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Salil-IBN-Razik

Excerpt

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# THE IMÂMS OF 'OMÂN.

## BOOK THE FIRST.

FROM JULÁNDA-BIN-MAS'ÛD

TO THE GLORIOUS IMÂM OF THE ÂL-BU-SA'ÏD, AHMED-BIN-SA'ÏD, EL-AZDY.

A.H. 41—1188 = A.D. 661—1774.

*Salil-ibn-Razik, the author of this book, to the reader :—*  
*Although our main object is to set forth the biography of the illustrious Ahmed-bin-Sa'ïd and his descendants, nevertheless we have deemed it desirable to preface it with an account of all the Imâms of 'Omân, in order to a more complete understanding of the subject, and that those hitherto unacquainted with their history may learn to know that the el-Yémeny, the el-'Omány Azdites are of great renown.*

THE most learned and accurate historians agree in this, that whereas after the disturbances and dissensions which had occurred among the people,<sup>1</sup> the supreme authority was eventually vested in Mo'âwiyah-bin-Harb-bin-Sofyân,<sup>2</sup> nevertheless Mo'âwiyah exercised no jurisdiction whatever over 'Omân. It was not until 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik-bin-Marwân suc-

<sup>1</sup> The reference here is to the differences among the Mussulmans which led to the assassination of 'Othmân, the election of 'Aly and his subsequent deposition, and the accession of his son Hâsan, who eventually resigned the Khalifate in favour of Mo'âwiyah. A succinct account of these intestine feuds, chiefly from original sources, will be found in the *Modern Universal History*, vol. i. pp. 348-412.

<sup>2</sup> The first of the Benu-Omcyah Khalifahs. He succeeded to the Khalifate A.H. 41 = A.D. 661.

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ceeded to the sovereignty that an attempt was made to reduce it to subjection. It took place on this wise:— 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik had appointed el-Hajjâj-bin-Yûsuf, eth-Thâkify,<sup>1</sup> governor over 'Irâk. According to concurrent testimony, Suleimân and Sâid, the sons of 'Abbâd-bin-el-Julânda,<sup>2</sup> of the lineage of its Sultâns, at that time ruled over 'Omân. El-Hajjâj was the first to send troops against them under successive commanders, but they were generally repulsed with the loss of their baggage. At length he was advised to dispatch an expedition under the command of el-Kâsim-bin-Sh'iwah, el-Mâziny, who embarked a large force in ships, and, on reaching the coast of 'Omân, anchored near the village of Hatât.<sup>3</sup> Suleimân-bin-'Abbâd attacked him at the head of the Azdites, and after a fierce encounter the invaders were routed, el-Kâsim and a number of his men were slain, and their equipage fell into the hands of the victors. Some state that none escaped; but God knows.

On hearing of this defeat, el-Hajjâj was greatly alarmed, and forthwith sent for Mujjâh-bin-Sh'iwah,<sup>4</sup> el-Kâsim's brother, and ordered him to stir up the people to vengeance,

<sup>1</sup> El-Hajjâj, who flourished during the Khalifates of 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik and his son el-Walid, was the most eloquent and warlike captain of the age. Several Arabian authors allege that religious fanaticism and a love of glory were not the only motives which actuated him, but that having little confidence in the permanency of the Omeyyah dynasty he sought to provide a suitable asylum for himself. He successively reduced Bokhara, Khuwarizm, and Kashgar. Another army sent by him crossed Sejistân and Mekrân, and reached the lower Indus. He died A.H. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Most probably the grandsons of 'Abd-el-Julânda, one of the two brothers who ruled over 'Omân during the time of Muhammad. See Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> A "Wâdi-Hatât" is mentioned in the sequel as leading to Semâil from Mâskat; hence it is probable that the abovenamed village was not far from that town.

<sup>4</sup> This Mujjâh, whom Belâdzory calls "bin-Si'ir," was subsequently appointed governor of el-Mukrân (Mekrân) and the neighbouring territories, under el-Hajjâj. Although he died a year after, an Arabian poet says of him: There is no monument in el-Mukrân which does not recall and adorn the memory of Mujjâh. *Futûh-el-Buldân*, p. 435. Lugd. 1866.

and to summon the tribes of Nizâr,<sup>1</sup> their followers and allies, to unite in retrieving their disasters in 'Omân. El-Hajjâj manifested the utmost animosity and zeal in carrying out this project, reporting what measures he was taking to 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik-bin-Marwân, and calling upon the Azdites residing at el-Bâsrah to join in an expedition against Suleimân-bin-'Abbâd and his adherents. According to the most authentic accounts the force dispatched under Mujjââh numbered 40,000 men. One half left by sea and the other half by land. The latter consisted of horsemen and men mounted on camels. They were encountered by Suleimân and his followers of the el-Azd and others near the water which is five (some say only three) days' journey from el-Balkâah. The said water is now called el-Balkâîn.<sup>2</sup> There a great battle was fought which ended in the rout of el-Hajjâj's force and their pursuit by Suleimân-bin-'Abbâd,

<sup>1</sup> The Nizâr or "Nizâriyyah," as they are more frequently styled in these annals, are, I conceive, the descendants of Nizâr, born about A.D. 64, the son of Mi'add, the son of 'Adnân, the alleged descendant of Ishmael, and reckoned the nineteenth among the progenitors of Muhammad. Nizâr had a numerous progeny: the descendants of his son Iyâd, after residing for two centuries in the Hijâz, migrated into the 'Irâk 'Araby; those of his son Rabi'ah remained in the Hijâz, but those of 'Abdu-'l-Kais, the son of Rabi'ah, went into el-Bahrein, from whence, as already mentioned in the Introduction, they sent a detachment of their tribe to assist 'Ikrimah, Abu-B.âkr's general, in suppressing a revolt in 'Omân. These indications confirm the local tradition that the Nizâr came originally from the Hijâz, through Nejd. Communities of them exist in different parts of 'Omân, where they are further distinguished by the name of the districts which they severally occupy, as the Nizâriyyah of Semâil, of Azka, etc. Their relationship to the el-Kuraish tribe gives them social importance, and rival parties in the country have always bid high to secure their alliance.

<sup>2</sup> I am unable to identify this "water." Perhaps it was the stream called "el-Fajj" by el-'Idrisy, and which he describes as flowing into the sea near "Julfârah." Niebuhr marks a stream at "es-Sirr," lower down on the coast, but it is not represented in any of our modern maps. The 'Omânîs appear to have marched westward, through the district now occupied by the Benu-Yâs, to meet the invaders coming from the opposite direction.

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who knew nothing of the approach of the 20,000 men by sea. On the arrival of the latter at el-Yunaniyah<sup>1</sup> of Julfâr, a man of the people of Tawwam<sup>2</sup> informed them of Suleimân's proceedings, telling them how he had gone forth with his army and defeated their companions who had travelled by land, and that after the victory dissensions had broken out among his followers, which led to his being abandoned by all except a few trusty adherents.

On Mujjââh's arrival at Barkah he was met by Sâid-bin-'Abbâd, Suleimân's uterine brother, and a severe conflict took place between them till darkness separated the combatants. On surveying the two armies, Sâid perceived that his was like a white hair in the hide of a black bull compared with that under Mujjââh; so, having already lost a number of men in killed and wounded, he retired with the remainder the same night, and taking with him some of his own and his brother's relatives he repaired to the Jebel-el-Akbar, the mountain of the Benu-Riyâm, called also the Jebel-el-Akh-dar, and likewise Rudhwân. The enemy followed, but being

<sup>1</sup> Probably a village on the western littoral of the promontory, which was sometimes called "Julfâr" and sometimes "es-Sirr," from the two most prominent localities on that coast. It is remarkable that our modern maps and charts omit the town of Julfâr, which was situated below Khâsab, not far from Cape Musândim. Ludovico di Varthema touched at the place about A.D. 1505, and describes it as having a good seaport. It was occupied a few years later by the Portuguese, who retained it chiefly for the sake of its pearl-fisheries, until they were expelled by the Imâm Nâsir-bin-Murshid, A.D. 1633. The town and fort were destroyed by a combined British and Máskat expedition in 1819, in retaliation for several acts of piracy committed by vessels belonging to the resident tribe.

<sup>2</sup> Tawwâm was the old name of el-Bereimy, as the author frequently remarks in the sequel. Captain Hamerton, who visited the town in 1850, describes it as of considerable size, situated in a very fertile and well-watered district, and defended by two forts. It has always been a rallying point for the Walhâbis whenever they made inroads into 'Omân. It is now held by the Benu-Na'im, who pay tribute to the Wakhâby Amir.

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unable to ascend the mountain they took up a position in the Wâdi-'l-Mastâll, from whence they besieged them.

Mujjââh had moored his ships, which numbered three hundred, under Máskat. These were attacked by Suleimân, who succeeded in burning fifty, the rest escaping out to sea. Convinced of his inability to subdue Suleimân, Mujjââh moved towards the coast, and was met by Suleimân at the town of Semâil, where a battle was fought between them, which resulted in the overthrow of Mujjââh, who effected his escape in a ship to Julfâr. Having reported all that had befallen him at the hands of Suleimân and Sáid to el-Hajjâj, and how they had succeeded in enlisting all the el-Azd chiefs of 'Omân on their side, el-Hajjâj dispatched another force by land, consisting of 5,000 horsemen of the Bedawîn of the Shamâl, under the command of 'Abdu-'r-Rahmân-bin Suleimân. This man was of the el-Mudhariyyah, and among his followers there was an Azdy of el-Básrah; but neither Suleimân-bin-'Abbâd nor his soldiers knew anything of him. He escaped from the camp by night, and coming to Suleimân and Sáid apprised them of the impending invasion. On hearing this intelligence they immediately collected their relatives and property, and taking with them a number of their followers and tribe departed for the land of the Zanj,<sup>1</sup> where they died. Thereupon Mujjââh and 'Abdu-'r-Rahmân took possession of the country, which they treated as a conquered province, committing every species of outrage upon the people. Their success was highly gratifying to el-Hajjâj, who proceeded to appoint el-Khayâr-bin-Sábrah, el-Mujâshâiy, governor over 'Omân.

On the death of 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik<sup>2</sup> he was succeeded by his

<sup>1</sup> This is the first intimation given by the author of the emigration of the 'Omân Arabs to the east coast of Africa. According to el-'Idrisy, the country of the Zanj was conterminous with that of Berbera on the north and Sofála on the south, including the adjacent islands. See his First Climate, 6th Section.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abdu-'l-Mâlik died A.H. 86 = A.D. 705, and his son el-Walid was proclaimed Khalifah the same day his father died.

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son el-Walîd, who removed the collectors who had been entrusted with the affairs of 'Omân, and placed it under the authority of Sâlih-bin-'Abdu-'r-Rahmân. He also placed 'Irâk under Yezîd-bin-Abi-Aslam, who sent Yezîd-bin-Seif-bin-Hâny to be collector in 'Omân. El-Wâlîd dying,<sup>1</sup> he was succeeded by his brother Suleimân, who deposed the governors from all the other provinces, but left 'Omân under Sâlih-bin-'Abdu-'r-Rahmân-bin-Kais, el-Laithy. Afterwards he directed that there should be collectors as before, but they were to be subject to the supervision of Sâlih-bin-'Abdu-'r-Rahmân. He then placed 'Irâk and Khorassân under Yezîd-bin-el-Muhâllab, el-Azdy, who made his brother Ziyâd governor of 'Omân. Ziyâd discharged his duties to the satisfaction of the inhabitants until the death of Suleimân. The latter was succeeded by 'Omar-bin-'Abdu-'l-'Azîz, who governed the people with justice and equity, and died at Deir-Simâân,<sup>2</sup> in the province of Hims, near Kinnasrîn, on Friday the 25th day of Râjab, A.H. 101, [10th February, 720,] after he had held the Khalîfate two years, five months, and five days.

During his reign, 'Omar-bin-'Abdu-'l-'Azîz had placed 'Adiy-bin-Artât, el-Fazâry,<sup>3</sup> over 'Omân, but he subsequently removed him and appointed 'Omar-bin-'Abdallah, el-Ansâry, in his stead. He was of a benevolent disposition, and won the affections of the people, so that they paid their tribute willingly. On the death of 'Omar-bin-'Abdu-'l-'Azîz, he said to Ziyâd-bin-el-Muhâllab: "this is the country of your people, and it is fitting that you should superintend their affairs."

<sup>1</sup> A.H. 96=A.D. 715.

<sup>2</sup> The monastery of St. Simon. Kinnasrin is about twelve miles from Aleppo.

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed-bin-Yahya, el-Belâdzory, mentions this 'Adiy-bin-Artât as having been removed from 'Omân and appointed governor of el-Bâsrah, where he began building some apartments for himself on the city walls, but was ordered to desist by the Khalifah 'Omar. He also states that 'Adiy made the creek of the river into a canal and extended it up to the town. *Futûh-el-Buldân*, pp. 77, 349, 469, Lugd. 1866.

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He then quitted 'Omân, and Ziyâd continued to administer the government until Abu-'l-'Abbâs, es-Saffâh,<sup>1</sup> took the supreme power from the Benu-Omeyyah. He appointed Abu-Jaâfar, el-Mansûr,<sup>2</sup> to 'Irâk, and he set Janâh-bin 'Ab-bâdah, el-Hinây, over 'Omân. The latter it was who built the mosque of Janâh, which is vulgarly called the mosque of Jamâh. He was subsequently deposed and his son Muhammad-bin-Janâh appointed in his stead. Janâh bin-'Abdallah secretly countenanced the doctrines of the el-Ibâdhiyah, who at length took the government of 'Omân into their own hands. Whereupon they ratified in the Inâmate

### JULÁNDA-BIN-MAS'UD.<sup>3</sup>

He was the first of the rightful Imâms<sup>4</sup> of 'Omân, and he greatly promoted the el-Ibâdhy<sup>5</sup> doctrines. He was just, generous, and pious. [The Khalifah] es-Saffâh dispatched Shîbân against him, on whose arrival in 'Omân Julânda sent Hilâl-bin-'Atiyyah, el-Khorassâny, and Yahya-bin-Najîh with a band of Mussulmans<sup>6</sup> to encounter him. When the two sides met and confronted each other, Yahya rose up and uttered the following prayer, referring to both parties :—" O God, if we hold the religion which Thou approvest, and adhere to the truth which is agreeable to Thee, cause me to be the first

<sup>1</sup> He succeeded to the Khalifate A.H. 132=A.D. 749, and was the first of the el-'Abbâs, or Abbaside dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> Brother to Abu-'l-'Abbâs, whom he subsequently succeeded in the Khalifate.

<sup>3</sup> According to Abulféda, "Julânda" was the name assumed by all the kings of 'Omân at this early period. He says: "And of the el-Azd, also, are the Benu-Julânda, the sovereigns of 'Omân. And every one who became king in 'Omân took the name of Julânda. At the time of Islâm the kingdom was in the hands of Habkar and 'Abd, both descendants of el-Julânda." Pocock, *Specimen Hist. Arab.*, p. 475.

<sup>4</sup> For the full import of this title, see Appendix A.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix B for an account of this sect.

<sup>6</sup> The term "Mussulmans" here implies that the el-Ibâdhiyah were the orthodox and their opponents the sectarians or heterodox.

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to fall of my companions, and cause Shîbân to be the first to fall of his companions, and then put them to flight. But if Shîbân holds the religion which Thou approvest, and adheres to the truth which is agreeable to Thee, then let Shîbân be the first to fall on his side." The two parties then came into collision, and the first killed was Najîh, and the first who fell of the opposite party was Shîbân.

After this occurrence Khâzim-bin-Khuzaimah came to 'Omân, and stated that he had come to look after Shîbân and his followers; but on hearing what had befallen them he said: "Let their death and what they have suffered at your hands suffice. My only wish now is to be able to inform the Khalîfah that you are obedient and loyal." Julânda consulted the Mussulmans on this point, but they would not agree to it. It is further stated that Khâzim asked for Shîbân's ring and sword, and that Julânda refused to give them up. This state of things led to a battle between Khâzim and the people of 'Omân, wherein all Julânda's adherents were slain, and none remained alive but Julânda himself and Hilâl-bin-'Atiyyah. Thereupon Julânda said: "To the attack, O Hilâl!" To which the latter replied: "You are my Imâm, and should be before me; rest assured that I shall not survive you."<sup>1</sup> So Julânda advanced and fought till he was slain, and was then followed by Hilâl. Now Hilâl had on a coat of mail, and was armed with a spear, with which he did such execution that the followers of Khâzim were astonished at his bravery. They did not recognize him at first, but on hearing that it was Hilâl they fell upon him and slew him. This battle took place at Julfâr.

The Imâmte of Julânda lasted two years and one month.

<sup>1</sup> There is a play upon the Arabic words used in the original which cannot be conveyed in English. *Imâm* and *amâm* are from the same root, the first means the person who precedes the congregation in prayer, the second *before*, in space. Hilâl said: You are *Imâmy* (in prayer) and should therefore be *amâmy*, *i. e.* in advance of me.



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## MUHAMMAD-BIN-'AFFÂN.

On the death of Julânda, the Jabâbarah<sup>1</sup> ruled over 'Omân, tyrannizing over the people and committing every species of excess and extortion. Notorious among these were Muhammad-bin-Zâ'idah and Râshid-bin-Shâzân-bin-en-Nadhr, the Julândites. In their time Ghassân-el-Hinây, who belonged to the Benu-Muhârib, plundered Nezwa and expelled the Benu-Nâfa' and the Benu-Hamîm, after killing many of them. This happened in the month of Shaâbân A.H. 145 [A.D. 762]. In consequence of this state of things the Benu-Harth<sup>2</sup> entered into a confederacy, and one of their number, a slave of Bîkr, named Ziyâd-bin-Sâ'id, el-Bikry, collected their suffrages, and it was finally agreed that they should attempt to free themselves from their oppressors by getting rid of Ghassân-el-Hinây. They accordingly waylaid him in a place called el-Khôr, where they fell upon him as he was returning sick from the Benu-Hinây, and murdered him. Menâzil-bin-Khânbash, who was collector to Muhammad-bin-Zâ'idah and Râshid-bin-Shâzân, was greatly incensed at this outrage, and marched forthwith against the people of Ibra, who made a stout resistance, but were finally overcome with the loss of forty men.

Eventually God had compassion upon those who adhered to the truth, and a confederacy of the Mussulmans was formed who stood up for His truth, and succeeded in putting an end to the government of the Jabâbarah. The change was

<sup>1</sup> That is, Tyrants. The term is used in that sense and under similar circumstances in a subsequent part of this history.

<sup>2</sup> The el-Harth are located chiefly in south-eastern 'Omân. The Arabs of Zanzibar belong mainly to this powerful and enterprising tribe. They appear to be an offshoot of the Benu-Temim, who are still scattered over the north east of Nejd, from the desert of Syria to the borders of el-Yamâmah. They are probably the descendants of el-Harth, el-'Âraj, ...the son of Temim, and therefore of the race of 'Adnân and Ma'add, the ancestors of Muhammad.

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effected in this manner :—The learned elders of the people of 'Omân assembled at Nezwa under the presidency of Mûsa-bin-Abi-Jâbir, el-Azkâny, and they agreed to confer the Imâmate upon Muhammad-bin-'Affân. But among those who had come together there were some chiefs who had separate views ; so, fearing lest the occasion might prove a source of discord among the Mussulmans, sheikh Mûsa said first to one and then to another : “ We have appointed so-and-so of such a village,” until he dismissed them all. After their departure he proclaimed that Muhammad-bin-'Affân had been duly elected ; whereupon he wrote letters deposing the malcontent chiefs from their authority, and sent governors in their stead. Meanwhile, Muhammad-bin-'Affân retained his post with the army, but his overbearing conduct towards the Mussulmans, his mode of life, together with his obstinacy, so alienated their hearts that they found a pretext for removing him from his command at Nezwa, and finally deposed him, after he had held office two years and one month. They then met together again and elected as Imâm over the Mussulmans

## EL-WÂRITH-BIN-KA'AB,

EL-KHARÛSY,<sup>1</sup> EL-YÁHMADY, ESH-SHÂRY.

He restored the good of former times among the Mussulmans, was upright in his administration, encouraging those who adhered to the truth and restraining impiety and crime, extortion and discord. Even before his elevation to the Imâmate he was admired for his excellent qualities both by high and low, and was conspicuous for his integrity and genius. We give the following as a few instances of his benevolence and enterprise :—He caused the waste places to be cultivated, and relieved those who were oppressed in

<sup>1</sup> A gentile cognomen from “el-Kharûs.” Wellsted, in his map of 'Omân, gives the name of “Wâdi Beni Karûs” to two adjoining districts between er-Rastâk, the inland capital, and the coast.