

al-Mundhir b. Sāwā (or Sāwī) b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Zayd b. ‘Abd Allāh, a chief of the tribal division of Dārim of Tamīm. The tribal branch of the ‘Abd Allah b. Zayd were, according to tradition, called *al-Ispadhiyyūn*. This name, obviously of Persian origin, is said to have referred to this people because they worshipped a horse (*asp*); according to another tradition, they were called so because they came from a place called Ispadh. A third tradition assumed that this name was attached to a group of scattered tribal factions joined together and united (*al-djumma*). Some Western scholars have assumed that the word is derived from the Persian *Ispahbadh*; this may indicate that this group served as a force of the Ispahbadh of Baḥrayn. There is indeed a report according to which the Ispadhiyyūn were a force stationed in the fortress of al-Mushakkar (see *LA*, s.v. *s-b- dh*).

The tribal division Dārim of Tamīm were in close relations with the Persians. Al-Mundhir b. Sāwā is mentioned in the Arabic sources as the “Master of Hadjar” (*ṣāhib Hadjar*) or as the “King of Hadjar” (*malik Hadjar*). These “kings”, says Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb in *al-Muḥabbar*, were appointed by the kings of Persia and controlled the market of Hadjar. One of the traditions says explicitly that al-Mundhir b. Sāwā was appointed by the Persians to control the Arab tribes (*kāna ‘ala l-‘arabi min kibali l-fursi*; al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-ashraf*, ms. ‘Āshir Ef. 597-8, fol. 969a; and see idem, *Futūḥ al-buldān*, 106). After his conversion to Islam, the Prophet is said to have appointed him as governor (*‘āmil*) of al- Baḥrayn.

Reports of the *sīra* compilations mention unanimously that the Prophet sent ‘Alā’ b. al-Ḥaḍramī with a letter to al-Mundhir b. Sāwā summoning him to embrace Islam. They differ, however, as to the date of the event: whether it took place in the year 6 H. or in 8 H. The exact date cannot be established. But it is plausible to assume that the Prophet sent his emissary to Mundhir after his conquest of Mecca; the conquest

strengthened his position in the Arab peninsula considerably and he could, due to his newly acquired authority, widen his influence in some districts which were remote from Mecca and which, though they formed part of the Persian empire, were entrusted by the Persian kings to Arab leaders. The plan to dispatch the messenger was probably stimulated by the fact that the merchants setting out to Haḍjar (literally: to al-Muḥaḳḳar) had to cross the territory of Muḍarī tribes and had to get the protection of Ḳuraysh (sc. of the Meccans). Without this protection, the merchants could not reach Haḍjar with their merchandise (see Ibn Ḥabīb, *op. cit.*). Mundhir responded by stating that he had embraced Islam, that he had read the letter of the Prophet to the people of Haḍjar and that some of them converted to Islam, while others refused to do it. Some traditions say that the Arabs of Baḥrayn embraced Islam. Mundhir asked the Prophet for instructions as to the positions of the Jews and the Magians in Baḥrayn. The Prophet decreed that the *djizya* should be imposed on them if they stuck to their faiths. In another letter of the Prophet, written to the Magians of Haḍjar, the Prophet added two stipulations: the believers should not marry Magian women and should not eat meat of animals slaughtered by the Magians. The Prophet is said to have sent to ‘Alā’ a list of the mandatory taxes levied as *ṣadaqa* from camels, cattle, sheep and fruits. The poll tax was imposed according to the social position of the taxpayer: people who had no landed property had to pay four *dirham* a year and deliver a striped cloak (‘*abā’a*’) made of hair or wool; others had to pay a *dīnār*. It is noteworthy that the poll-tax imposed on the people of the garrison of Haḍjar (*al-waḍā’i*) who had been settled there by Kisrā, with whom a separate treaty was concluded by the Muslim authorities, also amounted to one *dīnār*. The Prophet is said to have dispatched special emissaries (mentioned are Abū Hurayra, Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Djarrāḥ and ‘Alā’ b. Djāriya al-Thaḳafi) who would carry out the functions of tax-collectors and instructors in the performance of religious duties.

The full authority of the Prophet in the area can be gauged from a particular phrase in the letter of the Prophet to al-Mundhir: "... as long as you act rightly we shall not depose you". Certain cases of deviation and disloyalty seem to have taken place; this is implied in an utterance of the Prophet saying that "... he had the ability to drive them (i.e. the people of al-Mundhir b. Sāwā) out from Ḥaḍjar".

The Prophet enjoined the converts to Islam to obey his messengers and to aid them in carrying out their mission. The Prophet kept direct contacts with the believers of Ḥaḍjar; he is said to have received a deputation of the believers of al-Baḥrayn and to have welcomed them. Another tradition mentions that the Prophet met some believers from Ḥaḍjar and interceded in favour of Mundhir. The messengers of the Prophet in Ḥaḍjar passed favourable reports about Mundhir to the Prophet. The tradition saying that al-Mundhir b. Sāwā came with a group of believers to visit the Prophet was refuted by the majority of the scholars of the *sīra*. Another tradition says that "the king of Ḥaḍjar" sent Zuhra b. Ḥawiyya as his envoy to the Prophet; Zuhra embraced Islam and became a faithful believer. Mundhir is said to have died shortly after the death of the Prophet. A rare tradition says that at the Prophet's death the governor of Baḥrayn was Abān b. Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣī b. Umayya.

The position of al-Mundhir b. Sāwā and his peculiar relation with the Prophet is examined by Ibn Ḥazm in his *Fīṣal*. Mundhir is included in the list of the "Kings of the Arabs" who deliberately and voluntarily embraced Islam, became sincere believers and gave up their authority and prerogatives transferring them to the messengers of the Prophet. Their forces, says Ibn Ḥazm, were much stronger than those of the Prophet and their territory was vaster than that of the Prophet.

The letters of the Prophet to al-Mundhir b. Sāwā in which the Magians of Baḥrayn were granted the right to stick to their religion and were obliged to pay the poll tax,

djizya, are in fact the earliest documents reporting on this decision of the Prophet. This ruling of the Prophet is said to have stirred a wave of discontent and anger among the Hypocrites (*al-Munāfiqūn*) of Medina and is reflected in one of the earliest commentaries of the Qurʾān, the *tafsīr* of Muḳātil. The Hypocrites were enraged and argued that the Prophet had violated his own decision to accept the *djizya* only from People of the Book; they complained bitterly that on the basis of that ruling the forces of the Prophet had fought and killed their fathers and brethren. The believers were perturbed by these arguments and informed the Prophet about it. Then the well known verse of *sūra* II, 256, *lā ikrāha fi ʾl-dīn*, explicitly forbidding to compel anyone to change his faith, was revealed. Another verse of the Qurʾān, *sūra* V, 105, *yā ayyubā ʾlladhīna āmanū ʿalaykum anfusakum lā yaḍurrukum man ḍalla idhbā ʾbtadaytum* was also revealed in connection with the claim of the Hypocrites; the very early *tafsīr* of Muḳātil glosses the passage *lā yaḍurrukum man ḍalla* by *min ahli haḍjar*. Later scholars tried to present the stipulations of the agreements concerning the position of the non-Muslim population on a broader ideological basis. Ibn Ḥazm states in his *al-Muḥallā* that the *djizya* of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians may be accepted on the condition that they acknowledge (*aḳarrū*) that Muḥammad is a messenger of God to us (i.e. to the Muslim community) and do not offend him nor the faith of Islam. Mālik formulated this stipulation as follows: “... he who says that Muḥammad was sent as a prophet to us (i.e. to the Muslim community), not to them, is free of punishment. He who claims that Muḥammad was not a prophet should be killed”.

The treaties concluded between ʿAlāʾ b. al-Ḥaḍramī and the population of Haḍjar according to the instructions of the Prophet were, of course, considered valid and the territories of Baḥrayn and Haḍjar were assessed as *ṣulḥ* territories (Abū ʿUbayd, *al-Amwāl*, 100).

Some scholars attempted to justify the imposition of the *ḍjizya* on the Magians by the fact that the Magians had had a sacred Book, which was concealed by their sinful king; this assumption was however rejected by a great majority of Muslim scholars of tradition and law. Some scholars claimed that the Magians were granted the right to pay the tax of the *ḍjizya* because they had “something like a Book” (*shubhat al-kitāb*) and rules applying to the People of the Book are valid for them as well (Abū Ya‘lā Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Farrā’, *al-Aḥkām al-sultāniyya*, 154).

The Prophet's ruling imposing the *ḍjizya* on the people of Hadjar and Baḥrayn was not well-known in the Muslim community of Medina. Even ‘Umar was unaware of it, and was informed about it by some Companions of the Prophet. The injunction of the Prophet was supported by his utterance *sunnū bihim sunnata abli ‘l-kitāb* (see Ḥumayd b. Zandjawayh, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, 136, no. 122), “treat the Magians according to the *sunna* of the Prophet applied to the People of the Book”.

The stipulations of the treaties concluded with the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) and the Magians in Baḥrayn were applied in other territories of the Muslim empire. The Magian population in the Muslim empire became an integral part of the community, and the Muslim lawyers took care to provide details of their legal status; this can be seen e.g. in some chapters of the early *Muṣannaf* of ‘Abd al-Razzāk.

The revolt against Islam, the *ridda*, which flared up in Baḥrayn after the death of the Prophet and after the death of al-Mundhir b. Sāwā, was quelled by ‘Alā’ b. al-Ḥaḍramī, who headed some of the Muslim forces and succeeded in conquering some adjacent territories.

Thus the Tamīmī al-Mundhir b. Sāwā played an important role in the islamisation of the territories of al-Baḥrayn and in enabling the religious communities of Jews, Christians and Magians in Baḥrayn to survive.

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