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## THE FALL OF SASSANIANS

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### THE FALL OF THE SASSANIAN EMPIRE

**Khosrow Parviz (590-629 CE) the grandson of Khosrow Anushiravan Adel (531-579 CE) was the last Sassanian king with a stable reign. He was initially overthrown in the first year of his reign (590 CE) by Bahram-e-Chobin, but with the help of Maurice, the Emperor of Byzantine Khosrow got back the throne and ruled for 37 years. Bahram-e-Chobin was from the house of the Askanians (Parthians) and a general in the Persian army. His other name was Mehr-bandak (Mithra's Servant) he was a follower of Mithraism. He revolted and claimed the throne on behalf of his ancestors the Askanians. There were seven known clans of Askanian active among the Sassanians as governors and generals. The famous among them were the Ispahbudhan of Gurgan who claimed their ancestry to the Achemenians via the Askanians. Others were the Varaz of Eastern Khorasan, Karen of Nahavand, Mehran and Spandiyadh of Rey, Zik of Adurbadagan and Suren of Sakastan. Askanians for the most part were inclined towards Mithraism.**

**Seven Askanian governors and generals in control of important hubs in the empire, with divided loyalty, have to be taken into consideration when analysing the fall of the Sassanian Empire.**

**After the death of Khosrow Parviz once again an Askanian by the name of Shahrbaraz revolted in 629 CE and ruled for 40 days. Thereafter between 629 and 633 CE before young Yazdgerd (633-651CE) became king, eight Sassanian rulers succeeded each other due to the instability brought about by the Askanians.**

**So many Askanians centres with an inclination towards Mithraism plus the spread and the influence <sup>1</sup> of Mani (274 CE) and Mazdak (524 CE) three centuries apart is an indication of an era of religious liberalism and discounts the claim of religious fanaticism during the Sassanian era.**

**To claim that the fall of the Sassanian Empire was due to their religious extremism and that the people were wishing for a change and went with open arms to embrace Islam is sheer propaganda.**

**Also that the Arabs did not come to spread Islam is not true. The Quran explicitly requires a Muslim to "Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day ... Even if they are of the People of the Book."<sup>2</sup>**

**The Prophet of Islam Muhammad ibn Abd Allah waged 38 battles to spread Islam. In the 23 years that he claimed Prophet Hood, he united the Arab tribes in**

**modern-day Saudi Arabia by conquering them. Eight of the battles are mentioned by name in the Quran including the last battle, that of Hunay in 630 CE. <sup>3</sup> As per the Quran, Allah is directly involved in the battles and the outcome of the wars is regulated by Allah. The battles that were waged during the lifetime of the Prophet were all for the spread of Islam. The Prophet saw two years of peace before his death in 632 CE. After him, the leadership fell to Abu Bakr who became the first Khalifa in 632 CE. He had to find something to get them occupied or they would return to fighting each other like before. With no other skill and no other industry available, they looked beyond their realm toward Byzantine and Persia to pursue their only skill.**

**Two forces were organized one under Khalid Ibn Walid and the other under Yazid b. Abi Sufyan. Walid's forces were sent to attack the Persians and Yazid was dispatched to Byzantine.**

**The attack on the Persians was met with a counterattack and Khalid Ibn Walid was reassigned <sup>4</sup> to the Byzantine front which was succeeding and needed help. All of a sudden Abu Bakr died of illness and was replaced by Umar Ibn Al Khattab. The death of Abu Bakr was initially kept secret from the fighting forces on the battlefields of Byzantine to avoid loss of morale among them. Umar who replaced him had his eyes on the Persian Empire while the Arabs fighters were interested in Byzantine for it was easier to fight the Roman occupiers rather than the Persian natives. As narrated by Tabari.**

*"The first thing Umar did was summon the men with al-Muthanna b. Harithah al-Shaybani to fight the Persians before the dawn worship on the night on which Abu Bakr died. Then, when he arose, the people rendered the oath of allegiance, whereupon he repeated his call to the men to fight Persia. The people came in succession to give the oath of allegiance. They finished in three days; every day, he would summon them, but no one would heed the call to go against Persia. The Persian front was among the most disliked and difficult of the war front for them, because of the strength of the Persians sovereignty, their military force, their might, and their subjection of the nations." <sup>5</sup>*

**But Umar was adamant, he told them that as Muslims they were helpers of God in the execution of God's plan and final victory was guaranteed by God.**

*"The Hijaz is not a home for you except for foraging; its inhabitants do not survive in it except by that. Where are the impulsive migrants for the sake of God's promise? 'Navel in the land that God has promised you in the Book <sup>6</sup> to make you heirs to, for He has said, "That he may make it [Islam] triumph over all religion. God is the One who grants victory to His religion, **strengthens His helper** and commits to His people the inheritances of the nations. Where are the righteous worshippers of God?" <sup>7</sup>*

**Finally, Umar managed to inspire enough volunteers and in 636 CE the Arabs attacked the Persians at Qhadisiyeh. This time Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas was the commander of the Arab army.**

**When appointing Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas Umar reminded them that this world is a temporary abode and they should strive for the next life in Paradise.**

“One obeys Allah by **Hating this world** and loving the hereafter; one **hates Him by loving this world** and hating the hereafter. Know that God has made a promise to you, has taken this matter upon Himself, and will not break His promise. Be careful not to turn Him away from you, lest He **put someone else in your place.**”<sup>8</sup>

**Umar addressed the fear that the Arabs had, of the Persian army and reminded them of Allah’s promise.**

“Do not be perturbed by the information that you receive about them (Persians) nor by [the army] that they will muster against you. Ask God's help and put your reliance on Him. Send [to the Persian king] people of [impressive] appearance, sound judgment, and endurance, to invite him to embrace Islam. God will render this invitation a cause of weakness and defeat for them. Write to me daily!”<sup>9</sup>

**Sa’d Ibn Abi Waqqas followed Umar's instructions and dispatched emissaries to Emperor Yazdgerd. These Muslim emissaries said to Yazdgerd.**

“God ordered us to start with the **nations adjacent to us and invite them to justice.** We are therefore inviting you to embrace our religion. If you refuse our invitation, you must pay the poll tax. This is a bad thing, but not as bad as the alternative; if you refuse [to pay], it will be war.”<sup>10</sup>

**Then Yazdagird spoke, saying:**

“I know of no other nation on earth that was more miserable, smaller in numbers, and more rancorous than you. We used to entrust the outlying villages with our defence against you, and they were sufficient for the task. The Persians did not attack you, and you had no hope to hold your ground against them. If [your] numbers are now at par [with ours], let it not delude you [into attacking] us. **If it is the hardship that has caused you [to move against us], we shall allocate provisions for you in order to increase your prosperity.** We shall honour your nobles, we shall provide you with clothing, and we shall appoint for you a king who will treat you gently.”<sup>11</sup>

**To this offer of generosity by Yazdgerd Al-Mughirah a member of the delegation replied.**

“In your description of us, you said things of which you did not know. As for the destitution that you mentioned, there was nobody more destitute than we were. As for our hunger, it was not hunger in the usual sense. **We used to eat beetles of various sorts (khanafis, jidlan ), scorpions, and snakes, and we considered this our food. Nothing but the bare earth was our dwelling. We wore only what we spun from the hair of camels and sheep. Our religion was to kill one another and raid one another. And if there was among us such as would bury his daughter alive, recoiling from her eating from our foods -- our condition in the past had, indeed, been what I mentioned to you.**

But then God sent to us a well-known man. We knew his lineage, his face, and his birthplace. His land is the choice part of our land. His glory and the glory of his ancestors are the most memorable among us. We witnessed that he brought the truth from God. He said: “Whoever follows you in this [religion] has the same rights and the same obligations as you have, but whoever refuses, offer him (payment of) the poll tax. If he agrees, protect him from everything that you protect yourself from, but whoever refuses [to pay], fight him, and I shall be the judge between you. I shall admit those who are killed to My garden, and to those who survive I shall give victory over their opponents.”

*"If you wish, choose to pay the poll tax out of hand and in **humiliation**. If you wish (to reject this offer), it is the sword, unless you embrace Islam and save your soul."* <sup>12</sup>

Yazdgerd replied: *"But for our custom not to kill envoys, I would have killed you. I have nothing for you."*

**The Arabs were poor they had nothing in the desert of Arabia to thrive on and Yazdgerd recognized that and offered to help them but Islam had offered the Arabs psychological strength by designating them as soldiers of Allah and promising them Victory or if killed a place in Heaven. Umar had made sure to repeatedly emphasise this promise and every Arab believed in it.** <sup>13</sup>

**Another delegation was sent to Rostam the commander of the Persian Army.**

*"God has sent us and has brought us here so that we may extricate those who so desire from servitude to the people [here on earth] and make them servants of God; that we may transform their poverty in this world into affluence; and that we may free them from the inequity of the religions and bestow upon them the justice of Islam. He has sent us to bring His religion to His creatures and to call them to Islam. Whoever accepts it from us, we shall be content. We shall leave him on his land to rule it without us; but whoever refuses, we shall fight him until we fulfil the promise of God."*

**Rostam said:** *"And what is the promise of God?"*

**Rib`i said:** *"Paradise for him who dies while fighting those who have refused [to embrace Islam] and victory for him who survives."* <sup>14</sup>

**The Arabs were psychologically prepared by the Quran and the 23 years of war had included all aspects of warfare in the Quran.** So, the Arabs replied:

*"The custom that has been established for us by the Messenger of God and put into effect by our leaders is that we should **not listen** to the enemy nor delay the fight with them for more than three days. We shall therefore go back and leave you alone for three days. Look into your affair and the affair of your people and choose - within this period-one of **three options**. **Choose Islam, and we shall leave you alone on your land; or choose [to pay] the poll tax, and we shall be content and refrain from fighting you. If you do not need our help, we shall leave you alone; and if you need it, we shall protect you. Otherwise, it will be a war on the fourth day.** We shall not attack you between now and the fourth day unless you attack us. You have my guarantee on behalf of my companions and on behalf of all those [Muslims] whom you see."*<sup>15</sup>

**The Persians are offered the three classical options: to embrace Islam or pay the poll tax or be attacked and defeated. None of the Persian suggestions of material support was acceptable; unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Muslims do not fight for worldly possessions or in order to improve their standard of living. Their only objective is to spread the new faith of Islam.** <sup>16</sup>

**Umar was regularly informed of the happenings and he sent back instructions and guided them on all matters.**

**ARMY FORMATION**

## **The Quran has even revealed how the formation on the battlefield should be.**

*"God loves those who fight on His behalf in a line as if they were a strongly constructed building." 17*

### **Umar sends his instructions.**

*"When you receive this letter of mine, organize the people in groups of ten, and appoint a leader for each group; appoint amirs for the military units, and arrange them in battle order."*

*"Sa'd appointed commanders for the military units and appointed group leaders for every group of ten, as was the custom during the lifetime of the Prophet. These units remained in existence until the military payment system ('ata') was introduced." 18*

### **Umar made sure to use the information that Salman-e-Fars had of his native land by appointing him as a Scout and also made him responsible for the 'call to prayers'. 19**

### **He also used people with experience and high standing to boost the morale of the Arabs**

*"In the units of the army, there were seventy-odd men who had participated in the battle of Badr, around three hundred and ten men who were the Prophet's Companions since the Pledge of Good Pleasure (bayat al-ri'wdh), three hundred men who participated in the conquest of Mecca (fatlz), and seven hundred sons of Companions, from all the Arab tribes." 20*

### **The text of Umar's letter to Sa'd, giving him direction was as follows:**

*"After the preliminaries (ammo bacdu): Set out from Sharif in the direction of Persia, together with all the Muslims who are with you. Put your reliance on God and seek His help in all your affairs. Concerning the task in front of you, be aware that you are about to take on a nation that has great numbers and superior equipment. Their courage is great, and they live in a well-defended country. Though it is flat, it is hard to access because of its crevices, flood plains, and torrents, except if you happen to arrive when the water is low. When you encounter the Persians or one of them, **attack them first, and beware of waiting until their armies gather.** Let them not deceive you, because they are deceitful and crafty, unlike you, you must exert full effort in the struggle against them. Eventually, God will grant you victory over them and provide you with another opportunity to attack." 21*

### **Umar also gave them a battle cry to boost their morale. He told them to say it frequently.**

*"There is no power and no strength except in God!" (Id liawla wa-la quwwata illd bi-Allah)." 22*

### **While the Arabs were getting ready the Persian population were not expecting any unforeseen events and were going about their daily lives.**

*"The sister of Azadmard b. Azadbih, the governor of al-Hirah, was being married to the ruler of Sinnin, a Persian nobleman. The bride was accompanied by an escort, fearful of a lesser [danger] than that which they actually encountered. The Muslims were lying in ambush between the palm trees. When a gap opened between the horsemen and the women who accompanied the bride, and the luggage of the party passed by, Bukayr fell upon Shirzad b. Azidbih [who was between the luggage and the horses] and broke his back. The horses panicked and dispersed; the Muslims captured the luggage, the daughter of Azadbih*

*with thirty women of the Persian landowners (daghan ), and one hundred attendants. The Persians had with them, property of unknown value, as well as ivory, all of which Bukayr carried away. In the morning he brought the booty that God had given to the Muslims to Sa`d in `Udhayb al-Hijinit. The Muslims proclaimed loudly: "God is most great!" Sa`d said: "By God, you have exclaimed 'God is most great' like people in whom I perceive glory and strength." Then he distributed the booty among the Muslims, liberally distributing the fifth and giving all the rest to the warriors. They were extremely pleased. Sa`d stationed in Udhayb some horsemen to guard the women, and the guardians of all the womenfolk joined them. He appointed Ghalib b. "Abdallah al-Laythi as their commander. <sup>23</sup>*

**The Arab army did not have food with them so they robbed the villages on their way. Tabari has reported many such incidents of how the Arabs feed themselves.**

*"Sa`d sent Aim b. Amr to the lower Euphrates. He went to Maysan, looking for sheep and cattle. He encountered a man on the edge of the thicket and asked him where the cattle and the sheep were, but the man swore that he did not know. It became clear, however, that he himself was the shepherd of the flock in that thicket. A bull exclaimed: "By God, he is lying! Here we are." Aim went in, led the bulls away, and brought them to the camp. Sa`d distributed them among the people, and they had ample provisions for some time." <sup>24</sup>*

*"Sa`d then dispatched raiding parties to the region between Kaskar and al-Anbar. They obtained provisions sufficient for a period." <sup>25</sup>*

## **THE BATTLE OF QHADISIYEH 636 CE**

**Finally, when the Arabs came face to face with the army led by Rostam they followed the tradition of Prophet Mohammad's war tactics employed in the battle of Badr, where he threw sand into the eyes of his opponents and managed to kill them. The Arabs did not have an organized army they employed guerilla warfare to disarray the organized army of the Persians. Tabari has reported some of these tactics.**

*"One of them pierced the elephant's eye so that it trampled upon those who were behind it. The other struck the elephant's trunk, but the elephant's rider dealt him a crippling blow in his face with an axe." <sup>26</sup>*

*Agim shouted, "Use your spears, use your spears! Point them at those horses, aim at their eyes!" <sup>27</sup>*

**The Arabs were no match against the Persians so they attacked their horses and elephants.**

*"A fully armed Persian unit (katibah) was in front of [the tribe of] al-Ju`fi on the Day of `Imas. They moved toward the Persians and fought them with the swords, but they saw that the swords had no effect on the [Persian armour made of] iron, and they retreated. Humayda said: "What is the matter with you?" and they replied, "The weapons do not penetrate them." <sup>28</sup>*

**A group of 700 Arabs were sent from the Syrian front who having captured towns in Byzantine were high in morals, they encouraged those assigned to the war with the Persians.**

“Qays b. al-Makshuh said upon his arrival from Syria with Hashim, standing among those who were next to him:

*O Arabs! God has favoured you with Islam and has honoured you with Muhammad; may God pray for him and grant him peace! By the grace of God, you have become brethren. Your call is one and you are united. [All this happened ] after you had been attacking each other like lions and violently abducting each other like wolves. Help God, so that He may help you! Ask God to grant you victory over the Persians, because He has already fulfilled His promise to give your brethren victory over Syria and to wrest [from their enemies] the excellent castles and palaces [there].”*<sup>29</sup>

### **The Arabs encouraged each other to compete in becoming a martyr.**

Durayd b. Ka'b al-Nakha who held the standard of the tribe of al-Nakha`, said: "*The Muslims have prepared themselves for battle. Tonight, be the first among the Muslims to reach God and to [engage in] holy war (al-jihad) because whoever is first tonight will receive his reward accordingly. Compete with the [other] Muslims for martyrdom and accept death cheerfully. This will more effectively save you from death if you wish to live; and if not, then it is the hereafter which you wish to attain.*"

### **The battle was on its third day when the final blow in the war of Qhadesiyeh came. Tabari reports how a violent westerly wind blew sand against the Persians and their commander Rostam got killed.**

*A violent westerly wind blew away the sunshade from Rustam's throne, and it fell into the canal al `Atiq. The dust blew against the Persians. While Hilal was going after him, Rustam shot him with an arrow, hit his leg, fastened it to the stirrup of his saddle, and said in Persian bi-paye. Hilal b. `Ullafah al-Taymi cut the load on a mule. One of the half-loads fell on Rostam so that Hilal did not see him and did not notice him. The load hit Rustam and displaced a vertebra in his spine. Hilal went after him and caught him after Rustam had already started to swim. Hilal then struck his forehead with the sword and killed him. Then he dragged him farther and threw him at the feet of the mules. He seated himself on Rustam's throne and exclaimed: "By the Lord of the Kabah, I have killed Rustam! Come to me!" Men gathered around him without noticing or seeing the throne, proclaiming "God is most great! "and calling out to each other."<sup>30</sup>*

**IDirar b. al-Khattab seized the royal flag (*drafsh-i kavyan*) and was given thirty thousand dirhams in exchange for it; its value was one million and two hundred thousand.**<sup>31</sup>

*“The youngsters of the Arab army went to inspect the dead. They had with them, vessels of water. They gave water to the Muslims in whom there was a breath of life and killed the Persians in whom there was a breath of life. They came down from al `Udhayb at the time of the evening prayer.”*<sup>32</sup>

### **Seeing Rostam killed, the Persians lost heart and retreated towards Nahavand the Arabs pursued them. But Umar asked them to stop and first establish a settlement and use it as a base from where the Muslims could continue the fight.**

*“Then Sa'd wrote to Umar about the victory that God granted, to the Muslims. Umar wrote to him: "Halt and do not seek further conquest." Sa'd wrote back to him: "This is nothing but a small band of horsemen whom we have pursued; the land is before us `Omar wrote again to Sa'd: "Stay where you are and do not follow them. Establish for the Muslims a place where they can migrate and settle and from where they can wage holy war. Do not place a great river between me and the Muslims.”*<sup>33</sup>

*“He chose for them the place in which al-Kufah stands today and established the mosque and the settlement quarters (khilal) for the Muslims.”*<sup>34</sup>

### **The Persian army had retreated but the locals got together and stood up against the Arabs.**

*“The people of Maysan gathered an army against the Muslims. Al-Mughirah set out against them, leaving the heavy luggage behind. He confronted the enemy on this side of the Tigris. Ardah bint al-Harith b. Kaladah said: "I wish we could join the Muslim men and be with them," and she made a banner of her veil. The other women [also] used their veils as flags and set out in the direction of the Muslims. When they reached the Muslims, the polytheists were fighting them. But when the polytheists saw the approaching flags, they thought that reinforcements were coming from the Muslims and took flight. The Muslims pursued them and killed many of them.”*<sup>35</sup>

*“Utbah sent Anas b. Hujayyah to Umar with the belt of the governor of Dast -i -Maysan. `Umar said to him: "What is the condition of the Muslims?" Anas said: "The [wealth of this] world has engulfed them, and they are dripping with gold and silver." The people became attracted by al-Basrah and came to live there.”*<sup>36</sup>

### **The people that lived in the Sawad were a combination of Jews Christians and Persians who had moved to safety during the war. Now they came back made Peace with the Muslims and agreed to pay the Jaziyeh and be treated as second class citizens - *ahl al-dhimmah* on their land.**

*“Umar asked "What is the status of the Sawad? " He replied: "It was conquered by force (anwatan) and so was the entire land except for the fortresses. The inhabitants migrated and were then invited to make peace and receive protection. They responded, returned, and became ahl al-dhimmah. They are obliged to pay the poll tax, and they enjoy protection. This is the sunnah, and this is what the Messenger of God did in Dumah." The property of the Persian royal family and of those who migrated with them remained the fay' of those to whom God had restored it.”*<sup>37</sup>

### **A group of Arabs settled where today Basrah is they dug canals to get drinking water from the Tigris River near their dwellings away from the deluge. From there they raided Persian settlements and displaced them.**

*“Umar ordered him to halt in the desert because they disliked the clayey ground. At the fourth time, they halted on a stony track (al Basrah) (al-Basrah is used for any land of which the stones are gypsum). He ordered them to dig a canal through which water could be made to flow from the Tigris, so they dug a canal for drinking water to al-Basrah.”*<sup>38</sup>

*“Qutbah b. Qatadah was raiding the vicinity of al-Khuraybah, which was a part of al-Basrah, just as al-Muthanna b. Harithah al-Shaybani was raiding the vicinity of al-Hirah. Qutbah wrote to `Umar informing him of his location and telling him that, if he had a small number of men at his disposal, he would defeat the Persians who were in front of him and banish them from their land.”*<sup>39</sup>

*“Umar sent Shurayh b. Amir, who belonged to the tribe of Sa`d b. Bakr, to al-Basrah and said to him: "Reinforce the Muslims in this area." He came to al-Basrah, left Qutbah there, and set out for al-Ahwaz. When he reached Daris, which was a Persian garrison, he was killed. Then `Umar dispatched `Utbah b. Ghazwan.”*<sup>40</sup>

**In the meantime, the treaty of Damascus was signed between the Arabs and the people of Damascus. Umar moved to Byzantine where the Arabs were successful and had reached Jerusalem. He went and led them in the conquest of Jerusalem.**

*“Umar b. al-Khattab set out this year for Syria and encamped at al-Jabiyah. (Jawlan/) (Golan). He was given victory over Iliya, the city of Jerusalem”*<sup>41</sup>

## **SUMMARY**

None of the Persian suggestions of material support was acceptable; unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Muslims did not fight for worldly possessions or in order to improve their standard of living. Their only objective was to spread the new faith of Islam.<sup>42</sup>

**The battle of Ghadisiyeh left behind a lot of casualties. The Persian armour made the Arabs' weapons ineffective. They instead attacked the horses and elephants of the Persians to dislodge the rider. The Arabs were not afraid of death for they were promised a better place in Heaven by Allah. The Arabs had been organized in groups of ten and so fought independently without many strategies. While the Persians were in battle formation as an army taking orders from Rostam the general.**

**A sudden storm blew the sunshade of the throne of Rostam and dislodged him and the Arabs with their back against the storm managed to kill him. This brought the battle to an end with the Persians withdrawing toward Nahavand. Umar stopped the Arabs from pursuing the Persians and instead ordered them to first establish a base on the south side of the Tigris River from where they could then march forward. Kufah became a very important garrison town for many years.**

## **BATTLE OF NAHAVAND**

In 637 CE / 16<sup>th</sup> Hijri year

**The Arabs went towards Nahavand. Now they had armour and all the fighting gears they had captured at Qhadisiyeh. As they moved toward Nahavand they went on a killing spree they murdered whoever they met on the way.**

*“Zuhrah ordered his men to follow; they were not to pass by any (Persian) whom they caught up with without killing him.”*<sup>43</sup>

**Salman-e-Fars who was familiar with the terrain and spoke both languages was now appointed to guide the Arabs and negotiate with the Persians when they reached the king's palace. As usual, the three options of conversion to Islam or else were announced and the battle of Nahavand was launched. After days of fighting Yazdgerd decided to withdraw leaving a small force to keep the Arabs engaged, who finally surrendered to the Arabs.**

*“The one who crossed the water alongside Sa'd was Salman al-Farisi.”*<sup>44</sup>

*“The Muslims' scout was **Salman al-Farsi**. They had nominated him to the function of middleman with the people of Persia.”*

*“So Salman invited them to an agreement three times in all. 'Aliyyah and 'Ala' both went on: The words Salman called out to them ran as follows: "I have the same origin as you, I shall be compassionate toward you; you have three options to which I invite you, which may bring about a peace treaty for you: Either you embrace Islam, then you will be our brethren, you will have the same privileges and obligations as we. Or you pay the jizyah. And if these two propositions are not acceptable, then we will declare war on you .... likewise.”<sup>45</sup>*

*“When it was the third day, the people in Bahurasir refused to accept any proposition, so the Muslims fought them. On the third day in al-Mada'in, however, the occupants of the White Palace gave in and came outside. Sa'd, took up his quarters in the White Palace and designated the Great Hall as a prayer site.”<sup>46</sup>*

## **TREATMENT OF PRISONERS**

### **Here are some examples of the treatment of prisoners of war**

*“As for the Persian who is hostile, abandons his land and vacates it, his land shall be yours (to do with as you like). When you summon them (to convert to Islam or else pay the jizya) and you receive the jizya' from them and you send them back (to their homesteads even) before the allotment (of the money thereby collected), then that constitutes "protection." In addition, if you do not summon them to convert **to Islam**, then everything they own constitutes lawful booty for you, destined for him whom God has indicated.”<sup>47</sup>*

*“(I enter their camp) and come to a tent in which there are pillows and clothes. Suddenly (I sense the presence of) a human form hidden under some blankets. I tear them away and what do I find? A **woman, like a gazelle, radiant as the sun!** I took her and her clothes and surrendered the latter as booty, but put in a request for the maid that she may be allotted to me. Thus I acquired her as a concubine; she later bore me a child.”<sup>48</sup>*

**The Arabs looted all that was left behind by the withdrawing Persians they found a Carpet that covered the main hall of the palace and it is said to have been 60 x 60 cubits they send that to Saudi Arabia for Umar. Who decided to cut it into pieces and distribute it among the Muslims.**

*"You are perfectly right," Umar replied. So he cut the carpet up into equal pieces and distributed these among the people. Ali also acquired a fragment which he sold for twenty thousand (dirhams). And that was not even the best piece!”<sup>49</sup>*

**Thereafter the landlords and farmers of the area send emissaries to negotiate peace and they were offered the same three options. They all accepted to pay the Jaziyeh – the infidel tax.**

*“The digans sent messengers to him, whereupon he invited them to embrace Islam and then to return (to wherever they came from) or to pay the jizya, as a consequence of which they would enjoy full protection. One after the other they opted for the latter proposition (Jizya).”<sup>50</sup>*

## SUMMARY

The Arabs defeated the Romans before the Persians. The majority of Greater Syria had fallen to the Muslims by year 15 Hijri 636 CE and the Byzantines under Heraclius were in full retreat from the area.

On the second front, according to Tabari's accounts, Persian towns such as Babylon, al-Mada'in, the old Sasanian capital; and Tikrit had been taken by the Muslims in the year 16 Hijri, 637-638 CE.

Of tremendous importance was the resounding victory secured by the Muslim forces under Sa'd b. Abi Waggas at al-Qadisiyah, when a huge Sasanian army under Rostam dissolved in panic. Such a victory left the Sasanian empire to the East vulnerable to attack and penetration by the forces of Islam.

They were not slow to take advantage of their success and, of the weakness of a once-mighty empire. In the following year (17 H/ 638-639 CE), again according to Tabari, al-Kufah was founded as a Muslim garrison town in southern Iraq, and the conquering armies began to raid the province of Fars.

They killed the men captured the women and children and sold them in the slave markets of Mecca and Medina. <sup>51</sup>

The Muslim armies, who move out of the two garrison towns of al-Kufah and al-Basrah, include such important centres and areas as Isfahan (21 H/641-642), Hamadhan, al-Rayy, Qumis, Jurjan, Tabaristan, Azerbaijan, Khurisin (all in 22 H/642-643CE), parts of Fars province, Kirmin, Sijistan, and Makrin as far as the Indus. <sup>52</sup> (PAGES 14-15 Foreword by Translator Yohanan Friedmann Vol 14)

## POINTS TO BE NOTED

- 1 Sassanians were not religious fanatics
- 2 The Iranians did not accept Islam with open arms
- 3 The main aim of the Arabs was to spread Islam as per the Quran
- 4 Sassanians underestimated the Arabs based on their knowledge of pre-Islamic Arabs
- 5 It was the weakest period of Sassanian history with internal feuds among the Royals
- 6 The Arabs had a psychological advantage namely :
  - a. God thru the Quran has appointed the Arabs as Helpers to fight God's war
  - b. The Quran has laid down rules for all aspects of the warfare
  - c. The Quran promises a heavenly After-life as a reward to the fighters of the holy war

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<sup>1</sup> Keeping in mind that the royal families including the king became followers of both Mani & Mazdak.

<sup>2</sup> Quran Surah 9:29 <https://corpus.quran.com>

<sup>3</sup> Quran-Surah Taubah 25-27 <https://corpus.quran.com>

<sup>4</sup> History of Tabari 2089

<sup>5</sup> History of Tabari 2159

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- <sup>6</sup> Quran 9: 33; 48: 28; 611: 9. <https://corpus.quran.com>
- <sup>7</sup> History of Tabari 2160
- <sup>8</sup> History of Tabari 2229
- <sup>9</sup> History of Tabari 2235
- <sup>10</sup> History of Tabari 2240
- <sup>11</sup> History of Al-Tabari 2241
- <sup>12</sup> History of Al-Tabari 2242
- <sup>13</sup> History of Tabari 2229
- <sup>14</sup> History of Tabari 2271
- <sup>15</sup> History of Tabari 2272
- <sup>16</sup> Yohanan Friedmann- Translator of Tabari's History, introduction by. Page 19.
- <sup>17</sup> Quran 61.4
- <sup>18</sup> History of Tabari 2224
- <sup>19</sup> History of Tabari 2226
- <sup>20</sup> History of Tabari 2227
- <sup>21</sup> History of Tabari 2228
- <sup>22</sup> History of Tabari 2229
- <sup>23</sup> History of Tabari 2233
- <sup>24</sup> History of Tabari 2234
- <sup>25</sup> History of Tabari 2235
- <sup>26</sup> History of Tabari 2326
- <sup>27</sup> History of Tabari 2434
- <sup>28</sup> History of Tabari 2334
- <sup>29</sup> History of Tabari 2322
- <sup>30</sup> History of Tabari 2337 & 2357
- <sup>31</sup> History of Tabari 2337
- <sup>32</sup> History of Tabari 2341
- <sup>33</sup> History of Tabari 2360
- <sup>34</sup> History of Tabari 2360
- <sup>35</sup> History of Tabari 2387
- <sup>36</sup> History of Tabari 2386
- <sup>37</sup> History of Tabari 2372
- <sup>38</sup> History of Tabari 2381
- <sup>39</sup> History of Tabari 2382
- <sup>40</sup> History of Tabari 2382
- <sup>41</sup> History of Tabari
- <sup>42</sup> Foreword by **Yohanan Friedmann** page 16 History of Tabari Vol 14
- <sup>43</sup> History of Tabari 2422
- <sup>44</sup> History of Tabari 2437
- <sup>45</sup> History of Tabari 2441
- <sup>46</sup> History of Tabari 2441
- <sup>47</sup> History of Tabari 2467
- <sup>48</sup> History of Tabari 2463
- <sup>49</sup> History of Tabari 2454
- <sup>50</sup> History of Tabari 2427
- <sup>51</sup> History of Tabari 2632 , 2422
- <sup>52</sup> Pages 14-15 Foreword by Translator **Yohanan Friedmann** Vol 14)