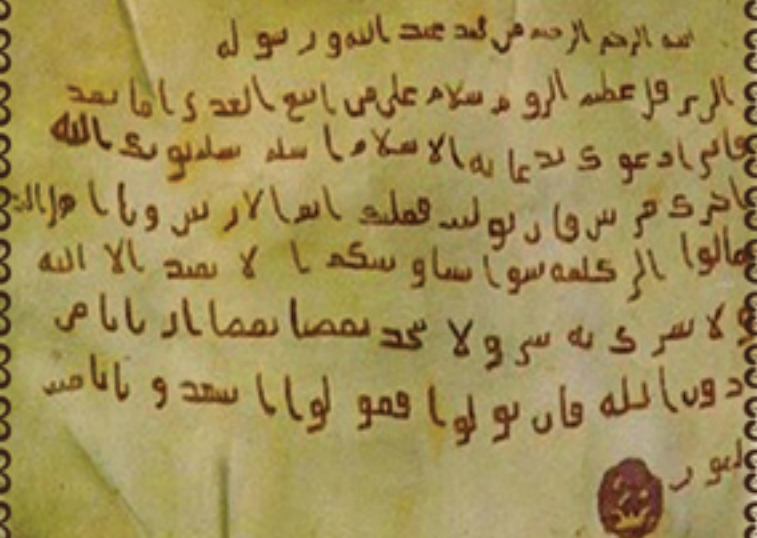


THE ENVOY TO HERACLES CAESAR OF THE BYZANTINES



بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الرَّبِّ الْعَظِيمِ
وَأَسْمَاءُ ابْنِ أَبِي سَهْلٍ
بِأَمْرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
إِلَى هِرَاقْلَ كَيْسَرِ
بِيزَنْتِينَ
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The translation of the letter from the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to Heracles, Caesar of the Byzantines.

"In the Name of Allâh, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

From Muhammad, the slave of Allâh and His Messenger to Heracles, Caesar of the Byzantines.

Blessed are those who follow true guidance. I invite you to embrace Islam so that you may live in security.

If you come within the fold of Islam, Allâh will give you double reward, but in case you turn your back upon it, then the burden of the sins of all your people shall fall on your shoulders.

I "Say [O Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)]: 'O people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), come to a word that is just between us and you, that we worship none but Allâh, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us shall take others as lords besides Allâh.' Then, if they turn away, say: 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'"

Seal: Muhammad the Prophet of Allah

Some years back when this letter was sent, the Persians attacked Syria and defeated the Romans. There is a reference to it in the Qur'an. The Romans, in order to avenge themselves, made big preparations and defeated the Persians. Although the Persians were at that time very powerful and the Romans did seem to have a chance of a victory against them, the Qur'an prophesied a clear triumph for the Romans. **Heracles** came to Jerusalem in token of his gratefulness.

It was here that **Heracles** received the letter of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). He ordered that somebody from Arabia, should be presented before him. Per chance **Abu Sufyan** was staying in Al-sham (now Syria, Lebanon & Palestine) with his merchandise, so the men of Caesar brought him.

Heracles held a grand court. He donned a Crown and sat on his throne. Then addressing the Arabs, he enquired as to who was the relative of the person who claimed himself to be a Prophet.

Abu Sufyan said that he was related to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). The following dialogue then took place:

Heracles: "Who amongst you is the nearest relative to the man who claims to be a Prophet?"

Abu Sufyan: I am the nearest relative to him from amongst the group.

So they made **Abu Sufyan** sit in front of **Heracles** and made **Abu-Sufyan's** companions sit behind him.

Then **Heracles** called upon his translator and said to him. "Tell them (**Abu Sufyan's** companions) that I am going to ask him (**Abu Sufyan**) regarding that man who claims to be a Prophet, so if he (**Abu Sufyan**) tells a lie, they should contradict him (instantly)'.

Abu Sufyan, an ardent enemy of the Prophet (PBUH) commented: "By Allah, had I not been afraid that my companions would consider me a liar, I would have told lies."

Heracles: To what sort of family does the Claimant to Prophethood belong?

Abu Sufyan: Muhammed descends from a noble family.

Heracles: Did some one else in the family claim Prophethood?

Abu Sufyan: No.

Heracles: Did someone from the family happen to be a King?

Abu Sufyan: No one of his family happened to assume kingship.

Heracles: Are the people who have accepted this religion, poor or influential?

Abu Sufyan: His followers are those deemed to be among the poor.

Heracles: Are his followers growing in number or decreasing?

Abu Sufyan: They are growing.

Heracles: Have you ever experienced an untruthfulness from him?

Abu Sufyan: He doesn't tell lies.

Heracles: Does he ever break a promise or agreement?

Abu Sufyan: Thus far he has never done it. But it is to be seen if he adheres to the new peace pact which has been concluded.

Heracles: Have you ever fought a battle against him?

Abu Sufyan: Yes.

Heracles: What was the result of the battle?

Abu Sufyan: Sometime we were victorious and sometime he was successful.

Heracles: What does he teach?

Abu Sufyan: He bids people to worship One God "Allah" Alone with no polytheism and to abandon our fathers' beliefs. He orders us to observe prayer, honesty, abstinence and maintain strong family ties.

Heracles, on hearing this testimony, turned to his translator bidding him to communicate to us his following impression which reveals full conviction in the truthfulness of Muhammad's Prophet hood: "I fully realize that Prophets come from noble families; he does not affect any previous example of Prophet hood. Since none of his ancestors was a monarch, we cannot then allege that he is a man trying to reclaim his father's monarchy. So long as he does not tell lies to people, he is immune to telling lies as regards Allah. Concerning his followers being those deemed weak with numbers ever growing, it is something that goes in agreement with questions of faith until it later assumes full dimensions geographically and demographically. I have understood that no instance of apostasy has as yet appear among his followers and this point to the bliss of faith that finds its abode in the human heart.

Betrayal, as I see, is alien to him because a real Prophet hold betrayal in abhorrence. Bidding worship of Allah with no associates, observance of prayer, honesty and abstinence and prohibition of paganism are traits bound to subject to him all my possessions. I have already known that a Prophet must arise but it has never occurred to me that he will be an Arab from among you. If I was sure I would be faithful to him, I might hope to meet him, and if I were with him, I would wash his feet."

Heracles then requested that the Prophet's (SAW) letter be read. The observation of the emperor and finally the definite and clear-cut exposition of the Islamic message could not but create a tense atmosphere amongst the clergy present at the court. **Abu Sufyan** and his companions were ordered to go out.

The love of crown and throne and the opposition of the courtiers, however, did not allow **Heracles** to accept Islam. But his searching questions and his talk clearly show that he was convinced of the truthfulness of Islam, as he had correctly judged that a person who never in his life, uttered even a trifling lie, could hardly say anything wrong about Allah. He was also certain that worldly riches, splendour and ascendancy were not the aims and objects of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), but the communication of the message of Islam to the entire world, was his mission.

When **Heracles** was about to return to Constantinople, he again advised his courtiers to follow the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as he was the one, they were awaiting. He further mentioned that their books contained the description of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH), and these clearly and unequivocally indicate that he was the true Prophet of Allah. It was, therefore, in their own interest to follow the guidance given by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The courtiers, however, said that it would mean their acceptance of the over lordship of the Arabs, although their's was the biggest kingdom of the world and their nation the greatest nation of the world.

Heracles, thereon, said that although they were not prepared to accept Islam then very shortly they would be overpowered by the Arabs.

Heracles was much displeased by the arrogant attitude of the courtiers and immediately left Syria. While departing he looked at the Syrian territory and said that he was leaving Syria for ever. And it was true, **Heracles** was never to return to Syria!