

The Day Of 'Ashura'

On the day of 'Ashura' –which fell on Saturday– 'Umar bin Sa'd offered the morning prayers and then came out with his men.^{[1](#)}

'Abdullah bin Zuhair al-Azdi^{[2](#)} was at the time leading the quarter of the people of Madinah. The quarter of Madhhij and Asad was led by 'Abd al-Rahman bin Abi Sabrah al-Ju'fi^{[3](#)}, while Qais bin al-Ash'ath bin Qais [al-Kindi] was in charge of the group of Rabi'ah and Kindah. Hurr bin Yazid al-Riyahi [al-Tamimi al-Yarbu'i] was leading the quarter of Tamim and Hamdan.

'Umar bin Sa'd put 'Amru bin al-Hajjaj al-Zubaidiyy on his right wing and Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan al-Dabbabi al-Kilabi on his left wing. 'Azarah bin Qais al-Ahmasi was given the command of the cavalry and Shabath bin Rib'i al-Riyahi [al-Tamimi] of the foot soldiers. He gave the standard to Dhuwaid, his retainer.^{[4](#)}

When the cavalry approached al-Husayn (as) in the morning, he raised his hands and said: "O Allah, it is You in whom I trust amid all grief. You are my hope amid all difficulties. You are my trust and provision in everything that happens to me. How many a calamity in which the heart may seem to weaken and trickery may seem to diminish and the friend may seem to desert [me] and the enemy may seem to rejoice, [but] I brought [it] before You and complained to You of it; that was because of my turning away from [all] other than You; and You averted it and warded it off. You are the Master of all blessings, the Possessor of all goodness and the Ultimate Resort of all desire."^{[5](#)}

[Dahhak bin 'Abdullah al-Mushriqi, the one among the companions of al-Husayn (as) who survived on the day of 'Ashura'] reports:

"When they approached us and saw the fire burning the firewood and cane –which we had set on fire behind our tents to prevent them from attacking us from the rear– one of them came towards us galloping [his horse] while he was fully armed. He did not speak to us but just passed by our tents and had a look at them, but he saw nothing except the firewood that was ablaze. So he returned and called out at the top of his voice: 'O Husayn! Are you hurrying to the fire before the Day of Resurrection?'

Al-Husayn (as) said: 'Who is that? [It sounds] like Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan?'

His companions said: 'Yes, may Allah guide you. It is him.'

[Al-Husayn] then said: 'Son of a goat-herdess! You deserve most to be burnt therein!'

So Muslim bin 'Awsajah said to him: 'O son of the Messenger of Allah! May I be your ransom, should I not shoot him with an arrow? He is within my range and I never miss the target. This vicious man is one of the great tyrants.'

[But] al-Husayn (as) said to him: 'Do not shoot at him, for I dislike to begin [fighting] against them.'⁶

The First Speech of the Imam (as)

When the enemy had neared him, he [called] for his mount and mounted it. He then called out at the top of his voice which was heard by most of the people [and said]:

"O people! Listen to my words and do not hurry [to attack me] so that I may remind you of the duties you have towards me, so that I may free myself from any blame for coming to you. If you accept my excuse, believe in what I say and give me justice, you will become happier through that and you will have no reason to fight against me. [But] if you do not accept my excuse and do not give me justice of your own accord, 'So conspire together, along with your partners, leaving nothing vague in your plan, then carry it out against me without giving me any respite.'⁷ 'My guardian is indeed Allah who sent down the Book, and He takes care of the righteous.'⁸

When his sisters heard what he said, they screamed and lamented. His daughters also [began] weeping and their voices rose. So [al-Husayn (as)] sent to them his brother, 'Abbas bin 'Ali, and his son, 'Ali, and told them: "Make them silent. For by my life, they are going to weep even more."

When the women became quite, he praised Allah and extolled Him and mentioned what He is entitled to. He called for blessings on Muhammad (S) and on the angels and the prophets.

[Here the reporter says:] "By Allah, I have never heard a speaker before or after him more eloquent in his speech than he was."

He then said: "Trace back my lineage and consider who I am?! Then look back at yourselves and remonstrate with yourselves. Then consider whether it is right for you to kill me and to violate my sanctity. Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet, and the son of his successor and cousin, the first of the believers in Allah and the one who believed [first] in what the Messenger brought from his Lord? Was not Hamzah, the lord of the martyrs, the uncle of my father?! Was not Ja'far, the martyr, the one who flies [in Heaven] and the one with two wings, my uncle?! Have you not heard the words common amidst you that the Messenger of Allah (S) said to me and my brother: 'These [two] are the

lords of the youths of Paradise?’

If you believe in what I am saying, [then know that] it is the truth, for, by Allah, I never thought of lying since I learnt that Allah hated the liars and that he punishes the one who lies. [But] if you regard it as a lie, then there are among you those who, if you asked them about it, would inform you [that the Prophet (S) had said so]. Ask Jabir bin ‘Abdillah al-Ansari⁹, or Abu Sa’id al-Khudhri¹⁰, or Sahl bin Sa’d al-Sa’idi¹¹, or Zayd bin Arqam¹²,

or Anas bin Malik¹³ and they will inform you that they have heard this statement from the Prophet of Allah (S) concerning myself and my brother. Is there not [sufficient] in this to prevent you shedding my blood?!”

Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan said: “Whoever understands what you are saying is [indeed] worshipping Allah on the fringe.”¹⁴

So Habib bin MuZahir said to him: “By Allah, I think you are worshipping Allah on seventy edges. I testify that you are right, you do not understand what he is saying; for indeed Allah has sealed your heart [from the truth].”

Al-Husayn (as) then told them: “If you are in any doubt about this, then are you going to doubt what I am going to say after this? Am I not the son of the daughter of your Prophet? By Allah, there is no son of the daughter of a prophet, between the East and the West, other than me; neither from among you, nor from other than you. I, only, am the son of the daughter of your Prophet. Now tell me, are you seeking retribution from me for one of your dead whom I have killed, or for property [of yours] which I expropriated, or are you seeking retaliation for a wound [which I have inflicted on one of you]?”

[They remained silent and] did not say anything to him.

Then he called out: “O Shabath bin Rib’i, O Hajjar bin Abjar, O Qais bin al-Ash’ath, O Yazid bin Harith! Did you not write to me [saying]: ‘The fruits have ripened, the gardens have grown green and the water spots have been filled. You are only coming to an army which has been prepared for you. So come?’”

They replied: “We did not!”¹⁵

So he said [with amazement]: “Glory be to Allah! Indeed, by Allah you did so.” Then he said: “O people! [Now] that you dislike me, let me go away from you to a secured place on this earth.”

So Qais bin al-Ash’ath said to him: “Will you not submit to the authority of the sons of your uncle [i.e. the Banu Umayyah]?! They will only treat you the way you wish and nothing detestful will touch you from them!”

Al-Husayn (as) said: “You are the brother of your brother [i.e. Muhammad bin al-Ash’ath]. Do you want the Banu Hashim to seek [retribution] from you for more than the blood of Muslim bin ‘Aqil?! Nay by

Allah, I will not give them my hand like one who has been humiliated, nor will I submit [to their demands] like the submission (*iqrar*) of the slaves!¹⁶ O servants of Allah! 'I seek the protection of my Lord and your Lord, lest you should stone me.'¹⁷ 'Indeed I seek the protection of my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.'¹⁸

Then, [he returned to (his tent)] and made his mount kneel and ordered 'Uqbah bin Sim'an to tie it up and he did so.¹⁹

The Speech of Zuhair bin al-Qain

Zuhair bin al-Qain then went out on his thick-tailed (*dhanub*) horse [while he was] fully armed. He said to them:

"O People of Kufah! Beware of the punishment of Allah, beware! Indeed a Muslim is obliged to admonish his fellow Muslim brother. So long as the sword does not separate us, we are [all] brothers, following the same religion, members of the same nation and [in that case] you are worthy of our advice. But when the sword comes [inbetween us], the bond [of brotherhood] will get severed. We will become a community and you will become a [different] community.

Allah has put you and us into test through the children of his Prophet, Muhammad (S), so that He may see what we and you are going to do in their right. We are inviting you to support them and to abandon the tyrant, 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad; for, indeed, you have only seen evil throughout their rule. They gouged your eyes, severed your hands and legs, mutilated your bodies and crucified you on date palms. They killed the exemplary personalities among you and the reciters of the Qur'an like Hujr bin 'Adiyy²⁰ and his companions, Hani' bin 'Urwah and his likes."

[Hearing this,] they started abusing him and praising 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad and prayed for him. They said: "By Allah, we will not leave [this place] until after we have killed your master and those with him, or send him and his companions to the governor, 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad as captives!"

Zuhair said: "O Servants of Allah, the children of Fatimah, may Allah's pleasure be with her, are more entitled to [your] love and help than the son of Sumayyah.²¹ If you are not willing to help them, then I seek refuge for you with Allah that you should kill them. Leave this man [alone] with his cousin, Yazid bin Mu'awiyah. For by my life, Yazid will consider you obedient even if you do not kill al-Husayn (as)."

[Here] Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan shot an arrow at him and said: "Quite! May Allah silence your voice. You have wearied us by your prattle!"

So Zuhair said to him: "O Son of the one who used to urinate on the heels of his feet. I am not speaking to you; you are, indeed, an animal! By Allah, I do not think that you can read properly even two verses from the Book of Allah! Humiliation and a painful punishment is awaiting you on the Day of Resurrection!"

Shamir said to him: “Allah is soon going to kill you and your master!”

[Zuhair] said: “Do you threaten me with death? By Allah, it is dearer for me to die with him than to live with you [people] forever!” He then turned to the people raising his voice and said:

“Servants of Allah! This rude and rough man and his likes should not deceive you with regard to your religion; for by Allah the intercession of Muhammad (S) shall not reach those who spill the blood of his offspring and household, and kill those who helped them and defended their sanctity!”

A man called out [Zuhair] and said: “Abu ‘Abdillah is saying [to you]: “Come back. By my life, if the believing man from among the people of Fir’aun²² had admonished his people and did his best in inviting them [to the right path], you also have admonished these people and done your best, if only admonition and invitation was of benefit to them.”²³

The Return of Hurr al-Riyahi

When ‘Umar bin Sa’d began to march [against al-Husayn], Hurr bin Yazid said to him: “May Allah guide you! Are you going to fight this man?!”

He said: “Yes, by Allah! I am going to fight him a battle the least part of which will be heads falling and severed hands flying.”

[Hurr] said: “Is not any of the options he proposed to you acceptable?”

‘Umar bin Sa’d said: “By Allah, if the matter rested with me, I would have [considered it]. But your governor has refused [any alternative].”

So Hurr went and stood apart from the people. With him was a man from his tribe called Qurrah bin Qais.²⁴ [Hurr] said: “Qurrah! Have you watered your horse today?”

He replied: “No.”

[Hurr] asked: “Do you want to water it?”

[Here Qurrah] says that: “By Allah, I thought that (Hurr) intended to leave the battle so that he may not witness it, but was unwilling to be seen by me when he left lest I should report against him. So I asked him: ‘I have not watered it, but I am [just] going to water it.’ Then I left the point where he was. By Allah, had he told me what he was intending to do, I would have gone with him to al-Husayn (as).”

[In the meanwhile,] Hurr gradually began to move closer to al-Husayn (as). A man from among his tribe called Muhajir bin Aws²⁵ asked him: “What do you want to do, O son of Yazid? Do you want to attack [them]?”

[Hurr] remained silent and [instead] a great shudder came over him. So the man said: “Son of Yazid! By Allah, the state you are in makes me suspicious. By Allah, I have never seen in you something like this before. If I was asked who was the bravest [man] from the people of Kufah, I would not neglect to mention you. So what is this I see in you [today]?”

[Hurr] said: “By Allah, I see myself between Heaven and the fire [of hell]. By Allah, I will not choose anything before Heaven, even though I am cut to pieces and burnt.” [With that] he whipped his horse and joined al-Husayn (as).

[When he saw al-Husayn (as)] he said to him: “May I be your ransom, O son of the Messenger of Allah! I was your companion who stopped you from returning. I accompanied you along the road and made you stop in this place. By Allah beside whom there is no deity, I did not think that the people would refuse to respond to what you have offered them and that they would ever come to this position [which they have now come to] with regard to you. Thus I said to myself: I am not concerned if I obey the people in some of the matters, so that they may not think that I no longer obey them. [I told myself] that these people will accept the offer al-Husayn has made to them. By Allah, if I had known that they would not accept that from you, I would not have done what I did with you. [But now] I have come to you repenting to my Lord for what I have committed and [I now intend] to support you until I die before you. Are you going to accept this as repentance?”

The [Imam (as)] said: “Yes, Allah will accept your repentance and forgive you. What is your name?”

He replied: “I am Hurr bin Yazid.”[26](#)

[Al-Husayn] said: “You are indeed a freeman (*hurr*) as your mother named you. You are free, by the will of Allah, in this world and the hereafter. Get down.”

[Hurr] said: “You will have no horseman better than me. I will fight with them on my horse for sometime and when I come down, [then] that will be my end.”

Al-Husayn (as) said: “Do as you deem fine.”

[The Speech of Hurr](#)

So [Hurr] advanced in front of [al-Husayn’s] companions and said [addressing the army of Ibn Sa’d]: “O people! Are you not going to accept from al-Husayn what he has offered you so that may Allah save you from having to go to war with him and fight him?”

They replied: “Here is the commander, ‘Umar bin Sa’d. Talk to him.” So [Hurr] told him all that he had told him and his army before this.

‘Umar [bin Sa’d] replied: “I have done all that I could. If I had a way to that, I would have certainly

considered [his offer].”

[Hurr then turned towards the people and] said: “O people of Kufah! May destruction befall your mothers! For you summoned him [to come to you], [now] when he has come to you, you have handed him over [to his enemies]! You claimed to fight with your own lives for him, [but] you have begun to attack him in order to kill him. You have laid hold of his life and seized his throat. You have encircled him on every side in order to prevent him from going to the broad land of Allah so that he and his family might be safe.

He has become like a captive in your hands; he has no longer the power over his profit or loss. You have prevented him, his womenfolk, his children, and his companions from [drinking] the water of the Euphrates which Jews, Christians and Majians may drink, and in which the pigs and the dogs of Sawad wallow. Here are the [family of al-Husayn] who have been overcome by thirst. How wickedly you have treated the offspring left by Muhammad after him! May Allah not give you water to drink on the Day of Thirst if you do not repent and desist from this stand of your’s on this day and at this moment.”²⁷

Some of the foot-soldiers attacked him by shooting arrows at him. So he went and stood in front of al-Husayn (as).²⁸

One of the people who had advanced [from Kufah] with ‘Umar bin Sa’d against al-Husayn was Yazid bin Ziyad bin Muhasir. When they rejected the conditions [and the offer] of al-Husayn (as), Yazid got inclined to [al-Husayn (as) and joined him].²⁹ [Therefore, he was among those who were guided on the day of ‘Ashura’ by the speech of Hurr al-Riyahi].

^{1.} Al-Tabari (5:421-422): “Abu Mikhnaf reports: [I narrate] on the authority of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Asim from Dahhak bin ‘Abdullah al-Mushriqi...”

^{2.} Al-Tabari: He was on the right wing of ‘Adiyy bin Wattad –the leader of the pilgrims from Rayy– during his battle with Mutarraf bin al-Mughirah bin Shu’bah in Isfahan (6:296). The last thing we read about him in al-Tabari is that he was among the guards of al-Saghd in 102 H and sustained many injuries therein, such that he became like a porcupine as a result of the arrows that struck his body (6:613). There is no mention of him before Karbala’ [in the books of history].

^{3.} Al-Tabari: He is the one whose name appeared in the list of those who testified against Hujr bin ‘Adiyy in the year 51 H (5:270). He was leading the foot soldiers from the Madhhij and Asad. Shamir had incited him to slaughter (dhibh) al-Husayn (as) but he refused and cursed him (5:450).

^{4.} Al-Tabari (5:422): “Fudhail bin Fadij al-Kindi has narrated to me on the authority of Muhammad bin Bishr from ‘Amru al-Hadhrami that...”

^{5.} Al-Tabari (5:423): “[I relate this] on the authority of some of the companions [of Abu Mikhnaf] who reported from Abu Khalid al-Kahili...” See also al-Irshad (pg.233) who narrated it from ‘Ali bin al-Husayn (as). Since Abu Khalid is among the companions of Imam al-Sajjad (as), he must be relating the report from him, though al-Tabari does not explicitly mention this.

^{6.} Al-Tabari (5:423): “‘Abdullah bin ‘Asim has related to me saying: ‘Dahhak al-Mushriqi narrated to me...” See al-Irshad (pg.234).

^{7.} Qur’an, 10:71.

^{8.} Qur’an, 7:196.

^{9.} Al-Tabari: Jabir bin ‘Abdullah al-Ansari refused to pay allegiance to Mu’awiyah at the hands of Busr bin Artat in the year 40 H, that was before the martyrdom of the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali (as). Jabir maintained that this was an

allegiance to falsehood. But he came under pressure from Busr and had to give allegiance out of fear for his life (5:139). In the year 50 H, when Mu'awiyah went on pilgrimage and was intending to move the pulpit and the staff of the Prophet of Allah [s] to Sham, Jabir stopped him and he desisted [from doing that] (5:239). In the year 74 H when Hajjaj entered Madinah on the orders of 'Abd al-Malik, he treated the companions of the Prophet [s] contemptuously and branded their necks, among them was Jabir bin 'Abdillah al-Ansari (6:195).

[10.](#) Al-Tabari: When the Holy Prophet (S) was examining his companions for the battle of Uhud, he rejected Abu Sa'id because of being too young (2:505). Abu Sa'id used to relate traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) on the merits of 'Ali (as) (3:149). However, he was one of those who refused to pay allegiance to 'Ali (as) after the murder of 'Uthman and was among his partisans ('uthmani) (4:430).

[11.](#) Al-Tabari: He used to relate traditions from the Holy Prophet (S) on the merits of 'Ali (as) (3:409). He also reported that 'Aishah had ordered 'Uthman bin Hunaif to be killed and later to be imprisoned (4:468). He has also narrated reports about 'Ali (as) (4:547). In the year 74 H when Hajjaj entered Madinah on the orders of 'Abd al-Malik, he treated the companions of the Prophet [s] contemptuously and branded their necks, among them was Sahl bin Sa'd. Hajjaj had accused him of betraying 'Uthman (6:195).

[12.](#) Al-Tabari: He used to narrate the merits of 'Ali (as) (2:310). Zayd is the one who informed the Holy Prophet (S) of the words of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the hypocrite (2:605). He was [also] the one who objected to Ibn Ziyad and stopped him from hitting the lips of Abu 'Abdillah (as) (5:456). Zayd passed away in the year 68 H, as reported in A'lam al-Wara (4:188).

[13.](#) Al-Tabari: It was by the assistance of Anas bin Malik that 'Umar [bin al-Khattab] could appoint Abu Musa al-Ash'ari over Basrah in 17 H (4:71). He participated in the conquest of Tustar (4:86). He was among those who aroused people in Basrah to help 'Uthman in the year 35 H (4:352). He was [also] among those in Basrah from whom Ziyad bin Abih had asked for help in 45 H (5:224). Anas was in Basrah on the day of 'Ashura'. After Ibn Ziyad was killed in 64 H, Ibn al-Zubair appointed him as the governor of Basrah. He led the people in prayers for 40 days (5:528). When Hajjaj took over Madinah in 64 H for 'Abd al-Malik and was treating contemptuously the companions of the Prophet [s] and branding them by their necks, he [also] branded Anas with the intention of humiliating him on account of his acceptance of the governorship for Ibn al-Zubair (6:195).

[14.](#) See also Tadhkirat al-Khawass (pg.252; Najaf edition).

[15.](#) Ibn al-Jawzi writes in al-Tadhkirah (pg.251): "They said: 'We do not know what you are talking about. Hurr bin Yazid al-Yarbu'i was one of their chiefs, so he said: 'Yes, by Allah, we have written to you and we are the ones who have invited you to come. May Allah distance the falsehood and its followers. By Allah, I will not choose this world over the hereafter.'"

[16.](#) Both al-Mufid in al-Irshad (pg.235) and after him Ibn Nama in Muthir al-Ahzan (pg.26) have recorded this statement of the Imam (as) in the following manner: "And I will not flee like a slave." Al-Muqarram has preferred [in al-Maqtal] this version [to the one which appears in this text]. However, the more suitable statement [among these two] as an answer to Ibn Ash'ath's question is [that which contains the concept of] 'submission' (iqrar), and not 'fleeing' (fihar); because what Ibn al-Ash'ath proposed to the Imam (as) was submission [to the authority of the Banu Umayyah], not to flee [to some secured place]. Although al-Muqarram attests the validity of his preference by citing the following statement of Imam 'Ali (as) regarding Masqalah bin Hubairah: 'And he fled like the fleeing of a slave', but that action of Masqalah does not, in any way, conform with the circumstances al-Husayn (as) was in, as it is very obvious.

[17.](#) Qur'an, 44:20.

[18.](#) Qur'an, 40:27.

[19.](#) Al-Tabari (5:423-426): "Abu Mikhnaf says: "Abdullah bin 'Asim has narrated to me that Dahhak al-Mushriqi said..."

[20.](#) Al-Tabari: Hujr was in the reinforcement troops sent from Yemen to the battle of al-Qadisiyyah in 16 H (4:27). He was among the first people from Kufah to answer to the call of 'Ali (as) for the battle of Jamal (5:485). He was one of those who had risen against 'Uthman (4:488). Hujr was the head of the Madhhij and the Ash'ariyyin, who were from Yemen residing in Kufah (4:500). He was with 'Ali (as) at Siffin and participated in the battle (4:574). He was among the witnesses to the agreed document for [choosing] the two arbitrators at Siffin (5:54).

He was on the command of the right wing of 'Ali (as) in the battle of Nahrawan against the Khawarij (5:85). In the year 39 H, 'Ali (as) dispatched him with 4000 men from Kufah to encounter the raid of Dahhak bin Qais who had come with 3000

soldiers. Hujr met Dahhak at Tadmur in the Syrian border. He had killed twenty men from Dahhak's army when the night set in and Dahhak fled, so Hujr returned (5:135).

When Mu'awiyah came to Kufah in the Year of Unity, he appointed Mughirah bin Shu'bah over the city. Mughirah used to abuse 'Ali (as) and Hujr used to strongly refute him. This continued until Mughira died. When Ziyad bin Abih was appointed by Mu'awiyah to replace Mughirah [and he continued with the same practice of abusing 'Ali (as),] Hujr once again stood against him in defence of 'Ali (as). Ziyad thus arrested him and sent him to Mu'awiyah who killed him (5:270).

21. Al-Tabari: Sumayyah was the adulteress slave. She was among those prostitutes who had banners [on top of their houses reflecting their identity] during the days of Ignorance (jahiliyyah). Six men from Quraish had slept with her and as a result she gave birth to Ziyad. The six men contended for the child but his actual father could not be known. He thus came to be known as Ziyad bin Abih, or Ziyad bin 'Ubaid, or Ziyad bin Sumayyah. Later, Mu'awiyah claimed him as the son of his father, Abu Sufyan, thus he also came to be known as Ziyad bin Abi Sufyan.

When Mu'awiyah appointed him over Kufah, he arrested Hujr and gathered witnesses against him. When Ziyad saw the name of Shaddad bin Bazi'ah among the witnesses, he said: "Has he not a father to be attributed to him! Take him off from the witnesses." So it was said to him: "He is the brother of al-Husayn, son of Ibn al-Mundhir." Ziyad said: "Then attribute him to his father." So his name was recorded together with that of his father. When Shaddad heard about this incident he retorted: "Woe onto the son of the adulteress! Is not his mother much known than his father is?! By Allah, [Ziyad] has not been attributed but to his mother, Sumayyah!" (5:270).

Yazid bin Mufarragh al-Himyari was with 'Abbad bin Ziyad, the brother of 'Ubaidullah, during the wars on Sajistan. They happened to be under constraint when Ibn Mufarragh swore at 'Abbad by reciting the following verses:

When Mu'awiyah bin Harb perishes, know that the base of your bowl has broken.
Be witness that your mother did not sleep with Abu Sufyan as a chaste woman.
It was a dubious affair surrounded by great apprehension and dismay.

He also said:

Has not the parcel from the man from Yemen reached Mu'awiyah bin Harb,
Do you get angry when it is said that your father is chaste, but are pleased when it is said that your father is a fornicator?
Know that your kinship with Ziyad is like the relationship of an elephant with the young of a she donkey.

A man from descendants of Ziyad called al-Sughda bin Salam bin Harb came to see Mahdi, the Abbasid caliph, while he was looking into public complaints. So he asked him: "Who are you?" The man replied: "Your cousin." "Which cousin of mine are you?" asked Mahdi. So the man traced back his lineage to Ziyad! So Mahdi said to him: "Son of Sumayyah, the adulteress! When did you become my cousin?" He then ordered him to be beaten and taken out.

Mahdi then turned towards those who were present and said: "Who has knowledge about the family of Ziyad?" But no one of them knew anything. Later, one of those who were present in the court of Mahdi called Isa bin Musa, or Musa bin Isa, happened to meet Abu 'Ali Sulaiman and requested him to write for him all he has been saying about Ziyad and his family, so that he could take it to Mahdi. So Abu 'Ali wrote and sent it to the caliph through Isa bin Musa.

Harun al-Rashid was at that time the governor of Basrah for Mahdi. So Mahdi wrote a letter to Harun al-Rashid instructing him to remove the names of the members of the family of Ziyad from the account books of the treasury (diwan) of the Quraish and the Arabs. Some of what he wrote to him is as follows:

"The decision of Mu'awiyah bin Abi Sufyan in claiming Ziyad –son of 'Ubaid who was a slave of the family of 'Alaj, from the tribe of Thaqif– as the son of Abu Sufyan was rejected by the community of the Muslims after the death of Mu'awiyah. This decision was not accepted even during his lifetime by many personalities known for their contentment, merits, piety and knowledge; that was because they knew well [the personality of] Ziyad, his father and mother.

Mu'awiyah had not done that out of piety or guidance, or because of following an upright tradition, or due to the authority he received from the past rightful leaders; rather, he did that [for several reasons:] out of desire to destroy his religion and the hereafter, his determination to oppose the Book and the Sunnah, taking pride in the extension of his kinsmen and influence, and [finally] because he expected him to support and assist him on [the path of] falsehood he was inclined to, from his evil deeds to his evil conduct. [All this on one side,] while the Prophet of Allah (S) has said: 'The child belongs to the husband (firash) [i.e. the husband of the woman who committed adultery], and the adulterer ('ahir) gets the stone [i.e. the man who committed adultery with the married woman gets nothing].' He also said: 'Whoever is named behind other than his father, or traces back his origin to other than those who are related to him, then the curse of Allah, [His] angels and of the mankind is upon him. Allah will not accept from him repentance or [any] ransom.'

By my life, Ziyad was neither born in the lap of Abu Sufyan [i.e. under his guardianship], nor in his bed [i.e. as a result of his sleeping with Sumayyah]. Nor 'Ubaid was his slave, nor was Sumayyah his maid. Neither of the two were part of his possession, nor did they become part his property through any means. Therefore, by claiming Ziyad as the son of Abu Sufyan, Mu'awiyah went against the ruling of Allah, the Almighty, the Majestic, and against the orders of the Prophet of Allah (S). He followed in that his own desire [because he] disliked the truth and wanted to move away from it. Allah, the Almighty, the Majestic, says: 'And who is more astray than him who follows his desires without any guidance from Allah? Indeed Allah does not guide the wrongdoing lot' [Qur'an, 28:50]. And Allah tells [Prophet] Dawud (as), whom he had granted wisdom, prophethood and wealth: 'O Dawud! Indeed We have made you a vicegerent on the earth. So judge between people with justice' [Qur'an, 38:26].

In a similar incident known to the people who preserve the narrations, when Mu'awiyah was speaking to the associates of the Banu Mughirah from the Makhzum, who intended to claim Nasr bin Hajjaj al-Salami as one of their family members, he threw at them a stone which he had prepared for that beneath his bed –following the words of the Holy Prophet: '...And the adulterer deserves the stone'. So the Banu Mughirah retorted: 'Should we let you do what you did in the case of Ziyad, but you are not ready to accept what we have done in the case of our companion [i.e. Nasr]? So Mu'awiyah replied: 'The ruling of the Prophet of Allah (S) is better for you than the judgement of Mu'awiyah!' (8: 131).

It is known from here that though Zuhair bin al-Qain was a follower of 'Uthman before he was guided aright and he answered the call of the Imam (as), he was angry on Mu'awiyah [right from those days]; because of his claiming Ziyad as his family member and killing Hujr bin 'Adiyy. This shows that, in reality, Zuhair was prepared from within to leave the side of 'Uthman and to show his resentment for Mu'awiyah, his son Yazid, and their governors, as he was equally ready to answer the call of the Imam (as) for rising against them.

[22.](#) The Imam (as) likens him to the believer from the people of Fir'aun because Zuhair was previously a partisan of 'Uthman. So it is as if he was from among the Banu Umayyah [who later changed his stance and joined the camp of truth].

[23.](#) Al-Tabari (5:426): "Ali bin Han'alah bin As'ad al-Shami has narrated to me from a man from his tribe called Kathir bin 'Abdullah al-Sha'bi –who witnessed the martyrdom of al-Husayn– that: 'When we advanced against al-Husayn, Zuhair bin al-Qain came out to us...' This speech has also been related by al-Ya'qubi (2:230; Najaf edition).

[24.](#) We have given his biography under the reports which discuss the arrival of the Imam (as) at Karbala'. Habib bin Mu'ahir had invited him to help the Imam (as) and he promised him to think about this, but he did not come back. It seems that he is relating this report and claiming it.

[25.](#) He, together with al-Sha'bi, were the killers of Zuhair bin al-Qain.

[26.](#) Perhaps Hurr was armed to the teeth and his head bowed in shame that the Imam (as) could not recognize him, and so he had to inquire about his identity. Otherwise, he knew him from before.

[27.](#) See also al-Irshad (pg.235) and Tadhkirat al-Khawass (pg.252).

[28.](#) Al-Tabari (5:427): "[Abu Mikhnaf says: 'I relate on the authority of Abu Janab al-Kalbi from 'Adiyy bin Harmalah who said...' See also al-Irshad (pg.235).

[29.](#) Al-Tabari (5:445): "Fudhail bin Khudaj al-Kindi has narrated to me that Yazid bin Ziyad, who is Abu al-Sha'sha' al-Kindi, from the Banu Bahdalah..."

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