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Imam Husayn (a.s.) in Karbala'

It is written in Biharul Anwar, that Ubaydullah bin Ziyad kept dispatching troops one after the other to Umar bin Sa'ad (in Karbala) until he had thirty thousand horsemen and foot-soldiers with him. Then Ubaydullah wrote to Umar: "I have not left any excuse for you with respect to the (quantity of) army. Then remember to inform me, every morning and evening, about your affairs." Ubaydullah had started inciting Umar (for battle) from the sixth of Muharram.

Habib bin Mazahir came to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and told him, "O son of the Prophet of Allah (S)! Nearby there is a branch of the tribe of Bani Asad. If you permit, I shall go to them and invite them to assist you, perhaps Allah will defend you through them." Imam gave him permission and Habib, in the darkness of the night, disguised himself and went towards them. They recognized him and inquired from him as to what he desired. Habib replied, "I have brought the best gift for you. I have come to you to invite you to assist the grandson of our Prophet. He is here with a group of believers, each one of whom is better than a thousand men, and they shall not leave him, betray him nor surrender him (to the enemies).

Then Umar bin Sa'ad has surrounded them, you are my tribesmen, hence I invite you towards welfare. Then today pay heed to my words and assist him, so as to gain honor in this world as well as the Hereafter. I swear by Allah! Whoever among you is martyred in the way of Allah along with the grandson of the Prophet of Allah, then he will be in the lofty station among the friends of Muhammad (s.a.w.s)."

Hearing this a man from among them, named Ubaydullah bin Basheer arose, and said, "I am the first one to accept this invitation." Then he recited the following Rajaz: "The nation knows that when the horsemen are ready to fight, I stand as a warrior, valorous, similar to a forest Lion." Then the men of the tribe gathered until ninety people prepared to go to assist Imam Husayn (a.s.).

At that moment, a man from among them went and apprised Umar bin Sa'ad about the situation and he sent Ibn Azraq with four hundred horsemen towards Bani Asad. When they (Bani Asad) were coming towards the army of Imam Husayn (a.s.), the horsemen of Umar bin Sa'ad stopped them on the bank of the river Euphrates. A quarrel started between them which turned into a fierce battle. Habib bin Mazahir

called out to Azraq, “Woe be to you! Lift your hands off us”, but Azraq refused to do so.

When the people of Bani Asad realized that they were incapable of resisting them, they returned back to their tribe. They left their place that very night fearing Umar bin Sa’ad. Habib returned to Imam (a.s.) and apprised him of the situation and Imam said,

“There is no Might and no Power except with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great.”

Umar bin Sa’ad’s horsemen retreated back and stopped the water supply for Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions, and intense thirst troubled them. Imam lifted up an arrow and went behind the tent of the ladies, and measuring nine steps towards the West, started digging the ground. Sweet water emerged from therein, which Imam and his companions drank and filled their water skins, then the water disappeared and was never traceable.

When this news reached Ubaydullah bin Ziyad, he sent someone to Umar bin Sa’ad saying, “I have received information that Husayn digs wells and drinks from therein along with his companions? Then when this letter reaches you, beware and try as much as possible to stop them from digging the well and drinking water. Then pester them as was done with (Caliph) Usman bin Affan.” When this letter reached Umar bin Sa’ad, he increased his persecution upon them.

Muhammad bin Talha and Ali bin Isa Irbili relate, that when thirst intensified, a man from among Imam’s companions, named Yazid bin Haseen Hamadani, who was a devout man, came to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and said, “O son of the Prophet of Allah! Permit me to go to Umar bin Sa’ad and speak to him regarding (blockage of) water, perhaps he may abstain from it.”

Imam agreed and Yazid bin Haseen Hamadani came to Umar bin Sa’ad but did not salute him. Umar said, “O brother from Hamadan! Do you not consider me to be a Muslim, for you have not saluted me”? Yazid replied, “If you had been a Muslim, as you say, then you would not have come to kill the progeny of the Prophet of Allah.

Then you would not have stopped the water of Euphrates from him, his brothers, his women-folk and his family, the water, which the pigs and the wild hogs drink, so that they may perish of thirst. You do not let them partake from it and then claim that you recognize Allah and His Prophet”?

Umar bin Sa’ad bowed his head (in shame) and said, “O brother from Hamadan! I am well aware that persecuting them is unlawful. But Ubaydullah, left the entire community, and chose me for a very difficult task and I left for it at that very moment. By Allah! I cannot understand, and am stopped at a dangerous turn, which I do not hold dear. Should I leave the ruler ship of Ray, which I desire, or I should return, with the blood of Imam upon myself, and his murder would be a cause of entering the fire (of hell) which is unavoidable, and the kingdom of Ray is the coolness of my eyes.”

Abu Ja’far Tabari and Abul Faraj Isfahani says that when the thirst of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his

companions increased, he called for his brother Abbas bin Ali (a.s.) and sent him with a group of thirty horsemen and twenty foot soldiers with twenty water skins to the river. They reached the water in the night and Nafe' bin Hilal Bajali was in the forefront carrying a standard. 'Amr bin Hajjaj Zubaydi saw him and asked as to who he was. Nafe' disclosed his identity, to which 'Amr said, "Welcome O brother! What have you come here for"?"

Nafe' replied, "I have come to partake the water which you have blocked from us." 'Amr said, "Go ahead and drink it with pleasure." Nafe' said, "By Allah! I shall not drink even a drop from it until Imam and his companions (whom you see) are thirsty."

Hearing this the men with 'Amr bin Hajjaj turned towards them and 'Amr said, "There is no way, we have been appointed for this very reason so as to stop them from reaching the water." When the men of Nafe' came closer, he told the foot soldiers to fill their water skins. They filled their water-skins quickly and 'Amr bin Hajjaj and his men attacked them.

Then Abbas bin Ali (a.s.) and Nafe' bin Hilal attacked them and pushed them to their ranks. Then they said, "Go, we have stopped them." 'Amr bin Hajjaj and his men returned back and some of them were driven back. A man named Sada', who was from among the men of 'Amr, was wounded by Nafe' with a spear. He considered the wound to be minor and did not attend to it, but later his wound opened up and he succumbed to it. Thus the companions of Imam took the water skins to him.

(Tabari) Imam Husayn (a.s.) sent 'Amr bin Qartah Ansari to Umar bin Sa'ad saying, "Come to meet me tonight between the two armies." Umar came with twenty horsemen, while Imam too went accompanied with the same amount of men. When they reached face to face, Imam told his companions to move far away and Umar too ordered his companions to do so.

Both the groups moved away and they started talking to one another until one part of the night passed away. Then they returned back to their armies and no one knew as to what was discussed between them. But the sane ones said that the Imam told Umar bin Sa'ad, "Accompany me in revolting against Yazid and leave his ranks." Umar replied, "My house shall be destroyed (if I do so)."

Imam said,

"I shall build it (back) for you."

He said, "My properties shall be confiscated", and Imam said,

"I shall give you better than that from my property in Hijaz."

But Umar was not pleased by it. And these reports were being discussed among men, when they had heard and knew nothing.

Shaikh Mufeed relates that Imam sent someone to Umar bin Sa'ad saying that he wanted to meet him.

Then they met at night and spoke to each other for a long time. Then Umar bin Sa'ad returned to his place and wrote to Ubaydullah, "Now then! Allah has extinguished the fire (of hatred) and united men on one opinion and has set right the affairs of the Nation (Ummah).

Husayn has promised me that he will return back to the place where he came from, or go away to an Islamic border-town and lead a life any other normal Muslim. Or that he would go to Yazid and offer him his hand and the disagreement between them may be straightened. And this proposal is that what you like and wherein lies the straightness of the Nation."

Abul Faraj writes that Umar sent a messenger to Ubaydullah with the proposal and informed him that, "If a Dailami had desired this from you and you would not yield to it, you would have committed injustice."

Tabari and Ibn Aseer relate from Uqba bin Sam'an that he says that: I accompanied Imam Husayn (a.s.) from Madina to Makkah and from Makkah to Iraq. And there was not a single speech of his which I had not heard, whether in Madina, Makkah or on the way to Iraq, and among his ranks, until he was martyred. By Allah! The report, which is renowned among men that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had agreed to go to Syria and place his hand in the hand of Yazid, or go away to any Islamic border-town, had never ever been said by him. But he had said that, "Leave me so that I may go around upon this extensive earth, until I witness where the state of affairs of the people reaches."

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