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Shimr bin Ziljawshan's arrival at Karbala and the events on the night of ninth Muharram

When the letter of Umar bin Sa'ad reached Ubaydullah, he read it and said, (Irshad) "This letter is from the man who is a well wisher of the chief and is merciful towards his community." Hearing this Shimr bin Ziljawshan arose and said, "Will you agree to his demands when he (Imam Husayn) has encamped in your province near you? By Allah! If he goes away from your domain without giving his hand in yours (submitting to you), then he will turn powerful, while you will become weak and distraught. Then do not agree to what he says for it is the sign of impotency. Do command that he along with his companions may submit to you, then if you punish them, you are worthy of it, and have the right to do so."

Ubaydullah replied, "Verily your opinion is very fair. Take my letter to Umar bin Sa'ad, so that he may convey my orders to Husayn and his companions that they may submit to my orders without any conditions or stipulations. Then if they agree to it, he should dispatch them alive to me, and if they disagree, he should fight them. Then if Umar bin Sa'ad agrees to do so, you should obey him, but if he disagrees, you shall be the commander in chief of the army. Then cut off his (Husayn's) head and dispatch it over to me."

Then he wrote to Umar bin Sa'ad, "Now then! I had not sent you to Husayn so that you may defend him and be negligent towards him. Nor to offer him assurance of safety and to make lame excuses and intercede on his behalf. Then see, if Husayn and his companions submit to my command, dispatch them over to me without battle. And if he disagrees, attack him and kill him. Then separate every limb of his for he is worth it.

Then again when you have killed him leave the horses to trample upon his back and chest, for he is worthy of it and is an ungrateful man and an oppressor (Allah's refuge). Although I know that doing so after his death would not effect him, but I have pledged to myself that if I kill him I shall do so. Then if

you obey my command, I shall bestow gifts upon you due to the observant and obedient one. And if you disagree, alienate yourself from my army and give the charge to Shimr bin Ziljawshan, whom I have ordered to do so. Greetings."

Abul Faraj relates that Ubaydullah sent a message towards Umar bin Sa'ad that, "O son of Sa'ad! You have been a man of ease and a profligate. Then fight the man (Imam Husayn) and use violence against him and do not yield to any of his requests until his submits to my command."

It is related in Tareekh of Tabari that Azdi said, that Haris bin Hasirah relates from Abdullah bin Shareek Amiri, that when Shimr had got the letter written, he arose along with Abdullah bin Abi Mahl, who was an uncle of Ummul Baneen (a.s.), daughter of Hizam bin Khalid, and the wife of the Commander of the faithful Imam Ali bin Abi Talib (a.s.). Ummul Baneen had four sons from Imam Ali (a.s.), viz. Abbas, Abdullah, Ja'far and Usman. Thus Abdullah bin Abi Mahl bin Hizam bin Khalid bin Rabi'ah bin Waheed bin Ka'ab bin Amir bin Kilab said, "May Allah rectify (the affairs for) the chief! Our nephews are along with Husayn, then if you deem fit, write down a document of security for them." Ubaydullah said, "Very well", then he ordered his scribe to write down the document of security for them.

Abdullah sent the letter to Karbala with one of his retainer named Kirman with the message that, "Your uncle (Abdullah bin Abi Mahl) has sent this document of security for you." The youth replied, "Convey our greetings to our uncle and tell him that we are in no need of his security. Verily Allah's security is better than that of the son of Sumayyah."

Shimr brought the letter of Ubaydullah to Umar bin Sa'ad. When Umar read it he said, "Woe be upon you! What have you brought? May your house be ruined! May it be evil whatever you have brought me! By Allah! I know that you must have prevented him from doing that what I had written to him. And you have spoilt the matter, which could result in peace. By Allah! Husayn will not submit, for he has a noble soul."

Shimr said, "So now tell me, what do you intend doing? Will you obey the orders of the chief and fight his enemy? If not, then hand over the charge to me." Umar replied, "No, you shall not have this honor and you shall not get this position. I myself shall undertake this task and you shall be the commander of the foot soldiers."

Thus Umar bin Sa'ad proceeded towards Imam Husayn (a.s.) on Thursday the night of the ninth of Muharram with his army.

Proposal of security to Abbas bin Ali (a.s.)

Shimr came and stood facing the companions of Imam Husayn (a.s.) and called out it a loud voice, "Where are the sons of our sister (of clan)"?

Hearing this Hazrat Abbas, Abdullah, Ja'far and Usman came out and asked him as to what he desired.

Shimr replied, “O sons of my sister! You are guaranteed security.” They replied, “Woe be upon you and your security! You offer us security while the son of the Prophet is devoid of it”?

(Malhoof) In another narration it is quoted that Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) called out in a loud voice, “May your hands be amputated! What an evil security you have brought for us. O enemy of Allah! Do you desire that we should betray our brother and master Imam Husayn (a.s.) and obey the accursed sons of accursed fathers”?

Umar bin Sa’ad then addressed his army saying, “Arise, O army of Allah! Thus have glad tidings of Paradise.” Then all the people mounted, and after the Prayer of Asr proceeded to attack Imam Husayn (a.s.).

(Kamil) It is related from Imam Ja’far as Sadiq (a.s.) that,

“Tasoo’ah (ninth) of Muharram is the day, when Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his companions were besieged at Karbala by the army of Syria from all sides and offloaded their luggage. The son of Marjanah (Ubaydullah bin Ziyad) and Umar bin Sa’ad were pleased at the large number of their army and they deemed Imam and his companions to be weak. They knew that Imam Husayn (a.s.) had no helpers or aides in Iraq. May my father be ransom upon the oppressed traveler.”

When Umar bin Sa’ad ordered his troops to mount, they obeyed and advanced until they neared the tents of Imam Husayn (a.s.). (Irshad, Kamil, Tabari) Imam was seated in front of his tent reclining against his sword with head on his knees and was dozing off. When Hazrat Zaynab (a.s.) heard the hue and cry of the troops, she ran towards Imam and asked him, “O dear brother! Do you not hear this hue and cry advancing towards us”? Imam lifted his head up and said,

“I have just seen the Prophet of Allah (S) in a dream and he told me that tomorrow I shall be united with them.”

Hearing this Hazrat Zaynab (a.s.) started beating her face and wailing. Imam Husayn (a.s.) said,

“There is no need for you to wail. O dear sister! Remain silent, may your Allah’s mercy be upon you.”

(Tabari, Irshad) Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) came to Imam Husayn (a.s.) and said, “O Master! These troops have come towards us.” Imam arose and said, (Irshad, Tabari)

“O Abbas! May my life be your ransom! O dear brother! Mount and go to them and ask as to what has happened, what they intend and why have they come towards us.”

Hazrat Abbas, accompanied by twenty soldiers including Zuhayr bin Qayn and Habib bin Mazahir, came towards them and said, “What has come up recently and what do you desire”? They replied, “An order has come forth from the commander that we order you either to submit or else we should fight you.” Abbas replied, “Then wait so that I may go and deliver whatever you have said to Abu Abdullah.” They

stopped (advancing further) and said, “Go to him and convey whatever we have told you and return back with his answer.” Hazrat Abbas (a.s.) speedily galloped towards Imam and conveyed to him their message, while his companions stood there talking with the troops.

Habib bin Mazahir told Zuhayr bin Qayn that, “If you desire to speak to them, do so, and if you desire I will talk to them.” Zuhayr replied, “Since you have started the talk, you may say.” Thus Habib bin Mazahir said, “By Allah! Tomorrow, on the day of Qiyamah, the worst among men to stand in the presence of Allah, will be the one who killed the Progeny of their Prophet (S), his family, his household and the virtuous people of his town, who stand up for the Midnight Prayers and remember Allah abundantly.” Urwah bin Qays replied, “Trouble yourself as much as you please.” Hearing this Zuhayr retorted, “O Urwah! Fear Allah, for I am your well wisher. I request you in the name of Allah O Urwah, that you will be among those assisting the astray and killing the devout.” Urwah replied, “You were not among the Shi’ah of that family but were in fact the follower of Caliph Usman.”

Zuhayr replied, “Does not my presence here convince you that I am one of their Shi’ah? By Allah! I am not among those who had written to the Imam nor sent my messenger to him and nor am I among those who had promised to assist him. But I met Imam on the way and then remembered the Prophet and positioned myself towards him. Then I realized that he was proceeding towards his enemy, hence I entered his ranks and resolved to assist him and be among his followers. And I should sacrifice my life for him, and thus guard the right of Allah and His Prophet, which you have abandoned.”

As regards Hazrat Abbas (a.s.), he returned back and conveyed whatever they had told him. Imam replied,

“Go and tell them if you can, to delay it until tomorrow, so that tonight we may worship our Lord and supplicate and repent, for Allah knows that I befriend Prayers, reading the Qur’an, supplicating abundantly and praying for forgiveness.”

Thus Hazrat Abbas went towards them and when he returned back to the Imam, a messenger of Umar bin Sa’ad was along with him. The messenger stopped from where his voice could be heard and said, (Irshad) “We have given you respite until tomorrow. Then if you submit, we shall take you to the commander Ubaydullah bin Ziyad, and if you refuse, we shall not leave you”, saying this he returned back.

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