

al-Ḥurr b. Yazīd b. Nādjiya b. Ka‘nab b. ‘Attāb b. al-Ḥārith b. ‘Amr b. Hammām al-Riyāhī, al-Yarbū‘ī, al-Tamīmī came at the head of a troop of 1000 horsemen from al-Ḳādisiyya as a vanguard of the forces sent by ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, the governor of al-‘Irāq against al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The latter was advancing at the time with a group of his kindred and followers in the direction of al-Kūfa. Al-Ḥurr was ordered to follow closely the group of al-Ḥusayn so as to bring him to ‘Ubayd Allāh in al-Kūfa; he was however not told to fight. Accordingly he kept close to the camp of al-Ḥusayn and prevented him from turning back to al-Madīna, but agreed that he should proceed in a direction other than al-Kūfa. The relations between al-Ḥurr and al-Ḥusayn were not at first hostile: he even prayed behind al-Ḥusayn; he denied at the same time having any knowledge of the letters sent by the people of al-Kūfa to al-Ḥusayn.

Rigidly adhering to a new order received from ‘Ubayd Allāh (2 Muḥarram 61/2 October 680) he prevented al-Ḥusayn and his followers from arriving at a settled place, compelling them to pitch their camp in the barren spot of Karbalā’.

When ‘Umar b. Sa‘d b. Abī Waḳḳāṣ, heading the forces dispatched by ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād, rejected the proposals of al-Ḥusayn and decided to fight him, al-Ḥurr decided to join al-Ḥusayn, although knowing that the latter's situation was desperate. He expressed his regret, went over with a small group of his followers to al-Ḥusayn and the latter promised him God's forgiveness. He fought bravely, killed two warriors of the force of ‘Umar b. Sa‘d and was finally killed (10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680).

The tradition about the repentance of al-Ḥurr, his audacity in the encounter and his heroic death became part of the story of the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn.

(M. J. Kister)

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