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Hani's Stand

When the matter became clear to Ibn Ziyad, who by now knew that Muslim was hiding at the house of Hani Ibn 'Urwah, he had Asma' Ibn Kharijah, Muhammad Ibn al-Ash'ath and 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj brought to him. He asked them why Hani had not been coming lately to visit him.

They told him that it was due to his sickness, but he was not convinced especially since his informers had already told him that Hani used to sit at the door of his house every evening.

These same men rode to Hani and asked him to meet the *sultan*, for "He cannot stand you staying away from him," they said, pressuring him till he yielded. Hani, therefore, rode his mule and went. As soon as Ibn Ziyad saw him, he said, "His feet, the feet of the treacherous one, have brought him to you."¹

Then he turned to his judge Shurayh and cited this verse of poetry:²

I seek his pleasure while he seeks my death,
Now from your fellow you have an excuse
To carry out what you intend to do.

Then Ibn Ziyad turned to Hani and said, "You brought 'Aqil's son to your house and gathered weapons for him, did you not?" Hani denied, and when their argument became heated, Ibn Ziyad ordered Ma'qil to be brought to him. Hani, hence, understood that that man was actually Ibn Ziyad's spy, so he said to Ibn Ziyad,

"Your father had done me great favours, and I now wish to reward him. Why do you not listen to my good advice and safely depart for Syria with your family and wealth? Someone who is more worthy than you and your friend³ of taking charge has come here." Ibn Ziyad said, "And under the foam is the pure sour milk."⁴

Ibn Ziyad then said to him, "By Allah! You will not stay out of my sight before you bring him to me." Hani

said, “By Allah! Had he been under my foot, I would not have lifted it!” Ibn Ziyad then spoke rudely to him and even threatened to kill him.

Hani, therefore, said, “In that case, there will be plenty of swords around you,” thinking that the tribesmen of Murad would protect him from Ibn Ziyad who then pulled Hani’s braids, hitting his face with his sword, breaking his nose and scattering the flesh from his cheeks and forehead on his beard. He then jailed him at his mansion.⁵

‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj heard that Hani had been killed. Hani’s wife, Raw’a, who is well known as the mother of Yahya son of Hani, was the sister of ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj. The latter, therefore, rode with a multitude from the tribe of Mathhaj, and they all surrounded the mansion.

When Ibn Ziyad came to know about it, he ordered Shurayh, the judge⁶, to see Hani and then to tell those horsemen that Hani was still alive. Shurayh narrates saying, “When Hani saw me, he said in a loud voice, ‘O Muslims! Should ten persons enter here, you must come to my rescue!’ Had Hamid Ibn Abu Bakr al-Ahmari, the policeman, not been with me, I would have conveyed his message, but I had to simply say instead that Hani was still alive. ‘Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj then praised Allah and went back accompanied by the other men.”⁷

1. On p. 19, Vol. 1, of his book *Mujma’ al-Amthal*, al-Maydani says that this verse was composed by al-Harith Ibn Jibillah al-Ghassani as he seized al-Harith Ibn ‘Afif al-‘Abdi who had composed poetry defaming him.

2. According to p. 274, Vol. 2, of *Al-Isaba* (of Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani), where Qays Ibn al-Makshuh’s biography is detailed, the author says that this verse was composed by ‘Amr Ibn Ma’di-Karib wherein he referred to his sister’s son from whom he had distanced himself. On p. 32, Vol. 14, of *Al-Aghani*, Abul-Faraj al-Isfahani says, “The Commander of the Faithful (‘a) cited this verse when Ibn Muljim al-Muradi came to swear the oath of allegiance to him.” On p. 97, Vol. 3, of his *Tarikh*, published by the Hayderi Press (Najaf, Iraq), al-Ya’qubi says, “It came to the knowledge of Abu al-‘Abbas al-Saffah that Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdullah raised an army in Medina to fight him, so he wrote the latter in this regard and included this verse:

I seek his love while he seeks to murder me,
What your friend seeks is now your own excuse.

‘Abdullah wrote him back saying,

How could he thus seek while you are
Like the arteries of his heart?
How could he thus seek while your forearm
Derives its strength even from his own?
How could he thus seek while you are
To Hashim a head and a guide?”

3. al-Mas’udi, *Muruj al-Thahab*, Vol. 2, p. 88. By “your friend” he meant Yazid.

4. al-Zamakhshari, *Al-Mustaqsa*, Vol. 1, p. 15 (Hayderabad, India, edition).

5. Ibn Nama, *Muthir al-Ahzan*.

6. On p. 330, Vol. 1, of his book *Al-Tabaqat*, Khalifah Ibn 'Amr says that Shurayh was one of the "sons" who were in Yemen, attributing his lineage to the Kindah tribe, and that he died in 76 A.H./695 A.D. On p. 16, Vol. 1, of his own commentary on *Al-Tabaqat*, Suhayl Zakar identifies the "sons" as "the descendants of the Persians who had accompanied Sayf Ibn Thu Yazan to help the latter in kicking the Ethiopians out of Yemen." He adds saying, "These 'sons' constitute a special class in Yemen: their fathers are Persian while their mothers are Arab."

7. *al-Tabari, Tarikh*, Vol. 6, p. 206. According to Ibn Nama and Ibn Tawus, the name of Hani's wife was Rowayha daughter of 'Amr Ibn al-Hajjaj.

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