listened, and when he gave a command, people would obey his orders.

Abu Lahab's Character and Appearance

Abu Lahab's name was actually Abdul-Uzzaa. But he was given the title of "Abu Lahab" which meant FATHER OF THE FLAME, because his face was red and shimmering like fire. He was tall with broad shoulders and very handsome.

In spite of all these attractive outer qualities, he had a thunderous voice, short temper, and was known to keep grudges in his heart.

Early Bitterness Which Led to Future Hostility

It has been mentioned that one of the causes of Abu Lahab's hatred for the Prophet and reasons for opposing Islam was an incident which took place in their youth. One day Abu Talib was arguing with his brother Abu Lahab and they began to get into a brawl until Abu Lahab ended up sitting on Abu Talib's chest. Muhammad (the young nephew of both of them) came along and tried to break up the fight and bring peace between the two, but Abu Lahab would just not comply. So Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) had no choice but to throw Abu Lahab off of Abu Talib by force. Abu Lahab said to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam), "Both of us are your uncles, so why did you do this to me?! I swear that I will never have love for you in my heart ever again!!!"

It was from that day that Abu Lahab forever kept a grudge in his heart for the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) and this lasted till the time Allah Ta`ala chose him to be the last and final Messenger.

A Divine Command to Warn the Family

After three years of calling people to Islam in secret, Allah Ta`ala commanded the Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) to openly invite his family members and tribesman to accept Islam. So he climbed on the hill of SAFA and called out all of his family members from the Quraysh and said, "O people! If I were to tell you that behind this hill I see an army coming to attack you, would you believe me?" So they all said, "Yes of course we would believe you, we do not know you to be a liar." If that is so, then know that I am warning you of a great punishment that will come from Allah Ta`ala if you do not believe in Him."

Abu Lahab was also among the people present there so he said, "May you be destroyed!!! Is this what you gathered us here for today?"

It was due to this disrespectful and rude statement that Allah Ta`ala revealed Surah Lahab saying:

"May Abu Lahab be destroyed! His wealth and everything he earned will not benefit him."

An Evil Neighbor

Not only was Abu Lahab a staunch enemy of the Prophet, but he was also his neighbor and the father in law of the Prophet's two daughters: Umm Kulthum and Ruqayyah.

He had so much hatred for the Prophet that he even forced his own sons to divorce their wives, because they were the daughters of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa salam).

He and his wicked wife Umm Jamil would throw their trash and intestines of animals at the doorstep of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam). The Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa salam) would say nothing in return and just remove the trash from his doorstep and throw it aside.

Non-Stop Persecution

Despite all of the harassment Abu Lahab would put the Prophet through; the Prophet would never give up his message of the truth and guiding people towards the light of Islam. The Prophet was non-stop in his effort but Abu Lahab was also non-stop in his persecution.

When the Hajjis would come from all over Arabia for the annual gathering of Hajj, the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) would call them to Allah Ta'ala saying: "O People! Believe that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and you will attain salvation!" In the meantime Abu Lahab would stand behind him and simultaneously curse the Prophet and call him a liar and a madman in front of all the people. He would take stones and throw them at the feet and shins of the Prophet and cause him to bleed and get injured and bruised.

People would ask, "Who is this young man calling people to a new religion?"

They would answer, "He is Muhammad. He is saying that he is the Messenger of Allah."

The people would then say, "Who is that man following him and belying him from behind?"

They would answer, "This is his uncle: Abdul-Uzzaa, also known as Abu

Lahab." *TO BE CONTINUED...*