

The family of Imam Husayn (a.s.) in Kufa

When the head of al Husayn, peace be on him, arrived and after Ibn Sad arrived on the next day (bringing) with him the daughters and household of al Husayn, peace be on him, Ibn Ziyad sat before the people in the governor's palace. He had given the people a general summons and had ordered them to be present (to see) the head. He put it in front of him, and he began to look at it with a smile. In his hand he had a cane and he began to poke at the teeth with it.

When Zayd Ibn Arqam, a Companion of the Prophet who was (then) an old man, saw him poking at the teeth with the cane he said, *“Take your cane away from those two lips. For, by God, other than Whom there is no deity, I have seen the lips of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, touch those two lips countless times.”*

(With that) he began to weep.

“Does God make your eyes weep?” asked Ibn Ziyad. *“Or are you weeping because of God's victory? If it was not for the fact that you are an old man who has become silly and your mind has left you, I would cut off your head.”*

Zayd Ibn Arqam stood up in front of him and went to his house.

(Meanwhile) the family of al Husayn, peace be on him, was brought before Ibn Ziyad. Zaynab, the sister of al Husayn, peace be on him, came in in the middle of the group, pretending not to be herself; she was wearing her dirtiest clothes. She went and sat in a corner of the palace and her maids crowded around her.

“Who is that woman who has gone to the side and has sat in a corner with her women?” Ibn Ziyad demanded but Zaynab did not answer. He repeated the question about her a second time.

“This is Zaynab, daughter of Fatima, the daughter of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and grant him peace,” one of her women told him.

“Praise be to God Who has disgraced you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims,” said

Ibn Ziyad as he came towards her.

“Praise be to God Who has favoured us with His Prophet, Muhammad, may God bless him and his family,” answered Zaynab, *“and He has purified us completely from sin. He only disgraces the great sinner and reveals the false nature of the profligate. Such men are not among us, praise be to God.”*

“How do you consider God has treated your House?” asked Ibn Ziyad. *“God decreed death for them and they went forward (bravely) to their resting-places,”* Zaynab replied. *“God will gather you and us together. You will plead your excuses to Him and we will be your adversaries before Him.”*

Ibn Ziyad became enraged and burnt with anger.

“Governor,” intervened 'Amr Ibn Hurayth, *“She is only a woman and women are not responsible for anything that they say. Do not blame her mistakes.”*

“God has healed my soul from your tyranny and the rebellion of your House,” he said to her.

Zaynab, peace be on her, became weak and wept.

“By my life,” she cried out to him, *“you have killed the mature ones (of my family); you have pierced my family; you have cut down my young branches; and you have pulled out my root. If this heals you, then you have been healed.”*

“By my life,” declared Ibn Ziyad, *“this is a woman who makes poetry. Your father was a poet.”*

“What has a woman to do with poetry?” she answered. *“Indeed I have (things) to distract me from poetry but my heart causes me say what I am saying.”*

'Ali Ibn al Husayn, peace be on them, was presented to him.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“I am 'Ali Ibn al Husayn” he answered.

“Didn't God kill 'Ali Ibn al Husayn?”

“I have a brother who is also called 'Ali,” answered 'Ali, peace be on him, *“the people killed him.”*

“Rather God killed him,” affirmed Ibn Ziyad.

“God receives the souls at the time of their death.” (29:42)

“How dare you answer me like that!” shouted Ibn Ziyad angrily, *“and that will be the last of you because of (your) answer to me. Take him away and cut his head off!”* Zaynab, his aunt, clung on to him, pleading, *“O Ibn Ziyad, haven't you had enough of our blood?”* Then she clung on to him and said, *“By*

God, I will not leave him. If you kill him, kill me with him.”

Ibn Ziyad looked at her and at him, and said, *“How wonderful is family relationship! I think she wants me to kill her with him. Leave him, for I see him (now) for what he is.”*

He rose from his assembly to leave the palace and go to the mosque. He went up on the pulpit. He praised and glorified God, then he said, *“Praise be to God Who has revealed the truth and the followers of the truth, and has given victory to the Commander of the faithful, Yazid, and his party, and has killed the liar who is the son of a liar and his Shia.”*

At this 'Abd Allah Ibn Afif al-Azdi, who had been one of the Shia of the Commander of the faithful ('Ali Ibn Abi Talib) stood in front of him and shouted, *“O enemy of God, you are the liar and your father and (the man) who appointed you and his father. O Ibn Murjana, you kill the sons of Prophets and take the place of men of truth on the pulpit.”*

“Get him for me,” ordered Ibn Ziyad.

The soldiers seized him but he gave the battle cry of al-Azd. Seven hundred of them (quickly) gathered and took him away from the soldiers.

At night Ibn Ziyad sent someone to get him out of his house. He was executed and crucified in al-Sabkha, may God have mercy on him.

The (next) morning Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad sent the head of al-Husayn, peace be on him, (to Yazid) after it had been taken through all the streets and tribes of Kufa.

It is reported from Zayd Ibn Arqam:

It was brought past; it was stuck on a spear and I was in a room in my (house). As it was opposite me I heard it recite,

“Or do you think that the Companions of the Cave and the inscription were among Our wonderful signs.” (18:9)

My flesh shuddered and I called out, *“O son of the Apostle of God, your head is miraculous, miraculous.”*

(This account is not in Tabari) When they had finished taking it around Kufa and had brought it back to the palace door, Ibn Ziyad gave it to Zahar Ibn Qays and he (also) gave him the heads of his companions. He despatched him to Yazid Ibn Muawiya and he sent with him Abu Burda Ibn 'Awf al-Azdi, and Tariq Ibn Abi Zubyan al-Azdi together with a group of Kufans, to take them to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiya in Damascus.

Abd Allah Ibn Rabiaa al-Himyari reported:

I was with Yazid Ibn Muawiya in Damascus when Zahar Ibn Qays brought the head to him.

“Woe upon you! What is behind you? What have you got?” demanded Yazid.

“O Commander of the faithful, he replied, I bring good news of God's victory and support. Al Husayn Ibn ‘Ali, peace be on them, came against us with eighteen men of his House and sixty of his Shi’a. We went out to meet them and we asked them to surrender and submit to the authority of the governor, ‘Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad, or to fight. They chose to fight rather than to surrender.

We attacked them as the sun rose and surrounded them on every side. Eventually (our) swords took their toll of the heads of the people and they began to flee without having any refuge (to go to). They (tried to) take refuge from us on the (open) hills and in the hollows, like the doves seek refuge from a hawk.

By God, Commander of the faithful, it was nothing but the slaughtering of animals for slaughter. (It was only the time taken by) the sleep of a man taking his siesta (before) we had come upon the last of them. There were their naked bodies, their blood-stained clothes, their faces thrown in the dust.

The sun burst down on them; the wind scattered (dust) over them; their visitors were (scavenging) eagles and vultures.”

Yazid looked down for a time, then he raised his head and said: I would have been satisfied with your obedience (to my orders) without this killing of al Husayn, peace be on him. If it had been me who had accompanied him, I would have let him off (such a fate).

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