

A Knight in History

Khaled ibn Al-Waleed

The Sword of Allah (592-642)

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We as human beings need to make a significant contribution to the understanding of any historical events which can occasionally



be a casual process to some generations.

History unfolds according to a specific set of rules and its natural progressions are not generally random. In this historical topic, a great general and Arabian knight is going to be brought forward to the attention of many

who may have never heard about his chronicles. He is Khaled ibn Al-Waleed, one of the greatest heroes of Islam and one of two generals in history to remain undefeated

in their entire military lives, the other being Genghis Khan. The history of ibn Al-Waleed's chronicles is extremely rich and extensive it would only be fair to write an actual book about him. What is about to come is just a quarter of a peek of his records.

Khaled; the boy, the man, the champion:

Born in 592 to Al-Waleed, the Chief of Bani Makhzum, one of the noblest clans of the Quraysh tribe, and who was also known in Mecca (present day in Saudi Arabia) by the title of Al-Waheed (the Unique), Khaled's upbringing was carried out by his father who did his best to instil into Khaled all the virtues of Arabian manhood such as courage, fighting skills, toughness and generosity. The great tribe of Quraysh that inhabited Mecca staged a clear-cut division of privilege and responsibility among its three leading major clans which were Bani Hashim, Bani Abduddar, and Bani Makhzum. Bani Makhzum was responsible for matters of war and they clan-bred and trained the horses on which Quraysh rode to war; it also made arrangements for the preparation and provisioning of expeditions, and it frequently provided the officers to lead Quraysh groups into battle. This role of Bani Makhzum set the atmosphere in which Khaled was to grow up.

Whilst still a child, Khaled was taught to ride, and as a Makhzumi he had to be a perfect rider acquiring mastery over the art of horsemanship. He would be given young, untrained colts and had to break them and train them into perfectly obedient and well-disciplined war horses. Bani Makhzum were among the best horsemen of Arabia, and Khaled became one of the best horsemen of Bani Makhzum. The horse was used for fighting, and the camel for long marches, in which horses were



tagged along unmounted.

As an excellent rider, Khaled also learnt to use all weapons such as the spear, the lance, the bow and the sword. He learnt to fight on horseback and on foot. While he became skilful in the use of all weapons, the ones for which he appears to have had a natural gift were the lance, used while charging on horseback and the sword for mounted and dismounted duelling. The sword was regarded by the Arabs as the weapon of chivalry, for this brought one nearest to one's adversary; and in sword fighting one's survival depended on strength and skill and not just on keeping at a safe distance from the opponent. Even though Al-Waleed was a wealthy man who nevertheless worked as a butcher and a blacksmith, Khaled did not have to work for a living and could concentrate on learning the skills of riding and fighting. Because of his wealthy background, Khaled grew up to disregard economy and became known for his lavish spending and his generosity to all who appealed to him for help. He was very tall and known to have a well-built body with broad shoulders. He had a beard which appeared full and thick on his face. He was also one of the champion wrestlers of his time. He wore lots of silver jewelry and was also regarded as strikingly handsome. On reaching maturity Khaled's main interest became war which soon reached the proportions of an obsession. His thoughts were thoughts of battle; his ambitions were ambitions of victory. His urges were violent and his entire psychological make-up was military. He would dream of fighting great

battles and winning great victories, himself always being the champion, admired and cheered by all. He promised himself battle, victory, and lots of blood. Unknown to him, destiny had much the same ideas about Khaled, son of Al-Waleed.

Khaled's conversion to Islam:

For some time a change had been taking place in Khaled's mind. He had never been deeply religious and was not excessively drawn towards the gods of the Ka'abah. He had always kept an open mind. In May 629, Khaled at 37 years of age took his armour, his weapons, and his horse, set out to Medina and went to the house of Prophet Mohamed (PBUH). Khaled entered and made his submission. He was warmly welcomed by the Prophet; his past hostility was forgiven so that he could now start with a clean sheet. Khaled had a brilliant military mind of that time and his entry into Islam would spell victory for Muslim arms in the following decades.

The name; The Sword of Allah, 629 CE:

Khaled was selected as a commander to fight the Ghassanids. He was able to maintain his army of 3,000 soldiers against the Byzantine Empire and Ghassanids Arab forces in what would be known as the Battle of Moo'tah. Because of Khaled's brilliant military abilities, the Muslim army survived from what would have been a shameful defeat. Khaled broke 9 swords during combat in the battle and after that he was given the title the Sword of Allah.

Khaled was a luminous general during the enormously successful Muslim conquests of the 7th century. He fought over 100 battles in his campaigns against the numerically superior forces of the Roman Empire, Persian Empire, and their allies, and remained undefeated throughout his career. His greatest strategic achievement was his swift conquest of the Persian Empire and conquest of Roman Syria all within just three years from 633 to 636. He also remained military Governor of Iraq from 632-633 AD and Governor of Qinasreen city in Northern Syria. Khaled's greatest tactical achievement was at the Battle of Walaja, where he was the only other military commander in history, along with Hannibal at Cannae, who successfully used the double envelopment maneuver against a numerically superior army. His most decisive victories were at the battle of Firaz and battle of Yarmouk. He died in 642 and was buried in Homs, Syria. **HT**

Sources:

Islamonline.net

The Sword of Allah by Lieutenant-General A.I. Akram

Cross-reference:

Ibn: son of.

Ka'abah: a large cubical building that was inhabited by idols before the faith of Islam was born. It is currently located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Medina: a city located in the western region of Saudi Arabia.

Hudaybiya: a plain once near Mecca but which now lies inside the city.

Ghassanids: Arab Christians that emigrated in the year 250 from Yemen to the Hauran, in southern Syria.