

The National Amīr/ President
Jamā‘at Aḥmadiyya,

Dear Brother,

السلام علیکم ورحمة اللہ وبرکاتہ

Summary of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul-Masīḥ V (May Allāh be his Helper) on 10th January 2025 at Mubārak Mosque Islāmabād, Tilford, UK

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said: One of the Sariyyah, during the life of the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) was directed against Banu Fazārah. Some historical accounts mention an incident involving the killing of Umme Qirfa during this campaign. However, the manner in which some historians have portrayed this event clearly shows that their narrative is contrary to the truth.

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) has written following well-reasoned account of this incident. Ibn Sa‘d records an expedition that was led by Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Ḥarithah (May Allāh be pleased with him), rather than by Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr (May Allāh be pleased with him). Further deviating from the other accounts, Ibn Sa‘d says that the mission aimed to discipline Banu Fazārah tribe, who had attacked a Muslim trade caravan, looting all its goods. The leader of this hostile group was an elderly woman named Umme Qirfa, a fierce adversary of Islām. During the encounter, she was captured, and a member of Ḥaḍrat Zaid’s party named Qays reportedly killed her in a brutal manner. Her daughter was then handed over to Salamah bin Akwa‘. A similar account, with some variations and less detail, appears in the writings of Ibn Ishāq.

Based on this narration, the orientalist Sir William Muir, known for offering more detailed accounts than other European historians, was quick to include this incident in his book as an illustration of Muslim cruelty. He said that the only reason for documenting it was the alleged brutality of the Muslims during the campaign. Muir wrote that although Muslims carried out several expeditions that year, most were inconsequential. However, he felt compelled to mention this one mission due to its purported savagery.

Analysing this claim, Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) writes that a historian who focuses on a single event solely to emphasise a supposed act of brutality by a particular group cannot be regarded as an impartial researcher. Such a person is unlikely to examine whether the alleged cruelty is grounded in fact, as doing so would weaken his argument. Despite Muir’s eagerness to include this incident, it is entirely false and unfounded. Both historical evidence and rational analysis prove that it is fabricated.

From a rational standpoint, it must be recognised that capturing a woman who was not accused of any crime, killing her in cold blood, and doing so in the manner described in this account is highly implausible, as Islām strictly forbids killing women, even in the battlefield. The Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) repeatedly emphasised that women must not be harmed. It is mentioned in a Ḥadīth that, on one occasion, a woman from an enemy tribe was found dead on the battlefield. Although it was unclear how or by whom she had been killed, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) expressed great displeasure and instructed the Ṣaḥāba that such a thing should never happen again. Similarly, whenever the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) sent out an expedition, he included in his instructions the clear directive not to kill women or children.

Given these fundamental guidelines, the idea that any Ṣaḥābī, especially Ḥaḍrat Zaid who was practically a member of the Holy Prophet’s household, would kill or permit the killing of a woman in the manner described by Ibn Sa‘d is utterly unacceptable. While the act of killing is not directly attributed to Ḥaḍrat Zaid, since the incident occurred under his command, the responsibility would ultimately fall on him. The notion that Ḥaḍrat Zaid would act contrary to the Holy Prophet’s instructions is unbelievable.

As for the authenticity of the narration, neither Ibn Sa‘d nor Ibn Ishāq provided any chain of transmission for this narration. A report of this nature, which contradicts the explicit instructions of the

Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) and the well-known practices of the Ṣaḥāba, cannot be accepted without a reliable source. Furthermore, the same event is mentioned in Ḥadīth collections such as Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawood, but they make no reference to Umme Qirfa's killing. These accounts also differ from those of Ibn Sa'd in several other details.

Authentic Aḥādīth are undeniably far more reliable and credible than general historical accounts. Thus, the narrations in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawood carry significantly more weight than those of Ibn Sa'd. This is particularly evident as Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ishāq recorded their reports without proper chains of narration, whereas Imām Muslim and Abu Dawood meticulously documented their sources. Hence, it is beyond doubt that the story of Umme Qirfa's cruel killing is a baseless fabrication that was likely introduced into certain historical records by a hidden enemy of Islām or a hypocrite. The true account of this expedition is limited to what has been accurately detailed in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim and Sunan Abu Dawood.

Sariyyah 'Abdullah bin 'Atīq is mentioned in historical accounts as targeting Abu Rāfay'. According to Ibn Sa'd, this expedition took place in 6 AH. Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) writes that among the Jewish leaders whose incitement and hostility led to the dangerous Battle of Aḥzāb at the end of 5 AH, Ḥuyyay bin Akḥṭab had already met his fate alongside Banu Quraiza. However, Salām bin Ḥuqaiq, also known as Abu Rāfay', remained free in Khaybar region and continued his hostile activities. The humiliating failure of battle of Aḥzāb and the severe punishment faced by Banu Quraiza only deepened his enmity towards the Muslims. Given that Ghaṭfān tribes resided near Khaybar and had close ties with the Jews of Khaybar and the tribes of Najd, Abu Rāfay', a wealthy and influential trader, made it his mission to provoke these fierce tribes against the Muslims.

His enmity towards the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) was akin to that of Ka'b bin Ashraf. Abu Rāfay' provided extensive financial support to Ghaṭfān tribes to encourage them to attack the Muslims. Historical records reveal that the threat faced by the Muslims from Banu Sa'd in the month of Sha'bān, which led to a military detachment under the command of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali being sent from Madinah, also had its roots in the conspiracies of the Jews of Khaybar that were orchestrated by Abu Rāfay'. His hostility and hatred drove him to seek Muslim blood, and the presence of the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) was intolerable to him. Determined to escalate his efforts, he set out once again to rally the tribes of Najd, including Ghaṭfān and others, with the aim of assembling a force similar to that of the Battle of Aḥzāb to crush the Muslims. As tensions rose, some Anṣār from Khazraj tribe approached the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) and suggested that the only way to quell the unrest was to eliminate Abu Rāfay', the chief instigator.

Recognising that eliminating a key instigator would be preferable to widespread bloodshed, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) granted permission for the mission. He appointed 'Abdullah bin 'Atīq Anṣārī as the leader of four Ṣaḥāba, with strict instructions to avoid harming women or children. In Ramadān of the 6th year of Hijrah, the group set out, carried out their mission with utmost care, and returned successfully, lifting the shadow of danger over Madinah.

After killing Abu Rāfay', 'Abdullah bin 'Atīq hurriedly descended the stairs of the fortress house and broke his shin. He later recounted, "I tied it with my turban and dragged myself out. Determined not to leave until I was certain of the death of Abu Rāfay', I hid near the fortress. At dawn, a voice from inside announced, Abu Rāfay', the trader of Ḥijāz, is dead.' Upon confirming this, I rose and slowly re-joined my companions. We returned to Madinah and reported the success of the mission to the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him). After listening to the full account, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) said, 'Show me your foot.' When I presented it, he prayed and passed his blessed hand over it, and I felt as though I had never been injured."

Ḥaḍrat Mirza Bashir Aḥmad (May Allāh be pleased with him) writes that there is no need to debate the justification for the killing of Abu Rāfay', as his bloodthirsty actions are well-documented in history. Under such circumstances, the actions of the Ṣaḥāba were correct and appropriate. In times of war, when

a nation faces a life-and-death situation, such measures are deemed completely legitimate. Throughout history, every nation and community has resorted to similar actions at time of necessity.

However, it is regrettable that in the present age of moral degradation, sympathy for criminals has reached such an unjustified extreme that even a tyrant is turned into a hero and the punishment he receives for his crimes begins to evoke public sympathy, and people forget his wrongdoings. But regarding Islām, we must acknowledge that it is not a religion of false emotions. It declares the criminal to be a criminal and considers his punishment to be a mercy for the state and society. Islām teaches to cut off a diseased limb from the body and does not wait for the corrupted part to spoil the healthy and sound ones.

Regarding the method of punishment, it has already been clarified that given the circumstances in Arabia at the time and the ongoing conflict between the Muslims and the Jews, the approach adopted was most appropriate for ensuring public safety.

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) said he would continue with these accounts in future, inshā' Allāh.
Wassalām,

Abdul Majid Tahir
Additional Wakīlut Tabshīr
ISLĀMABAD (UK)
Dated: 15 January 2025