

In Mecca

In Mecca, al-Husayn (‘a) wrote one copy of a letter that he arranged to be circulated to the five individuals charged with collecting the *khums* from the Muslims of Basra. They were: Malik Ibn Musmi’ al-Bakri¹, al-Ahnaf Ibn Qays, al-Munthir Ibn Jarud,² Mas’ud Ibn ‘Amr, Qays Ibn al-Haytham, and ‘Amr Ibn ‘Ubayd Ibn Mu’ammār. He sent his letter with one of his slaves named Sulayman³ and its text was as follows:

“Allah chose Muhammad (S) from among His creation and blessed him with being His Prophet. He chose him to convey His Message, then He took him away after he had advised His servants and conveyed the Message with which he was entrusted. We are his family, supporters, wasis, heirs, and the most worthy of all people of his status.

Yet our people usurped our right, so we put up with it out of fear of disunity and out of love for people’s safety, knowing that we were most worthy of what belongs to us than those who took it away from us.

I am sending my messenger with this letter to invite you to the Book of Allah and to the Sunnah of His Prophet, for this Sunnah has been killed, while bid’a has already been revived. If you listen to me, I shall show you the path of guidance.”

Al-Munthir Ibn al-Jarud al-’Abdi handed al-Husayn’s messenger to Ibn Ziyad who crucified the messenger during the night. Then he went out in the morning to Kufa in order to reach it before al-Husayn.⁴ Bahriyya daughter of al-Munthir was Ibn Ziyad’s wife. Al-Munthir lied to her, saying that that messenger had been sent to spy on Ibn Ziyad. Al-Ahnaf wrote al-Husayn (‘a) saying, “Be patient, for Allah’s promise is true, and do not let those who have no conviction take you for granted.”⁵

As for Yazid Ibn Mas’ud⁶, he gathered Banu Tamim, Banu Hanzalah and Banu Sa’d. When they all assembled, he said, “O Banu Tamim! How do you see my status among you and my lineage?” They said, “Very good, very good, indeed! You, by Allah, are our backbone and the source of our prestige. In distinction, you are the most distinguished one, and in lineage you are ahead of everyone else.”

He said, "Then I have gathered you for a matter about which I wish to consult you and for which I seek your support." They said, "By Allah! We shall grant you our advice and still find your view the best; so, say what you wish, and let us hear you."

He said, "Mu'awiyah died. It is better, by Allah, to see him dead and lost! The flank of oppression is now crumbled and the corners of injustice weakened. He had undertaken a fealty for which he thought he did his best to secure. Far away, indeed, is he from the truth, though he tried very hard to achieve what he wanted.

By Allah, he has failed; he sought advice then betrayed those who offered it to him! Yazid has now taken charge! Yazid, who drinks wine and is the source of all evil, now claims to be the caliph of the Muslims. He now rules them without their agreement, the youth that he is, and the ignorant one that he is, the man who does not know where his foot should stand in order to be right.

I swear by Allah a true oath that waging *jihad* against him is better than waging it against the polytheists. Al-Husayn is the son of 'Ali and the son of the Messenger of Allah (S), the one whose prestige is pure, whose view is the wisest. His distinction can never be described enough, and his knowledge never ends.

He is more worthy of taking charge on account of his record, seniority, accomplishments and kinship to the Prophet (S). He is kind to the young and benevolent to the elderly. He is an excellent care-taker when taking care of his flocks and an excellent Imam from among people obedience to whom is mandated by Allah Through him is your proof and argument.

Wisdom is perfected through him; so, do not be blind from seeing the light of guidance, nor should you remain idle from suppressing falsehood. You betrayed Sakhr Ibn Qays during the Battle of the Camel, so wash away that stigma by marching out to support the son of the Messenger of Allah (S) and by helping him.

Should any of you fall short of assisting him, he will be given by Allah the shame that his offspring will inherit, while his tribe's number will be diminished. Here I am outfitted for war. One who is not killed will still die, and one who flees will never escape from death; so, be good, may Allah have mercy on you, in providing your answer."

Banu Hanzalah said, "O Abu Khalid! We are the arrows in your quiver and the knights of your tribe! When you fight with us, victory will be on your side, and when you assault, you will be the conqueror. By Allah! You shall not enter in any battle without us, nor will you, by Allah, face hardship without us being on your side. We shall support you with our swords and protect you, if it pleases you, even with our bare hands."

Banu 'Amir Ibn Tamim spoke out saying, "O Abu Khalid! We are your brothers and allies! We are not pleased when you are angry, nor do we stay when you depart. The matter is in your hands, so order us

as you please.”

Banu Sa’d Ibn Zayd spoke out saying, “O Abu Khalid! The most hateful to us is to do anything against your wish or to disobey you. Sakhr Ibn Qays had ordered us to abandon the battlefield during the Battle of the Camel, so we abided by his order and maintained our honour. Grant us a respite, therefore, so that we may consult each other, then we will let you know of our decision.” He said to them, “Should you do that, may Allah never remove oppression from you or stop you from killing one another...”

He then wrote al-Husayn (‘a) saying, “Your letter reached me, and I understood the task for which you seek my assistance.

You have called upon me to shoulder my share of the responsibility of obeying you so that I may win the rewards of having supported you. Allah has never deprived the world of a doer of good, or without someone to guide others to the path of salvation. You are the Argument of Allah against His creation and His trust on earth.

You branched out of an Ahmedi olive tree, the stem of which is the Prophet (S) while you are its branches. Come to us, may you be the recipient of glad tidings, for the descendants of Tamim are at your service, and I have left them racing to obey you faster than thirsty camels seeking water. Banu Sa’d, too, are at your command: rain water washed their hearts of any uncleanness, so they shine as brightly as lightning.”

When al-Husayn (‘a) read his letter, he said, *“May Allah grant you security on the Day of Extreme Fear, and may He grant you dignity and permit you to quench your thirst on the Day of extreme thirst.”*

(When Ibn Mas’ud was making preparations to march, news of al-Husayn (‘a) being killed reached him, so he was very grieved and sorrowful for having lost the opportunity to realize eternal happiness through the avenue of martyrdom.^{[7](#)})

Mariyya daughter of Sa’d (or Munqith) was a bondmaid and a sincere Shi’a. Her house was the place where other Shi’as used to meet to discuss the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt (‘a). Yazid Ibn Nabit, who belonged to the tribe of ‘Abd al-Qays, said to his ten sons, “Who among you will join me in marching?”

Two of them, namely ‘Abdullah and ‘Ubaydullah, came forth. At the house of that lady, he was addressed by his followers thus: “We fear for you the retribution of Ibn Ziyad.” He said, “By Allah! Should camels' hooves be flattened because of the lengthy way, I would still place myself at the service of the one who has sought my support.”^{[8](#)}

‘Amir, his slave, accompanied him, and so did Sayf Ibn Malik and al-Adham Ibn Umayyah^{[9](#)} They joined al-Husayn (‘a) at Mecca, adding their strength to his, till they reached Karbala’ where they were all

martyred.

- [1.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 63 (first edition). While discussing the events of the year 38 A.H./659 A.D., the historians indicate that Malik Ibn Musmi' supported Banu Umayyah, and that he had sheltered Marwan during the Battle of the Camel.
- [2.](#) Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Al-Isaba, Vol. 3, p. 480. Al-Munthir Ibn al-Jarud, according to this reference, was on 'Ali 's side during the Battle of the Camel. He was given the responsibility of dealing with Istakhar and his mother was Umama daughter of al-Nu'man. Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad appointed him as ruler of India till he died there in 61 A.H./681 A.D. Khalifa said he was appointed ruler of al-Sind where he died in 62 A.H./682 A.D. On p. 183, Vol. 7 (first edition), in the discussion of the events of the year 71 A.H./691 A.D., Mis'ab Ibn al-Zubayr said to al-Hakam Ibn al-Munthir Ibn Jarud: "Al-Jarud was a donkey living on the island of Ibn Kawan; he was Persian; he took to the coastline, so he claimed to belong to 'Abd al-Qays. No, by Allah! I do not know anyone alive more evil than them! Then he married his sister off to al-Muka'bar, a Persian, so he did not earn any distinction at all."
- [3.](#) This is indicated on p. 200, Vol. 6, of al-Tabari's Tarikh. On p. 21 of Al-Luhuf of Ibn Tawus, he is nicknamed "Abu Razin," and on p. 12 of Muthir al-Ahzan, the author indicates that that letter was sent with Thira' al-Sadusi.
- [4.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 200.
- [5.](#) Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Azan, p. 13.
- [6.](#) The following information is provided by the author of Muthir al-Ahzan. But according to al-Tabari and Ibn al-Athir, he was Mas'ud Ibn 'Amr. Ibn Hazm, on p. 218 of Jamharat Ansab al-'Arab, says that 'Abbad Ibn Mas'ud Ibn Khalid Ibn Malik al-Nahshali was a man of nobility. His sister, Layla daughter of Mas'ud, was wife of [Imam] 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib ('a). She gave birth to his son Abu Bakr, who was killed fighting on al-Husayn's side, and 'Abdullah, who was on the side of Mis'ab Ibn al-Zubayr when the latter marched to fight al-Mukhtar. He was killed when al-Mukhtar's men fled away." On p. 101 (second edition) of my book Zayd al-Shahid, I quoted what the historians have said with regard to his being killed at al-Mathar, a Basra suburb, and that nobody knew who had killed him. While discussing the miracles performed by Imam 'Ali ('a) in his book Al-Khara'ij, al-Rawandi says, "He was found slain in his tent, and nobody knew who had killed him."
- [7.](#) Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 13. Ibn Tawus, Al-Luhuf, p. 21.
- [8.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 198.
- [9.](#) Thakhirat al-Darayn, p. 224.

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