

(.The Destiny of Muslim ibne Aqil (A.S

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Introduction

The caravan of al-Imam al-Husayn ('alayhi salam) was travelling toward the city of Kufa in Iraq, during the month of Zhul Hijjah 60AH when a messenger came from the direction of Kufa and said :

"I only left Kufa after Muslim b. 'Aqil and Hani' b. 'Urwa had been killed. I saw them being dragged by their legs into the market-place." – Bakr al Asadi of Kufa.

"We belong to God and to Him we shall return; may God have mercy on them both," uttered al-Husayn as he repeated it several times over. The people at that halting place exhorted al-Husayn ('a) to not continue beyond that point and to not travel on to the treacherous city of Kufa. Al-Husayn ('a) turned to the brothers of Muslim who were amongst his caravan and said :

"What is your opinion [O sons of 'Aqil] now that Muslim has been killed?" "By God," they declared, "we will not go back until we have taken our vengeance or have tasted (the death) which he tasted" (al-Mufid, 1981, p333). Al-Husayn ('a) went near to the former people and said, "There is nothing good (left) in life for these men." And thus the decision was made to continue his journey. He ('a) summoned those who had joined his caravan along the way and stated to them :

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. News of the dreadful murder of Muslim b. 'Aqil, Hani' b. 'Urwa, and 'Abd Allah b. Yuqtur has reached us. Our Shi'a have deserted us. Those of you who would prefer to leave us, may leave freely without guilt." – al-Husayn ('a).

"The people began to disperse from him to right and left until there were only left with him those followers who had come with him from Medina, and a small group of those who had joined him. Al-Husayn ('a) had done that because he realised that the Arabs who had followed him had only followed him because they thought that he was going to a land where the inhabitants' obedience to him had already been established. And he did not want them to accompany him without being (fully) aware of what they were going to" (al-Mufid, 1981, p333).

Muslim b. 'Aqil ('a)

Muslim was one of many righteous children of 'Aqil b. 'Abi Talib. He was the nephew of Amirul

Momineen 'Ali b. 'Abi Talib ('a) and the cousin of al-Hassan and al-Husayn ('a). He married Ruqaiyyah al-Kubra, daughter of 'Ali b. Abi Talib and Sahba from Yamamah (Ahmed Ali, 1964, p207), his cousin and sister to Imam Husayn ('a), and had four children to her. Of his children, Abdullah [15 years] was martyred alongside the family of al-Husayn ('a) on the battlefield of Karbala (Ahmed Ali, 1964, p207).

Ibrahim [10 years] and Mohammad [8 years], known as the Tiflan Muslim, were captured and martyred on the banks of the Euphrates River during Dhul Hijjah before the Battle of Karbala, and his youngest child, Ruqaiyyah [4 years], was amongst the pious womenfolk of the household of the Prophet ('s) who were attacked and humiliated after the Battle of Ashura.

'Aqil b. Abi Talib ('a)

His father, 'Aqil b. Abi Talib, was the second oldest son of Abi Talib and the cousin of Prophet Muhammad ('s). The oldest son of Abi Talib was Talib, followed by 'Aqil, Jafar, 'Ali and reportedly his only daughter was Fakhitah, known as Umm Hani. 'Aqil b. Abi Talib is reported as having many children. His sons were Abd Allah, Jafar and Abd al-Rahman, who were martyred at Karbala, Abu Sa'id, whose son was martyred at Karbala (al-Mufid, 1981, p373), Muslim and Hisham. Of his daughters were Zaynab, Umm Luqman, Umm Hani, Ramla and Asma (al-Mufid, 1981, p371).

'Aqil had a knowledge of 'Nasab shanasi' (acquaintance with lineage) and had a complete knowledge of the identities and recognition of the personages of all tribes and families within the Arab world. He it is who Amirul Momineen 'Ali b. 'Abi Talib ('a) requested to find him a wife, after the passing of his beloved Lady Fatimah az-Zahra ('a), who would bare him a brave and valiant son, at which 'Aqil suggested Fatimah Kelabiye bint Hazm b. Khalid Kalbi (Ahmed Ali, 1964, p112), known as Ummul Baneen, and said "marry Ummul Baneen because there is no other brave, valiant and more courageous family in Arabia than hers" (Moosavi, 2004).

The Destiny of Muslim b. 'Aqil ('a)

The news of the death of the despotic caliph Mu'awiya and the dreaded succession of his son Yazid had spread across the lands of Arabia and was under great discussion amongst the Shias of Kufa. In the house of Sulayman b. Surad al-Khuza'i, a companion of the Prophet ('s) (Ziaraat.com), a meeting was held wherein Sulayman said : "Mu'awiya is dead. Al-Husayn has withheld giving his pledge of allegiance to the people (Umayyads) and has gone to Makkah. You are his Shi'a and the Shi'a of his father. If you know

(in your hearts) that you will be his helpers and fighters against his enemy, and that our lives will be given on behalf of him, then write to him and tell him of that. But if you fear failure and weakness, do not tempt the man (to risk) his own life."

"No", they declared, "indeed we will fight his enemy and our lives will be given on behalf of him." "Then write to him" concluded Sulayman. They dispatched their letter with 'Abd Allah b. Musma al-Hamdani and 'Abd Allah b. Walin who found al-Husayn in Makkah on the 10th Ramadhan 60AH and delivered the first of what was to be more than 150 letters from Kufa to follow it.

Imam Husayn replied to them by stating :

"In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

From al-Husayn b. 'Ali, To the leaders of the believers and the Muslims.

... The main statement of your great men is: "There is no Imam over us. Therefore come, through you, may God unite us under truth and guidance." I am sending you my brother, Muslim b. 'Aqil, who is my cousin and my trustworthy (representative) from my House. If he writes to me that the opinion of your leaders and of the men of wisdom and merit among you is united in the same way as the messengers who have come to me have described and as I have read in your letters, I will come to you speedily. God willing. For by my life, what is the Imam except one who judges by the Book, one who upholds justice, one who professes the religion of truth, and one who dedicates himself to the essence of God.

Greetings." (al-Mufid, 1981)

Imam Husayn ('a) summoned Muslim b. 'Aqil and told him to prepare for his journey and his task. He said something like; "Muslim, the whole world knows that you are one of the bravest warriors. It is just possible that seeing you in Kufa some people may think that our intention is to fight Yazid. Take your two sons Muhammad and Ibrahim with you. When they see you with such young children, they will know that our intentions are peaceful" (Ziaraat.com).

Muslim b. 'Aqil had travelled with the caravan of al-Husayn ('a) with his wife and children from Medinah to Makkah. He was from there dispatched with Qays b. Mushir al-Saydawi and Umara b. Abd Allah al-Saluli and Abd Allah and Abd al-Rahman, the sons of Shaddad al Arhabi, (al-Mufid,1981, p305) where he first travelled directly back to Medinah to pray at the graveside of Prophet Muhammad ('s). He said goodbye to the dearest members of his family

before he set off with two hired guards into the desert toward Kufa, Iraq.

After his two guards became lost and died of severe thirst, Muslim b. 'Aqil was only just able to find his way, by the Grace of the Almighty, to a place known as al-Maqid. From this place he wrote to al-Husayn ('a) stating that the guards had died and that their lives themselves had only been saved in the last moments when they found water.

He requested al-Husayn ('a) to release him of his duty and replace him with another due to this bad omen as he saw it. Where upon Muslim received a reply from al-Husayn ('a) stating: "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 said that it was not for himself that he was afraid, and continued his journey onto Kufa (al-Mufid, 1981).

Muslim ('a) Arrives in Kufa

Muslim arrived in Kufa on the 5th Shawwal 60 AH (Events Calendar, 2005) accompanied by, among others, his two young sons, Ibrahim and Muhammad, and they stayed in the house of al-Mukhtar b. Abi 'Ubayda, known today as the house of Muslim b. al-Musayyib. He was thereafter visited by the Shias in groups during which he would read them the letter of al-Husayn ('a) at which they pledged allegiance to Imam Husayn ('a) through Muslim b. 'Aqil. The groups visiting this house became as numerous as 18,000 persons which drew attention to the location of Muslim b. 'Aqil.

The evil newly appointed Caliph, Yazid b. Mu'awiya came to learn that the Shi'a were paying allegiance to Imam Husayn ('a) through Muslim and replaced his then governor of Kufa, al-Nu'man b. Bashir, who was a man who preferred to stay in obedience to God, with the cruel, cold-hearted 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad who was at that time the governor of Basra. Yazid told 'Ubayd Allah to 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" (al-Mufid, 1981, p308).

When Ibn Ziyad arrived in Kufa, he had veiled his face and was wearing a black turban and the people did not recognise him as being Ibn Ziyad. The Kufans, who were expecting the arrival of Imam Husayn ('a), mistook the arriving entourage as being the Imam and therefore, rushed to greet him. The crowds became so thick that the governor could not ride on until one of his guards cried out, "This is the governor 'Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad." The shocked crowds quickly dispersed out of fear. When Muslim b. 'Aqil heard of the arrival of Ibn Ziyad and fearing for his safety, he moved into the house of Hani b. 'Urwa, a devoted Shi'a and nobleman of Kufa, and kept the location secret except among a few trusted devotees.

The Capture of Hani b. 'Urwa ('a)

Ibn Ziyad summoned a retainer, Ma'qil, who he tasked to act a spy and pretend he was Shi'a in order to locate the whereabouts of Muslim b. 'Aqil. With 3,000 dirhams in his hand and by falsely convincing Muslim b. 'Awsaja al-Asadi of his sincerity, Ma'qil was invited into the presence of Muslim b. 'Aqil where he began to collect information, which he regularly reported

to Ibn Ziyad.

Muslim's host, Hani b. 'Urwa, began fearing for himself and stopped attending the Majlis of the new governor by saying that he was sick. However, it was reported to Ibn Ziyad that Hani was seen sitting in the doorway of his house every evening and thus he was aggressively called to the presence of the new governor.

A violent argument occurred between Hani b. 'Urwa and Ibn Ziyad wherein Ibn Ziyad produced his spy, Ma'qil, and said: "Do you know this man?" Hani replied, "Yes" as he realised that that man had acted as an informant of all their information and brought it to Ibn Ziyad. Hani offered to release Muslim b. 'Aqil from his protection so as he may leave his house, but Ibn Ziyad retorted, "You will never leave me unless you bring him!" At which Hani replied, "No, by God, I will not bring him to you." Hani continued, "By God, indeed there would be shame and disgrace for me 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" (al-Mufid, 1981, p313). Ibn Ziyad said, "Bring him to me or I will have your head cut off" and then he began to strike at Hani's face with his cane until he had broken his nose and blood and flesh sprinkled his beard. They then threw him into one of the rooms and locked the door.

At the news that Hani had been captured, 'Amr b. al-Hajjaj thought he had been killed and therefore advanced on the palace with the people of Madhhij and surrounded the palace as they considered the murder of their colleague to be a great crime. Ibn Ziyad heard this commotion outside and called for one of his guards to look at the state of Hani and report to them that he had not been killed. Hani heard his people outside and became hopeful of being rescued. The women of Murad had also gathered and were crying out; "O tears of grief for him! O bereavement of him!"

Muslim's ('a) Attempted Uprising

Meanwhile, the condition of Hani's arrest had been reported directly to Muslim b. 'Aqil by 'Abd Allah b. Hazim who was ordered to summon Muslim's supporters. The Kufans were gathered and assembled before him, numbering up to 4,000 men of which Muslim appointed leaders over the tribes of Kinda, Madhhij, Tamim, Asad, Mudar and Hamdan. "Muslim b. 'Aqil has come!" cried out a date-seller rushing into the area of the palace as Ibn Ziyad retreated into the palace and locked the gates, surrounded only by his thirty guardsmen, twenty nobles, his family and entourage. (al-Mufid, 1981, p315).

Amongst the noblemen, Ibn Ziyad called on Kathir b. Shihab to go out amongst the Madhhij and make them desert Muslim; he called on Muhammad b. al-Ash'ath to go to the Kinda and Hadramawt; al-Qa'qa al Dhuhuli, Shabath b. Rib'i ul Tamimi, Hajjar b. Abjar al'Ijli and Shamir b. Dhi al-Jawshan al'Amiri. Until nightfall these nobles attempted to convince their people to desert Muslim b. 'Aqil.

The noblemen who were sent to break up the uprising were heard to have 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 ('ata') and he will scatter your soldiers in Syrian campaigns. He will make the healthy among your 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 nobles all spoke in similar vein and it was completely successful in dispersing any support Muslim had in the city of Kufa. When the people heard what they said, they began to disperse. Men started saying to their sons and brothers, "Tomorrow, the Syrians will come against you. What are you doing, causing war and evil? Come away." Women were approaching their sons and brothers saying, "Go, the people will be enough (without) you." This continued until by the time Muslim prayed the evening prayer in the great Mosque, there were left only thirty men with him. When he saw this, he left with these men and headed for the gates of Kinda. When he reached there, only ten men were left by his side and after he had passed there, no-one was left to walk alongside Muslim b. 'Aqil, the emissary of al-Husayn ('a) (al-Mufid, 1981).

Muslim wandered through the unfamiliar streets of the treacherous city, searching for ways to exit the city or a place to take refuge. He came to rest in a doorway of the house of a kind lady, whose name was Taw'a, whereupon she provided drinking water for him. Taw'a had been a freed slave wife of al-Ash'ath b. Qays before marrying Usayd al-Hadrami with whom she had a son named Bilal. At enquiry as to who he was and why he remained seated at her door, Muslim is reported to have said to her; "I have neither house nor clan in this town ... I am Muslim b. 'Aqil. These people have lied to me, incited me (to action) and then abandoned me." Taw'a, upon realising that he was from the Household of the Prophet ('s), kindly showed him hospitality and refuge in a room within her house. Her son, Bilal, who had been out with the

people hunting for Muslim ('a), returned home and became suspicious as to why his Mother was frequenting the small room and forced her to reveal her secret to him.

The Hunt for Muslim ('a) - The First Betrayal

Ibn Ziyad had become aware that the people outside the palace had dispersed and once he had the darkest places within the entire Mosque checked, it was confirmed that there was no man lying in ambush for the governor. He then threatened all the inhabitants of the city that they must do night prayer in the Mosque.

They all came, after which Ibn Ziyad ordered all exit points of Kufa to be sealed, he ordered a thorough search for Muslim b. 'Aqil and gave Husayn b. Numayr full authority over all the houses in Kufa, he offered rewards to those who brought Muslim in, and sent lookouts onto all the roads.

The next morning, the son of Taw'a, Bilal, approached 'Abd al-Rahman b. Muhammad b. al-Ash'ath and told him that Muslim b. 'Aqil was taking shelter in his mother's house, where after 'Abd al-Rahman approached his father Mohammad, who was in the presence of Ibn Ziyad, and informed them. "Get up and bring him to me immediately!" shouted Ibn Ziyad.

Seventy men from the tribal group of Qays approached the house and as Muslim had heard their approach, he went out to meet them with his sword drawn. He fought them off like a true brave warrior of the Household of the Prophet ('s). He was struck on the mouth by Bakr b. Humran al-Ahmari, cutting his lips and knocking out two teeth and then Muslim struck him a terrible blow on the head and then another cutting a nerve along his shoulder almost reaching his stomach.

When the people saw that they went on top of the rooves and began pelting stones and lighted canes at him. He had been hurt and wearied by the fighting; he became out of breath and so leant against the wall of the laneway. Muhammad b. al-Ash'ath offered Muslim a guarantee of security and repeated it several times. A mule was brought and Muslim was put on it, however the people gathered around and took his sword from him. At this he was in distress for his life and with eyes filled with tears, he cried;

"This is the first betrayal."

He was then taken to the palace door of Ibn Ziyad and all he could think of was al-Husayn ('a) and his family on their way to Kufa (al-Mufid, 1981, p322).

The Martyrdom of Muslim ('a)

Still waiting at the door of the palace, Muslim requested water to quench his burning thirst.

When he attempted to drink from a cup, his wound filled the cup with blood and he was therefore unable to drink it. He attempted this a second and third time and finally said;

"Praise be to God, if it had been a provision granted me (by God), I could have drunk it."

When Muslim entered the palace in the presence of Ibn Ziyad he refrained from giving Salam. When questioned on this, he stated, "If he wants my death, what is (the point of) my greeting him with words of peace? If he did not want my death, my greetings (of peace) to him would be profuse."

Ibn Ziyad declared, "By my life you will be killed!" Following this, Muslim requested to make his will to one of his fellow tribesmen. Of those present there was only one man to whom he had kinship, 'Umar b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas, who reluctantly heard Muslim's last requests. In his will Muslim requested his sword and armour to be sold in order to pay a seven hundred dirham debt to a man in Kufa, his body to be properly buried and for a message to reach the Imam, al-Husayn ('a), to tell him to turn back and not continue onto Kufa. Of his requests, Ibn Ziyad only agreed to one of those being carried out, and that was the sale of his property - sword and armour, not the burying of his body nor the message being sent to al-Husayn ('a) (al-Mufid, 1981, p323).

"Take him up to the top of the palace," ordered Ibn Ziyad, "and cut off his head, (throw it to the ground) and make (his body) follow it (to the ground)."

The man to whom Muslim had struck with his sword, Bakr b. Humran al-Ahmari, was the man summoned to do the dreadful deed. He went with Muslim to the roof when Muslim said "Allahu Akbar!" He sought God's forgiveness and prayed for blessings on the Apostle saying, "O Allah, judge between us and a people who have enticed us, lied against us and deserted us." His head was cut from his body and thrown to the ground. His body was made to follow it. This was the ninth day of Zhul Hijjah, The Day of Arafah.

Following this, Muhammad b. al-Ash'ash approached Ibn Ziyad concerning Hani b. 'Urwa and requested for him to be handed over to himself. Ibn Ziyad instead of this, ordered Hani to be taken to the marketplace and have his head cut off. Hani was violently taken in chains to the marketplace where sheep were sold and he cried out, "O Madhhij! There is no one from Madhhij for me today! O Madhhij, where is Madhhij?" But he realised there was no man who was there to help him. He then squeezed his hand out from the chains and cried, "What is there, stick, knife, stone or bone, with which a man can defend his life?"

A Turkish retainer, Rashid, struck at Hani's head but it had no effect. Hani shouted, "To God is the return. O God to Your mercy and Your paradise." Then Rashid struck another blow and cut off Hani's head.

Following these two martyrdoms, the heads of Muslim and Hani were sent to Yazid b. Mu'awiya and their bodies were dragged through the Kufa marketplace by their legs. May Allah rest their souls and may Peace be upon them.

If you do not know what death is, then look at Hani in the market-place and Ibn 'Aqil : (Look at) a hero whose face has been covered with wounds and another who fell dead from a high place.

The command of the governor struck them (down) and they became legends for those who travel on every road.

You see a corpse whose colour death has changed and a spattering of blood which has flowed abundantly;

A young man who was (even) more bashful than a shy young woman, was more decisive than the polished blade of a two-edge sword.

Is Asma riding in safety a mount which moves at walking pace while Madhhij urged him to seek vengeance And Murad wander around him? Are all of them in fear of the questioner and the questioned?

If you do not avenge your two brothers, then be harlots satisfied with little.

- 'Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr al-Asadi (al-Mufid, 1981, p323).

'Abdullah b. Muslim ('a)

On the day of Ashura, 10 Muharram 61AH, 'Abdullah the 15 year old son of Muslim b. 'Aqil, was martyred alongside Imam Husayn ('a) and the Household of the Prophet ('s). He was the second member of the House to fight after that of al-Husayn's ('a) 18 year old son, Ali al-Asghar ('a). In three attacks, he killed many enemy soldiers after which Yazid bin ar-Raqqad al-Juhni shot him with an arrow from which he protected his head with his arm. "The arrow pierced his arm and lodged into his forehead sewing the two together. Failing to dislodge his arm from his forehead, he sent an outcry saying, "O Lord! They trampled on and humiliated us.

So, God kill them as they killed us."

As he was in that state, a man thrust his spear into his heart causing his death. Yazid bin Ar-Raqqad approached the dead body and plucked his arrow from his forehead causing the arrow to come off leaving the arrowhead buried into the forehead" (Tale of Husain's Martyrdom, 1424, VNM).

Conclusion

The caravan of al-Imam al-Husayn ('a) was travelling toward the city of Kufa in Iraq, during the

month of Zhul Hijjah 60AH and into the month of Muharram 61AH. The news of the martyrdom of Muslim b. 'Aqil ('a) did reach Imam Husayn ('a) and it was Imam Husayn's ('a) destiny that he continue the journey until he reached the sands of Karbala near the banks of the Euphrates River.

Imam Husayn ('a) was the "Zibhe Azeem"- the greatest sacrifice, martyred accompanied by his closest family members, The Household of The Prophet (s.a.w.s.) and his ('a) most devoted companions on the tenth day of Muharram, the Day of Asshura.

Asshura is the heartbeat of every Shi'a, commemorated every year across the globe in days gone by, today and those to come. The Events of the Day of Asshura, the events leading up to that day and those that followed it, build the foundation of Asshura, the salvation of Islam.

May Allah (s.w.t.) bless the martyrs of Karbala and the martyrs of Kufa -Muslim b. 'Aqil and Hani b. 'Urwa and the ladies and the children of The Household of the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.s) who were taken prisoner at Karbala through to Kufa and on to Damascus. Let everyone tremble at the thought of being questioned directly by Amirul Momineen Ali ('a) on the Day of Judgement, if they have in any way opposed his ('a) righteous Shi'a.

Amirul Mo'mineen 'Ali b. Abi Talib ('a) said :

"No one can establish the rule of Allah except he who shows no relenting (in the matter of right), who does not behave like wrongdoers and who does not run after objects of greed" ('Ali b. Abi Talib, 1989).

May Allah (s.w.t.) rain down down his peace and blessings on Muhammad and on Ale Muhammad and may Allah (s.w.t) and the Ale Muhammad ('a) forgive me for any mistakes in my humble writings.

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