

'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala, Commander of Medinan Forces

'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala played a pivotal role in the battle of Harrah. Having been influential in provoking people for battle against Yazīd and the Umayyid rule, he now undertook the high command of the combatant forces in the defense of Medina.

In fact, the role that Ibn Zubayr had undertaken in Mecca was played by 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala in Medina.

With the Syrian army approaching Medina, 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala called people to the Prophet's (s) Pulpit in Masjid al-Nabī and asked all those who accompanied him, to swear allegiance to him until the end of their lives.

The people of Medina swore an enduring allegiance to him and said that they would be with him to the last of their lives. 'Abd Allāh mounted the pulpit and after praising God said:

“O people! You have revolted for the sake of religion, so try to successfully come out of this trial and be graced with God's forgiveness, and may you enjoy the Paradise!

Be ready to fight with all your strength and power!

Let me inform you that the Syrians have halted and camped near Medina and that Marwān b. Hakam and the Umayyids are also with them. If God wishes, He will punish him for breaking the pledge he had made at the Prophet's (s) tomb!” The people then began to curse and swear out loud together at Marwān and the Umayyids and called Marwān a frog son of a frog!1)

'Abd Allāh then called people to silence and peace, saying: “Swearing does not solve any problem; so, prepare for battle, since, by God, no people have ever proceeded with truthfulness except that they triumphed by Divine assistance.”

Then, 'Abd Allāh raised his hands to the sky and said: “O Lord! We trust You and have faith in You and rely on You, ask You to help us triumph.”295

The historians have elsewhere reported that 'Abd Allāh b. Hanzala also said:

“O People of Medina! We did not revolt except for the reason that Yazīd is an adulterous, drunkard, and prayerless (denouncer of Salāt) man; and tolerating his rule will cause descent of Divine punishment. If I would be left alone and no one would help me, still I won't give up revolting against Yazīd.”³⁹⁶⁹⁶

Meanwhile, Muslim b. 'Uqba, who was seeking to find a way to penetrate into and dominate over Medina, got the chance to address the people of Medina by sending them the following message: “*Amr al-Mu'minīn* Yazīd sends his regards to you and says that you are his clan and kinsmen. Fear God! Listen to my words and obey. There are two bounties for you with me in my covenant to God: one in summer and the other one in winter. I have made a covenant to God to keep the price of wheat for you at the same rate as it is for us, which was one dirham for every *sā'* (3 kg.). As for the bounty that 'Amr b. Sa'īd Ashdaq has taken away from you, it is upon me to return it to you.”⁴⁹⁷

This message had no impact on the people of Medina, because, although there were some people among them whose religious motivations were overshadowed by their material, tribal, and emotional motives, a large number of the pioneers of this uprising were decisive and purposeful people who were mainly motivated to overthrow the Umayyid rule and to fight against Yazīd as a person notorious for his incompetence and irreligiousness.

Thus, in response to Muslim b. 'Uqba, they said: “We have removed Yazīd from Caliphate just like a shoe that we remove from our feet.”⁵

Nevertheless, Muslim b. 'Uqba gave the Medinans three days' time to finally make up their mind.⁶⁹⁹ Suffering from illness, Muslim b. 'Uqba avoided attacking Medina for three days, and then since he did not receive a favorable answer from the Medinans, finally decided to overcome them by force and violence and subdue them to Yazīd.

Evidence shows that Muslim b. 'Uqba's hesitation for fighting the Medinans was not merely for avoiding slaughtering, rather, he was commissioned to go to Mecca after suppressing the Medinans' revolt in order to suppress Ibn. Zubayr's revolt as well. Muslim b. 'Uqba seemed to fear that if the battle with the Medinans would become difficult and lengthy, the fighting energy of Syrian forces would get exhausted and then he would not be able to confront Ibn. Zubayr and gain victory over him.

That was because fighting with Ibn Zubayr in Mecca was in many aspects more difficult and risky than fighting with the people of Medina. First of all Mecca was a Divine Sanctuary on which invasion and launching a military campaign would cost the invaders dearly; and secondly, the distance between Mecca and Medina and its scorching and dry desert would severely wear out Syrian forces. That was why Muslim b. 'Uqba in his last talk to the people of Medina said: “If you give up revolting and disobedience, I will get the chance to use all the Syrian forces against Ibn Zubayr, who is an impious and rebellious man!

However, he was unaware of the fact that they not only approved of Ibn Zubayr but did not allow the Syrian army to make any attempt to invade the Divine Sanctuary and attack that Holy Land!⁷

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1. With this appellation, people were in fact referring to a hadīth from the Prophet (s) who had used the epithet “a frog son of a frog” about Hakam and Marwān for their indecent behavior. (Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, Sharh Nahj al-Balīgha, vol. 4, p. 71.
 2. Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 48; Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 20.
 3. Ibn Sa’d, Tabaqāt, vol. 5, p. 47.
 4. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 2, p. 9; Tabarī, Ta’rīkh, vol. 4, p. 374.
 5. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 2, p. 9; Tabarī, Ta’rīkh, vol. 4, p. 374.
 6. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 374; Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta’rīkh, vol. 4, p. 114.
 7. Tabarī, Ta’rīkh, vol. 4, p. 374; Ibn Athīr, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta’rīkh, vol. 4, p. 114.

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