

Muslim Meets Ibn Ziyad

They brought him to Ibn Ziyad and when Muslim saw water he asked for some. Bahili said to him, “You are not going to taste this water until you taste the fire of Hell.”

Muslim said, “Who Are You? You are the one who deserves the fire!” And sat at the wall of the castle. Later, a woman named ‘Umarah gave him a bowl of water. Whenever Muslim tried to drink, the bowl became filled with his own pouring blood. After the third time trying to drink the water, all of his teeth fell into the bowl. He gave up and put the bowl down. Then, the guards took him inside and ordered him to say ‘Salaam Alaykum’ to the new governor, Ibn Ziyad. Muslim replied, “Shut up! He is your governor. I say Salaam to whoever follows the truth!”

Ibn Ziyad laughed and said, “If you say ‘Salaam Alaykum’ or not, you are going to die anyway.”

Muslim said, “If you kill me, there have been better people than me killed by worse people than you.”

Ibn Ziyad said, “You have rebelled against your leader, you have divided Muslims and have created disorder.”

Muslim said, “Indeed, Muawiyah and his son Yazid have divided Muslims and created disorder. And your father is the beginning of disorder! I wish to reach martyrdom at the hands of the worst person in the world.”

Then Muslim asked someone in the court to write a will for him. He looked at the people and recognized ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d and asked if he would carry his will but ‘Umar refused. Ibn Ziyad ordered him to take it because he wanted to find out for himself what Muslim would write.

Muslim went to ‘Umar and said, “First pay the loan I took when I came to Kufah, six hundred Dirhams. Second, take my body from Ibn Ziyad and give it an Islamic burial. Third, write to Imam Husayn and tell him what happened to me.”

‘Umar Ibn Sa’d immediately went to Ibn Ziyad and revealed it to him. Ibn Ziyad said to ‘Umar Ibn Sa’d, “The trustworthy one never betrays you but sometimes you trust a liar.”

Then, he came to Muslim and said, “You came to people and divided them.”

Muslim replied, “No! Never! I did not come for that, but people of this city claim that your father has killed their best people and we came to bring justice and to implement the Quran.”

Ibn Ziyad said, “That is not your business, we were giving them justice.”

Muslim said, “God knows that you are not truthful and you kill people without justice.”

Then Ibn Ziyad cursed Imam ‘Ali and Imam Husayn, and Muslim said, “You and your father deserve that more than anyone else.” Ibn Ziyad ordered a man from Syria to take Muslim to the roof, cut his head off, and throw his body down into the street. He took him to the roof while Muslim was saying, “Subhanallah!² O God, judge between us and these people who betrayed us, deceived us, and denied us.” Then he turned his face to Medinah and said, “Assalamu ‘ala al-Husayn.”³ The Syrian killed him and dropped his head and his body to the ground.

When he killed Muslim, he saw a strange and horrifying vision. After he killed Muslim, the man came to Ibn Ziyad, afraid, and said, “When I killed him I saw a man pointing to me, and it scared me.”

Ibn Ziyad waved him away and ordered H^{ani} to be taken to the market. They tied H^{ani} up and took him, and no one helped him. H^{ani} struggled and managed to untie the ropes. He got out of the ropes, picked up a stick, and fought with it, but the guards lunged at him all at once and killed him with their swords.

Ibn Ziyad ordered the bodies of both Muslim and H^{ani} to be dragged up and down the streets of Kufah, and then hung upside down in a place called Kunnasah. He sent their heads to Yazid who hung them at the city wall of Damascus, his capital.

With the heads, Ibn Ziyad sent a letter to Yazid, “Thank God that the leader of the faithful (Amir ul-Mu’minin)⁴ was successful. We captured Muslim in the house of H^{ani}. I scattered spies around them until I found them. I cut off their heads and sent them to you by two people who are reliable, and the Leader of the faithful can ask them about the details.”

Yazid replied to Ibn Ziyad, “You did what a wise man has to do, you spoke the truth, as I believed in you. I asked the two messengers the details and I have heard that Husayn Ibn ‘Ali has gone towards Iraq. Keep your eyes open and kill people whom you are suspicious of. Do not wait for any proof. Husayn is the problem. Either you fight him or you send him to me.”

1. Both ‘Umar and Muslim were from Medina

2. Subhanallah –Praise be to God– is an expression of surprise.

3. Salaam –peace– be upon Hussayn.

4. This title, which means ‘the leader of the faithful ones’, though Prophet Mohammad said it to Imam ‘Ali exclusively, was used to every one to come to power in the Islamic State.

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