

Home > Battle of Harrah > The Aftermaths of the Battle of Harrah > The Invasion of Mecca by the Syrian Army

The Aftermaths of the Battle of Harrah

Claiming allegiance from the people of Medina for Yazīd

After three days the invasion of the Syrian army over Medina and its inhabitants was over and the fourth day was the time for those who survived the massacre to go with full humiliation and debasement under the yoke of Yazīd's slavery!¹

At that time, on the fourth day, Muslim b. 'Uqba was stationed in a place called “Wādī al-Qur’”² and he ordered the surviving Medinans to report to him for swearing allegiance to Yazīd.

The very command by Muslim b. 'Uqba to claim allegiance from the people of Medina for Yazīd is not much surprising as the dominating army was perpetually seeking to block the enemy's way to fight after having dominated over it. What is unique in the history of Islam is the subject and the type of allegiance that the people were forced to undergo.

Ibn Athar wrote:

“Muslim b. 'Uqba said: Yazid has privilege over all kinds of appropriation of the properties and families of the Medinans and their blood is permissible to him in whatever ways he wishes.”³²⁴⁴

Dīnawarī has pointed out the issue this way:

“Muslim ordered the people of Medina to swear allegiance to Yazīd to be his prisoners of war and let him decide and act as he wishes about their properties and family.”⁴²⁴⁵

Samhūdī has recorded the procedure of allegiance as follows:

“Muslim b. 'Uqba summoned the dignitaries of Medina and ordered them to swear allegiance to Yazīd and admit to be his slaves.”⁵²⁴⁶

Exhausted and humiliated after the battle of Harrah, the people of Medina were forced under the unsheathed swords of the Syrian army to swear allegiance to Yazīd b. Mu'awiyah to be his slaves⁶ and whoever rejected this allegiance was killed on the spot.⁷²⁴⁸

It is reported in historical sources that the only personality who was exempted from such allegiance was

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a).8249

In his talk to the Imam (a), Muslim b. 'Uqba regarded his case apart from the others and said: "Yazid did not want me to make you swear allegiance like others."⁹

Given the short interval between the battle of Harrah and the tragedy of Karbalā, the heavy and irreparable aftermath of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (a) and his companions for Yazid and Umayyid's rule – like the uprising of *Tawwābīn* and Mecca and Medina revolts – and the Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's (a) impressive speeches in Syria, it was obvious that Yazid had advised Muslim b. 'Uqba not to expect allegiance from Imam Husayn b. 'Alī's (a) son, as the *'ashqāra* was created initially because of descendents of 'Alī's (a) abstaining to pledge allegiance to such a person as Yazid.

It is reported in some sources that before meeting with Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a), Muslim b. 'Uqba would revile him and his household, but when he met with Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (a), he became gentle and obedient before him and faced him with respect. When his entourage asked the reason for this encounter, Muslim answered that he had been impressed by his imposing appearance and nobility. 10251

The second person who did not swear allegiance like others to Yazid was 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās; with the difference that in the first place Muslim b. 'Uqba commanded him to swear allegiance to Yazid like others to be his slave, but since 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh had some kind of tribal kinship with Husayn b. Numayr – one of the commanders of Syrian army – the latter protected him and told Muslim b. 'Uqba to exempt him from such an allegiance.

Muslim felt that if he would insist on his command and did not accept Husayn b. Numayr's request, it was possible that this would lead to discord, conflict, and indolence in the Syrian army;¹¹ thus, he gave up his order and let 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh simply state that: "I swear allegiance to Yazid and am obliged to obey him."¹²

Muslim b. 'Uqba's Report to Yazid

After his victory in early Muharram 64 A.H. (682 C.E.), Muslim b. 'Uqba wrote a letter to Yazid and informed him of the event of Harrah and what befell the people of Medina and asked him for advice.

Muslim's letter is as follows:

"From Muslim b. 'Uqba to the chief commander of the faithful, Yazid b. Mu'awiyah.

Salutations to you Oh commander of the faithful and God's Mercy and Blessings be on you!

I thank the One God for your victory; now then, God has undertaken the preservation and protection of the Amīr. May the shadow of Amīr be prolonged. Now I forward a report of my mission to you:

I left Damascus while I was feeling unwell as Amīr knew about it. I met some Umayyids who had left Medina in *Wādī al-Qur'*. Marwān despite his swearing not to help the enemy returned with us to Medina! He was our aid in our victory over the enemy. We went to Medina and noticed that the people of Medina had dug many trenches around them, installed armed guards at the city entrances, taken their

beasts inside Medina, and claimed to have stored up enough foodstuff for one year so that they would be able to resist in case of being besieged. I advised them and informed them of the Amīr's promises, but they did not accept.

Then, I arranged my troops in groups and sent each group to one direction; I sent Husayn b. Numayr to Dhanāb region and its outskirts; Habāsh b. Dalja as commander of Mawāḍiḡ to Banī Salma region; and 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd to "Baqi' Gharqad" region.

I and other troops of Amīr's army stood against Banī Hāritha. Thanks to the way shown to us by one of the Banī Hāritha tribesmen, we managed to enter the city from the region of Banī 'Abd al-Ashhal early at the sunrise.

It so happened that Marwān saw a man from the Banī Hāritha tribe and secretly promised him that the commander of the faithful Yazīd will do him benevolence and guarantee to pay off all his debts and give him some rewards, too that man was deceived and showed the way to the Syrian army to infiltrate into the city. Now, I am sending this letter to you via the same person and hope that God may inspire His Caliph and slave Yazīd the way that man deserves so that he the Caliph makes him satisfied with his generous gifts!

God has graced and favored Amīr for his readiness, cleverness and triumph over his enemies, and this victory over the enemies is something that will not be lost for the Caliph of God and the Muslims. Insha'Allah!

May God preserve Amīr's men Syrian army; no one was harmed! Their enemy people of Mādīna resisted but only for four hours. After widespread massacre and pillage, we performed the noon prayer in their mosque!

We wielded the swords against them, killing whoever that stood before us. We chased the fugitives and killed their wounded, as Amīr had commanded. We were busy killing and plundering for three days! May God lengthen Amīr's shadow!

I made secure the houses of 'Uthmān's children. Thanks God that He appeased my heart by killing the hypocrites and wrong-doers whose the Medinans' rebellion had lasted too long.

I am writing this letter to Amīr from the house of Sa'ūd b. 'īs while I am severely sick. For this sickness you may not see me any longer. I did not have any other wish than revenge from the people of Medina! Wassalām!" 13254

Some others have reported that in the end of his letter, Muslim had written to Yazīd as follows:

"Do not be saddened for the faithless people!" 14255

Departure of the Syrian Army towards Mecca

Early in 64 A.H. (683 C.E.), following Muslim b. 'Uqba's ending of his deadly mission in Medina – as he had already predicted – he dispatched the Syrian army to Mecca to fight against 'Abd Allāh b. Zubayr who was known to be the main instigator of the revolts in Hijāz region and had made Mecca his base for such revolts, and to put an end to him and his partisans' oppositions to the Umayyid rule. However, no farther than three miles away from Medina, Muslim b. 'Uqba died due to illness. 15256

Noticing the pangs of death, Muslim b. 'Uqba summoned Husayn b. Numayr to come to him before dying and made some recommendations to keep moving toward Mecca and battle against Ibn Zubayr, that have been recorded by some historians as follows:

“Yazīd recommended to me that if I failed to continue this way, I should appoint Husayn b. Numayr as the commander of the army; but if it were up to me, I would not have chosen you because the Yemenis are soft-hearted! But I do not disobey Yazīd's command.” 16257257

“Now I have some advice for you; keep it well in mind! Hasten to move; be quick in confrontation and fighting; and search for the news from the enemy. Beware! Do not give audience to the Quraysh and do not cooperate with them!” 17258

“When you arrive in Mecca, launch the battle with Ibn Zubayr, and do not prevent the people of Syria from doing whatever they wish to do with their enemy, and do not listen to Quraysh lest they should deceive you.” 61

In another part of his advice to Husayn b. Numayr, he says:

“The mission we have ahead of us requires more violence, rigidity, decisiveness, disregard for temptations, and unwavering mind. Therefore, make yourself ready for slaughter and plunder! May it never happen that the words of those who say “Mecca is the House of God and He has made it a safe sanctuary” would make you indolent! Pay no heed to such nonsense. The very sanctity of the Caliph Yazīd is much more superior to all other sanctities, even from the sanctity of the House and *Haram* of Allah!” 18259

Unfortunately, as it is evident from the words and recommendations of Muslim b. 'Uqba, misunderstanding and misconception of the basic religious concepts and lack of knowledge, tribal bigotry, vengeance, and playful manipulation of religion for the political purposes, were the most problematic issues that the people were entangled with during the Umayyids' ruling era.

Absence of the Prophet (s), Muslim community's being distanced from the the *'Itrat* ('a) – i.e. the Progeny (*Ahl al-Bayt*) of the Prophet (s) – the dominance of the worldly-minded profane scholars who were unfamiliar with the spirit of the Prophetic mission; the usurpation of the political and social positions by the bullies, gold-worshippers, and tribal authorities, were all aiding the Caliph and political commanders of people to garner much more reverence and honor than that of all the religious and Divine values, and any human and religious principle can be easily trampled for the sake of the preservation of the ruler's

authority and power!

In his death-bed and after creating all these tragedies, Muslim b. 'Uqba says:

“O Lord! You know that I never disobeyed the Caliph. O God! After professing Your Oneness and the Prophethood of Muhammad (s), I have done no better and more praiseworthy task than the massacre of the people of Medina, and I take this massacre as a means of my salvation on the Day of Resurrection.”¹⁹²⁶⁰

A man, whom the historians have regarded as among the devotees of Mu'awiyah²⁰ and one of the tyrants of Arabs and their devils²¹, and who because of his countless murders and massacres has been called Musrif b. 'Uqba, now tries to impute all his evils to religion and serving the Muslims!

Thus he died and was buried at a distance of three miles from Medina. However, those whose children and relatives were killed by his order exhumed his body from the grave and burned it.²²⁶³

The Invasion of Mecca by the Syrian Army

On 26th of Muharram 64 A.H. (24th of September 683 C.E.), Syrian troops commanded by Husayn b. Numayr entered the city of Mecca in order to fight with Ibn Zubayr and his followers.

In this invasion the Divine Sanctuary was disgraced and Holy Ka'ba was damaged by the Yazidian army.

-
1. Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 265.
 2. Tabar̄, Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 373.
 3. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im̄ma was al-Siȳsa, vol. 1, p. 214; Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 118.
 4. Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 264.
 5. Samh̄d̄, Waf̄' al-Waf̄', vol. 1, p. 132.
 6. Ya'q̄b̄, Ta'r̄kh, vol. 2, p. 250; Mas'̄d̄, Mur̄j al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 70; Samh̄d̄, Waf̄' al-Waf̄', vol. 1, p. 134.
 7. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im̄ma was al-Siȳsa, vol. 1, p. 214; Mas'̄d̄, Mur̄j al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 70; Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 118; Samh̄d̄, Waf̄' al-Waf̄', vol. 1, p. 132.
 8. Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 119.
 9. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im̄ma was al-Siȳsa, vol. 1, p. 218; Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 266; Ya'q̄b̄, Ta'r̄kh, vol. 2, p. 251; Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 119.
 10. Mas'̄d̄, Mur̄j al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 70.
 11. 'Al̄ b. 'Abd All̄h b. 'Abb̄s was on her mother side originally from Zur'a tribe and many people from that tribe were serving in Hassin b. Numayr's army (Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 120).
 12. Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 267; B̄bit̄, Mu'jam al-Shu'ar̄, p. 133.
 13. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im̄ma wa al-Siȳsa, vol. 1, p. 217.
 14. Safwat, Zak̄ Ahmad, Jumhuru Ras̄'il al-'Arab f̄ 'Us̄r al-'Arabiyyat al-Z̄hira, vol. 2, p. 576.
 15. Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 267; Ibn A'tham K̄fi, Al-Fut̄h, vol. 3, p. 314; Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 132; Azraq̄, Akhh̄r Makkat al-Musharrafa, vol. 1, p. 139; Ab̄ al-Fid̄', Al-Mukhtasar f̄ Akhh̄r al-Bashar, vol. 1, p. 192.
 16. Dinawari, al-Akhh̄r al-Tiww̄l, p. 267.
 17. Ibn Qutayba, Al-Im̄ma wa al-Siȳsa, vol. 1, p. 219 and vol. 2, p. 12; Ibn Ath̄r, Al-K̄mil f̄ al-Ta'r̄kh, vol. 4, p. 123.
 18. Ibid.

19. Ibn A'tham, Al-Futūḥ, vol. 5, p. 185; Ibn Athar, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 123; Samḥūdī, Wafī' al-Wafī', vol. 1, p. 136.
20. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalānī, Al-Isṭiḥāq, vol. 3, p. 493.
21. Mas'ūdī, Murāj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 70; Zubayrī, Mus'ab, Nasab-i Quraysh, p. 127; Tabarī, Ta'rīkh, vol. 7, p. 14; Madqisī, Al-Bad' wa al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 6, p. 14; Ibn Athar, Al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rīkh, vol. 4, p. 120.
22. Zubayrī, Mus'ab, Nasab-i Quraysh, p. 222; Ibn Qutayba, Al-Imāma wa al-Siyāsa, vol. 1, p. 219; Samḥūdī, Wafī' al-Wafī', vol. 1, p. 135.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/battle-of-harrah-muhammad-ali-chenarani/aftermaths-battle-harrah>