

Al-Shimr's Oppressiveness

Having read Ibn Sa'd's letter, Ibn Ziyad said, "This is a letter of someone who advises his people and who is compassionate towards them." He was about to respond to it when al-Shimr¹ stood up as he said, "Do you really accept such an offer from him after his having settled in your land? By Allah! If he ever departs from your land without making an agreement with you, he will get even stronger, while you will get weaker."

Ibn Ziyad found his statement to be the wisest, so he wrote Ibn Sa'd saying, "I did not dispatch you to al-Husayn so that you would spare him, nor to negotiate with him, nor to give him any glimpse of hope of security, nor did I dispatch you so that you would intercede on his behalf with me.

See if Husayn and his company surrender to my authority; if so, send them to me safely; if not, attack them and kill them and mutilate their bodies, for they surely deserve it. If al-Husayn is killed, let the horses trample over his chest and back. I do not think that this will hurt him after his death, but this is in fulfillment of a promise that I had made to do just that.

If you carry out our order, we shall reward you as someone who listens to us and who obeys, but if you refuse, then remove yourself from our business and our troops, and let Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan take charge of the army, for we have granted him authority to do so."²

When Shimr brought this letter, Ibn Sa'd said to him, "Woe unto you! May Allah never make your home near, and may He reveal the ugliness of what you have done! I believe you are the one who discouraged him from doing it and thus foiled our hopeful attempt to bring about reconciliation. By Allah!

Husayn shall never surrender, for there is an honourable soul within him." Al-Shimr said to him, "Tell me what you are going to do: Are you going to carry out your prince's order or not? If not, let me take charge of the army." 'Umar Ibn Sa'd answered him by saying, "I shall do it, and no thanks to you; but you should be in charge of the infantry."³

1. Ibn Kathir, on p. 188, Vol. 8, says, "Al-Husayn ('a) used to narrate to his companions at Karbala' what his grandfather (S) used to tell him, which was: 'It is as if I see a spotted dog licking the blood of my Ahl al-Bayt ('a).'¹ When he saw that al-Shimr was leprous, he immediately said, 'He is the one who shall kill me!'"

On p. 222 of his book *Al-A'laq al-Nafisah*, Ibn Rastah says, "Al-Shimr Thul-Jawshan, who killed al-Husayn ('a), was leprous." On p. 449, Vol. 1, of his book *Al-I'tidal*, al-Thahabi says, "Shimr son of Thul-Jawshan was one of those who killed al-Husayn, peace be upon him." This narrative, therefore, is not an original. When he was asked, "Why did you side with the enemies of the son of Fatima ('a)?," he said, "Our men of authority ordered us. Had we disobeyed them, we would have been more wretched than red camels." Al-Thahabi says, "This is only an ugly excuse; obedience is due to what is right."

On p. 303 and on the following pages of his book titled *Siffin* (Egyptian edition), Naar Ibn Muzahim says, "Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan was with the Commander of the Faithful ('a) at Siffin. From the company of Mu'awiyah came out Adham Ibn Muhriz challenging anyone from 'Ali 's army for a duel. Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan went out, and they exchanged two blows. Adham struck Shimr on his forehead, causing his sword to reach the man's bones. When Shimr responded with a blow of his own, he could not harm Adham in the least; therefore, he went back to his camp to drink some water. He took a spear and composed these lines of poetry:

I have reserved for the brother of Bahilah
A swift blow, only should I live
A final blow shall I strike him with,
A blow like death, or death itself.

He charged at Adham, pierced him with his sword, causing him to fall from his horse. Adham's fellows carried him away, so Shimr left. On p. 143, Vol. 2, of his book *Nafh al-Tib* ('Eisa al-Babi Press), al-Maqrizi says, "Al-Samil Ibn Hatim Ibn al-Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan was a chief of Mudar who bore a great deal of grudge against the Yemenites."

This is stated on p. 222 of the Beirut edition edited by Muhammad Muhyi ad-Din." In a footnote in the same book, Hatim, son of al-Shimr, was with his father at Kufa. When al-Mukhtar killed Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan, it is stated that Hatim fled to Qinnasrin. On p. 145, he says that al-Samil was governor of Serqasta. He left it to be the governor of Tulaytala. On p. 67, Vol. 1, of his book *Al-Hulla al-Sayra*, Ibn al-Abar says, "When al-Mukhtar appeared in Kufa, al-Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan, who killed al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a), fled to Syria accompanied by his wife and sons. He stayed there in dignity and security. It is said that al-Mukhtar killed him, whereas he fled till Kulthum Ibn 'Iyad al-Qushayri went out to invade al-Maghreb.

Al-Samil was one of the dignitaries selected by the army from among the people of Syria. He entered Andalusia under the authority of Balaj Ibn Bishr who looked after the Mudarites in Andalusia when Abu al-Khattar al-Husam Ibn Dirar al-Kalbi demonstrated his fanaticism in support of the Yemenites. Al-Samil died in the prison of 'Abdul-Rahman Ibn Mu'awiyah in the year 142 A.H./759 A.D. He was a poet."

On p. 234, Vol. 1, of his book *Tarikh 'Ulama' al-Andalus*, Ibn al-Fawti says the following, "Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan al-Kila'i, a Kufian, is the one who presented the head of al-Husayn ('a) to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah at the Balaj garrison. He is grandfather of al-Samil Ibn Hatim Ibn Shimr al-Qaysi, a fellow of al-Fahri." What is really accurate is the account narrated by al-Dinawari on p. 296 of his book *Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal*: "Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan was killed by the supporters of al-Mukhtar at al-Mathar. His head was sent to Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya."

On p. 222 of his book *Al-A'laq al-Nafisa*, Ibn Rastah says, "Al-Shimr Ibn Thul-Jawshan was leprous." On p. 122, Vol. 7, of his *Tarikh*, al-Tabari says the same, and so does Ibn al-Athir in his book *Al-Kamil*.

2. Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil*, Vol. 4, p. 23.

3. al-Tabari, *Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 236.

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