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Muslim Meets Ibn Ziyad

Muslim Ibn 'Aqil was brought before Ibn Ziyad. At the mansion's gate, he saw an urn containing cooled water. He asked to drink of it. Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili[1] said to him, "You shall not taste one drop of it till you taste of the *hamim* in the fire of hell."

Muslim ('a) asked him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am one who knew the truth which you rejected, and who remained faithful to his *imam* when you betrayed him." Muslim Ibn 'Aqil said to him, "May your mother lose you! How hard-hearted and rude you are! You, son of Bahilah, are more worthy of tasting of the *hamim*." Having said so, he sat down, supporting his back on the mansion's wall.[2]

'Imarah Ibn 'Uqbah Ibn Abu Mu'it sent a slave named Qays[3] to give him water. Whenever Muslim was about to drink of it, the cup became full of his blood. In his third attempt to drink, the cup became full of his blood and both his front teeth fell in it, so he abandoned it saying, "Had it been prescribed in destiny for me to drink it, I would have drunk it."

Ibn Ziyad's guard came out to escort Muslim. Having entered the room where Ibn Ziyad was, Muslim did not greet him. The guard asked Muslim, "Why did you not greet the *Amir*?" "Keep your mouth shut," said Muslim, "he is not my *Amir*."[4]

It is also said that he said to Ibn Ziyad, "Peace be upon whoever followed the right guidance, feared the consequences in the hereafter, and obeyed the Exalted King," so Ibn Ziyad laughed and said, "Whether you greet or not, you shall be killed."[5] Muslim said, "If you kill me, someone worse than you had already killed someone much better than me.

Besides, you shall never abandon committing murders, setting a bad example, thinking ill of others, being mean; having the upper hand will be the doing of anyone else but you."

Ibn Ziyad said, "You disobeyed your *imam*, divided the Muslims, and sowed the seeds of dissension." Muslim said, "You have uttered falsehood. Rather, those who divided the Muslims are Mu'awiyah and

his son Yazid. The seeds of dissension were sown by your father, and I wish Allah will grant me to be martyred at the hand of the worst of His creation."[6]

Then Muslim asked permission to convey his will to some of his people. He was granted permission, so he looked at those present there and saw 'Umar Ibn Sa'd. "There is kinship between me and you," said Muslim to him, "and I need a favour of you which you should oblige, and it is a secret between us." But he refused to listen, whereupon Ibn Ziyad said to him,

"Do not hesitate from tending to your cousin's need." 'Umar stood with Muslim in a way that enabled Ibn Ziyad to see them both Muslim conveyed his desire to him to sell his sword and shield and pay a debt in the amount of six hundred dirhams[7] which he had borrowed since he entered Kufa, to ask Ibn Ziyad to give him his corpse to bury it, and to write al-Husayn ('a) to tell him what happened to him. 'Umar Ibn Sa'd stood up and walked to Ibn Ziyad to reveal the secret with which he had just been entrusted by Muslim! Ibn Ziyad said to him, "A trustworthy person never betrays you, but you have placed your trust in a treacherous person."[8]

Then Ibn Ziyad turned to Muslim and said, "O son of 'Aqil! You came to a united people and disunited them." Muslim said, "No, indeed, I did not come to do that, but the people of this country claimed that your father killed their best men, shed their blood, and did what Kisra and Caeser do, so we came to them in order to enjoin justice, and to invite all to accept the judgment of the Book [of Allah]."

Ibn Ziyad said, "What do you have to do with all of that? Have we not been dealing with them with equity?" Muslim said, "Allah knows that you are not telling the truth. You, in fact, kill when angry, out of enmity, and for mere suspicion."

Ibn Ziyad then verbally abused him and abused 'Ali ('a), 'Aqil, and al-Husayn ('a), whereupon Muslim said, "You and your father are more worthy of being thus abused; so, issue whatever decree you wish, you enemy of Allah!"[9]

It was then that Ibn Ziyad ordered a Syrian[10] to go to the top of the mansion and to behead Muslim and throw both the head and the body to the ground. The Syrian took Muslim to the flat rooftop of the mansion as the latter kept repeating,

"*Subhan-Allah! La ilaha illa-Allah! Allahu Akbar!*" He also kept repeating, "O Allah! Judge between us and the people who deceived, betrayed and lied to us," then he faced Medina and saluted al-Husayn ('a).[11]

The Syrian struck Muslim's neck with his sword and threw his head and body to the ground[12] then hurried down. He was very startled. Ibn Ziyad asked him what was wrong with him. "The moment I killed him," said he, "I saw a black man with an extremely ugly face standing beside me biting his finger, so I

was frightened." "Perhaps you lost your mind for a moment," said Ibn Ziyad.[13]

Hani was taken to an area of the market place where sheep were sold; his arms were tied. He kept saying, "O Mathhaj! Any man from Mathhaj to help me today?! O Mathhaj! Where has Mathhaj gone away from me?!"

Having seen that there was none to respond to him, he somehow managed to get one of his arms out of the ropes and said, "Is there anyone who would hand me a stick, a knife, a rock, or even a bone so that a man may be able to defend himself?"

Guards attacked him and tied him again. He was ordered to stretch his neck so that they might strike it with their swords. "I am not going to give it away to you so generously. I shall not assist you at the cost of my own life." A Turkish slave named Rasheed owned by 'Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad struck him with his sword, but he missed. Hani said, "To Allah is my return! O Allah! To Your Mercy do I come and to Your Pleasure!"

Rasheed hit him again and killed him. This same slave was killed by 'Abdul-Rahman Ibn al-Hasin al-Muradi who saw him at the Khazar[14] (Caspian Sea) in the company of 'Ubaydullah.

Ibn Ziyad ordered the corpses of both Muslim and Hani to be tied with ropes from their feet and dragged in the market places[15]. He crucified them upside-down[16] at the garbage collection site, then he sent their severed heads to Yazid who displayed them at one of the streets of Damascus.

'Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad wrote Yazid saying:

"Praise to Allah Who effected justice on behalf of the commander of the faithful and sufficed him having to deal with his foes.

I would like to inform the commander of the faithful, may Allah bless him, that Muslim Ibn 'Aqil had sought refuge at the house of Hani Ibn 'Urwah al-Muradi, that I assigned spies for them and let men infiltrate their assemblies and plotted against them till I forced them out.

Allah gave me the upper hand over them, so I killed them and sent you both of their heads with Hani Ibn Abu Hayya al-Wadi'i al-Hamdani and al-Zubayr Ibn al-'Arwah al-Tamimi who both are from among those who listen to and obey us; so, let the commander of the faithful ask them whatever he pleases, for there is knowledge with them, truth, understanding, and piety. And peace be with you".

Yazid wrote Ibn Ziyad saying,

"You do not cease being the source of my delight. You have behaved with strictness and assaulted with courage, maintaining your composure. You have done very well and testified to the correctness of my

good impression about you. I invited your messengers and asked them and confided in them, and I found their views and merits just as you indicated; so, take good care of them.

It has also come to my knowledge that al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali has marched towards Iraq. You should, therefore, set up observation posts, prepare with arms, be cautious for mere suspicion. Kill anyone whom you suspect.[17]

Your tenure is put to the test by this Husayn rather than by anyone else, so is your country and your own self as governor. The outcome will determine whether you will be freed or whether you will return to slavery[18]; so, you have to either fight him or arrest and transport him to me."[19]

O cousin of al-Husayn! Tearful eyes of your Shi'as may
With blood provide you with water to drink.
Tearful eyes shall never cease
Greeting you as they come and go,
For you were not given to drink,
Not even once, as your fractured teeth
Fell into the drink.
From the mansion did they hurl you,
Having tied you; were you not their prince
Only the day before?
Should you spend without anyone mourning you?
Is there anyone in the land to mourn you?
Is there anyone in the land to cry over you?
Should you die, in Zarud there are
Many a mourner mourning you in the night and the day.[20]

1. On p. 126, Vol. 4, of Ibn al-Athir's book Al-Kamil, in the discussion of the events of the year 71 A.H./690 A.D., Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili is identified as Qutaybah's father. On p. 185, Vol. 7, of al-Tabari's Tarikh (first edition), where the events of the year 71 A.H./690 A.D. are discussed, the author says that Muslim Ibn 'Amr al-Bahili was killed at a Catholic convent, and that he was in the company of Mis'ab Ibn al-Zubayr when the latter's army clashed with that of 'Abd al-Malik.
2. al-Shaikh al-Mufid, Al-Irshad.
3. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 212. According to al-Mufid, 'Amr Ibn Harith sent his own slave Salim to bring water.
4. Ibn Tawus, Al-Luhuf, p. 30. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 212.
5. al-Turayhi, Al-Muntakhab, p. 300.
6. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 17. Al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 211, chapter 10.
7. On p. 241 of al-Dinawari's book Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal, his debt was a thousand dirhams.
8. al-Mufid, Al-Irshad. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 212. This statement runs like a proverb. It has been made by Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them. For example, on p. 643, Vol. 2, of Al-Wasa'il by al-Hurr al-'Amili, in chapter 9, it is stated that a treacherous person should never be trusted. Relying on the authority of Mu'ammar Ibn Khallad, al-Kulayni says, "I heard the father of al-Hasan, peace be upon him, saying that Abu Ja'far [Imam al-Baqir], peace be upon him, used to say, 'The trustworthy one did not betray you, but you placed your trust in a treacherous person.'"

Muslim, the mansion's martyr, was not unfamiliar with the nature of ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d, nor was he ignorant of the meanness of his origin, but he wanted to let the Kufians know the extent of this man's “manliness” and his lack of safeguarding a secret so that nobody would be deceived by him. He had another reason:

He wanted to let the people of Kufa know that Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, and those charged with authority among them, desired nothing but reforming the nation and the promotion of the Divine call. This man [Muslim], whom they entrusted, did not stretch his hand to bayt al-mal although he had the full authority over it to do whatever he pleased. But he, instead, spent his days, which were sixty-four in number, borrowing money.

Thus should those charged with authority behave, they should not regard the wealth that belongs to the poor as booty. This treacherous person, as a matter of fact, reminds me of the incident that took place to Khalid al-Qasri with regard to safeguarding a secret because this is one of the characteristics of the Arabs' norms of manliness and one of the Islamic morals and ethics, in addition to disrespect to the Prophet of Islam (S) and the abusing of the master of wasis [Imam ‘Ali, peace be upon him] from the pulpits and saying about him what no writer finds appropriate to state.

Al-Walid Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik once wanted to perform the Hajj, so a group of men decided to assassinate him, and they sought Khalid's participation in their plot, but Khalid refused.

They, therefore, asked him not to reveal their plot, but he instead went to al-Walid and advised him not to go to the pilgrimage that year because “I fear lest you should be assassinated.” Al-Walid asked him, “Who do you fear may assassinate me? Tell me of their names.”

But he refused to name them. Said he, “I only advise you and will never name them to you.” “In that case,” responded al-Walid, “I shall hand you over to your enemy, Yousuf Ibn ‘Umar.” “Even if you do so,” he said, “I shall not name them.” Al-Walid handed him over to Yousuf who tortured him, but the man still refused to name them, whereupon he was jailed. A huge stone was placed on his chest that finally killed him in 126 A.H./744 A.D. He was then sixty years old.

He was buried in a suburb. ‘Amir Ibn Sahl al-Ash’ari hamstrung his horse on his grave, so Yousuf whipped him seven hundred lashes. Nobody in all of Arabia dared to eulogize him despite his open-handedness except Abu al-Shaghab al-’Abasi who said,

Truly, the best of men alive or living
Is a captive with them in chain,
By my life! You thus immortalized his prison
And caused it a great deal of pain:
Should you imprison the Qasri, you should not
Imprison his name, nor his virtues among the tribes.

These verses are recorded on p. 79, Vol. 5, of Ibn ‘Asakir's Tahthib.

9. Ibn Nama, Al-Luhuf, p. 31.
10. al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 213.
11. Sayyid Kaẓim Ibn Qasim al-Rashti al-Ha’iri (d. 1259 A.H./1843 A.D.), Asrar al-Shahada, p. 259
12. Ibn Nama, Muthir al-Ahzan, p. 18.
13. al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 312. Also Al-Luhuf (by Ibn Tawus).
14. It is also called “bahr jurgan” [the sea of jurgan] , that is, the Georgian Sea, “bahr al-baskoon,” the Basque Sea, Tabaristan Sea, “bahr al-daylam,” “bahr jilan,”, “bahr shirwan,” “bahr Baku,” and “bahr saraee.” Islam reached the Caspian on a large scale during the early 9th century A.D. N. Tr.
15. al-Turayhi, Al-Muntakhab, p. 301. On p. 266, Vol. 2, of Tarikh al-Khamis, where [first caliph] Abu Bakr's sons are discussed, the author says, “Mu’awiyah Ibn Khadij ordered Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr to be dragged on the highway, and that the dragging party should pass by the house of ‘Amr Ibn al-As, knowing how much the latter hated to see Muhammad

Ibn Abu Bakr killed. Then he ordered his corpse to be buried. A donkey was stuffed with the corpse, then it was set on fire...” On p. 153, Vol. 11, of Ibn al-Athir's book Al-Kamil, where the events of the year 555 A.H./1160 A.D. are discussed, citing Muruj al-Thahab, the author says, “When Zahir ad-Din Ibn al-Attar was killed, an order was issued to tie his penis with a rope and to drag the body on the streets; an ink-pot was placed in one of his hands, and a pen was placed in the other, so people were shouting, ‘Mawlana! Please sign for us!'”

On p. 12 of Midmar al-Haqa'iq by Muhammad Ibn Taqi al-Ayyubi, governor of (the Syrian town of) Hama, it is written that, “Certain individuals cut his [Zahir's] ear off on Thul-Qi'da 15, 575 A.H. (April 19, 1180 A.D).” [Islam prohibits mutilating or burning corpses, be they the corpses of Muslims or of non-Muslims.]

16. Ibn Shahr Ashub, Manaqib, Vol. 2, p. 21. Al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 215. Such a heinous action is not committed except by one who reneges from the Islamic creed and whose heart does not contain one iota of mercy or compassion. Al-Hajjaj had likewise done to the corpse of [the sahabi] ‘Abdullah Ibn al-Zubayr as we read on p. 268, Vol. 5, of al-Balathiri's book Ansab al-Ashraf, and on p. 481 of Ibn Habib's book Al-Mahbar. On p. 116 of Ibn al-'Arabi's book Mukhtasar Tarikh al-Duwal, we read the following: “Nero, the king [of ancient Rome], killed two disciples of Christ then crucified them upside-down.”

In Hayat al-Haywan, we are told that Ibrahim al-Fazari was found guilty of committing many heinous deeds such as ridiculing belief in Allah and in the prophets, so the faqihs decreed that he, too, should be killed then crucified upside down. His corpse was taken down then burnt. On p. 481 of Al-Mahbar (Hayderabad edition), it is stated that al-Hajjaj Ibn Yousuf al-Thaqafi crucified the corpse of Abdullah Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca upside down.

17. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 1, p. 214.
18. 'Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqtal al-'Awalim, p. 66. Ibn ‘Asakir, Tarikh, Vol. 1, p. 332.
19. al-Khawarizmi, Maqtal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 215.
20. These poetry lines are excerpted from a poem by Sayyid Baqir al-Hindi, may Allah have mercy on his soul. It is not a secret that there are three viewpoints with regard to the date when Muslim was martyred: The first is that he was martyred on the third of the month of Thul-Hijjah. This is stated in Al-Akhbar al-Tiwal. It seems that Ibn Tawus, in his book Al-Luhuf fi Qatla al-Tufuf, agrees with this view. Says he, “Al-Husayn (‘a) left Mecca on the third of Thul-Hijjah,” adding, “on the same day when Muslim was killed.” The other view is that he was martyred on the eighth of Thul-Hijjah. This is stated in Al-Watwat on p. 210 of his book Al-Khasa'is. This date seems to be the one accepted by Abu al-Fida' as stated on p. 19, Vol. 2, of his Tarikh, and the same is stated on p. 139 of Tathkirat al-Khawassof Ibn al-Jawzi, the grandson. Both authors have stated that Muslim was killed on the 8th of Thul-Hijjah, implying, from their wording, that it was on the eve preceding the third day which would have been the Day of ‘Arafa. This is what al-Mufid says in his book Al-Irshad and al-Kaf'ami in his book Misbah al-Kaf'ami. This is also what Ibn Nama says in his book Muthir al-Ahzan and al-Tabari on p. 215, Vol. 6, of his Tarikh, as well as the author of Muruj al-Thahab [al-Mas'udi] who states the same on p. 90, Vol. 2, of his book. These authors say that Muslim was seen in Kufa in public on the 8th of Thul-Hijjah and was killed one day after making his uprising public. Al-Mas'udi, in his book Muruj al-Thahab, makes a statement to the effect that al-Husayn (‘a) left Mecca on the ninth of Thul-Hijjah. So, if Muslim had been killed one day after al-Husayn's departure, his martyrdom would have been on the first day of ‘Id al-Adha.

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