

15) ‘Ammar would be killed by Transgressors

Ibn Hanbal says:

Abu Mu‘awiyah has related to us from A‘mash from ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Ziyad who quotes ‘Abdullah bin Harth as saying:

I was with Mu‘awiyah (ibn Abi Sufyan) when he was returning from (the Battle of) Siffin and I was riding between him and ‘Amr bin ‘As, when ‘Abdullah the son of ‘Amr bin ‘As said:

Don't you remember the Messenger of Allah had told ‘Ammar

“Waihaka ya ibn al-Sumayyah, taqtuluka al-fi’ah al-baghiyah (Bravo O son of Sumayyah! You will be killed by a group of transgressors).”

‘Amr bin ‘As turned to Mu‘awiyah and said:

Did you not hear what he says?

Mu‘awiyah replied:

You find fault with us! Did we kill him? Those who brought him here are responsible for his death!¹

This hadith has been recorded over twenty times in the Musnad on the authority of eight companions of the Prophet with variations in its text.² Ahmad Shakir considers this hadith not only sahih but mutawatir (regularly transmitted throughout the first three generations of Muslims by a large number of transmitters) and says that scholars have never doubted its veracity. Explaining the word hannahu (finding fault) as used by Mu‘awiyah, he writes:

It is clear that Mu‘awiyah is not disputing this hadith but is censuring ‘Abdullah bin ‘Amr (bin ‘As) for remembering it in this situation (when ‘Ammar has been killed by his troops), since he fears that if his army knows that he is on the wrong track they would desert him. In view of this fact, Mu‘awiyah was trying to misinterpret and give a wrong connotation to this hadith by saying that the killers of ‘Ammar are those that brought him to the battlefield.

Ahmad Shakir, quoting Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani's comments in Fath al-Bari fi Tafsir Sahih al-Bukhari (vol. 1, p. 452), further writes:

This hadith has been related by several companions of the Prophet including Qatadah bin Nu'man, Umm Salamah, Abi Hurayrah, 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'As, 'Uthman bin 'Affan, Hudhayfah al-Yamani, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Abu Rafi', Khuzaymah bin Thabit, Mu'awiyah, 'Amr bin 'As, Abu al-Yasar and 'Ammar bin Yasir himself. This hadith is a firm proof of the virtues of (Imam) 'Ali ('a) and 'Ammar and their standing with the Prophet. It is also a fitting reply to the enemies of (Imam) 'Ali (nawasib pl. of nasib) who accuse him of error in his wars (during his caliphate).³

1. Al-Musnad, hadith no. 6499 (Ahmad Shakir).

2. Also refer to hadith nos. 6500, 6926, 6927. For other instances of its recording in the Musnad refer to al-Salafi: Murshid al-Muhtar, vol. 2, p. 39. For details on the Prophet's prophecy and 'Ammar's martyrdom refer to Muhammad bin Jarir al-Tabari: Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk, vol. 5, pp. 38 to 42, annotated by Muhammad Abu al-Fazl Ibrahim, 2nd edition, Dar al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 1971.

3. Al-Musnad, hadith nos. 209, 210.

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