

Hakim ibn Hazm

History has recorded that he is the only person who was born inside the Kabah itself.

Together with a group of friends, his mother had gone inside this ancient House of God to inspect it. On that particular day it was open because of a festive occasion. She was pregnant and labor pains suddenly gripped her. She was unable to leave the Kabah. A leather mat was brought to her and she gave birth on it. The child was named Hakim. His father was Hazm who was the son of Khuwaylid. Hakim was therefore the nephew of the Lady Khadijah, the daughter of Khuwaylid. may Allah be pleased with her.

Hakim grew up in a wealthy and noble family which enjoyed a high status in Makkah society. He was also an intelligent and well-mannered person who was well respected by his people. He was held in such esteem that he was given the responsibility of the rifadah which involved giving assistance to the needy and those who had lost their property during the season of pilgrimage. He took this responsibility seriously and would even help needy pilgrims from his own resources.

Hakim was a very close friend of the Prophet, peace be on him, before the latter's call to prophethood. Even though he was five years older than the Prophet, he used to spend much time talking to him and enjoying hours of pleasant companionship. Muhammad in his turn felt great affection for Hakim.

Their relationship was further strengthened when the Prophet married his aunt, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid.

What is truly amazing is that in spite of the close friendship between Hakim and the Prophet, Hakim did not become a Muslim until the conquest of Makkah, more than twenty years after the start of the Prophet's mission. One would have thought that someone like Hakim whom God had blessed with a sound intellect and who was so well-disposed to the Prophet, would have been among the first to believe in him and follow the guidance he brought. But that was not to be.

Just as we are astonished at the late acceptance of Islam on the part of Hakim, he himself later in life was also amazed. In fact, as soon as he accepted Islam and tasted the sweetness of iman (faith), he began to feel deep regret for every moment of his life as a mushrik and a denier of God's religion and of His Prophet.

His son once saw him weeping after his acceptance of Islam and asked: "Why are you weeping, my father?" "Many things cause me to weep, my dear son. The most grievous is the length of time it took for me to become a Muslim. Acceptance of Islam would have given me so many opportunities to do good which I missed even if I were to have spent the earth in gold. My life was spared at the battle of Badr and also at the battle of Uhud. After Uhud. I said to myself. I would not help any Quraysh against Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, and I would not leave Makkah. Then, whenever I felt like accepting Islam I would look at other men among the Quraysh. men of power and maturity who remained firmly attached to the ideas and practices of Jahiliyyah and I would fall in line with them and their neighbors... Oh, how I wish I had not done so. Nothing has destroyed us except the blind following of our forefathers and elders. Why should I not weep, my son?"

The Prophet himself was puzzled. A man of sagacity and understanding like Hakim ibn Hazm, how could Islam remain "hidden" from him?. For a long time, the Prophet had dearly hoped that he and a group of persons like him would take the initiative and become Muslims. On the night before the liberation of Makkah, he, may God bless him and grant him peace, said to his companions:

"There are four persons in Makkah whom I consider to be above having any dealing with shirk and I would dearly like them to accept Islam." "Who are they, O Messenger of God?" asked the companions. "Attab ibn

Usayd, Jubayr ibn Mutim, Hakim ibn Hazm and Suhayl ibn Amr," replied the Prophet. By the grace of God, they all became Muslims.

When the Prophet, peace be on him, entered Makkah to liberate the city from polytheism and the ways of ignorance and immorality, he ordered his herald to proclaim: "Whoever declares that there is no god but Allah alone, that He has no partner and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, he is safe..."

Whoever sits at the Kabah and lays down his weapons, he is safe. Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan, he is safe.

Whoever enters the house of Hakim ibn Hazm, he is safe..." The house of Abu Sufyan was in the higher part of Makkah and that of Hakim was in the lower part of the city. By proclaiming these houses as places of sanctuary, the Prophet wisely accorded recognition to both Abu Sufyan and Hakim, weakening any thought they might have of resisting and making it easier for them to be more favorably disposed to him and his mission.

Hakim embraced Islam wholeheartedly. He vowed to himself that he would atone for whatever he had done during his Jahili days and that whatever amounts he had spent in opposing the Prophet, he would spend the same amounts in the cause of Islam.

He owned the Dar an-Nadwah, an important and historic building in Makkah, where the Quraysh held their conferences during the days of Jahiliyyah. In this building the Quraysh leaders and chieftains would gather to plot against the Prophet.

Hakim decided to get rid of it and cut himself off from its past associations which were now so painful to him. He sold the building for one hundred thousand dirhams. A Quraysh youth exclaimed to him: "You have sold something of great historical value and pride to the Quraysh, uncle."

"Come now, my son," replied Hakim. "All vain pride and glory has now gone and all that remains of value is taqwa - consciousness of God. I have only sold the building in order to acquire a house in Paradise. I swear to you that I have given the proceeds from it to be spent in the path of God Almighty."

Hakim ibn Hazm performed the Hajj after becoming a Muslim. He took with him one hundred fine camels and sacrificed them all in order to achieve nearness to God. In the following Hajj, he stood on Arafat. With him were one hundred slaves. To each he gave a pendant of silver on which was engraved: "Free for the sake of God Almighty from Hakim ibn Hazm." On a third Hajj, he took with him a thousand sheep - yes a thousand sheep and sacrificed them all at Mina to feed the poor Muslims in order to attain nearness to God.

While Hakim was generous in his spending for the sake of God, he also still liked to have much. After the battle of Hunayn, he asked the Prophet for some of the booty which the Prophet gave. He then asked for more and the Prophet gave him more. Hakim was still a newcomer to Islam and the Prophet was more generous to newcomers so as to reconcile their hearts to Islam. Hakim ended up with a large share of the booty. But the Prophet peace be upon him, told him:

"O Hakim! This wealth is indeed sweet and attractive. Whoever takes it and is satisfied will be blessed by it and whoever takes out of greed will not be blessed. He would be like someone who eats and is not satisfied. The upper hand is better than the lower hand (it is better to give than to receive)."

The kind words of advice had a deep and immediate effect on Hakim. He was mortified and said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of God! By Him who has sent you with the truth, I shall not ask anyone after you for anything."

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Hakim was called several times to collect his stipend from the Bayt al-mal but he refused to take any money. He did the same during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab

whereupon Umar addressed the Muslims: "I testify to you, O Muslims, that I have called Hakim to collect his stipend but he refuses."

Hakim remained faithful to his word. He did not take anything from anyone until he passed away. From the Prophet, he had learnt the great truth that contentment is riches beyond compare.

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