

Conceit of Ibn Sa'd

Al-Husayn ('a) dispatched 'Amr Ibn Qarzah al-Ansari to Ibn Sa'd asking for an evening meeting between both warring factions. Each came out escorted by twenty cavaliers. Al-Husayn ('a) ordered those in his company, with the exception of al-'Abbas and his oldest son, 'Ali al-Akbar, to lag behind. Ibn Sa'd did likewise, keeping his son, Hafs, with him together with his slave.

Al-Husayn ('a) said, *"O Ibn Sa'd! Are you really fighting me?! Don't you fear Allah to Whom you shall return?! I am the son of you know very well who. Why don't you come to my side and leave these folks, for that will surely be better for you with Allah?"* 'Umar Ibn Sa'd said, "I fear lest my house should be demolished [if I do so]."

"I shall rebuild it for you," was al-Husayn's answer. "I fear lest my estate should be confiscated," said Ibn Sa'd. The Imam, peace be upon him, said, *"I shall compensate you for it with one even better from my property in Hijaz."*¹

It is said that the Imam ('a) promised Ibn Sa'd to give him his own estate called al-Bughaybgha, a vast tract of land containing palms and many other fruit trees. Mu'awiyah had offered the Imam ('a) one million² dinars for it, but he refused to sell it to him.³ Ibn Sa'd then said, "I have in Kufa many children, and I fear lest Ibn Ziyad should kill them all."

When al-Husayn ('a) lost all hope of winning him over, he stood up as he said, *"What is the matter with you, may Allah soon kill you on your bed, and may He never forgive you on the Day of Gathering?! By Allah! I wish you will only eat a little of the wheat of Iraq."* Ibn Sa'd responded by saying sarcastically, "Barley suffices me!"⁴

The first Sign of Allah's Wrath, which this man witnessed, was the loss of his anticipated post as the governor of Rey. When he returned from Karbala', Ibn Ziyad required him to bring him the covenant wherein he promised to make him governor of Rey, but Ibn Sa'd claimed that he had lost it.

He pressured him to bring it to him, so Ibn Sa'd said, "I left it being read for the old women of Quraysh

as means to apologize to them. By Allah! I had advised you with regard to al-Husayn with one piece of advice which, had you conveyed it to my father Sa'd, you would have paid him what you owe him.”

‘Uthman Ibn Ziyad, ‘Ubaydullah's brother, said, “Yes, he has said the truth! I wish there is a ring in the nose of each and every person belonging to Banu Ziyad till the Day of Judgment, and that al-Husayn had never been killed.”⁵

One of the ways whereby al-Mukhtar dealt with him was that when he granted him security, he hired women to mourn the death of al-Husayn at the doorstep of ‘Umar Ibn Sa'd's house. This attracted the attention of passers-by to the fact that the person living inside was the one responsible for killing the Master of the Youths of Paradise.

This caused a great deal of embarrassment to Ibn Sa'd who requested al-Mukhtar to have them removed from there. Al-Mukhtar said to him, “Does not al-Husayn (‘a) deserve to be mourned?”⁶ And when the people of Kufa wanted ‘Umar Ibn Sa'd to be their governor, following the death of Yazid son of Mu'awiyah, the women of the tribes of Hamdan and Rabi'a came to the grand mosque screaming and saying,

“Was not Ibn Sa'd satisfied with killing al-Husayn so he now wants to be the governor?” People wept, turning away from him.⁷

1. ‘Abdullah Nur-Allah al-Bahrani, Maqatal al-‘Awalim, p. 78.

2. The word “million” does not exist in Arabic; instead, the Arabs say “a thousand thousands.” N. Tr.

3. Radiyy ad-Din al-Qazwini, Tazallum al-Zahra’, p. 103.

4. Ibid., p. 103. al-Khawarizmi, Maqatal al-Husayn, Vol. 1, p. 245.

5. al-Tabari, Tarikh, Vol. 6, p. 268.

6. Sayyid Muhammad Riqa al-Asterbadi al-Hilli, Al-‘Iqd al-Farid, in a chapter bearing the heading “Al-Mukhtar's Uprising.”

7. al-Mas’udi, Muruj al-Thahab, Vol. 2, p. 105, where Yazid is discussed.