

The Two Young Sons of Muslim bin Aqeel A.S.

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Of all the children that accompanied Imam Husain A.S., the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh & progeny) to Karbala, the story of the suffering and death of Muhammad and Ibrahim, the two young sons of Muslim bin Aqeel A.S. is particularly sad and moving. Muslim A.S. was cousin of Imam Husain A.S. and nephew of Imam Ali A.S.

Muslim A.S. arrives in Kufa. Imam Husain A.S. had sent his cousin Muslim A.S. to Kufa to assess the political and social environment there. Muslims of Kufa had invited Imam Husain A.S. to come and guide them in the religious affairs as the Imam of the time. Muslim A.S. was treacherously killed in Kufa by the orders of Yezid, the ruler of that time. This order was executed by the Governor of Kufa, Ubaidallah ibn Ziyad. This was particularly sad and shocking, because Kufans themselves had invited Imam Husain to Kufa. Initially he was welcomed by Kufans and 18,000 to 24,000 people made pledge of support for Muslim A.S. He thereafter, sent a letter to Imam Husain advising him of the large support of Kufans for him. However, when Ibn Ziyad arrived with just a handful of companions as the new Governor of Kufa, the environment changed overnight. Ibn Ziyad used intimidation, threats, bribery and lies and managed to disperse the huge crowds of Muslim's supporters. Muslim A.S. was cowardly and treacherously abandoned by Kufans, rather quickly. He did not know where to go and where to hide from his enemies. He wandered alone in the streets of Kufa, and finally took refuge in the house of Hani bin Urwah. Ibn Ziyad learned about Muslim's whereabouts and ordered Hani's arrest. Muslim A.S. escaped and took refuge in the house of an old woman by name Tua.

Muslim A.S. martyred. Ibn Ziyad discovered the hiding place of Muslim A.S. and sent his army to kill him or capture him. Muslim A.S. fought bravely in the tradition of the bravest of Bani Hashim. Finally he succumbed to the onslaught by the numerous but coward forces of Kufans who attacked him from all sides, even hurling stones from the roof of the house. He was thirsty but could not even drink water because he was bleeding from injuries to his face. He was beheaded and his head was sent to Ibn Ziyad. His body was desecrated in the worst pre-Islamic barbaric tradition. He was the first Bani Hashim from the camp of Imam Husain to die. *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Raja'oon.*

The two Sons of Muslim A.S. The name of the older child was Muhammad and the younger was Ibrahim. Their exact ages are not known. However, according to some accounts they were pre-teens, possibly 12 years and 10 years old. There are two versions of their initial whereabouts. According to the Books: "Nasak-ut-Tawarikh," and in "Roda al Shod'a" by Qazvini, they were with their father, Muslim A.S. The other version is that they were with Imam Husain in Karbala and later on imprisoned by Ubaydallah Ibn Ziyad, the Governor of Kufa. This is according to Ali Nazari Munfarid in his book "The Story of Karbala." Also, reported in the book, "Muntahal Amaal" by Sheikh Abbas Qummi. However, all historians agree that they were subsequently imprisoned in Kufa on the orders of Ibn Ziyad.

Life in the prison. The young orphans spent about one year in the prison. They underwent extreme hardship. Ibn Ziyad had ordered to treat them harshly. They only received two pieces of barley bread and a cup of water daily, in the evening. In the tradition of Ahulul Bayt, they fasted in the daytime, even though they were so young. They became weaker by the day. After a year had passed by, one brother said to the other, "O' brother! It is a long time that we have been imprisoned, our life is being wasted away and our

bodies have suffered. Tonight when the jailer comes, we are going to introduce ourselves to him, perhaps he might release us.”

Release from the prison. When the jailer learned that these youngsters were from the family of the Prophet, he was shocked. He fell on their feet and asked for forgiveness. That night he set them free with some provision and directed them towards Medina with caution to travel only at night to avoid being caught by Ibn Ziyad’s soldiers. After a while, they lost their way and became tired and exhausted. They asked an old woman, who was outside her house, to give them shelter for the night. When she learnt that they were from the family of the Prophet, she was kind to them. However, she worried about her son-in-Law, Harith, who was Ibn Ziyad’s supporter, and who might harm the boys. The boys slept in a dark room. They were unfortunately, discovered by the man and he found out who they were. He bound their feet together.

Final moments of the youth’s life. In the morning, Harith ordered his slave named Fatih to take them to the bank of the river and kill them and bring back their heads. The slave when he learned that these were from the Ahlul Bayt of Prophet Muhammad pbuh&p, he refused to obey his master and fled. The man asked his son to kill them, but he also refused and left. Finally, the man himself took the boys to the bank of river Euphrates to kill them. They pleaded with him to sell them as slaves rather than kill them. The man refused. They again pleaded with him to take them to Ibn Ziyad and let him decide their fate, but the cruel and greedy man would not listen. He said, “I better earn his nearness by spilling your blood.” They finally requested permission to offer the Salaat, which was granted.

Their last words. After the Salaat, they looked up towards the heaven and prayed: “O’ Thou alive, O’ Thou wise, O’ who is the best of all the judges; Thou judge us and him with justice.” Then the evil man killed the older youth first, and then the younger one. *Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilaihi Raja’oon.*”

The heads of Mohammad and Ibrahim brought in Ibn Ziyad’s Court. The man wrapped their heads in a cloth and took them to Ibn Ziyad expecting two thousand Dirhams in bounty.

When Ibn Ziyad saw the heads of the children, he arose and sat three times and then exclaimed, “Woe upon you! Where did you find them?” The man related the whole story. Ibn Ziyad asked him why did he not bring them alive, so he would give him four thousand Dirham. The man replied, “my heart did not allow me, except that by spilling their blood I should seek your nearness.”

Fate of the killer of the youth. Ibn Ziyad asked what their last words were. The man repeated their prayer seeking Justice of God. Ibn Ziyad said, “Allah had done justice between you and those children.” Then he ordered that this cruel man be taken to the same place where the two children were killed and behead the man and bring his head back. Thus, the prayers of the innocent victims were answered

Their tomb is situated at a place called Musaiyib, about ten miles from Karbala. It is visited by pilgrims on their way to Karbala...

Such were the times, and the people that the Imams, their families, and their supporters had faced.

(The End)

O’ Allah! Count us among the supporters and lovers of Ahlul Bayt. A’meen.

References: - 1.The Story of Karbala by Ali Nazari Munfarid, translated by sayyid Hussein ‘Alamdard. 2. Muntahal Amaal by Sheikh Abbas Qummi. 3. The Martyrdom of Imam Husain, compiled by Yousuf N. Lalljee.