

*A*bdul Malek' was the caliph. He was leaning on his throne and

listening to his vizier. The vizier was standing at attention, and was reading out the report of what he had done. When he finished the report, Abdul Malek thought for a while, and then took the paper from the vizier so he could read it more accurately. When he looked at the paper, his eyes fell upon a sign at the top of it. Abdul Malek stared at the sign. He brought the paper closer but he couldn't understand anything from the sign. He had forgotten the vizier's report and he tried to find the secret to the sign. When he realized that he could get nothing from the sign on the paper, he told his vizier, "What is the meaning of the sign at the top of your report paper?"

The vizier who seemed to be seeing the sign for the first time answered, "I don't know, my lord!"

Abdul Malek said with surprise, "Are you saying that you don't know the sign at the top of your own paper?"

The vizier took another look at the paper and answered, "No, my lord! I don't know"

Abdul Malek called another one of his viziers. The second vizier came forward and bowed. Abdul Malek gave him the paper and said, "Let's see, can you understand anything from this sign?"

The vizier bowed again and took the paper. He stared at the sign at the top of the paper. After a while he took a step forward and said, "May the caliph be in good health; the sign on the page is not Arabic. It seems to be in the Roman language. Allow me to bring someone acquainted with this language so he could inform you of the meaning of this sign."

With the caliph's order, a number of agents went after a man who was acquainted with the Roman language. The agents brought him very quickly to the presence of Abdul Malek. Abdul Malek gave the paper of

his vizier to the man and said, "Tell me what you understand from the sign on the paper."

The man stared at the sign and after some moments said, "May the caliph be in good health! This sign is the symbol of the Christians. In addition, there is a sentence in the sign written in Roman, which is the motto and belief of the Christians."

Abdul Malek became very angry from what the man said. He called his agents and ordered them to imprison his vizier.

The vizier, who did not expect such an attitude, kneeled on his knees and said,

"Oh great caliph, what has been my crime that you order my imprisonment?"

The caliph answered with great fury, "what greater crime than the fact that you are my vizier and yet at the top of your report paper is a writing which is the motto and belief of the Christians?!"

The wretched vizier asked for permission and said, "My lord! This is not my crime. My people have bought this paper from the bazaar. All the papers sold in Damascus bazaar have this sign on them. I am a Muslim. I haven't committed a crime."

In reality what the vizier said was true. At that time, only the Egyptian Christians produced paper and the Egyptian Christians followed the Roman Christians and stamped a special sign at the top of the papers. These papers were sent to all the Islamic cities. Therefore, all the papers, which were in the hands of the Muslim people, bore the Christian sign on the

When Abdul Malek found out about it, he became thoughtful.

He did not favor the circulation of a paper in his country, which had the sign of a foreign country stamped on it. Therefore, he wrote a letter to the governor of Egypt and asked him to stop the paper manufacturers from stamping the Christian sign on the papers. In addition, he ordered them to stamp 'There is no God but Allah' on top of the papers.

With his order all papers with Christian signs were collected and they were replaced with papers which bore the sentence, 'There is no God but Allah'.

The Muslims were very happy with this replacement. On the other hand, Abdul Malek who knew that the people do not like him and are in distress from his oppressions, introduced himself as a great caliph.

Little by little, the new papers were seen everywhere. These papers had even found their way to the Roman court. The Roman emperor was a Christian who had great power. He always sent money for the Christians in Egypt who had paper factories.

The Roman emperor became very miserable when he realized that they had replaced the Christian sign on the papers.

He sent a letter to Abdul Malek as follows:

The caliphs before you all used the papers that had the Christian sign on them. This sign has been at the top of the papers for tens of years. You better proceed like your fathers and order the removal of 'there is no God but Allah' from the papers and stamp back the previous sign at the top of all papers.

The emperor sent many gifts with the letter to Abdul Malek.

The emperor's messenger reached Abdul Malek's palace with the letter and priceless gifts. Abdul Malek read the letter. Then he told the emperor's messenger, "The letter which you have brought has no answer. Take the gifts and go back. I will not accept these gifts."

The emperor's envoy took the gifts and returned to Rome. He explained everything to the emperor. The emperor wrote another letter to Abdul Malek. He again asked him to put back the Christian sign on the papers and omit 'there is only one God'. The emperor sent the letter with another envoy to Abdul Malek and doubled the gifts.

Again, Abdul Malek returned the gifts and left the letter without an answer.

The emperor's messenger took the gifts and went back to Rome.

Abdul Malek knew that the Roman emperor was powerful. For this reason, he did not want to annoy him. But he couldn't change his decision.

The people of Damascus had all found out about the subject. If he had given in to what the Roman emperor had said, he would have disgraced himself.

For the third time, the Roman emperor sent even more gifts for Abdul Malek, but this time he included a threatening letter for the caliph. He had written in his letter as follows:

"I sent you gifts and friendly letters twice; but you refused to answer me and returned my gifts. This time I have sent you more valuable gifts. You better accept them and order the removal of 'there is no god but Allah' and stamp the Christian sign like before on the papers. In this way our friendly relationship will stay as firm as before. If you do not do this, I will order the stamping of insulting sentences towards your prophet on gold and silver coins. You know that the people of your country trade with Roman coins. Then, you shall see that the Muslim people of your land will be forced to trade with coins that insult their prophet."

The third letter of the Roman emperor frustrated Abdul Malek. He had never thought of the Roman coins. The Roman coins were the currency of that time. All the people traded with them. A few of those coins could be found in the pockets, pouches, houses and shops of everyone. If the Roman emperor stuck to his words and ordered the stamping of insulting words towards the prophet, the Muslims would revolt. Every one needed coins to buy and sell. Moreover, there was no one who knew how to make coins with gold and silver to free the people from trading with Roman coins.

Abdul Malek was really helpless and didn't know what to do. If he allowed the stamping of the Christian signs on the papers, he would lose

his influence and position. And if he didn't allow it, coins would circle in the market that was an even greater danger for his power and ruling.

This time he didn't sent back the emperor messenger straight away. He decided to gather his counselors and nobles, so that they could come to a decent conclusion and answer the emperor.

The noblemen of Damascus and the counselors of the palace circled around the Caliph.

Abdul Malek set forth his problem but no one could come to a reasonable solution. Their meetings were held for a few days, but it was all useless. On the next day one of the nobles stepped forward fearfully. He politely turned to Abdul Malek and said, "I know someone who is sure to have a solution to your problem. You already know him but I'm not sure if you would like to consult him or not?"

"Who is he?" Abdul Malek asked.

"He is Imam Mohammad Baqir !" the man replied.

A heavy silence shadowed the meeting. Everyone knew that Abdul Malek was an enemy of Imam Mohammad Baqir (p.b.u.h.).

Everyone knew Imam Mohammad Baqir. They all knew that Imam Mohammad Baqir was an intellectual and that's why he was called 'Baqir', meaning the splitter of knowledge. They were sure that the Imam knew very well the solution to their problem.

Abdul Malek started to think deeply. He, too, was sure that Imam Mohammad Baqir knew what to do. But seeking help from him was very hard for the caliph. He had frequently asked the governor of Medina to keep an eye on Imam Mohammad Baqir and his followers.

After some moments, Abdul Malek wrote a letter to the governor of Medina and asked him to arrange trip of Imam Mohammad Baqir to Damascus with honor and respect.

A few days later, Imam Mohammad Baqir entered Damascus while facing the welcome of the people. Imam knew about the problem.

Abdul Malek went to meet the Imam at a suitable time and informed him of the situation. After hearing about it, Imam Mohammad Baqir replied, "the emperor's threat will not be carried out! Be sure that God will not give him the chance to make coins that are insulting towards the prophet and distribute them among the people. The real solution to this problem is easy too. Gather the artisans of Damascus so I could teach them how to make coins."

Soon after, all of the artisans of Damascus circled around Imam Mohammad Baqir. Imam taught them making of coin which they needed. Also he determined the weight, size, and value of the coins and organized a plan to make three kinds of coins. Imam Mohammad Baqir told them to write the Surah Al-Towhid on one side; and the name of the holy prophet of Islam on the other side.

The order of Imam was quickly sent to other towns either. The people gave their Roman coins to the governors and received Islamic coins instead. On the coins was the place and date of the town they were made in. Trading with Roman coins was prohibited. From then on the Islamic coins became the validate coins of trade in the vast Muslim territory.

Logic and wisdom
The words of Imam Kazim to Hisham
ibn Hakam

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Introduction: The present article is a tradition from Imam Kazim related to Hisham ibn Hakam. This tradition is mentioned in *Usul al-Kafi*. In this article to make the reading faster and easier we classify different parts of the tradition under different categories from A to Z. We use the English translation of *al-Kafi* prepared by Rizvi and explanatory of the late al-Ja'fari.