

The Steed

Ibn Sa'd shouted, "Who volunteers to make sure that the chest and the back of al-Husayn ('a) are run over by the horses?" Ten men stood up.¹

Those miscreant "volunteers" were: Ishaq Ibn Hawiyyah,² al-Ahbash Ibn Murshid Ibn 'Alqamah Ibn Salamah al-Hadrami, Hakim Ibn al-Tufayl al-Sinbisi, 'Amr Ibn abi al-Saydawi, Raja' Ibn Munqith al-'Abdi, Salim Ibn Khaythamah al-Ju'fi, Salih Ibn Wahab al-Ju'fi, Wakhit Ibn Ghanim, Hani Ibn Thabit al-Hadrami, and Asid Ibn Malik.

They rode their horses and trampled upon the body of the fragrant flower of the Messenger of Allah. Then the ten "men" went back to Ibn Ziyad with Asid Ibn Malik in their vanguard reciting this *rajaz* verse of poetry:

We did crush the chest and the back:
Mighty steeds made it like a river track.

Ibn Ziyad ordered generous awards to be given to them.³

What a martyr whose body the sun baked,
And its rising from his origin is born!
And what a slaughtered one trampled upon
By the steeds from whose names the cavaliers freeze.
Did they not know that Muhammad's soul,
Like his Qur'an, in his grandfather personified?
Had those steeds, like their riders, only knew
That the one under their hooves was but Ahmad,
They against their riders would mutiny declare,
Just as they against him rebellious they were.⁴

Al-Biruni has said,

They did to al-Husayn (‘a) what no other nation had ever done to their most evil ones: killing with the sword or the spear, with stone throwing, and with horse trampling.⁵

Some of those horses reached Egypt where their shoes were pulled out and fixed on doors as means of seeking blessings. This became a custom among them, so much so that many of them started making the like of those shoes and hanging them over the doors of their houses.⁶

May hands that fought you be to pieces chopped,
May feet that oppressed you be forever paralyzed,
May the steeds over your body charged be hamstrung,
Crushing your ribs, having lost to your swords their riders.
You became their victim, so no pleasure shall today be
Nor a moon in the night shall ever be shiny.⁷

1. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 161. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 4, p. 33. al-Mas’udi, Muruj al-Thahab, Vol. 2, p. 91. al-Maqrizi, Khutat, Vol. 2, p. 288. Ibn Kathir, Al-Bidaya, Vol. 8, p. 189. al-Khamis, Tarikh, Vol. 3, p. 333. Shaikh al-Mufid, Al-Irshad. al-Tabarsi, l’lam al-Wara, p. 888. al-Naishapuri, Rawdat al-Wa’izin, p. 662. Ibn Shahr Ashub, Al-Manaqib, Vol. 2, p. 224.

2. On p. 31, Vol. 4, of Taj al-’Arus, her name is recorded as “Huwayza.”

3. Ibn Tawus, Al-Luhuf, p. 75. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 41. On p. 39, Vol. 2, of his book Maqatal al-Husayn, al-Khawarizmi adds the following verses to the above:

Till we disobeyed some of the Commandments of Allah,
The Omnipotent, when dealing with al-Husayn, the Pure One.

4. Excerpted from a poem by Sayyid Salih son of the ‘Allama Sayyid Mahdi Bahr al-’Ulum.

5. Abul-Rayhan al-Biruni, Al-Athar al-Baqiya, p. 329.

6. al-Karakchi, Kitab al-Ta’ajjub, p. 46.

7. These verses were composed by Abu Thib Shaikh Yousuf al-Qatifi who died in 1200 A.H./1786 A.D.