

Account of the Battle of Mutah

Shaykh Tabarsi and other tradition scholars have narrated that the expedition entitled Mutah was undertaken in the month of Jamadiul Awwal, in the eighth year of the Hijrat, and was occasioned in the following manner according to Ibn Abil Hadid: In this year the Prophet sent Harith bin Umair with a letter to the governor of Busra.

When Harith arrived at Mutah, Sharjil bin Amr Ghasani fell in with him, and learning that he was a messenger of the Prophet going to Shaam, ordered him to be beheaded. The Prophet was much distressed at his news and assembled a large army which he sent to that quarter. Sunnis say that the Prophet constituted Zaid bin Haritha as army chief, and in the event of his being slain, ordered the command to devolve on Ja'far, and if he also should fall a martyr, Abdullah bin Rawaha should succeed, and in case of his falling, the Muslims were to elect a commander themselves.

Shaykh Tabarsi has through trustworthy chains narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (S) first appointed Ja'far as chief, then Zaid and then Abdullah bin Rawaha. When the army reached Maan, news met them that Harqal, emperor of Rum, had advanced to Marib, where he was encamped with a hundred thousand men of Romans and hundred thousand Arabs.

And Aban bin Uthman relates that they learnt that Arab and non-Arab tribes of infidels, namely, Laham, Khudam, Bali and Khuza had gathered there camping at east. So Muslims camped at Maan for three days and counseled that enemies were present in large numbers. Abdullah bin Rawaha said: "We have never fought with military supremacy, we always fight with the strength of true religion, because of which the Almighty Allah has given us auspiciousness.

True said the Muslims and they set out with three hundred men and reached a village called Sharaf in Balqa. Muslims camped in Mutah and the battle took place there.

Another account says that the Muslims received intelligence that a vast multitude of Arab and Non-Arab infidels were assembled and encamped in the eastern quarter. The Muslims were three thousand strong, and at length met the army of Rum at a village called Ashraf, in the district of Bulka, and retired to Mutah, where the battle was fought

Shaykh Tusi has narrated from Zuhri that when Ja'far returned to Medina from Habasha, the Holy Prophet (S) sent him to the Battle of Mutah and appointed him, Zaid bin Haritha and Abdullah bin Rawaha in turn to bear the standard. At the beginning of the engagement Ja'far raised the banner, and mounted on a red horse, fought till he received many wounds, when he dismounted, hamstringing his horse, and fought on foot till he was slain.

He was the first Muslim that hamstrung his horse. Abdullah, who next took the command, was likewise slain, but Khalid bin Walid, who succeeded him, after continuing the action a short time, fled and sent Abdur Rahman bin Samrah to inform the Prophet of what happened. The messenger found the Prophet in the Masjid, and he ordered Abdur Rahman to be silent, that he might himself announce what had occurred, which he did.

The people wept at the mournful relation, but he said to them, "Weep not, for my community is like a garden whose owner cultivates it well, builds houses in it, prunes its trees that they may be more fruitful year after year. Verily, when Isa shall descend among my community, He will find a multitude of apostles like His own.

Qutub Rawandi has narrated that when the Messenger of Allah (S) sent the army to Mutah, he appointed three chiefs saying that after each is killed the other should take the command. At that time, a Rabbi was present there. He said: "If this man is a prophet, all three will be martyred." "Why?" asked the people.

He said: "Whenever a prophet of Bani Israel sent an army with similar instructions to a hundred persons, all of them were sure to be killed. It is narrated from Jabir that on the day the Battle of Mutah was fought, the Prophet went to the Masjid and announced to the people what was transpiring on the contested field. Among other particular statement, he said that Ja'far, having his right hand cut off, raised the banner in his left hand, which likewise losing, he sustained the standard by pressing it to his bosom with folded arms, till at length he fell a martyr.

Now the standard was bore by Khalid and after sometime he fled the battlefield and the Muslims also fled from the battlefield. On leaving the Masjid, he went to Ja'far's house, whose little son, Abdullah bin Ja'far, he took upon his lap and stroked his head. The mother, Asma binte Umais, observed that the Prophet's manner seemed to denote that the child was an orphan.

The Prophet then with tears declared that Ja'far was martyred; "before which," said he, "both his hands were cut off, and in exchange for them Allah has given him two emerald wings with which he now flies where he pleases among the angels of Paradise." Some say the wings were ruby; however that may be, he is now called Ja'far Tayyar, or Ja'far the flyer.

Shaykh Tusi has through trustworthy chains narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that when Ja'far Tayyar was martyred with fifty wounds, twenty-five of them were on his face.

Barqi and Kulaini have narrated from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that on the day of Battle of Muthah, Ja'far dismounted from his horse so that people may not even think that he will flee from battlefield. And he was the first among Muslims to have hamstrung his horse.

Barqi has narrated that when the Prophet learnt about the martyrdom of Ja'far, he went to his house, called for his sons, Abdullah, Aun and Muhammad and stroked their heads. Asma, Ja'far's wife said: "O Messenger of Allah (S), you are stroking their heads as if they are orphans." The Holy Prophet (S) was surprised at her intelligence and he said: "Perhaps you don't know that Ja'far is martyred." When Asma heard this, she began to weep.

The Holy Prophet (S) said: "Don't cry, because the Almighty Allah has informed me that He has gifted two wings of red ruby with which he glides in Paradise." Asma said: "O Messenger of Allah (S), call the people and narrate his excellence to them, so that he is always remembered. The Holy Prophet (S) again appreciated her wisdom and he told his family members to send food etc. to Ja'far's house. Since then started the practice of sending food to the family in which death has occurred.

Barqi and Kulaini have narrated through reliable chains and Shaykh Tusi has through good chains narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that when Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib was martyred, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Lady Fatima (s.a.) to send food for three days to Asma binte Umais and to console her and since then started this practice.

Kulaini had narrated through trustworthy chains from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that one day the Holy Prophet (S) was in the Masjid, when suddenly the Almighty Allah lowered all high lands till he saw Ja'far that he was fighting the infidels till he was martyred. So he told his companions about it. And due to sorrow his stomach began to ache.

And it is narrated in *Jamiul Usul* that Abdullah says: "I was present in the Battle of Muthah. I found Ja'far among the dead carrying more than ninety wounds, all on his front, because he did not turn away from the enemies. According to another tradition, he received fifty wounds all in front.

Shaykh Tabarsi has narrated that Abdullah bin Ja'far says: I remember the day when the Messenger of Allah (S) came to mother with news of my father's martyrdom. He stroked my head in affection with tears in his eyes. Then the Holy Prophet (S) said: "O Lord, Ja'far has taken precedence in Your path, so please make his children inherit his bravery."

Then he said: "Asma, do you want me to give you a glad tiding; the Almighty Allah has gifted a pair of wings to Ja'far with which he flies in Paradise." Asma said: "Tell the people about it." The Holy Prophet (S) arose, took me and came to the Masjid. Then he mounted the pulpit and made me sit at the lower step. With a sorrowful demeanor he said: "A man is followed in his footsteps by his sons and nephews.

Ja'far is martyred and the Almighty Allah has given him a pair of wings to fly in Paradise." Then he came down and took me to his house and told them to feed me and also called my brother for this purpose.

We stayed in his house for three days. The Holy Prophet (S) used to take us around his wives's rooms and he sent us home after three days. Then he came to our house one day, when I was playing with my brother and pretending to purchase a sheep from him.

The Prophet prayed that I should become an expert in business and by his prayers, I have always made profit in all my dealings. And it is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that the Holy Prophet (S) told Lady Fatima (s.a.) to mourn for her cousin, Ja'far but not to utter words of heresy; and to narrate his qualities.

And in another tradition, he said: "People like Ja'far should be mourned," and it is narrated from Urwah that when Muslims returned from the Battle of Muthah, the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions went out to meet them; those who came out of the city cast dust in the faces of the defeated army and reviled them by the name of runaways. The Prophet said, they do not deserve that reproachful epithet, and, Insha Allah, they will fight more successfully another time.

Ibn Abil Hadid has narrated that the people of Medina heaped such disgrace on the army as was never experienced. When they knocked at the doors of their houses, their own families would not open to them, but taunted to them, saying, "Why were you not slain with your comrades at Muthah?" Through shame, the officers did not venture to leave their houses till the Prophet had consoled them, and accepted their apology for their defeat.

It is mentioned in *Istiab*, that when Ja'far was martyred, he was aged forty-one years. And Ibn Abil Hadid has narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (a.s.) that the Messenger of Allah (S) said: "People are created from different trees and Ja'far is created from a single tree." Once he told Ja'far: "You are like me in make-up and behavior." And it is narrated from Saeed bin Musayyab that the Holy Prophet (S) said: "I was shown the faces of Ja'far, Zaid and Abdullah bin Rawaha.

They were seated in a tent on a throne of emerald. The necks of Zaid and Abdullah bin Rawaha were crooked but Ja'far's neck was straight. I asked about it and was told that at the time of imminent death they tried to turn a little away from the battlefield but Ja'far did not do that.

And Ibn Babawayh has narrated through reliable chains from Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) that the Almighty Allah revealed to the Prophet that He liked the four qualities of Ja'far bin Abi Talib which the Prophet asked from Ja'far who said: If the Almighty Allah had not told you, I would have never revealed to you. First is that I never tasted wine, because it destroys intellect. Second: I never lied, because it destroys valor and modesty.

And I never indulged in adultery with anyone's wife, because I know that other may also do the same with my wives. And I never worshipped the idols because I know that they cause neither harm nor benefit. The Holy Prophet (S) placed his hand on his shoulder: You deserve to be given a pair of wings with which you can fly with the angels.

And Shaykh Tusi has narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) told Lady Fatima (s.a.) that: “Our martyr is better than all martyrs, and he is your uncle, Ja’far, who is from us; the Almighty Allah has given him a pair of wings that he uses to fly with the angels. It is narrated from Abu Hamza Thumali that Imam Zainul Abideen (a.s.) saw Ubaidullah, son of Abbas Ibn Ali, the standard bearer of Imam Husain (a.s.) and he wept at him and said: There was no day worse than the day of Battle of Uhud, when Hamza, the lion of Allah was martyred.

After that was the day of the Battle of Mutah when his cousin, Ja’far bin Abi Talib was martyred.” Then he said: “There is no day like the day of Imam Husain (a.s.) when 30000 men came against the Imam and all claimed to be Muslims, and they sought divine proximity through killing him. Imam tried all means to advise them and warned them of divine wrath but they martyred him with injustice.

Then he said: “May Allah have mercy on uncle, Abbas who sacrificed his life for his brother. When the oppressors severed his hands, the Almighty Allah gave him a pair of wings with which he flies in Paradise with the angels, like He gave a pair of wings to Ja’far bin Abi Talib. And the status of Uncle Abbas is such that all martyrs will vie for it on Judgment Day.

It is mentioned in some reliable books that during the Battle of Mutah, the Holy Prophet (S) was on the pulpit of Medina and veils when were lifted from his eyes and he watched the scene of battle. He saw Ja’far being lifted on spears and he turned to the heavens and prayed: “O Lord, do not degrade my cousin.” The Almighty Allah gave him a pair of wings in that condition with which he flew away to Paradise immediately. That is why he is called Zuljunahin and it is narrated that at that time he was aged forty-one years. ¹

1. The author says: Traditions about the excellence of His Eminence, Ja’far will be mentioned in the coming pages, if the Almighty Allah wills.

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