

The Men of Madina II

**Ibn Sa‘d’s
Kitab at-Tabaqat al-Kabir
Volume V**

**Translated by
Aisha Bewley**

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The Battle of al-Harra: 63AH/26th August 683CE

The significance of the Battle of al-Harra and the terrible loss of life and the sacking of Madina cannot be minimised. Madina never recovered its political role after this. The number of Ansar who perished in this battle was enormous. Muslim ibn 'Uqba was in charge of the operation, and he allowed his soldiers to kill and loot to such an extent that he was given the nickname 'Musrif' ('the extravagant') in accounts of the event. He was ill at that time, and then died on the way to Makka. The Harra was a field of black volcanic rock to the north-east of Madina.

After this outrage, which had been foretold by the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the army proceeded on to Makka. The news of the sudden death of Yazid while Ibn az-Zubayr was under siege in Makka complicated the situation. For a time, it seemed that Ibn az-Zubayr had won since there was some confusion about who should next become khalif, after Mu'awiya II, Yazid's son and heir, died almost immediately after assuming office. Eventually, however, the Syrians settled on the leadership of Marwan ibn al-Hakam, and after his death nine months later, his son, 'Abdu'l-Malik, became the new khalif in 65AH/685CE.

As far as the Kharijites were concerned, they initially supported Ibn az-Zubayr, but when he failed to denounce his father, they also turned against him, and so Mus'ab ibn az-Zubayr, his brother and governor of Iraq, was forced to direct most of his attention and forces to fighting them rather than the Umayyad forces.

At the same time, things were further muddled by the Shi'ite, alMukhtar ibn Abi 'Ubayd. Ibn az-Zubayr was not pro-'Alid and treated Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, 'Ali's son by another wife other than Fatima, very badly. At this time, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya had become the focus of opposition to the Umayyads because at that point no 'Alid was old enough to be leader.

The Shi'ite rebellion of al-Mukhtar in Kufa: 66AH/685CE

Al-Mukhtar initially passed himself off as a supporter of Ibn azZubayr, but when Ibn az-Zubayr did not appoint him governor, he went to Iraq and eventually led a rebellion in Kufa in 66AH/685CE which forced Ibn az-Zubayr's governor, 'Abdullah ibn Muti', to leave Kufa. Al-Mukhtar passed himself off as the *wazir* (helper) of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, and allegiance was given to him as such.

Al-Mukhtar stated that he was trying to avenge the death of alHusayn and indeed killed anyone who had been implicated in that. Then he tried to expand his power base. Ibn az-Zubayr was accordingly forced to send the governor of Basra, his brother Mus'ab, to fight al-Mukhtar. Mus'ab defeated him at the Battle of al-Madhar, whereupon al-Mukhtar retreated to Kufa, where he was besieged and then killed in 67AH/687CE.

Al-Mukhtar's revolt generated and helped form many Shi'ite ideas – like the idea of an imam living in retirement who was politically represented by a designated *wazir*. This concept was later adopted by the 'Abbasids when they revolted against the Umayyads. The Shi'ite concept of the *mahdi* took on its political form and significance from this time.

Al-Mukhtar also had a lot of non-Arab clients (*mawali*) among his followers and he seems to have incorporated various elements which were pre-Islamic, perhaps through their influence. For instance, they carried what they called 'the chair of 'Ali' into battle, like the Ark of the Covenant.

Historically, the 'Abbasid claim finds its historical justification in this revolt, as they claimed that Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya's son, Abu Hashim, was the next imam and that when he died, he transferred his rights to the 'Abbasid family. Thus al-Mukhtar's revolt had many ramifications in Muslim history, both for the Shi'ites and for the Sunnis.

Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya

This was 'Ali's son by a woman of the Banu Hanifa, not by Fatima. He was reluctant to involve himself in politics, but nonetheless found himself used as a figurehead much to his distress. AlMukhtar referred to him as 'the Mahdi', and if you examine the instances when this term is used in the *Tabaqat*, you will notice how the meaning of this term begins to change politically during this time. Thus, when Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya died, some of those who thought of him as 'the Mahdi' believed he would return (*raj'a*) from concealment, possibly through transmigration (*tanasukh*) of his soul.

It is clear therefore that the various ideologies which surfaced during this early period of Muslim history after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, shaped many of the major events which were to follow. Whoever wishes to understand the differences which exist today will discover their roots buried in this period of the past, painful as it is for any sincere Muslim to examine.

Chapter One

The First Generation of the Tabi'un of the People of Madina

'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn al-Harith

Of Makhzum. His mother was Fatima bint al-Walid ibn al-Mughira of Makhzum. His *kunya* was Abu Muhammad. He was ten years old when the Prophet died. His father, al-Harith ibn Hisham, died in the 'Amwas Plague in Syria in 18AH. Then 'Umar ibn al-Khattab married his widow, Fatima bint al-Walid, and so 'Abdu'r-Rahman grew up in 'Umar's care. He used to say, "I have not seen a step-father better than 'Umar ibn al-Khattab." He transmitted from 'Umar, and he had a house in Madina. 'Abdu'r-Rahman died in Madina while Mu'awiya was khalif. He was noble and generous. He was present at the Battle of the Camel on 'A'isha's side. 'A'isha said, "It would have been better for me to have remained in my house and not to have travelled to Basra than to have had ten children by the Messenger of Allah, all of whom were like 'Abdu'r-Rahman ibn al-Harith ibn Hisham."

It is reported that 'Abdu'r-Rahman's original name was Ibrahim. He went to 'Umar when he was khalif when 'Umar wanted to change the names of those who had been given the names of the Prophets. He changed his name to 'Abdu'r-Rahman and that remained his name.

'Abdu'r-Rahman's children include: Muhammad, the elder, by whom he receives his *kunya*, Abu Bakr, who was called 'the Monk of Quraysh', 'Uthman, 'Ikrima, Khalid, Muhammad the younger, and Hantama who married 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, Umm Hujayn, Umm Hakim, Sawda, and Ramla: their mother was Fakhita bint 'Utba ibn Suhayl. He also had 'Ayyash, 'Abdullah, Abu Salama, al-Harith, Asma', 'A'isha who was married to Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyan, Umm Sa'id, Umm Kulthum and Umm az-Zubayr: their mother was Umm al-Hasan bint az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam, whose mother was Asma' bint Abi Bakr. He also had al-Mughira, 'Awf, Zaynab, Rayta – who married 'Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr after her sister,

Fatima – and Hafsa: their mother was Su‘da bint ‘Awf ibn Kharija. He also had al-Walid, Abu Sa‘id, Umm Salama who married Sa‘id ibn al-‘As, and Qurayba: their mother was Umm Hasan bint al-Harith ibn ‘Abdullah. He also had Salama, ‘Ubaydullah and Hisham by *umm walads*. He also had Zaynab, who is also called Maryam, whose mother was Maryam bint ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan.

‘Abdu’r-Rahman ibn al-Aswad ibn ‘Abdu Yaghuth

His mother was Umayya bint Nawfal. His children were Muhammad and ‘Abdu’r-Rahman, whose mother was the daughter of ‘Abdullah ibn Wahb, ‘Abdullah, whose mother was an *umm walad*, and ‘Umar, whose mother was an *umm walad*. ‘Abdu’r-Rahman related from Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and ‘Umar. He had a house in Madina.

Subayha ibn al-Harith

His mother was Zaynab bint ‘Abdullah ibn Sa‘ida. Subayha’s children were al-Ajashsh, Ma‘bad, ‘Abdullah the elder, Zabina and Umm ‘Amr the elder: their mother was ‘Atika bint Ya‘mar. He also had ‘Abdu’r-Rahman, ‘Abdullah the younger, who is Abu’l-Fadl, and Umm ‘Amr the younger: their mother was Ama bint ‘Amr ibn ‘Abdu’l-‘Uzza. He also had ‘Abdullah, Umm Salih, Umm Jamil, and Umm ‘Ubayd, whose mother was Zaynab bint Wahb. He also had Habiba who married Ma‘bad ibn ‘Urwa of the Banu Kalb. ‘Abdu’r-Rahman was the noblest of his children. Subayha had a house in Madina among the people of al-Aqfas.

‘Abdu’r-Rahman married a daughter of Rashid ibn Hudhayl and had Muhammad and Musa. It is said that she was Umm ‘Ali bint Hilal of Hudhayl. He also had a son Sakhr by Umm Yahya bint Jubayr of Khuza‘a.

Subayha at-Taymi said, “Abu Bakr as-Siddiq asked me, ‘Subayha! Are you going to perform *‘umra*?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied. He said, ‘Bring your mount.’ So I brought it and we went on *‘umra*.” Subayha reported the things he did on the journey.

Muhammad ibn ‘Umar said that the one who travelled with Abu Bakr was actually his son, ‘Abdu’r-Rahman ibn Subayha. It may be that both he and his father went with Abu Bakr and related from him. ‘Abdu’r-Rahman was reliable with few *hadiths*.

Niyyar ibn Mukram al-Aslami

One of the four who buried 'Uthman ibn 'Affan and prayed over him and went down into his grave. Niyyar listened to Abu Bakr. He was reliable with few *hadiths*.

'Abdullah ibn 'Amir ibn Rabi'a

His *kunya* was Abu Muhammad. He was born in the time of the Prophet and he was five or six when the Messenger of Allah died.

'Abdullah ibn 'Amir said, "The Messenger of Allah came to our house when I was a little child. I went out to play and my mother said, 'Abdullah! Come and I will give you something.' The Messenger of Allah said, 'What do you want to give him?' She replied, 'I want to give him a date.' He said, 'If you had not done so, a lie would have been recorded for you.'"

Muhammad ibn 'Umar said, "I do not think that 'Abdullah ibn 'Amir remembered these words because he was too young." He related from Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, and his father.

Abu'z-Zinad reported that 'Abdullah ibn 'Amir saw Abu Bakr and 'Umar give a slave forty lashes for defamation (*qadhf*).

'Abdullah ibn 'Amir died in Madina in 85AH while 'Abdu'l-Malik was khalif. He was reliable with few *hadiths*.

Abu Ja'far al-Ansari

Abu Ja'far al-Ansari said, "I saw Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and his head and beard were like hot embers," (meaning dyed with henna).

Aslam, the client of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab

His *kunya* was Abu Zayd.

Aslam said, "'Umar ibn al-Khattab purchased me in 12AH, the year in which al-Ash'ath ibn Qays was brought as a captive. I saw him in irons speaking to Abu Bakr as-Siddiq. Abu Bakr was telling him, 'You did this and did that!' until I finally heard al-Ash'ath ibn Qays say, 'O khalif of the Messenger of Allah, let me lead your army and marry me to your sister.' Abu Bakr did that. He was gracious to him and married him to his sister, Umm Farwa bint Abi Quhafa, and she bore him Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath."

Muhammad ibn ‘Umar said, “Aslam related that he saw Abu Bakr as-Siddiq take hold of the end of his tongue and say, ‘This has had consequences for me.’” Aslam related from ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and others.

Muhammad ibn ‘Umar said that he heard Usama ibn Zayd ibn Aslam say, “We are Ash‘arites, but we do not fail to acknowledge the grace of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab.”

Sa‘id ibn al-Musayyab was asked who Aslam, the client of ‘Umar, was. He said, “An Abyssinian from Bajawa.”

The *kunya* of Aslam was Abu Zayd. Aslam died in Madina while ‘Abdu’l-Malik was khalif.

Hunayy, the client of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab

Hunayy reported that Abu Bakr as-Siddiq did not set aside any land as a reserve (*hima*) except for an-Naqi‘. He said, “I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turn it into a reserve. It was reserved for the horses used for military expeditions. When the *zakat* camels were lean, they were also released to graze there as far as ar-Rabadha. There was no reserve for them. He commanded owners of water sources not to exclude those who came to them for water and to graze with them. When ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab was khalif, and there were a lot of people and he sent delegations to Syria, Egypt and Iraq, ar-Rabadha was made a reserve and he put me in charge of it.”

Malik ad-Dar

He was the client of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab.

Malik ad-Dar related from Abu Bakr as-Siddiq and ‘Umar, may Allah have mercy on them. Abu’s-Salih as-Samman related from him. His transmission was accepted.

Abu Qurra

He was the client of ‘Abdu’r-Rahman ibn al-Harith and was reliable, with few *hadiths*. Ibn Abi Dhi’b said that his master was a man from Mukharraba, not the one who set him free.

Abu Qurra said, “Abu Bakr as-Siddiq divided the booty and he gave me a share as he gave my master a share.”