

Muslim's Stand

When Muslim Ibn 'Aqil came to know about Ibn Ziyad's speech and his explicit threats, and having come to know about people's conditions, he feared being assassinated. He, therefore, left al-Mukhtar's house after the dark and went to the house of Hani Ibn 'Urwah al-Mathaji who was a very zealous Shi'a. [1](#) He was also one of Kufa's dignitaries, [2](#) one of its *qaris* of the Holy Qur'an, [3](#) and the shaikh and chief of Murad.

He could easily raise four thousand troops fully armed and eight thousand cavaliers. If he includes his tribe's allies from Kindah, the number would swell to thirty thousand. [4](#) He was one of the closest friends of the Commander of the Faithful Imam 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib ('a) [5](#) on whose side he fought in all his three battles. [6](#)

He had seen and was honoured by being a companion of the Prophet (S). When he was killed, he was more than ninety years old. [7](#)

Muslim Ibn 'Aqil stayed at the house of Sharik [8](#) Ibn 'Abdullah [9](#) al-A'war al-Harithi al-Hamdani al-Basri, one of the main supporters of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, in Basra, a man who enjoyed great prominence among our men. [10](#) He had participated in the Battle of Siffin and fought side by side with 'Ammar Ibn Yasir. [11](#)

Due to his distinction and prominence, 'Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad appointed him as Governor of Kerman on behalf of Mu'awiyah [12](#). He used to be in contact with and in the company of Hani Ibn 'Urwah. He fell very seriously ill, so Ibn Ziyad went to visit him.

Before his arrival, Sharik said to Muslim ('a), "Your objective and that of your Shi'as is his annihilation; so, you should stay inside the storage room. Once he feels secure at my house, you should come out and kill him, and I shall spare you having to deal with him in Kufa while you yourself remain in good health" [13](#)

As they were thus engaged in their dialogue, the arrival of the *Amir* (provincial governor) at the door was

announced, so Muslim entered the storage room. When Sharik thought that Muslim had taken too long to come out, he kept taking his turban off and putting it on the ground then putting it back again, doing so several times as he recited the following verses of poetry in an audible voice which Muslim could hear:

Why do you not Sulma greet?
Greet her and those whom she does greet.
A pure drink is what I desire when thirsty,
Though drinking it brings sends me to eternity.
If you fear Sulma's watchful eyes, for sure
Against her conniving you will never feel secure.

He kept repeating these lines as he cast quick glances at the storage room. Then he raised his voice so that Muslim could hear him saying, "Give it to me to drink even if my death lies therein."¹⁴ It was then that 'Ubaydullah turned to Hani and said,

"Your cousin, on account of his sickness, is surely hallucinating." Hani said, "Sharik has been hallucinating since he fell sick, and he does not know what he says."¹⁵

Sharik, at a later time, asked Muslim, "What stopped you from killing him?" He said, "Two reasons: first, one *hadith* of the Messenger of Allah (S) narrated by 'Ali ('a) says, 'Faith stops where murder begins; a faithful man does not murder others.'¹⁶

The second reason is Hani's wife. She pleaded to me in the Name of Allah not to do so in her house, and she wept before my very eyes." Hani said, "Woe unto her! She has killed me and killed her own self! That from which she fled, in it have I fallen."¹⁷

Sharik died three days later. Ibn Ziyad performed the funeral prayers for him¹⁸, then he was buried at al-Thuwayya. When it became clear for Ibn Ziyad that Sharik used to instigate people to have him killed, he said, "By Allah! I shall never perform the funeral prayers for anyone from Iraq! Had it not been for Ziyad's grave being in their land, I would have exhumed Sharik's grave."¹⁹

The Shi'as kept meeting Muslim Ibn 'Aqil secretly at Hani's house without attracting the attention of Ibn Ziyad, admonishing each other to keep it to themselves. Ibn Ziyad, therefore, could not know where Muslim was. He called Ma'qil, his slave, to meet him.

He gave him three thousand [dinars] and ordered him to meet the Shi'as and to tell them that he was a Syrian slave of Thul-Kila', that Allah blessed him with loving Ahl al-Bayt of His Messenger (S), that it came to his knowledge that one of the members of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) had come to that country, and that he had with him some money which he wanted to hand deliver to him.

Ma'qil entered the grand mosque and saw Muslim Ibn 'Awsajah al-Asadi offering his prayers. Having seen him finish his prayers, he came close to him and made the above claim to him. Muslim prayed Allah to grant him goodness and success.

He then accompanied him to the place where Muslim Ibn 'Aqil was. He delivered the money to Muslim and swore the oath of allegiance to him.²⁰ The money was handed over to Abu Thumama al-Sa'idi who was a far-sighted and a brave Shi'a dignitary appointed by Muslim to receive the funds and to buy thereby weapons.

That man kept meeting Muslim every day. No secrets were kept from him, so he kept gathering intelligence and getting it to reach Ibn Ziyad in the evening.²¹

¹. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 4, p. 10.

². al-Dinawari, Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, p. 235.

³. Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, Vol. 14, p. 95.

⁴. al-Mas'udi, Muruj al-Thahab, Vol. 2, p. 89.

⁵. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Al-Isaba, Vol. 2, p. 616, Part 3.

⁶. al-Darimi, Thakhira, p. 278. On p. 10, Vol. 4, of Ibn al-Athir's book Al-Kamil, he is said to have fought during the Battle of Siffin with 'Ammar Ibn Yasir.

⁷. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Al-Isaba, Vol. 3, p. 616, Part 3.

⁸. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Al-Isaba, Vol. 3, p. 616, Part 3.

⁹. On p. 201, Vol. 1, of his book Maqatal al-Husayn, al-Khawarizmi says, "The great religious authority, Sayyid al-Amin, is confused when he identifies Sharik as 'al-Hamdani.' Both al-Khawarizmi, in his book Maqatal al-Husayn, and Ibn Nama, in his book Muthir al-Ahzan, are confused about him despite the fact that in his Appendix to Vol. 12 of his work Tarikh al-Umam wal-Muluk, Ibn Jarir [al-Tabari] makes a reference to him. The genealogy of Sharik actually belongs to al-Harith Ibn al-A'war, one of the companions of the Commander of the Faithful [Imam 'Ali ('a)].

The confusion stems from historians identifying Sharik as the son of al-A'war al-Harithi, overlooking the fact that Sharik belonged to Mathhaj, whereas al-Harith al-A'war was from Hamdan." Among those who have accurately referred to Sharik as "al-Mathhaji" is Ibn Durayd who says on p. 401 of his book Al-Ishtiqaq, "Among the notables of Hamdan is Sharik Ibn al-A'war who addressed Mu'awiyah with a poem that included this verse:

Does Mu'awiyah son of Harb really taunt me
While my sword is unsheathed and my tongue is with me?"

The same author goes on to state the following on pp. 397-398: "The men belonging to Sa'd al-'Ashira are named after Mathhaj who is Malik Ibn Adad. Among their distinguished families are those of: 'Abd al-Madan, one of the three main distinguished families of the Arabs, Zurarah Ibn 'Adas, who belongs to Banu Tamim, Huthayfah Ibn Badr, who belongs to Fizarah, and 'Abd al-Madan of Banu Harith among whose notable men is Sharik al-A'war who addressed Mu'awiyah and with whom he had a discussion." The dialogue between Mu'awiyah and Sharik is documented by al-Hamadani on p. 229, Vol. 2, of his book Al-Iklil (Egypt: 1386 A.H./1967 A.D.) which contains the three verses of poetry mentioned by Ibn Hajja in his book Thamarat al-Awraq which comments about the contents of p. 45, Vol. 1, of Al-Mustazraf, in Chapter 8 which contains silencing answers.

He also states responding statements made by the Hashemite but makes no reference to the said poetic lines. He states only six lines on p. 70, Vol. 1, of Al-Hamasa al-Basriyya. Under the heading "'awa" of Taj al-'Arus, a reference is made to

the same dialogue. So is the case when al-Zamakhshari records in his Rabi' al-Abrar a list of silencing answers, citing four lines from the same poem. What makes us feel comfortable with attributing him to Mathhaj is the fact that he resided at Kufa at the house of Hani Ibn 'Urwah, one of his immediate kinsmen and tribesmen. Had this son of al-Harith been from Hamdan, he would have stayed over his father's house. Al-Harith al-Hamdani died in 65 A.H./685 A.D.

[10.](#) Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 14.

[11.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 203.

[12.](#) Al-Nujum al-Zahira, Vol. 1, p. 153. Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol. 3, p. 206. Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani, Al-Aghani, Vol. 17, p. 60, 64 and 70 (Sasi edition).

[13.](#) Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 14.

[14.](#) Riyadh al-Masa'ib, p. 60. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 1, p. 204, where Sharik is cited saying, "What do you think of Sulma? Why do you not greet her? Give it to me to drink though in it lies my own death."

[15.](#) Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 14.

[16.](#) Ibn al-Athir, Vol. 4, p. 11. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 240. This tradition is quoted quite often in compilations of hadith. For example, it is recorded on p. 166, Vol. 1, of Ahmad's Musnad; in a footnote on p. 57, Vol. 1, of Muntakhab Kanz al-'Ummal; on p. 123, Vol. 4, of al-Suyuti's book Al-Jami' al-Saghir; in a footnote on p. 95, Vol. 1, of Kunuz al-Haqa'iq; on p. 352, Vol. 4, of Al-Hakim's Mustadrak; on p. 202, Vol. 1, of al-Khawarizmi's book Maqatal al-Husayn, chapter 10; on p. 318, Vol. 2, of Al-Manaqib by Ibn Shahr Ashub; in Vol. 11 of al-Majlisi's Bihar al-Anwar; and in Waqai' al-Ayyam where it is quoted from Al-Shihab fil Hikam wal Adab.

[17.](#) Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 14. Such a statement, coming from a scholar of Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and a vicegerent of the Master of Martyrs in both religious and secular matters, is useful for religiously conscientious people who follow in their footsteps in order to comprehend the fiqh of the holiest Prophet (S). Such fiqh prohibits treachery. Pure souls refuse to expose a host to any hardship on account of his guest. Such are the sacred teachings of the Umma, only if its members contemplate.

There is another minute mystery and implication viewed by the "mansion's martyr" the essence of which we sensed and found to be unique. It exists when the Commander of the Faithful ('a) was asked once, "Why do you not kill Ibn Muljim?" He ('a) answered, "Who will then kill me?!" It also exists in a statement made by al-Husayn ('a) to Umm Salamah. He said, "If I do not proceed to Karbala', who will then kill me?! And who will reside in my grave instead?! And how will they otherwise be tested?!" The implication of such statements is that nobody is capable of altering anyone's fate that is determined by the Almighty Who implements whatever He decrees.

This is proven by the martyrdom of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) at the hands of Ibn Muljim and that of Imam al-Husayn son of 'Ali ('a) at the hands of Yazid. If it is possible for the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to inform some of his closest followers, such as Maytham [al-Tammar], Habib, Rashid, and Kumayl [Ibn Ziyad], about the method how they themselves will be killed and who will kill them, then it is quite possible that the Master of Martyrs ('a) had informed Muslim Ibn 'Aqil of what will happen to him to the letter.

Ibn 'Aqil is in the zenith of conviction and the most discreet far-sightedness. But the circumstances did not help him to reveal such secrets. The secrets known by the Progeny of Muhammad (S) are not easy for others to withstand. You ought to read p. 134 of our book Al-Shahid Muslim where we simplified our explanation of this issue under the heading "Muslim is not to commit treachery."

[18.](#) al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 202, Ch. 10. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 202.

[19.](#) al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 202.

[20.](#) al-Dinawari, Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, p. 237.

[21.](#) al-Mufid, Al-Irshad.

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