

Hatib Bin Abi Balt'a (ra)

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(Translated from Arabic)

Hatib bin Abi Balt'a bin Amr bin Umair bin Salama Al-Lakhmi (ra) was a Badri Companion. He entered Islam and migrated to Yathrib along with Muslims, accompanied by Sa'ad bin Khawli, the ally (Mawla) of Hatib. He came to the house of Al-Mundhir bin Muhammed bin Uqbah. The Prophet (saw) made a brotherhood between Hatib and Raheela Bin Khalid. Hatib had participated with the Prophet in all the battles in which the Prophet (saw) fought. He witnessed the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Uhud, the Battle of Khandaq, Hudaibiya Treaty and the Opening of Mecca. Also, the Prophet (saw) sent him in the sixth year of Hijra as a messenger with a letter to Al-Maqawqis, the King of Egypt, inviting him to Islam where Al-Maqawqis sent Maria and her sister Sirin, as gifts to the Messenger of Allah (saw).

During the day of Badr, when Hatib bin Abi Balt'a heard the herald of the Prophet (saw) proclaiming, "Here is the caravan of Quraysh that has their wealth, so march forth towards them, may Allah make them transferred to you." Hatib (ra) responded to the call and drew his sword. When the two groups met at Badr, Hatib was put to a good trial. **During the day of Uhud**, Hatib remained steadfast with the Prophet (saw) when people were exposed. He and some of the Companions (ra) began defending the Prophet (saw), pledging to die defending the Prophet (saw). Hatib bin Abi Balt'a also witnessed the Battle of Khandaq.

There is an account about him on **the day of Hudaibiya**: Muhammed bin Ishaq says: When the Messenger of Allah gathered to march towards Mecca, Hatib bin Abi Balt'a wrote a letter to Quraish, informing them of the mobilization of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to march towards them. Hatib then gave the letter to a woman, Muhammed bin Jaffer claimed that the woman was a hairdresser, also others claimed to me (Ibn Ishaq) that she is Sarah, the ally to some of the Banu Abdul Muttalib. Hatib gave the letter to her to convey it to the Quraish. She put the letter in her hair and then hid it by covering the hair and then she left. The news of what Hatib had done came to the Prophet from Heaven (through Revelation) and so the Prophet (saw) sent Ali bin Abu Talib (ra) and Zubair Bin Awwam (ra).

Bukhari reported from Ubaidullah bin Abi Raafi who said: "I heard `Ali saying, 'Allah's Messenger (saw) sent me, Az-Zubair and Al-Miqdad somewhere saying, **انْطَلِقُوا حَتَّى تَأْتُوا رَوْضَةَ خَاخٍ فَإِنَّ بِهَا ظِعِينَةً مَعَهَا كِتَابٌ فَخُذُوهُ مِنْهَا** Proceed till you reach Rawdat Khakh. There you will find a lady with a letter. Take the letter from her.'" "So, we set out and our horses ran at full pace till we got to Ar-Rawda where we found the lady and said (to her), "Take out the letter." She replied, "I have no letter with me." We said, "Either you take out the letter or else we will take off your clothes." So, she took it out of her braid. We brought the letter to Allah's Messenger (saw) and it contained a statement from Hatib bin Abi Balta to some of the Meccan pagans informing them of some of the intentions of Allah's Messenger (saw). Then Allah's Messenger (saw) said, **«يا حاطب ما هذا؟»** "O Hatib! What is this?" Hatib replied, "O Allah's Messenger (saw)! Don't hasten to give your judgment about me. I was a man closely connected with the Quraish, but I did not belong to this tribe, while the other emigrants with you, had their relatives in Mecca who would protect their dependents and property. So, I wanted to recompense for my lacking blood relation to them by doing them a favor so that they might protect my dependents. I did this neither because of disbelief nor apostasy nor out of preferring Kufr (disbelief) to Islam." Allah's Messenger (saw), said, **«أما إنه قد صدقكم Hatib has told you the truth.»** `Umar said, O Allah's Apostle! Allow me to chop off the head of this

hypocrite." Allah's Messenger (saw) said: **«إِنَّهُ قَدْ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا، وَمَا يَدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَطَّلَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَدْرِ فَقَالَ: «HATIB PARTICIPATED IN THE BATTLE OF BADR, AND WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS ALLAH HAS ALREADY LOOKED AT THE BADR WARRIORS AND SAID, AND 'DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE, FOR I HAVE FORGIVEN YOU.'»** So Allah (swt) revealed Surah Mumtahina: **يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تَلْفُونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَقَدْ كَفَرُوا بِمَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يُخْرِجُونَ الرَّسُولَ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ رَبِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ حَرَجْتُمْ جِهْدًا فِي سَبِيلِي وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِي تُسِرُّونَ إِلَيْهِمْ بِالْمَوَدَّةِ وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا أَخْفَيْتُمْ وَمَا أَعْلَمْتُمْ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْهُ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ** **“O you who have believed, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Prophet and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you have come out for jihad in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection, but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”** [TMQ Surah al-Mumtahina 60:1]

As-Suhaili said that the letter of Hatib says: the Messenger of Allah (saw) is heading to you with an army like a night that marches like a torrent. By Allah, if the Messenger of Allah (saw) marches to you alone, Allah will give him victory over you as Allah fulfills what He has promised. Tafsir of Ibn Salam says: Hatib wrote: Muhammad (saw) has marched, it may be towards you or others, so be cautious.

Hatib bin Abi Balt'a, the Envoy of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt.

After the Messenger of Allah (saw) had struck the Hudaibiya Treaty with the Quraish, he (saw) did not remain calm and quiet. Allah Azza Wa Jal ordered him to convey the message, so he (saw) sent messengers to Kings and Rulers upon the earth. He sent messengers to Caesar, Khosrau, and the Negus...When he (saw) intended to send to Egypt, he (saw) said: **«أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَيُّكُمْ يَنْطَلِقُ بَكْتَابِي هَذَا إِلَى صَاحِبِ مِصْرَ وَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ؟»** **“Oh People! Who amongst you will go to the ruler of Egypt with my letter and his reward is upon Allah?”** Hatib bin Abi Balta' sprang and said: 'I am, Oh Messenger of Allah!'. So the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: **«بَارِكْ اللَّهُ فِيكَ يَا حَاطِبُ»** **“May Allah bless you, O Hatib.”** Hatib took the letter of the Messenger of Allah (saw), rode on his horse and travelled to Egypt. He used to know the route to Egypt, for he had travelled to trade in Egypt many times. The letter was sent to Juraih bin Mina who was Egyptian. However, he ruled Egypt on behalf of Heraclius. He used to collect taxes and send them to Constantinople. Alexandria was his capital.

Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah presented the letter of the Messenger of Allah (saw) to Muqawqis. The letter reads: **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، مِنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ إِلَى الْمُقَوْقِسِ عَظِيمِ الْقِبْطِ، سَلَامٌ عَلَى مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى... أَمَا بَعْدُ، فَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ بِدَعَايَةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، أَسْلَمَ تَسْلَمُ يَوْمَ تَكُونُ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ مَرَّتَيْنِ، فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتَ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْكَ إِثْمُ الْقِبْطِ، ﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فُقُولُوا أَشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا [64 آل عمران: ﴿مُسْلِمُونَ﴾** **“In the name of Allah, the Gracious One, the Merciful. From Muhammad, servant of Allah and His apostle to al-Muqawqis, premier of Egypt: Peace unto whoever follows the guided path! And thereafter, I verily call you to the call of Islam. Embrace Islam and be safe [from perdition, as] Allah will compensate your reward two-folds. But if you turn away, then upon you will be the guilt [of delusion] of the Egyptians. “Say, "O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you - that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him].”** [TMQ Surah Aali-Imran 3:64]”

Al-Muqawqis looked at Hatib bin Abi Balta' and asked: "What prevented him, if he is a Prophet, to invoke (Allah) against those who opposed him and expelled him from his land to another?" Hatib remained silent and so Juraih bin Mina (Al-Muqawqis) repeated the question, when he saw the approval of those who present (around him) and asked: "What prevented him, if he is a Prophet, to invoke against those who opposed him and expelled him from his land to another, to have control over them?" Hatib bin Abi Balta' replied: "Do you witness that Isa bin Maryam is a Messenger of Allah". Al-Muqawqis said: "Yes". Hatib bin Abi Balta' said: "What about him when his people wanted to crucify him? He did not invoke them until Allah raised him." Al-Muqawqis shook his head with admiration and said: "Well done, you are wise. And the message is from the wise."

Hatib bin Abi Balta' said: "There was a man before you who claimed himself to be the supreme lord, so Allah punished him both in this world and Hereafter. You should take heed of his example so that you yourself do not become a cautionary tale." Hatib meant Firaun when he left behind Musa (as) and Banu Israel. So Kaleemullah (Musa) and Banu Israel were victorious, and Firaun and those with him were drowned. Al-Muqawqis looked at Hatib astonishingly and the questions appeared in the eyes of those who were present: "Where did this Arab get such knowledge? So Hatib continued: "This Prophet invites people to Islam. The people who oppose him the most are Quraish, the ones who show him the most enmity are the Jews, and those who are closest to him are the Christians i.e. those who believe in his Prophethood. I swear by my own life that Esa (as) brought the glad tidings of Muhammad, and this is no different than Moses speaking the glad tidings of Jesus. Our invitation to you to the Quran is like you calling the people of Torah to the Bible."

Al-Muqawqis said: "I have thought about the issue of this prophet. He does not preach about leaving the world aside, nor he forbids to stay away from what is good (desirable). I do not see him as a misguiding magician or a lying sorcerer. I see him signs of Prophethood which give the news of hidden secrets. But I will need some time to consider". Then, Al-Muqawqis wrote a letter which reads: "In the name of Allah, the All-Merciful and the Most Compassionate, To Muhammed, Son of Abdullah, from the ruler of Copts, Al-Muqawqis: Peace be upon you. Afterwards...I have read your letter and I have understood what you have invited me to! I also know that there is a messenger to come. But I had thought that he would appear in Sham (Syria). I have treated your envoy kindly. And I am sending you two slaves who are held most highly by the Copts, and I am giving you a mule to ride. Peace be upon you."

Hatib died in Madina Munawwara in the 30th year of Hijra whilst he was 65 years old. And Uthman (ra) led the funeral prayer upon him. The Messenger of Allah (saw) informed that Hatib will not enter Hellfire. A servant of Hatib bin Abi Balta'ah came to the Prophet complaining about Hatib and said: O Prophet of Allah! Hatib will surely enter the Hellfire. So the Prophet (saw) said: «كَذَبْتَ لَا يَدْخُلُهَا فَإِنَّهُ شَهِدَ بَدْرًا وَالْحُدَيْبِيَّةَ» **"You have lied. He will certainly not enter the Hellfire, for he witnessed Badr and Hudaibiya."** [Muslim] Hatib has a narration of the Prophetic hadith from the Prophet (saw). The hadith was narrated from him by his two sons, Abd al-Rahman ibn Hatib, Yahya ibn Hatib, and Urwa ibn al-Zubayr.