

Home > Nafasul Mahmum, Relating to the heart rending tragedy of Karbala' > Part 1: On what befell Imam Husayn (a.s.) before Yazid bin Mu'awiyah claimed allegiance from him, until his Martyrdom > Ubaydullah bin Ziyad's exit from Basra towards Kufa

Ubaydullah bin Ziyad's exit from Basra towards Kufa

When Ubaydullah received the letter of Yazid, he selected five hundred people from Basra, which included Abdullah bin Haris bin Nawfal, Shareek bin A'awar, both of whom were Shi'ah, and accompanied by them and Muslim bin 'Amr Bahili and his retinue and family, left for Kufa.

(Irshad) When he reached Kufa, Ubaydullah had worn a black turban and had covered his face. People there had received news that Imam Husayn (a.s.) was due to arrive to Kufa hence they waited his arrival.

They mistook him to be Imam Husayn (a.s.), and from the midst of whichever group he passed they saluted him saying, "Welcome O son of the Prophet"! When Ubaydullah saw them rejoicing at the arrival of Imam Husayn (a.s.), he was troubled. When people started increasing, Muslim bin 'Amr called out, "Get away, this is the commander Ubaydullah bin Ziyad." He then reached the palace at night surrounded by a group of people who still thought that he was Imam Husayn (a.s.).

Nu'man bin Basheer shut the door on him and his comrades (mistaking him to be Imam Husayn) when one of his people called out to him to open the door. Nu'man mistaking him to be Imam Husayn (a.s.) said,

"I request you in the Name of Allah to get away from here. For by Allah, I shall not hand over the trust to you, nor do I intend fighting you."

Ubaydullah remained silent and then came closer, when Nu'man was speaking with him while hanging from atop the balcony. Ubaydullah said,

"Open the door, you have not opened yet, and your nights have become prolonged (in which you have slept instead of governing)."

These words of Ubaydullah were heard by a man behind him, who turned to the people standing behind mistaking him to be Imam Husayn (a.s.), and said,

“O people! By Him besides Whom there is no other Deity, this is Ibn Marjanah (referring to Ubaydullah).”

Mas’oodi says that when the people recognized him, they started throwing stones at him, but he got away. (Irshad) Then Nu’mān opened the door for him and he entered therein and closed the door on the people and they dispersed away.

In the morning he announced for the congregation Prayers and people gathered. Ubaydullah bin Ziyad praised and glorified Allah and then said,

“Now then! The Commander of the faithful (referring to Yazid) has given me the charge of your city and your frontiers, while your booty is under my control, and he has ordered me to assist the oppressed and bestow upon the deprived. And has also commanded me to be fair to the obedient ones and take severe action against the suspicious and the rebels amongst you. Then I shall fulfill his command regarding you and shall put to practice his orders. I shall be like a merciful father for the obedient and good people among you, and my spear and sword will be upon the head of those who disobey my command and oppose my rule. Let each man fear himself, let right warn you and not threat.”

In another narration it is quoted that he said,

“Take my words to that Hashemi (referring to Muslim bin Aqeel) that he should guard himself against my wrath.”

(Irshad) Then he alighted from the pulpit and dealt strictly with the chiefs and commanded that,

“Note down the names of the guarantors (of men), and the followers of Yazid, while also those of the rebels and the suspicious who might revolt or cause disturbances. All these people should be brought to me so that I may decide about them. Then the chiefs who do not write down their names should stand surety that none among them would oppose us nor revolt. The one who does not do so, will be denied immunity and his blood and wealth will be lawful for us. And if a rebel of Yazid is ever found in any area under the control of a chief and he does not report to us about him, he shall be hanged on the door of his house and his stipends will be stopped and he will be fed to the Lions.”

In Fusulul Muhimmah it is quoted that a group of people of Kufa were imprisoned by him and executed at that very moment (Kamil, Muhammad bin Abi Talib, Tabari)

When Muslim bin Aqeel was informed regarding the arrival of Ubaydullah and heard his words, he left the house of Mukhtar and went to the door of Hani bin Urwah Muradi and called out to him. When Hani came out he looked displeased and Muslim said,

“I have come to your door to seek shelter and as a guest.”

Hani replied,

“You have put me in trouble, and if you had not entered my house and had confided in me, I would be pleased to tell you to go away. But your entering into my house has bound me in responsibility, hence do come in.”

Thus Hani gave him residence and the Shi’ah started visiting him in secret while safeguarding from Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad.

(Manaqib) People started swearing the oath of allegiance at the hands of Muslim until the number reached twenty five thousand. Then they decided to revolt, but Hani advised that they should wait further.

Ubaydullah called his retainer Ma’qal and gave him three thousand dirham¹ (Kamil) and told him to find the whereabouts of Muslim bin Aqeel and his associates and intermingle with them. Then he should partake that wealth with them and thus show them that he too was among their own people and hence remain aware of their intentions and report to him. Ma’qal entered the Mosque and heard that Muslim bin Ausaja Asadi was taking the oath of allegiance in the name of Imam Husayn (a.s.). Muslim at that moment was busy in Prayers, when he finished his Prayers Ma’qal came up to him and said,

“O slave of Allah! I am a native of Syria, a slave of Zil Kila, who has been favored by Allah with the love of the Household (Ahlul Bayt) (a.s.) of the Prophet (S). These are three thousand dirham, and I desire to give it to the person regarding whom I have heard that he has come to Kufa and is accepting the oath of allegiance in the name of the grandson of the Prophet. I have heard from some people that you are acquainted with the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) hence I have come to you. I request you to accept this wealth and take me to your chief so that I may swear the oath of allegiance to him, and if you desire I should swear fealty at your hands before meeting him.”

Muslim replied,

“I am delighted to meet you and happy upon your desire to reach your destination, and may Allah aid the Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) with your assistance. But I do not like that people should be aware of that issue before its completion and I fear the oppressor and his power.”

Then Muslim accepted his allegiance with firm promises to remain faithful and to keep it concealed. Ma’qal started coming to him for some days until Muslim took him to the presence of Muslim bin Aqeel (a.s.).

1. Islamic Silver currency weighting approximately 3.12 grams. And equivalent to approximately 2 dollars.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/nafasul-mahmum-relating-heart-rending-tragedy-karbala-shaykh-abbas-qummi/ubaydullah-bin-ziyad-s-exit>