

The Household Of Al-Husayn (as) In Kufah

'Umar bin Sa'd remained [there for the rest of] that day and the next day.¹ He ordered the heads of the remainder [of al-Husayn's followers who had been slain] to be cut off. He then sent seventy-two heads² with Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan, Qais bin Ash'ath, 'Amru bin al-Hajjaj and 'Azarah bin Qais. They journeyed until they brought them to 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad.

['Umar] then ordered Humaid bin Bukair al-Ahmari³ to summon the people for the journey to Kufah. He took with him the daughters and sisters of al-Husayn (as), the children, and 'Ali bin al-Husayn who was [still] sick.⁴

Qurrah bin Qais al-Tamimi reports: "I will not forget Zainab, the daughter of Fatimah, when she passed by her brother al-Husayn (as) lying dead. She was crying: 'O Muhammad! O Muhammad! The angels from the heavens salute you! Here is al-Husayn lying in the plains, covered in [his] blood, with his limbs severed from his body. O Muhammad! And your daughters have become captives, while your offspring have been killed and left for the east wind to blow on them.' By Allah, her wails made every friend and foe weep⁵. The women lamented and struck their faces."⁶

The Burial of al-Husayn (as) and His Companions

[Some of] the Banu Asad, who had been staying at al-Ghadhiriyyah, buried al-Husayn (as) and his followers, a day after they were killed.^{7,8}

The Head of the Imam (as) Before Ibn Ziyad

Humaid bin Muslim narrates: "Umar bin Sa'd summoned me and sent me to his family members to give them the good news of the victory of Allah granted to him and that he was in safety. So I proceeded until I came to his family and informed them about that.

There [I saw] Ibn Ziyad sitting, while the delegation that brought [the heads] had [just] entered on him. The [people of] Kindah, led by Qais bin al-Ash'ath, came forward with thirteen heads. The [people of]

Hauzan, under Shamir bin Dhi al-Jaushan, came with twenty heads. Seventeen heads were brought by the [men from the] Tamim. Banu Asad brought six heads. Madhhij came with seven heads and the rest of the army came [in] with seven heads. This comes up to seventy heads.

[Ibn Ziyad] let them in and granted the [rest of] people the permission to enter. I was one of those who went in. I saw the head of al-Husayn (as) placed in front of him, while he was poking at his front teeth with a staff. When Zayd bin Arqam⁹ saw that he would not stop poking [the teeth], he said: 'Take your cane away from those [two] lips. For, by He beside whom there is no deity, I have seen the lips of the Prophet of Allah (S) on those two lips, kissing them!' [With that] the old man broke into tears.

Ibn Ziyad said to him: 'May Allah make your two eyes weep! By Allah, 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 bin Arqam] stood up and went out¹⁰ saying: 'A slave has appointed [another] slave to rule and he is treating [the people] as his [own] property. O the community of the Arabs! [Know that] you have become slaves henceforth! You have killed the son of Fatimah and taken the son of Marjanah as [your] ruler! He will kill the righteous among you and enslave the wicked. You have thus accepted humiliation! And away from the people who have accepted humiliation!' ¹¹

After he went out, I heard people saying: 'By Allah, Zayd has said something that if Ibn Ziyad had heard, he would have killed him.'

[The Captives in the Court of Ibn Ziyad](#)

When [al-Husayn's] sisters, his womenfolk and children were brought before 'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad, Zainab, the daughter of Fatimah, put on her mean clothes, pretending not to be herself. Her maids crowded around her and she sat.

'Ubaidullah bin Ziyad said: 'Who is that woman sitting?' She did not answer him. He repeated that three times, but she did not speak.

One of her maids [then] said: 'This is Zainab, daughter of Fatimah.'

'Ubaidullah said to her: 'All praise is due to Allah Who has disgraced you, killed you and revealed the false nature of your claims.'

[Zainab] replied: 'Praise be to Allah Who honoured us with Muhammad (S) and purified us with a thorough purification. It is not the way you have said. Only a sinner is disgraced [by Allah] and [only] the false nature of the wicked is revealed!'

He said: 'How do you consider Allah has treated the members of your household?'

She replied: 'Death had been decreed for them and they went forward [bravely] to their resting places.'

Allah will gather you and them, and you will argue against each other and dispute with one another before him.’¹²

[At this] Ibn Ziyad became enraged and he burnt with anger. He said to her: ‘Allah has cured my soul from your tyrant [brother] and the rebellious members of your family!’

[Here] Zainab wept. She then said: ‘By my life, you have killed my elders and destroyed my family. [You have] cut my branches and extracted my roots! If this is what cures you, then you have been cured!’

‘Ubaidullah said: ‘This is a woman who rhymes her speech (*sajja’ah*).¹³ By my life, your father used to speak in rhymed prose and was a poet.’

She answered: ‘What has a woman to do with rhythmic construction of statements! I have [things] to distract me from that. But this is the agony of my heart that is flowing on my tongue.’¹⁴

Thereafter, ‘Ubaidullah bin Ziyad looked at ‘Ali bin al–Husayn and asked him: ‘What is your name?’

He replied: ‘I am ‘Ali bin al–Husayn.’

[Ibn Ziyad] said: ‘Did Allah not kill ‘Ali bin al–Husayn?’ [At this, Imam al–Sajjad] remained silent.

So Ibn Ziyad said to him: ‘Why are you not speaking?’

[Al–Sajjad] said: ‘I had a brother who was also called ‘Ali. The people killed him.’

Ibn Ziyad said: ‘Allah has indeed killed him.’ [Again] he remained quiet. So Ibn Ziyad said: ‘Why are you not speaking?’

He said: ‘Allah takes the souls at the time of their death.’¹⁵ ‘No soul may die except with Allah’s leave.’¹⁶

Ibn Ziyad said: ‘By Allah, you are one of them [i.e. the rebellious].’ [Then he said to Mariyy bin Ma’adh al–Ahmari:] ‘Woe onto you! Kill him.’

His aunt, Zainab, clung on to him and said: ‘O Ibn Ziyad! You have had enough of our blood! Have you still not quenched your thirst by our blood?! Is there anyone you have left among us?’ Then she embraced [al–Sajjad] and said: ‘I beseech you by Allah –if you are a believer– that if you [intend to] kill him, then kill me with him.’

‘Ali [bin al–Husayn] called on him: ‘If you have a bond of kinship with them [i.e. these women], then ask a pious man to accompany them in a manner worthy of Islam.’

Ibn Ziyad looked at them and said: ‘How wonderful is family relationship! By Allah, she likes me to kill her with him, if I were to kill him. Leave the boy.’^{17,18}

‘Ubaidullah bin Ziyad then stuck the head of al–Husayn [(as) on a spear] and ordered it to be taken

round [the city of] Kufah.”¹⁹

The Stand of ‘Abdullah bin ‘Afif

[After the gathering was over], it was announced: “Offer your prayers in congregation.” So people gathered in the great mosque [of Kufah]. Ibn Ziyad ascended the pulpit and said:

“Praise be to Allah Who has revealed the truth and the followers [of the truth], and has given victory to the commander of the faithful, Yazid bin Mu’awiyah, and his party, and has killed the liar son of the liar: al-Husayn bin ‘Ali, and his followers.”

Ibn Ziyad had not yet finished his speech when ‘Abdullah bin ‘Afif al-Azdi al-Ghamidi –who was among the Shi’ah of ‘Ali –[lit.] may Allah honour his face, and who would hardly leave the great mosque as he used to [be busy] praying in it the whole day²⁰– sprung up as he heard [these words from] Ibn Ziyad. He said:

“The liar, son of the liar, is you and your father, and the one who appointed you as the governor [i.e. Yazid] and his father. O son of Marjanah!²¹ You kill the sons of Prophets and speak the speech of the men of truth?!”

Ibn Ziyad said: “Get him for me.”

The soldiers rushed towards him and arrested him. He gave the battle cry of al-Azd [saying]: “O the kind one!” So a number of young men from Azd quickly came forward, freed him and took him to his family.²²

Ibn Ziyad then sent someone who brought [Ibn ‘Afif] to him. He killed him and ordered him to be crucified in al-Sabkhah, so he was crucified there.²³

¹. See also al-Irshad (pg.243).

². See al-Irshad (pg.243). Sibt bin al-Jawzi says in al-Tadhkirah (pg.256; Najaf): “There were ninety-two heads.” But this is, perhaps, due to the misspelling of seventy (sab’in), for he himself asserts on page 259 of the same book: “There were more than seventy heads.”

³. Al-Tabari (5:368): “He was one of the bodyguards of Ibn Ziyad. Ibn Ziyad had sent him with Shuraih, the chief judge, to monitor [Shuraih] when he sent the latter to see Hani’ and then to inform his clansmen that he was safe. Shuraih later used to say: “I swear by Allah, had he not been with me, I would have conveyed to the followers of Hani’ what he had asked me to tell them.”

⁴. Al-Tabari (5:453–455): “[Abu Mikhnaf says:] ‘Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim that...’

⁵. See Maqatil al-Talibiyyin (pg.256).

⁶. Al-Tabari (5:455): “[Abu Mikhnaf says:] ‘Abu Zuhair al-‘Absi related to me from Qurrah bin Qais al-Tamimi that...’

⁷. Al-Tabari (5:453–455): “[Abu Mikhnaf report:] ‘Sulaiman bin Abi Rashid has narrated to me from Humaid bin Muslim who said...’

⁸. See al-Irshad (pg.243&249) and Muruj al-Dhahab (3:72). However, the predominant opinion is [that the burial took place] three days after they were [martyred] and in the presence of Imam al-Sajjad (as), as the the debate between ‘Ali bin Hamzah and Imam al-Ridha (as) attests to this fact. See Maqatil al-Husayn (pg.415) of ‘Abd al-Razzaq al-Muqarram.

9. Sibṭ bin al-Jawzī narrates in al-Tadhkirah (pg.257) from Ibn Sirīn on the authority of al-Bukhārī that: “When the head of al-Husayn (as) was placed in front of Ibn Ziyād, it was put in a wash-bowl. [Ibn Ziyād] began striking [al-Husayn’s] teeth with a cane. Anas bin Malik was with him and so he started weeping and said: ‘He is the most resemblance of them to the Prophet of Allah.’”

10. See also al-Irshād (pg.243).

11. Sibṭ bin al-Jawzī has narrated this incident in al-Tadhkirah (pg.257). He further adds: “[Zayd] then said: ‘O Ibn Ziyād! I am indeed going to tell you a word which is harsher for you than this: I have seen the Prophet of Allah (S) seat al-Hasan on his right lap and al-Husayn on his left. Then he placed his hand on the crown of their heads and said: ‘O Allah, I commend to Your protection both of them and the righteous among the believers!’ So how have you treated the trust of the Messenger of Allah (S) with you, O Ibn Ziyād?!” Ibn al-Jawzī then says: “Hisham bin Muhammad reports: ‘When the head [of al-Husayn] was put before Ibn Ziyād, his fortuneteller said to him: ‘Stand up and put your foot on the mouth of your adversary! So he stood and put his foot on [al-Husayn’s] mouth. Then he said to Zayd bin Arqam: ‘How do you find this?’ [Zayd] said: ‘By Allah, I have seen the Prophet of Allah (S) keeping his mouth where you have kept your foot.’” Ibn al-Jawzī then writes: “Al-Sha’bi said: ‘Qais bin ‘Abbad was with Ibn Ziyād. So he asked [Qais]: ‘What is your opinion regarding me and al-Husayn?’ He said: ‘His grandfather, his father and mother will come and intercede for him on the Day of Judgement, while your grandfather, your father and mother will come and intercede for you!’ [At this,] Ibn Ziyād became angry and asked him to leave the gathering.” Ibn al-Jawzī relates from al-Tabaqat of Ibn Sa’d that he said: “Marjanah, the mother of Ibn Ziyād, said to his son [Ibn Ziyād]: ‘O vicious [man]! You have killed the son of the Prophet of Allah! By Allah, you will never see the heaven!’” See al-Tadhkirah (pg.259). Ibn al-Athīr has also narrated this in al-Kāmil (4:265).

12. See al-Irshād (pg.243) and al-Tadhkirah (pg.258&259; Najaf edition).

13. The word sajjā’ah and saja’ah in the text above have been recorded by Tabarī as shajā’ah and shujā’ah (a brave woman). In al-Irshād (pg.244; Najaf edition), al-Mufīd has recorded these words in the same manner as we have brought them in the text, which is more appropriate and suitable as far as the context of the speech is concerned.

14. Al-Tabarī (5:456–457): “[Abū Mikhnaḥ says:] ‘Sulaymān bin Abī Rashīd has narrated to me from Humāid bin Muslim that...’”

15. Qur’an, 39:42.

16. Qur’an, 3:145.

17. Al-Tabarī (5:457): “[Abū Mikhnaḥ reports:] ‘As for Sulaymān bin Abī Rashīd, he related to me from Humāid bin Muslim who said...’”

18. Tabarī writes in Dhayl al-Mudhāyyal that: “‘Alī [bin al-Husayn al-Asghar] said: ‘When I was brought before Ibn Ziyād, he asked me: ‘What is your name?’ I answered: ‘Alī bin Husayn.’ He said: ‘Did Allah not kill ‘Alī?’ I said: ‘I had a brother who was older than me and the people killed him!’ He said: ‘Rather Allah killed him.’ I said: ‘Allah takes the souls at the time of their death.’ So he ordered me to be killed. Zaynab bint ‘Alī (as) then said to him: ‘O Ibn Ziyād! You have had enough of our blood! I beseech you by Allah –if you are a believer– that if you [intend to] kill him, then kill me with him.’ So he left him.” Tabarī then relates in Dhayl al-Mudhāyyal (pg.630; Dar al-Ma’arīf publications), quoting from al-Tabaqat of Ibn Sa’d (5:211–218), that he narrated from Malik bin Ismā’il, who was relating from Sahl bin Shu’aib, who reported from his father Shu’aib, that Minhal bin ‘Amru said: “[One day] I went to see ‘Alī bin al-Husayn (as). I said to him: ‘How are you this morning, may Allah guide you?’ He said: ‘I have not seen an old man like you in this city, who does not know our condition! But if you are not aware and do not know about it, then I will inform you. [He then said:] ‘Our position among our people is that of the children of Israel amidst the people of Fir’aun. ‘They were slaying their sons and sparing their women.’ Abusing and cursing our master and leader [‘Alī bin Abī Talīb] from the pulpits has become a means of gaining closeness to our enemy. The Quraish consider themselves superior than the Arabs because Muhammad was from them, not because of any other reason; while the Arabs are acknowledging that for them. The Arabs [on their part] see themselves to be superior to the non-Arabs because Muhammad is from them, and they have no other reason for their superiority except this; while the non-Arabs have accepted this from them. [Now], if the claim of the Arabs that they are superior to the non-Arabs is true, and if the claim of the Quraish that they enjoy superiority over the Arabs is [also] true, because [both the sides] argue that Muhammad is from them, then we, the household of Muhammad, certainly enjoy superiority over the Quraysh, because Muhammad was from us. But [unfortunately] they began taking our right and do not acknowledge any right for us! This is

our situation, if you do not know what our condition is.” Ibn Sa’d says: “‘Abd al-Rahman bin Yunus narrated to us from Ja’far bin Muhammad [al-Sadiq] on the authority of Sufyan that: ‘Ali bin al-Husayn died at the age of 58 years.’ This implies that ‘Ali bin al-Husayn was with his father [in Karbala’] when he was 23 or 24 years old. Therefore, the view that says that he was still a child at that time, who had not grown up, is in no way correct. Rather, he was sick at that time and thus could not fight. Besides this, how can he be a child at that time while Abu Ja’far Muhammad bin ‘Ali [al-Baqir] (as) had been born to him?” See also al-Irshad (pg.244) for the conversation that took place between al-Sajjad and Ibn Ziyad. Ibn al-Jawzi has briefly related the actual report [i.e. the conversation between Ibn Ziyad, Lady Zainab and Imam al-Sajjad] in al-Tadhkirah (pg.258; Najaf edition).

[19.](#) Al-Tabari (5:459): “Abu Mikhnaf says...”

[20.](#) Al-Tabari (5:458): “He lost his left eye in the battle of Jamal, fighting alongside ‘Ali (as). He was struck on his head in the battle of Siffin and a second strike on his eyebrow. He thus lost his other eye too.” See al-Irshad (pg.244) for the actual incident. Sibt bin al-Jawzi has also narrated the incident briefly in al-Tadhkirah (pg.259).

[21.](#) Marjanah is an Arabicized version of the Persian word mehrgan. She was the mother of Ibn Ziyad, who was a slave girl supposedly from Khuzistan.

[22.](#) Al-Tabari: ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Mikhnaf al-Azdi was sitting. So he said: “Woe onto other than you! You have destroyed yourself and your clan!” (5:459). ‘Abd al-Rahman was the uncle of Abu Mikhnaf’s father, for he was the brother of Sa’id, the grandfather of Abu Mikhnaf. He participated in the battle of Siffin and had also stood against the raids launched by Mu’awiyah’s army, as reported in al-Tabari (5:133). He was with ‘Abdullah bin al-Muti’ al-‘Adawiyy –the governor of Ibn al-Zubair in Kufah– during the uprising of Mukhtar in 66 H. Al-‘Adawiyy had sent him with some horsemen to the cemetery of the people of Said (6:18). ‘Abd al-Rahman was also among the advisers to al-‘Adawiyy, who advised him to leave Kufah and go to Hijaz (6:31). He disliked rising against Mukhtar, but when they insisted him to do so, he [ultimately] rose against him (6:44). He fought [the followers of Mukhtar [near] the Euphrates. He was covered with wounds and was carried away by the soldiers (6:51). [‘Abd al-Rahman] then joined Mus’ab bin al-Zubair in Basrah, along with those noblemen of Kufah who had risen [against Mukhtar] (6:55). Mus’ab sent him to Kufah in 67 H to invite people to pay allegiance to Ibn al-Zubair and to persuade them to go [and join] Mus’ab (6:95). He remained with Mus’ab throughout his war against Mukhtar (6:104). In the year 74 H, during the rule of ‘Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, [‘Abd al-Rahman] fought against the Azariqah sect of the Khawarij, on the order of Bishr bin Marwan, the governor of Basrah (6:197). He pursued them up to Kazarun, where they [bravely] fought him. [Most of] his followers were put to flight except for a few of them. ‘Abd al-Rahman continued to fight until he was killed in the year 75 H (6:212).

[23.](#) Al-Tabari (5:458): “[Abu Mikhnaf relates that:] ‘Humaid bin Muslim said...”

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