

Tragedy of Karbala as reported by the Sunnis

Part 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Events That Transpired With Muslim B. Aqil

Al Husayn, peace be upon him, summoned Muslim b. Aqil and despatched him with Qays b. Mushir al Saydawi and Umara b. Abd Allah al Saluli, and Abd Allah and Abd al Rahman, sons of Shaddad al Arhabi. He enjoined him to be pious before God and to conceal his affair, and to act in a kindly way. If he saw that the people were united and had committed themselves to an agreement, he should speedily inform him of that.

Muslim, the mercy of God be on him, departed until he came to Medina. There he prayed in the mosque of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, and said farewell to the dearest members of his family. Then he hired two guides. These two set out with him, but they missed the way and got lost. Both were struck by severe thirst and were unable to continue their journey. They indicated the path to him after it again appeared clear to them. Muslim carried on along the path and the two guides died of thirst. Muslim b. Aqil, the mercy of God be with them both, wrote a letter from the place known as al Madiq and sent it with Qays b. Mushir:

I set out from Medina with two guides and they missed the way and got lost. Both were overcome by thirst and soon died. But we kept going until we came to water. We were only saved at the last moment of our lives. That water is in a place called al- Madiq in a low valley. I have taken this as a bad omen for my mission. If you consider it so, you could relieve me and send another in my place.

Greetings.

Al-Husayn, peace be upon him, wrote (back):

I am afraid that your urging me in the letter to relieve you from the task which I sent you on is only cowardice. Therefore go on with your task which I gave you.

Greetings.

Muslim read the letter, he said: "It is not for myself that I am afraid." So he continued (once more) until he came to a well belonging to (the tribe of) Tayyi'. He stayed there (the night) then as he rode off (he saw) a man hunting. He saw him shoot a fawn as it came into his sight, and kill it. Muslim said: "(Thus), will we kill our enemies, God willing."

He went on until he entered Kufa. There he stayed in the house of al-Mukhtar b. Abi Ubayda, which is called today the house of Muslim b. al-Musayyib. The Shi'a began to come regularly to (see) him. Whenever a group of them gathered together with him, he would read the letter of al-Husayn, peace be upon him, and they would weep. The people pledged allegiance to him (on behalf of al-Husayn) to the extent that eighteen thousand men made such a pledge to him.

Therefore Muslim wrote to al-Husayn, peace be upon him, informing him of the pledge of allegiance to him of the eighteen thousand and urging him to come.

The Shi'a began to visit Muslim b. Aqil so frequently that his place (of residence) became well-known. Al-Numan b. Bashir, who had been Muawiya's governor of Kufa and had been confirmed in office by Yazid, knew of his whereabouts. He went up on the pulpit and after praising God said: "Servants of God, fear God and do not rush into rebellion and discord. For in that men will be destroyed, blood will be shed, and property will be plundered. I do not combat anyone who does not combat me, nor do I disturb those of you who remain quiet. I do not oppose you, nor do I apprehend (you merely) on grounds of suspicion, accusation or hearsay. However, if you turn your faces away from me, violate your pledge of allegiance and oppose your Imam, by God, other than Whom there is no deity, I will strike you with my sword as long as its hilt remains in my hand, even though I do not have any of you to help me. Yet I hope that those among you who know the truth are more numerous than those whom falsehood will destroy."

Abd Allah b. Muslim b. Rabi'al al-Hadrami, an ally of the Banu Umayya stood before him and said: "O governor, what you see can only be adequately dealt with by violence; for the view which you hold about what (should be done) between you and your enemy is that of the weak."

"I would prefer to be one of the weak (while remaining) in obedience to God than to be one of the mighty (while at the same time being) in rebellion against God," answered al-Nu'man. Then he went down (from the pulpit).

Abd Allah b. Muslim went out and wrote the (following) letter to Yazid b. Mu'awiya:

Muslim b. Aqil has come to Kufa and Shi'a have pledged allegiance to him on behalf of al-Husayn b. Abi

Talib, peace be on them. If you have any need for Kufa, then send it a strong man, who will carry out your orders and act in the same way as you would against your enemy. Al-Nu'man b. Bashir is a weak man, or he is acting like a weak man.

Umara b. Uqba wrote to him in a similar vein, as did Umar b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas. When the letters reached Yazid, he summoned Sarjun, a retainer (mawla) of Muawiya and asked (him): "What is your view (of the fact) that Husayn has sent Muslim b. Aqil to Kufa to receive pledges of homage on his behalf? I have (also) learnt that Numan is weak, and had other bad reports of him. Who do you think that I should appoint as governor of Kufa?"

Now Yazid was angry with 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad so Sarjun answered him, "Do you think, if Muawiya was alive and advising you, that you would take his advice?"

"Yes," he answered.

Sarjun produced a (letter of) appointment for 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad (as governor) of Kufa, and said: "This is the advice of Mu'awiya, which he ordered before he died. So join the two cities of Basra and Kufa (under the authority) of Ubayd Allah."

"I'll do that," replied Yazid. "I'll send the letter of authority (which my father wrote) for 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad to him."

After this he summoned Muslim b. 'Amr al-Bahili and he sent him to 'Ubayd Allah with the following (letter):

My Shi'a among the people of Kufa have informed me that Ibn 'Aqil is there gathering units in order to spread rebellion among the Muslims. Therefore, when you read this letter of mine, go to Kufa and search for Ibn Aqil as if you were looking for a bead until you find him. Then bind him (in chains), kill him or expel him.

Greetings.

In this way he gave him authority over Kufa. Muslim b. 'Amr went to Ubayd Allah at Basra and brought him the authorization and the letter. 'Ubayd Allah ordered that preparations should be made immediately and that the departure for Kufa would take place on the next day. He himself left Basra after he had made his brother, 'Uthman, his deputy. He took with him Muslim b. Amr, Sharik b. al-A'war al-Harithi, together with his entourage and household.

When he reached Kufa, he was wearing a black turban and he was veiled. News of al-Husayn's departure had reached the people and they were expecting his arrival. When they saw Ubayd Allah, they thought that he was al-Husayn. He (i.e. Ubayd Allah) did not pass a group of people without them greeting him. They were saying:

"Welcome, son of the Apostle of God, your arrival is a happy (event)."

He saw in their welcoming of al Husayn something which (greatly) troubled him. Muslim b. Amr said, when their number had become so great (that) they were delaying them: "This is the governor 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad."

He went on so that he was approaching the (governor's) palace at night. With him was (still) a great crowd who had gathered round him and who did not doubt that he was al-Husayn. Al-Numan b. Bashir had (the palace) bolted against him and against his entourage. One of those with him called on him to open the door to them. But al-Numan, still thinking that he was al-Husayn, went up to the balcony and called down: "I invoke God before you, unless you withdraw (from me), by God, I will not hand over my of fice (amana) to you but I have no wish to fight you."

(Ibn Ziyad) did not answer him. But he went closer while al- Nu'man was hanging over the balcony of the palace. Then he began to say to him: "Open, you have not opened yet and you have already had a long night (in which you have slept instead of governing).

A man behind him heard this and withdrew to the people from Kufa who had followed (Ibn Ziyad) (believing) him to be al-Husayn. He said: "O people, it is Ibn Murjana, by Him other than Whom there is no deity." Al-Numan opened the door for him and he entered. They slammed the door in the faces of the people and they dispersed.

In the morning the call was made among the people: "Al Salat jamia (the prayer is a general prayer which all should gather for)." The people gathered and he went out to them. He praised and glorified God and said: "The Commander of the faithful (Yazid) has appointed me to be in charge of your town and your frontier-station and the distribution of your booty (fay). He has ordered me to give justice to the oppressed among you, to be generous to those of you who are deprived, and to treat the obedient among you with generosity like a good father, but to use the whip and the sword against those who abandon my commanus and oppose my appointment. Let each man protect himself. True belief (sidq) should declare itself on your behalf, not the threat of punishment (wadis)."

Then he went down, he took the group leaders (arifs) and (some of) the people forcibly and he said: "Write to me about the strangers, those among you who supported the Commander of the faithful (i.e. "Ali b. Abi Talib), those among you who support the Haruriyya (i.e. Kharijites), and the trouble-makers whose concern is discord and turmoil. Whosoever of you makes these lists for us will be free from harm. But those of you who do not write anyone, will have to guarantee that there is no opponent in his group (irifa) who will oppose us, and no wrongdoer who will try to wrong us. Anyone who does not do so, will be denied protection and his blood and his property will be permitted to us. Any group leader (arif) in whose group is found anyone with partisanship for the Commander of the faithful, who has not been reported to us, will be crucified at the door of his house, and I wil abolish the pay (atal) of that group (irafa)"

When Muslim b. Aqil heard of the coming of Ubayd Allah to Kufa, of the speech he had made and his treatment of the arifs and (other) people, he left the house of al-Mukhtar and went to the house of Hani' b. Urwa and went in (to stay) there. The Shi'a began to visit Hani's house secretly to keep it hidden from Ubayd Allah and they enjoined that it should be kept secret.

Ibn Ziyad summoned a retainer (mawla) of his called Maqil.

"Take three thousand dirhams,"he told him, "and look for Muslim b. 'Aqil and search out his followers. If you get hold of one or a group of them, give them these three thousand dirhams. Tell them to use it to help in the war against your enemy. Let them know that you are one of them. For if you give them it, they will be sure of you and have confidence in you, and they will not keep any of their information from you. So go (looking) for them and continue until you find where Muslim b. 'Aqil is staying and you have met him."

He did that. He came (to a place where) he sat near Muslim b. Awsaja al-Asad; in the great mosque. The latter was praying, and he (Maeqil) heard some people saying that this (was one of those who) had pledged allegiance to al-Husayn. He went up and sat right next to him until he had finished praying.

"O servant of God,"he said, "I am a Syrian whom God has blessed with love for the House and love for those who love them."

He pretended to weep (in front of) him. Then he continued: "I have three thousand dirhams with which I want to meet a man from them (the House) whom I have learnt has come to Kufa to receive pledges of allegiance on behalf of the son of the daughter of the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family. I have been wanting to meet him but I have not found anyone who will direct me to him and I don't know the place (where he is staying). While I was sitting (here), I heard a group of the faithful saying that this is a man (i.e. Muslim b. Awsaja) who is acquainted with this House. Therefore I have come to you so that you may take this money from me and introduce me to your leader (sahib); for I am one of your brethren and someone you can trust. If you wish, you may receive my pledge of allegiance to him before my meeting him."

"I thank God for you meeting me,"replied (Muslim) b. 'Awsaja, "and it gives me great joy to get (you) what you desire, and that God should help the House of His Prophet, peace be on them, through you. Yet the people's knowledge of my (connection) with this affair before it is finished troubles me, because of (my) fear of this tyrant and his severity."

"It would be better (if) you took the pledge of allegiance from me (now),"Maqil told him. So he took his pledge of allegiance and testaments heavily supported by oaths that he would be sincere and keep the matter concealed. He (Maqil) gave him whatever would make him content in that way.

"(Some to visit me at my house for (a few) days,"said (Muslim b. 'Awsaja), "for I will seek permission for you (to visit) your master."He began to go to visit him frequently with the people (i.e. the other members

of the Shi'a) and sought permission for him (to visit).

Permission was given and Muslim b. Aqil received (Maqils) pledge of allegiance. He told Abu Thumama al Saidi to take the money from him. The latter was the one who collected money from them and what could be used to help each other, and he used to buy their arms.

He was a perceptive man and one of the knights (faris) of the Arabs and one of the notables of the Shi'a.

That man (i.e. Ma'qil) began to visit them regularly. He was the first to enter and the last to leave, in order to become acquainted with (everything of) their affairs which Ibn Ziyad wanted. He used to keep him informed about that at regular intervals.

Hani' b. Urwa began to fear for himself and he stopped attending Ibn Ziyad's assembly (majlis). He pretended to be sick. Ibn Ziyad asked those who did attend, "Why is it I don't see Hani'?"

"He is sick."they replied.

"If I had been informed of his illness, I would have paid him a sick visit,"said Ibn Ziyad. Then he summoned Muhammad b. al-Ashath, Asma' b. Kharija and 'Amr b. al-Hajjaj al Zubaydi. Ruwayha, daughter of 'Amr was married to Hani' b. Urwa, she was the mother of Yahya b. Hani'.

"What prevents Hani' from coming to visit us?"he asked them.

"We don't know,"they replied, "but it is said that he is sick."

"I have learnt,"replied (Ibn Ziyad), "that he is better and that he sits at the door of his house. Go and tell him that he should not abandon his duty towards us. For I do not like one of the Arab nobles like him to ill-treat me."

They went until they stood before his (house) in the evening. He was sitting at his door.

"What is stopping you from seeing the governor?"they asked.

"For he has mentioned you and said that if he had been told you were ill, he would have paid you a sick-visit."

"An illness has stopped me,"he answered.

"He has been informed,"they said, "that you sit at the door of your house every evening. He finds you tardy and tardiness and churlish behaviour are things which the authorities will not tolerate. We adjure you to ride with us."

He called for his clothes and got dressed. Then he called for a mule and rode (with them). When he got near the palace, he began to feel some apprehension. He said to Hassan b. Asma' b. Kharija,

"Nephew, by God, I fear this man. What do you think?"

"Uncle, by God, I do not fear anything for you. why do you invent a reason (for blame) against yourself?" he answered, for Hassan did not know why Ubayd Allah had sent for him. (So) Hani' went on until he came to 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad. With him was a group (of people).

When he looked up, 'Ubayd Allah said (to himself): "The fool's legs have brought him to you." Then, when Hani' had drawn near Ibn Ziyad who had the qadi Shurayh, with him, Ibn Ziyad turned towards him and recited:

I want his friendship but he wants my death.

The one who makes excuses to you is one of your own bosom friends from the tribe of Murad.

He was referring to his earlier kindness and gentleness to him (Hani').

"What is that, governor?" asked Hani'.

"Yes, Hani', what are these matters which you have been plotting in your house against the Commander of the faithful and the general community of the Muslims?" asked Ibn Ziyad. "You have brought

Muslim b. Aqil and taken him into your house. You have gathered arms and men for him in houses around you. You thought that was hidden from me."

"I have not done that and Muslim is not with me," he replied.

"Oh yes (you have)," was the answer.

After the argument between them had gone on for some time and Hani' persisted in contradicting and denying (the accusations), Ibn Ziyad summoned that spy, Maqil. He came and stood before him.

"Do you know this man?" (Ibn Ziyad) asked him.

"Yes," he replied.

At that (moment) Hani' realised that he had been a spy against them and had brought (Ibn Ziyad) all their information. For a moment he was bewildered, and then his spirit returned to him.

"Listen to me," he said, "and believe what I say. I swear by God that I do not lie. By God, I did not summon him to my house. I did not know anything about his business until he came to me asking to stay with me. I was too ashamed to refuse him. As a result of that, the duty of giving (him) protection fell upon me.

Therefore I gave him lodging and refuge. Then his affair developed as you have been informed. If you wish, I will give you strongly sworn testaments that I will not do you any harm and danger, and I will come

to you and put my hand in your hand. If you wish, I will give you a guarantee which will be in your hand until I return to you. Then I will go to him and order him to leave my house for wherever in the land he wants to go. Then he will leave his right of protection."

"You will never leave me unless you bring him," answered Ibn

Ziyad.

"No, by God, I will not bring him to you," (the other) declared.

After the argument between them had gone on for some time, Muslim b. 'Amr al-Bahih rose (to speak). There was no other Syrian or Basran in Kufa except him.

"May God make you prosper, governor," he interjected, "(please)

leave me with him (for a time) so that I can speak to him." He arose and took him (Hani') aside from Ibn Ziyad. They were (standing) where he could see them and when they raised their voices, he could hear what they were saying.

"I adjure you before God, Hani'," said Muslim, "you are killing yourself and bringing tribulation on your clan. By God, I hold you too precious to be killed. This man is the cousin of (your) tribe so they will not fight against him, nor harm him. Therefore give him (i.e. Muslim b. Aqil) to them (the authorities). There will be no shame and failure for you by that for you would only be handing him over to the authorities."

"By God, indeed there would be shame and disgrace for me," answered Hani', "were I to hand over one who has come under my protection and is my guest, while I am still alive and sound. I can hear; I see well; I have a strong arm and many helpers. By God, if I was the only one without any helper, I would not hand him over until I had died on his behalf."

He began to shout at him saying: "By God, I will never hand him over to him."

Ibn Ziyad heard that. "Bring him to me," he said. They brought him. "Either bring him to me or I will have your head cut off," demanded Ibn Ziyad.

"Then there will be much flashing (of swords) around your house," replied Hani, thinking that his clan would prevent him (from being killed).

"Come near me," demanded (Ibn Ziyad). He came nearer and Ibn Ziyad struck his face with his cane and went on beating at his nose, forehead and cheeks so that he broke his nose and the blood flowed from it on to his face and he heard and the flesh of his forehead and cheeks was sprinkled over his beard.

Eventually the cane broke.

Hani' stretched out his hand towards the hilt of the sword of one of the armed attendants but the man pulled it away and prevented him.

"You have been behaving like one of the, Haruri (i.e. Kharijites) all day long!" yelled Ibn Ziyad, "so your blood is permitted to us. Take him away!"

They took him and threw him into one of the rooms in the building. They locked the doors on him. He had told them to put guards on him and that (also) was done. However Hassan b. Asma' arose and said: "Are (we) messengers of treachery now? For you told us to bring the man to you. yet when we brought him to you, you smashed his nose and face, and his blood flowed on his beard. Then you claimed that you would kill him."

"You will be for it here (and now)," cried 'Ubayd Allah and he ordered him to be struck, shaken, and pushed aside.

"We are satisfied with the governor's attitude on our behalf and against (those of) us (who are wrong); the governor is only punishing (those who are wrong)," declared Muhammad b. al Ashath.

However when it was reported to Amr b. al-Hajjaj and he learnt that Hani' had been killed, he advanced with Madhhij and surrounded the palace. He had a great crowd with him.

"I am 'Amr b. al-Hajjaj," he called out, "and these are the knights of Madhhij, and their leading men. We have not broken away from obedience, nor have we separated from the community."

It had been reported to them that their colleague had been killed, and they regarded that as a great crime. Ubayd Allah was told that Madhhij were at the gate. He told the qadi Shurayh: "Go in to their colleague, look at him and then go out and inform them that he is still alive and has not been killed."

Shurayh went in and looked at him. When Hani' saw Shurayh, he said, with blood flowing down his beard: "Oh what a God! Oh what Muslims! Has my clan been destroyed? Where are the people of religion? Where are the people of the town?" When he heard the tumult at the door of the palace he said: "I think those are the voices of Madhhij and my group of the Muslims. If ten of them got in, they would be able to rescue me."

After Shurayh had listened to what he had to say, he went out to them and told them: "When the governor learnt about your attitude and your statements concerning your colleague, he ordered me to go and see him. I went and I saw him. Then he ordered me to meet you and inform you that he is still alive and that the report that he had been killed was false."

"Praise be to God since he has not been killed," answered 'Amr b. al-Hajjaj and his colleagues. Then they went away.

Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad went out and went up on the pulpit. (He had brought) with him the nobles of the people, his bodyguard (shurat) and his entourage. He said: "O people, seek refuge in obedience to God and your Imams. Do not cause division, for you will be destroyed, humiliated, killed or harshly treated and deprived. Your brother is he who speaks the truth to you. He who warns is excused."

After he had finished, he was about to go down but had not gone from the pulpit, when the look-outs at the date-sellers' gate of the mosque rushed in yelling: "Muslim b. Aqil has come!"

Ubayd Allah quickly went into the palace and locked the gates.

Abd Allah b. Hazim reported:

By God, I was Ibn 'Aqil's messenger at the palace to see what was done to Hani'. When he was beaten and imprisoned I mounted my horse and was the first to enter the house to bring information of him to Muslim b. Aqil. There the women of Murad had gathered and they were crying out: "O tears of grief for him! O bereavement of him!"

I went in to see Muslim and gave him the news of him (Hani'). He ordered me to summon his supporters. The houses around him were full of them; there were four thousand men there. He told his messengers to cry out: "O victorious, kill!" so I cried out: "O victorious, kill!"

Then the Kufans gathered and assembled before him. Muslim, may God have mercy on him, appointed leaders over the quarters, over the tribes of Kinda, Madhhij, Tamim, Asad, Mudar and Hamdan. The people had answered the call and gathered, except for a few who had delayed so that the mosque and the market place were full of people. They were full of enthusiasm until the evening.

Ubayd Allah's situation was grim. All his energy was concentrated on holding the door, for he only had thirty members of his bodyguard with him in the palace, twenty nobles of the people, and his family and entourage. The nobles who had not been with him began to come to him through the door which adjoined the building of the Romans. Then those of the nobles who were with Ibn Ziyad began to look down on them (the people outside). (These) were looking at them, while they hurled stones at them and cursed them and abused 'Ubayd Allah and his father. Ibn Ziyad summoned Kathir b. Shihab and ordered him to go out among those of Madhhij who obeyed him and to go round Kufa and make the people desert Ibn Aqil; he should make them afraid of (the possibility of) war and threaten them with the punishment of the authorities. Then he ordered Muhammad b. al-Ashath to go out among those of Kinda and Hadramawt who obeyed him; he should raise a standard which would guarantee security to those people who came to him. He gave similar instructions to al-Qa'qa al-Dhuhli, Shabath b. Rib'i al-Tamimi, Hajjar b. Abjar al-'Ijli and Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan al-Amin.

He kept the rest of the nobles of the people with him, not wishing to be without them because of the small number of people who were with him. Kathir b. Shihab went out (and began) making the people desert Muslim. Muhammad b. al-Ashath went out until he reached the houses of the Bana Umara. Ibn 'Aqil sent 'Abd al-Rahman b. Shurayh al-Shibami to Muhammad b. al-Ashath from the mosque.

When Muhammad b. al-Ashath saw the great number of those who had come to him (Muslim), he lingered where he was (i.e. he did not carry out Ibn Ziyad's instructions). Then he- Muhammad b. al-Ashath- Kathir b. Shihab, al-Qaqa b. Shawr al-Dhuhli, and Shabath b. Rib'i began to make the people

withdraw from their close adherence to Muslim for they made them afraid of the authorities so that a great number of their tribesmen and others gathered to them and they went to Ibn Ziyad through the house of the Romans. The tribesmen went in with them.

"May God make the governor prosperous," said Kathir b. Shihab, "you have many of the nobles of the people with you, (as well as) your bodyguard, family and servants. Let us go out against them."

Ubayd Allah refused but he gave Shabath b. Ribī a standard and he sent him out. The people with Ibn Aqil remained numerous until evening.

Their situation became strong. 'Ubayd Allah sent for the nobles and he assembled them. They (went up to the roof to) look down on the people. They offered additional (money) and kind treatment to those who would obey and they terrified the disobedient with (threats of) dispossession and (dire) punishment. They told them that the army from Syria was coming against them. Kathir b. Shihab spoke until the sun was about to set.

He said: "O people, stay with your families. Do not hurry into evil actions. Do not expose yourselves to death. These are the soldiers of the Commander of the faithful Yazid, who are approaching. The governor has given God a promise that if you persist in fighting him and do not go away by nightfall, he will deprive your children of their (right to a) state allotment of money (fate') and he will scatter your soldiers in Syrian campaigns. He will make the healthy among you responsible for the sick and those present responsible for those who are absent until none of those rebellious people will remain who has not tasted the evil consequences of what their hands have earned."

The (other) nobles spoke in a similar vein. After the people had heard what they had to say, they began to disperse. Women began to come to their sons and brothers (saying): "Go, the people will be enough (without) you." Men were going to their sons and brothers and saying: "Tomorrow, the Syrians will come against you. What are you doing, causing war and evil? Come away." Thus (a man) would be taken away or would leave.

They continued to disperse so that by the time evening came and Muslim b. Aq'il prayed the evening prayer, he had only thirty men with him in the mosque. When he saw that it was evening and he only had that group with him, he left the mosque and headed for the gates of Kinda. He reached the gates with only ten of them (left) with him. When he left the gate, there was no one with him to guide him. He looked around but could see no one to guide him along the road, to show him to his house and to give him personal support if an enemy appeared before him.

He wandered amid the lanes of Kufa without knowing where he was going until he came to the houses of the Banu Jabala of Kinda. He went on until he came to a door (at which was) a woman called Tawa. She had been a slave-wife (umm walad) of al-Ashath b. Qays and he had freed her. She had, then, married Usayd al-Hadrami and had borne him (a son called) Bilal. Bilal had gone out with the people and his mother was standing at the door waiting for him.

Ibn 'Aqil greeted her and she returned the greeting.

"Servant of God, give me water to drink,"he asked her. she gave him a drink and he sat down. she took the vessel inside and then came out again.

"Servant of God, haven't you had your drink?"she asked.

"Yes,"was the answer

"Then go to your people,"she said. But he was silent. She repeated it but he was still silent. A third time she said: "Glory be to God, servant of God, get up – may God give you health – (and go) to your people. For it is not right for you to sit at my door and I will not permit you to do it."

(At this) he got up and said: "Servant of God, I have neither house nor clan in this town. Would you (show) me some generosity and kindness? Perhaps I will be able to repay it later on."

"What is it, servant of God?"she asked.

"I am Muslim b. Aqil,"he replied. "These people have lied to me, incited me (to action) and then abandoned me."

"You are Muslim,"she repeated.

"Yes,"he answered.

"Come in,"she said and he was taken into a room in her house but not the room she used. She spread out a carpet for him and offered him supper but he could not eat.

Soon her son returned. He saw her going frequently to and fro between the rooms and exclaimed: "By God, the number of times which you have gone into and come out of that room this evening, makes me suspect that you have something important (there)."

"My little son, forget about this,"she answered.

"By God, tell me,"he replied.

"Get on with your own business and don't ask me about anything,"she retorted. However he persisted until she said: "My little son, don't tell any of the people anything about what I am going to tell you."

"Indeed,"he answered and she made him take an oath. When he swore (not to do) that, she told him. He went to bed without saying anything.

After the people had deserted Muslim b. 'Aqil, a long time passed for Ibn Ziyad without him hearing the voices of the supporters of Ibn Aqil as he had heard them before. He told his followers to look down at them and see whether they could see any of them. They looked down and did not see anyone. Then he

told them to see whether they were in the shadows and were lying in ambush for them. They removed the (bamboo) roof covers of the mosque and began to lower the torches of fire in their hands, and to look.

Sometimes the torches gave light for them and sometimes they did not give (as much) light for them as they would have wished. They let down the torches and sticks of cane tied with rope on which was fire. They were let down until they reached the ground. They did this in (places in which was) the deepest darkness, (as well as) those parts which were closer and those which were in between. They (also) did that in the darkness around the pulpit. When they saw that there was nothing, they informed Ibn Ziyad that the people had dispersed.

Then he opened the gateway which (went) into the mosque. He came out and went up on the pulpit. His followers had come out with him. He told them to sit for a little while before the night prayer. He ordered 'Amr b. Nafi to call out that there would be no guarantees of security for any man of the bodyguard, the arifs, the supporters and the fighters who prayed the night prayer (anywhere) except in the mosque.

Not an hour passed before the mosque was full of people. After ordering his caller (to call for prayer), he rose for the prayer. His guard rose behind him but told them to guard him against anyone coming in (to try) to assassinate him. After praying with the people, he went up on the pulpit, When he had praised and glorified God ,he said:

Ibn 'Aqil, stupid and ignorant (man as he is) has attempted the opposition and rebellion which you have seen. There will be no security from God for a man in whose house we find him. Whoever brings him, will have the reward for his blood. Fear God, you servants of God, and keep to obedience and your pledge of allegiance. Do not do (anything which will be) against yourselves. Husayn b. Numayr, your mother will lose you, if any of the gates of the lanes of Kufa is open or this man gets away, and you do not bring him to me. I give you authority over the houses of the inhabitants of Kufa. Send lookouts (to inspect) people on the roads. Tomorrow morning clear out (the people from) the houses and search them thoroughly so that you bring me this man."

Al-Husayn b. Numayr was in charge of the bodyguard and was of the Banu Tamim. After this, Ibn Ziyad went back into the palace. He gave Amr b. Hurayth his standard and put him in charge of the people. In the morning he held an assembly and gave permission for the people to come to him. Muhammad b. al-Ash'ath approached. "Welcome to one of those whose loyalty is above suspicion,"he said to him and sat him by his side.

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