



# An Embodiment of Bravery and Taqwa

By: Anonymous

Please allow me to introduce you to one of my all-time favorite Sahabas or companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). This sahaba is an ultimate role model for boys who want to be men. For any of you who want to see what bravery, strength, courage, iman, and taqwa truly look like. Some of the most beautiful lessons related to reliance on Allah (ﷻ) and other people (although they are not the same), tying your camel or doing your part to gain victory, and success from Allah (swt) is evident in his (ra) life story. Additionally, there is a lot to learn about self-perception and the views that others hold of us. Extracting the lessons from the story of Al Baraa ibn Malek (ra) is essential for everyone, man or woman, as an informed example of someone who took their best characteristics from the prophet (saw) and applied them in the Muslim community and in jihad.

Let me begin with one of my favorite stories, Al Baraa (ra), and his involvement in the battle of Al Yamamah. This battle occurred between Khaled ibn Waleed (ra) with about 12 thousand fighters and Musaylimah Al Kathab with about 40,000 fighters. Essentially, the reason for this war was that after the death of the prophet (saw) and the establishment of the khilafa of Abu Bakr (ra), three or four problems arose. These problems included a few people who claimed to be prophets to get the status and victory that they saw the prophet (saw) and the Muslims receive after the conquest of Makkah. Musaylimah Al-Kaththab was one of those four people who made this outrageous claim, so, Abu Bakr (ra) solved this problem by dispatching several armies, referred to in the Seerah as “Huroob Al Riddah” or the Wars of Apostasy<sup>1</sup> (حروب الردة),

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<sup>1</sup> Leaving Islam (The wars against those who left Islam)



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led by Khaled ibn Waleed. Khaled ibn Waleed (ra) was sent by Abu Bakr (ra) to fight Musaylimah the Liar.<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning, the Muslims were already at a disadvantage in terms of the size of their army compared to the enemy who had an army of nearly three times the Muslims. However, we know that the number of fighters does not matter, even if there are very few Muslims and lots of disbelievers. Throughout the battle, the Muslims were struggling, as this was a particularly arduous and exhausting battle. Their army was penetrated at least three times by their enemies. Khaled ibn Waleed (ra) made a plan to rectify the situation by making groups with different objectives to win the battle. Khaled (ra) took his group to go all the way to the back of the massive army where Musaylimah Al-Kathab was cowardly hiding. To get back to the battle, Khaled (ra) and his army detail made their way to the back of the army, but as Khaled (ra) knew what would happen, Musaylimah Al-Kathab (the liar) fled to his castle nearby. The land they fought on was referred to as "عقرباء" and nearby was one of the castles of Musaylimah Al-Kathab which was known for its extremely high surrounding walls. He'd chosen that location for the battle because he knew he could escape with some of his army nearby if he wanted. This castle was known as "حديقة الموت" (Castle of Death) because of all of the deaths that happened there. So Musaylimah-Al Kathab escaped with some of his fighters to this castle and locked the door. This gave the Muslims some time to rest, but then something amazing happened. A man by the name of Al-Baraa ibn Malek (ra) made a request that sounded odd to the men around him. He asked them to throw him over the wall! Yep, you heard that right. Al-Baraa (ra) asked his fellow fighters to lift him on top of a shield over the walls of the castle into a large crowd of their enemies so he could unlock the doors for the Muslim army. At first, this sounded very weird to the rest of the men, but they did just that. They lifted Al-Baraa (ra) over the wall and he was able to successfully let the Muslims in after fighting off a big crowd of men attacking him with arrows and swords. He is a massive part of the reason that the Muslims won that war

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<sup>2</sup> He was named "The Liar" by the Prophet SAW in an exchange of letters between the two of them when Musaylimah first claimed prophethood



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and that Musaylimah Al-Kathab was killed. After this incident, Al-Baraa (ra) had some 80 wounds which were treated by Khaled ibn Waleed (ra) himself for about a month or so after the battle was won. Because of the selfless bravery of Al-Baraa (ra), the Muslims were victorious in the battle of Al-Yamamah, and Musaylimah Al Kathab was killed.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "How many are there with disheveled hair, covered with dust, possessing two cloths, whom no one pays any mind to - if he swears by Allah then He shall fulfill it. Among them is Al-Bara bin Malik."

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي زِيَادٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سَيَّارٌ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا جَعْفَرُ بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا ثَابِتٌ، وَعَلِيُّ بْنُ زَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " كَمْ مِنْ أَشْعَثَ أَغْبَرَ ذِي طَمْرَيْنِ لَا يُؤْبَهُ لَهُ لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِأَبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ الْبِرَاءُ بْنُ مَالِكٍ " . قَالَ أَبُو عِيْسَى هَذَا حَدِيثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيبٌ مِنْ هَذَا الْوَجْهِ .

**(Jami` at-Tirmidhi 3854)**

Firstly, look at the description of Al-Baraa (ra) in the Hadeeth above, how does it describe him? Does it describe him as a wealthy and famous man whom everyone knows the name of? Or a man who is the most popular and well-known in his town? Perhaps it describes him as someone who is very outspoken and extroverted. What about someone who dresses in the nicest fabrics and beautiful clothing? Nope! The hadeeth describes him as a man with disheveled hair who is covered with dust, possessing two cloths, and whom no one pays any mind to. This description may sound unappealing or uninteresting in comparison to the one I provided but this is certainly not the case. This is made apparent in the last words of the hadeeth: لَوْ أَقْسَمَ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِأَبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ "If he swears by Allah then He shall fulfill it. Among them is Al-Bara bin Malik." The significance of this statement is that it shows the beauty of the qualities mentioned and connects them with taqwa. This sentence disproves the idea that someone needs to be popular, wealthy, or extroverted to be pious.



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When it comes to the death of Al Baraa ibn Malek (ra), this hadeeth has to be mentioned- one that was narrated *by his own brother*: Anas ibn Malek (ra). A few years after the battle of Al Yamamah came the battle of Tostor against the Persians. The companions and fighters with him recalled the status of Al Baraa (ra) and requested that he make dua for them to win the battle against their enemies. Put yourself in the shoes of Al Baraa ibn Malek (ra) and imagine that you are in the same position, being asked to make dua that Allah (swt) makes the army successful. Would you do it? Baraa ibn Malek (ra) decided to accept their request and make dua for their success and victory in the battle, but... he did something that those around him didn't quite understand. After making dua for their victory over the Persian Empire, he made a special dua to Allah (swt): he asked Allah (swt) to take him as shaheed in this battle. It might sound confusing that he made this dua for Allah (swt) to cause him to die as a shaheed but he did this for a very beautiful reason, he did not want his Muslim brothers to attribute their victory over the kuffar to himself and the dua that he made, he wanted them to be grateful to Allah (swt) for giving them the strength and the ability to fight for his cause and become victorious. He was concerned that if he continued to make dua for the Muslims to win every battle, they would begin attributing their success to him and his dua, instead of to Allah (swt)-given his status with Allah (swt), Al-Baraa (ra) died as a martyr in the battle of Tostor and of course, the Muslims were victorious against the enemy. What a beautiful death. May Allah (swt) all give us an ending that we are pleased with!

SubhanAllah, look at the dignity and bravery of Muslim fighters compared to the armies of the kuffar. The beauty in the plan of Khaled (ra) is that he did not send some of his men to go fight and die for him. He took charge and went on the hardest sub-mission. He did not hide and allow others to do the work for them. I have noticed this trend where the leaders of non-muslim armies tend to hide in the back of their



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armies and send people to fight for them whilst doing nothing and being lazy cowards in the back, hoping for the best. From what I have observed of Muslim armies in Islamic History, the leader is the one who takes charge and pushes himself. They do not send men to their deaths with no hope of success and victory. They fight with nobility, bravery, courage, and most importantly, with Iman. They intend to fight for the sake of Allah (swt) and to do Jihad for his sake. They see dying in battle as one of the absolute best ways to meet Allah (swt) and they fight with the pleasure of Allah on their minds and in their heart. Armies of the kuffar often fight seeking the victory of this world. They seek fame, and attention, and indulge deeply in their worldly desires. Their intention is not pleasing Allah (swt) or increasing their hasanat in the akhirah, it is to have the status of winner or victorious person/people over their enemy. Allah (swt) puts barakah in Muslim armies like that because win or die, the Muslims are fighting for the sake of Allah (swt) so there is no losing for us.

قُلْ هَلْ نَرَبُّونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ ۖ وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ ۗ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا ۖ فَتَرَبَّصُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَبِّصُونَ

Say, "Are you awaiting anything to befall us except one of the two best things: 'victory or martyrdom'? But We are awaiting Allah to afflict you with torment either from Him or at our hands. So keep waiting! We too are waiting with you."

**(9:52)**

This is one of the many reasons why Muslims during the time of the prophet (saw) and even after his death (saw), despite the Muslims having significantly fewer people, we often won because Allah was on our side.

Like in the battles of Uhud and Badr, the number of Muslim fighters was much lower but Allah aided our armies and made us victorious in this world and will make those armies happy in the next world inshaAllah. Additionally, the value and strength of Muslim fighters vs non-Muslim fighters is incomparable. We have people like Al Qa'qaa'





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In one narration regarding one of the battles of Persia, some of the Persian soldiers stood on top of the castle walls and were throwing down some very large and heavy chains that were heated with fire and had hooks below them. One of these hooks grabbed hold of his brother Anas (ra) and lifted him off the ground. He called his brother for help and he came and held it down so he could cut it and save his brother from this. Baraa (ra) was successful in cutting the chain and helping his brother, but because of the heat of the chain, all of the flesh of the hands of Al-Baraa (ra) was melted off of him.

This narration is beautiful because it highlights the courage and loyalty of Al-Baraa (ra). He went up against some very dangerous attacks that were extremely scary because of how gruesome of a death they could cause. Despite this, he went up against these hot iron hooks to save his brother in blood and Islam. Although he was already quite fragile, he did everything he could to save his brother, even when it harmed him on such an extreme level. The qualities of duty and bravery are no doubt ones that he learned from the Prophet (saw), and they are qualities that we should do our best to embody as well. This event is a testament to the fact that true strength comes from faith and conviction, not just physical ability.

At the end of the day, you don't have to be loud, have a lot of attention on you, always talk or be friends with the whole ummah to be close to Allah (swt) or to be a good person who is honored by Allah (swt). How well-known you are doesn't have anything to do with your relationship with Allah (swt) and oftentimes, those who speak less and seem insignificant are those who are closer to Allah (swt) and have a stronger relationship with Him. This is a great lesson when it comes to balancing social life and character with your internal state and connection with Allah (swt). In reflecting on the incredible life of Al Baraa Ibn Malek (ra), we are reminded of the importance and impact of bravery, selflessness, and taqwa. His story teaches us that strength does not lie in external appearances or worldly recognition *only* but in the sincerity of our intentions and our unwavering reliance on Allah (swt). His courage in the face of overwhelming



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odds, loyalty to others, and how careful he was in ensuring that people did not equate his efforts with their success are all things that we should all aspire to embody in our daily lives to please Allah.

**May Allah (swt) grant us the strength to embody these virtues, and may He guide us towards a righteous and successful life in this world.**

**Ameen.**