Muslim Ibn Aqil:

Messenger of al-Hussain (Peace Be Upon Them)

By Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi



مسلم بن عقيل سفير الحسين (عليهما السلام)

لآية الله العظمى السيد محمد تقي المدرّسي

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آية الله السيد محمد تقي المدرسي

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Biography of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi (Arabic: محمد تقي الحسيني المدرسي) born in 1945 is an Iraqi Shia *marja'* and political theorist.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi is the author of over 400 books on matters of theology, historiography, jurisprudence, philosophy, logic and social science.

The Anglican Centre in Rome has stated that *"Grand Ayatollah al-Modarresi is probably the second most senior Shia cleric after al-Sistani. His call for peace & human dignity is very significant."*

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was born into a distinguished Shia religious family in Karbala, Iraq. His father is Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Kadhim al-Modarresi. His mother is the daughter of grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi. He is from the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed (sawa).

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi began his religious education in the religious seminaries of Karbala, at the young age of 8. He studied under some of Karbala's most senior scholars such as Shaykh Mohammed al-Karbassi, Shaykh Jafar al-Rushti, Shaykh Yusuf al-Khurasani and his uncle, Sayyid Mohammed al-Shirazi.

Due to the rising pressures of the Bathists anti-Shia sentiment Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi emigrated to Kuwait in 1971. He

settled there until 1979, after which he moved to Iran. With the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by American-led forces in 2003, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi along with other Iran-based clerics returned to Iraq.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was the first Shia religious leader to issue a call to popular resistance against ISIS, after its swift capture of large swathes of land in Iraq in June 2014. In his statement, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi warned against the destruction of churches and temples belonging to all religions.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi made an official statement regarding the COVID-19 strain, saying that the people of Iraq should self-isolate, and utilize the month of Rajab, by performing the recommended prayers and supplications at home. He also stated that Muslim community needs to increase its faith in God, so that He may protect us from all evil. Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi also called for the Iraqi government to take up all measures to face this new viral strain, which threatens the lives of many today. He added, the Iraqi people are always willing to stand by its government and provide aid, as is seen in the Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modaressi traveled to Bahrain in 2002 on an official visit, at the invitation of the Minister of Justice and Islamic Affairs, Abdullah bin Khalid Al Khalifa.

In December 2014, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi was invited by the Pope to attend a summit of world religious leaders at the

Vatican. This made him the first Grand Ayatollah to have met the Pope.



In his speech, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohammed-Taqi al-Husayni al-Modarresi asked world religious leaders to "engage in a symbiosis of civilizations and religions". He condemned terrorism, nuclear proliferation, modern day slavery and said:

"At its core, divine religion is one, but failure to understand religion has divided human beings and created barriers between us. We must exert extra effort to tear down those barriers and join religions under the umbrella of a common term. We have a calling to love one another, to protect the environment, to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction and to end slavery in all its forms."

In 2016 he went to Australia, where he met community leaders as well as the Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop. The two discussed Iraq, the war on

terrorism, as well as how Muslims can be better integrated into the Australian community.[1]

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohammad_Taqi_al-Modarresi

Series Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

To reach the position of leadership in the nation or in a human gathering is a great ambition, but why is it not always achieved? It is not always achieved because this position requires some requirements which you may not possess, and may be present in someone more qualified or luckier than you.

But to be a loyal supporter of that leader is very achievable, and may even be as important as leadership. As the Chinese saying says: "Behind every great man stands great men." Truly, many great leaders have failed to achieve their magnificent goals because of their lack of supporters, or their incompetence.

This may cause the nation to have a chaos of leadership, and their multiplicity may cause issues, as the poet says:

قومي رؤوس كلهم

My people are all heads (leaders),

أرأيت مزرعة البصل

(Like) Have you not seen an onion farm?

It's the nation's responsibility, especially its conscious vanguard to choose a leader and support them loyally.

In Islamic culture, there are many great examples of men who surrounded a great leader, and whose support was drastic (in the nation). Our Lord (swt) said describing these loyal men who supported the Greatest Messenger (s):

(مِّنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا۟ مَا عَـٰهَدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُم مَّن قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُۥ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا۟ تَبْدِيلًا)

Among the believers are men who have proven true to what they pledged to Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pledge [with their lives], others are waiting. They have never changed in the least.

The Almighty also said:

(مُّحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلَّذِينَ مَعَهُۥٓ أَشِدَّآءُ عَلَى ٱلْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَآءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَىٰهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرِضْوَٰنًا)

Mohammed is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate amongst each other. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking Allah's grace and pleasure

This was how the companions of Prophet Mohammed (s), headed by Imam Ali ('a), were. As for the Commander of Faithful's companions, they were those whom he mourned on the pulpit of the Mosque of Kufa after some of them passed away when he said: "Where are my brothers who took the path and passed on the truth? Where is Ammar (Ibn Yasser)? Where is (Abul-Haytham) Ibn al-Tayhan? Where is He of the Two Witnesses (Khuzayma Ibn Thabit)? Where are their equals of brothers who chose to die, and whose heads were taken to the depraved?"

The companions of the Martyred Grandson Aba Abdillah al-Hussain ('a) were as he described, when he said: "I do not know companions more loyal or virtuous than my

companions, nor a household who keep ties (with kinship) or better than my household." ([2])

The chiefs of his companions were his family members whom he mentioned by name. Hence, it was our duty to have a moment of contemplation of their lives. For maybe we can return some of their rights on us, be guided by them, and emulate their lives in defending the truth to hold their banner in every age.

The important roles of these virtuous few which we are honored to mention: Our master al-Abbas Ibn Ali, lady Zainab Bint Ali, our master Muslim Ibn Aqil, our master Ali Ibn al-Hussain (Ali Akbar), the Sayyids of the progeny of Imam al-Hassan, and lastly Umm al-Banin the symbol of faith and righteousness in the epic of Karbala are not hidden from anyone. They ('a) are the best example for anyone who wants to fight for the truth and under the banner of a Lordly leader (Chosen by Allah), may Allah bless us for that.

The Holy City of Karbala
3rd of the Sacred Dhul-Qidah / 1433 AH
Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

([2]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg392

Introduction

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, may His blessings be upon Mohammed (s) and his Pure Household, and may His curse be upon all their oppressors.

Allah has completed his proof upon His servants, not allowing them to have an excuse for their negligence of faith and struggle (for His sake). To complete His religion and proof upon His creation, He sent prophets to set a good example for humanity. Then, He chose successors to be Imams that can be followed and enlightened from. Then, He chose from His creation martyrs who are in a lesser rank than prophets and successors and are humans like anyone else. Except that their struggle for the sake of Allah elevated them to the high ranks. So, if someone were to say: "I cannot be like the Messenger (s) or the Imams ('a)," he cannot find an excuse to not follow the companions, supporters and followers of the Messenger and Imams ('a).

So, why do we not follow our master al-Abbas Ibn Ali ('a) as an example for our lives? Or why do we not follow our master Ali al-Akbar, the son of the Martyred Grandson Imam Hussain ('a), or al-Qassim Ibn al-Hassan ('a)? Why do we not follow and be guided with light of our master Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a), the Messenger of al-Hussain ('a), the first martyr to fall for the love of the martyred grandson?

For this, Allah (swt) blessed me with (writing) the biography of this oppressed Sayyid from the family of the Messenger, who the Beloved of Allah (s) cried for while saying: "To Allah, I complain about what my family will face after me." ([3])

([3]) Bihar al-Anwar: v22 / pg288

Despite the story of Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) ending with his martyrdom, his noble blood still fuels the torch of revolution and lightens the paths of fighters. I ask Allah to make these papers an aid for me and the readers (in intercession) on the Day of Judgement, and to bless us with following Muslim in his path of struggle (for His sake), surely, He is All-hearing, All-responsive (to prayers).

8th of Rajab / 1416 AH
Mohammed Taqi al-Modarresi

Call to Mobilization

He entered Kufa, only to find it a city of ghosts filled with deadly silence. Only military patrols were in its empty markets. Suddenly, they catch him. "Who are you?!" They shout, "What caused you to fall behind the Commander's call to mobilization?"

He was astonished. What commander? What mobilization? "I am a man from the valley (a nomad)." Before finishing his sentence, a soldier interrupted him by saying: "We do not have time for your stories. Come with us to the Commander for him to decide."

Kufa was a city built in the era of Prophet Noah ('a). Some narrations say that it was the epicenter of the flood that struck Mesopotamia and that area of the world.

The city was destroyed and rebuilt many times throughout history. When the eastern army of Muslims conquered Iraq, Kufa was not a major city, rather a few villages near the Euphrates. The Muslims then rebuilt a great city in it as a base for their forces in conquering the east. It was named the Kufa of troops. The eastern army that resided in it was very large and powerful. When Imam Ali ('a) was chosen for the Caliphate, after the killing of the third Caliph, Muawiyah the commander of the Levantine army (the second largest army) refused to pledge allegiance. Then, the people of Basra, led by chiefs of Quraysh (Talha, Zubair, and Aisha), revolted against him. Imam Ali ('a) migrated to Kufa and took it as a military capital to absorb the riots in Basra and fight the rebellion of the Levant.

Thus, Kufa became the capital of the Caliphate, and participated in many battles against the Levantine army. Despite its loss against the army who benefited from the

military experience of the Romans and their use of deception, Kufa continued to hate the Umayyad regime and support the Ahlul-bayt ('a), waiting for the opportunity to revolt against it. With the death of Muawiyah, came the opportunity to revolt against it. The Islamic nation was put into chaos, so the chiefs of Kufa messaged Imam al-Hussain ('a) to come to them for them to fight under his righteous banner. But Yazid, in compliance with the advice of his Roman advisor, Sargon, chose Ibn Ziyad to rule Kufa. He (Ibn Ziyad) took control by terrorizing them using the Levantine army. Then he bought some of them using money.

He was able to control the weak-hearted of them which he then used to fight Abu Abdullah al-Hussain ('a) under the command of Omar Ibn Saad Ibn Abi Waqqas, whose father (Saad) was once the commander of the army of Iraq.

Then, he declared a call to mobilization, and that whoever did not enlist is to be executed. This nomad was a victim of this call. He stood before Ibn Ziyad, so he asked him: "Why did you not enlist to fight al-Hussain?"

He said: "O' commander, I am a nomad. I sold some of my camels to a man from Kufa, and I have come to receive the money."

The man spoke with confidence and his words showed his truth. Ibn Ziyad looked at his entourage and said: "I think he is truthful." However, he turned to the executioner and said: "Execute him to teach other a lesson (terrorize them into fighting)."

Seconds later, the head of the nomad was rolling before Ibn Ziyad, becoming yet another witness of Umayyad tyranny.

My Brother, Cousin and Confidant

He left the mosque with a few people heading towards the gate of Kinda. Before reaching the gate, he was left with less than ten companions. Upon exiting the gate, he had no one to guide him or defend him if the enemies came. Our master Muslim Ibn Aqil walked in the streets of Kufa not knowing where to go. ([4])

The curved streets and markets of Kufa most of which led to the grand mosque were empty that night despite it being a night suitable for night gatherings which Arabs enjoyed, especially with the scattered courtyards which would be used as places of gathering. Muslim was walking through these empty streets in a lonely night, alone and as a stranger not knowing where to go.

Aqil Ibn Abi Talib was the best-knowing historian in Quraysh. His father Abu Talib ('a) loved him greatly, and so did the Messenger of Allah (s). When the Commander of Faithful Ali ('a) asked him about his love for Aqil, he (s) said: "By Allah, I love him two loves: for his love, and for the love of Abu Talib." Then he said: "His son will be killed for the love of your son. The eyes of the believers will cry for him and the close angels will pray for him." ([5])

Allah blessed Aqil with a blessed son which he named Muslim. He grew up in the Hashemite house, the house of revelation, the axis of the nation's movement and the pole of the religious and political life. He was nurtured in this great house. Then, when he reached his youth, like most of those his age, he joined the Islamic army which roamed the horizons in that time and controlled states,

([4]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg350
([5]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg287

adhering them to the Islamic world. The historical narration says: "When the Muslims conquered Oxyrhynchus (located in Upper Egypt), Muslim Ibn Aqil (who had seen his brothers Jafar and Ali injured), poetically said:

ضناني الهم مع حزني الطويل

Pain came to me along with my long-lasting grief

لفقد صاحبي مجد أثيل

For the loss of two men of great glory.

فوا ثاراً لجعفر مع علي

I will take revenge for Jafar and Ali,

ليوث الحرب آل بني عقيل

The lions of war, the progeny of Aqil.

سأقتل بالمهند كل قرم

I will kill with my sword every strong (enemy) master,

عسى بالثأر أن يشفي الغليل

In hope that it cures my pain." ([6])

During the battles of Umayyad apostasy, he fought under the banner of his uncle Imam Ali ('a) and defended the true Islam bravely against the ignorance covered with mere rituals.

He married the daughter of his uncle Imam Ali ('a), Ruqayah, who gave birth to a righteous progeny. Historians mention that he had a son named Abdullah, a girl (perhaps

([6]) Mabouth al-Hussain: pg51

Hamida) and many more, but he sacrificed all his progeny for the sake of Allah, hence he has no remaining progeny.

When the chiefs of Kufa messaged Imam al-Hussain ('a) to come, they wrote in a letter:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

To al-Hussain Ibn Ali from his followers of believers and Muslims,

Welcome, people are waiting for you, they have no opinion (love) for anyone but you, so hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! Peace (be upon you).

In another they said: ... *The gardens have flourished, the fruits have ripened, the ground grew its grass and the trees have blossomed. If you wish, come to us, as we are your mobilized soldiers. Peace be upon you and your father who preceded you and Allah's mercy and blessings.*

Like that, many letters and messages came, until they reached about twelve thousand letters. Then, the Imam took a decisive decision to rise in revolution from Kufa against the corrupt Umayyad regime. He chose Muslim Ibn Aqil to be his messenger to the people of Kufa and sent with him a letter which included: ... *I am sending to you my brother, cousin and confidant from my family Muslim Ibn Aqil. If he wrote to me (saying) that your chiefs and virtuous ones agreed on what your messages requested, I will be coming to you soon, God-willing.* ([7])

Muslim was a learned leader and a brave warrior. The verses of the Book (of Allah), the battlefields of struggle

([7]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg334

(for His sake) and the nights of worship elevated him to the best, most-praised ranks with Allah. His life was the least important thing, if there was any risk to the religion. The verses of the Book widened his horizons of vision till he viewed life as a mere illusory pleasure and that the wise one is he who dedicates his life for the sake of his Lord.

Muslim ('a) left to Mecca carrying the worries of a nation which Allah wanted to be the best nation, and the enemies wanted to exploit as a beast of burden for their pleasure.

Before leaving, Muslim visited the shrine of the Messenger (s), where his close relatives also resided, prayed some raka'ats (of prayer) and gave farewell to the leader of the nation. Then, he gave farewell to his family in fear of (being unable to see them due to) the tyrants of his time. He then set out for Iraq using a path other than the main path.

Ibn Aqil knew the risks of the mission he accepted, as Karbala was a well-known event to the house of the Messenger (s), which they knew many details about. Didn't the Messenger (s) tell the Commander of Faithful Ali ('a) that the son of Aqil would be killed for the love of his son? Do you think Muslim had not heard and understood that narration?

Additionally, Imam Hussain ('s) said farewell to him by saying: *I am sending you to the people of Kufa, and these are their letters to me. Allah will establish in your matter what he likes and accepts. I hope you and I are in the rank of the martyrs, so go with the blessings of Allah ...* ([8])

([8]) al-Futuh: v5 / pg31

Muslim quickly completed the path and reached Kufa. He set the house of al-Mukhtar Ibn Abi Ubaid al-Thaqafi, who was a chief in the movement of revolution against the Umayyad regime, as his base of operations and movement. He would welcome the Shiites (in it) and read to them the message of Aba Abdillah al-Hussain ('a), causing them to cry. The people then pledged allegiance for him, reaching about 18,000 supporters. So, he wrote to Imam al-Hussain ('a) explaining the situation and asking him to come.

In that time, al-Numan Ibn Bashir was the governor of Kufa appointed by the Umayyad's. When he heard of the movement of Ibn Aqil, he stood on the pulpit (of the mosque) and told the people of Kufa that he was uncertain of his opposition to the movement, as he said: "I do not fight he who does not fight me, or curse you or intrude upon you. Nor do I accept accusations ..."

The Umayyad's accused him of weakness. Abdullah Ibn Muslim (a prominent Umayyad commander) said to him: "Your stance on your enemy is the stance of the weak."

al-Numan Ibn Bashir said to him: "To be weak in obedience to Allah is more lovable to me than being strong in His disobedience." ([9])

So, Abdullah Ibn Muslim wrote to Yazid instigating him against al-Numan by accusing him of weakness. Yazid then asked Sargon, Muawiyah's Roman advisor whom he had recommended to consult in important decisions, by saying: "What is your advice?"

Sargon said: "If Muawiyah were to be brought back to life, would you take his advice?"

([9]) Tarikh al-Tabari: v5 / pg356

He said: "Yes."

Sargon then took out a written command appointing Ubaydullah (Ibn Ziyad) as governor of Kufa and said: "This is the advice of Muawiyah."

Hence Ibn Ziyad became the governor of Kufa through the consultation of the Roman, despite Yazid's hate for him. If he hadn't needed him, he wouldn't have appointed him governor (of Kufa).

Despite the chaos that struck Basra following the death of Muawiyah, Kufa was much more dangerous. Therefore, he quickly appointed his brother Uthman Ibn Ziyad as the governor of Basra and headed to Kufa (as Ubaydullah was the governor of Basra).

The Messenger of al-Hussain

After being appointed governor of Kufa, Ibn Ziyad entered it from the direction of Najaf. The people therefore thought he was Imam al-Hussain ('a) and began welcoming him and chanting: "God is great!"

When they gathered around him, he removed his face covering, revealing his identity. Then he said: "I'm Ubaydullah." The people were shocked and quickly withdrew from the streets, while he entered the House of Governance where he began conspiring against the revolution.

Following this, Kufa was divided into two groups: a minority which continued to support the Hashemites, and a majority which avoided political interference, and separated their actions from their beliefs. They were as al-Farazdaq (a poet) said to Imam al-Hussain ('a) when he encountered him on the way and was asked about the people of Kufa: "Their hearts are with you, but their swords are against you." ([10])

Ibn Ziyad knew this nature of Kufa (that the majority flow with the waves), therefore he spoke to its chiefs saying: "The Commander of Faithful Yazid appointed me ruler of your city, sent me (to represent him) to your country, and ordered me to: divide your money between you, help your oppressed against your oppressor, return the rights of the weak from the strong, be generous to the well-listening and obedient and be difficult to the suspicious. So, tell this Hashemite man (Muslim) what I said so that he beware of my fear." ([11])

([10]) al-Akhbar al-Tiwal: pg245
([11]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg340

His second step was to strengthen the power of governance which at the time depended heavily on the Urafaa' system (which acted as a police agency in early Islamic governments). He ordered each of these urafaa' to write a list of the opposition members in their area and monitor their actions to guarantee that they do not act against him. He then threatened that whoever does not do so would lose his rights, meaning his blood and money will be permissible to others. Then he said: "And if anyone is found to have hate against the Commander of Faithful[12], and was not reported, the Arif who's in charge of his district would be crucified on the door of his house, and the district will be prohibited of government funds (welfare)." ([13])

His third step was to search for the leader of the movement, as Muslim ('a) had went into hiding since the arrival of Ibn Ziyad as he knew of his extremist tactics unlike the previous governor, al-Numan Ibn Bashir who was moderate.

So Muslim hid in the house of Hani Ibn Urwah, who was a well-respected senior in Kufa, and was backed by his tribe, Madhij.

Ibn Ziyad used deep spies in his search for Ibn Aqil. The Umayyad's had built an intelligence network before that depends mainly on supposed followers (of Ahlul-bayt), one of the members of this network was Maqil. So, he (Ibn Ziyad) gave him 3,000 dirhams and said: "Ask for Muslim Ibn Aqil and when you find a companion of his or a group of companions, give them these 3,000 dirhams and tell them to use it in their war against their enemy, and tell them that you are one of them. When you do so, they will trust you and not hide any of their information from you. Then keep on

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([12]) He is Implying Yazid

([13]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg341

going to them until you learn the place of Muslim Ibn Aqil and you see him." ([14])

Maqil did as he was told until he was able to sneak into Hani's house, which Muslim had set as his base of operations and communications with the leaders of his movement.

When Ibn Ziyad learned of this, he called for Hani. Despite Hani's hesitation at first, some of his pro-Government relatives' insistence forced him to visit Ibn Ziyad.

He asked him to sell Muslim, but he denied knowing his location, so he confronted him with Maqil. So, he confessed, but insisted on not selling him, as he said: "By Allah, I will never bring him to you. How can I bring you my guest so you can kill him?"

When he refused, Ibn Ziyad said: "Bring him closer to me." So, they did. Then he said: "By Allah you will bring him or I will kill you."

Hani said: "If you do so, the swords (of my tribe) will surround your house."

Ibn Ziyad said: "O' pity be on you; do you threaten me with their swords?"

Then he slapped him on his face with an iron rod continuously until he broke his nose, his blood flowed onto his beard and face, and his forehead's meat ripped and scattered (onto his face). Hani pulled the sword of a guard standing nearby to defend himself, so Ibn Ziyad said: "Is a

([14]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg342

Hurawri walking here today (he accused him of being a Kharijite), your blood is permissible ..."

Minutes later, hundreds of his tribe members gathered around the House of Governance. So, Ibn Ziyad ordered Shurayh the Judge, who played a filthy role in supporting the terrorist regime of Bani Umayyad and fighting the free movement of Muslim, to use his religious and pious appearance to convince them that their man (Hani) was alive and healthy.

Muslim ('a) saw that Ibn Ziyad was closing up on him, and that he must revolt before he is taken captive to him by one of his spies or soldiers. Especially after losing one of his closest companions, Hani Ibn Urwah.

So, he released his well-known slogan: "O' Victorious, bring death!" The slogan quickly spread in Kufa, and people gathered around it.

Ibn Ziyad went to the Mosque along with his guards, entourage, and nobles. He rose onto the pulpit (of the Mosque) and threatened the people. Before coming down from the pulpit, people ran into the Mosque shouting in fear: "Ibn Aqil has come!" Ubaydullah quickly went into his palace and closed the gates.

Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) organized his army into four brigades, and the Mosque was filled with his supporters. It seemed to everyone that his movement had won.

Yes, in a similar event, five years later, the movement of al-Mukhtar Ibn Abi Ubayd al-Thaqafi won, which resulted in the killing of Ibn Ziyad, except that not all the factors of victory were present with Ibn Aqil. As those that gathered around Muslim were a group of supporters of

the common people, while the nobles and the special continued to support the Umayyad's. This may have been due to fear, as the federal government in Damascus was still strong, or due to greed, as Ibn Ziyad gave them huge amounts of money.

So, Ibn Ziyad welcomed the nobles of Kufa through the backdoor of the House of Governance, and seduced them through money and fear. Then he asked them to persuade the people into abandoning Muslim Ibn Aqil.

Muslim continued organizing his army during the rest of the day, but in the evening, a supporter of the Umayyad's named Kathir Ibn Shehab gave a speech to the people saying: "O' people, help your families, do not hasten evil and do not cause yourselves to die. The soldiers of the Commander of Faithful Yazid have approached, and the commander (Ibn Ziyad) has pledged to Allah that if you insist on fighting him, he would; prohibit your children from government funds, scatter your soldiers in the frontiers of the Levant, treat equally between your innocent, sick, present, and absent, until all the people of disobedience taste the wrath which they have brought on themselves." ([15])

This speech is an example of the Umayyad propaganda which the nobles of Kufa spread between the supporters of Muslim who did not have Quranic visions (understandings), did not organize themselves within the movement of the Message and were not taught its values sufficiently.

So, they began abandoning Muslim. The women would come to their children or brothers saying: "Leave, the others will take your place," and the men would say to their

([15]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg350

children or brothers: "When the people (army) of Damascus arrive tomorrow, how will this war help you? Leave!"

History has many dangerous curves in which a person's awareness of his responsibilities and adherence to his principles determines whether it will be in favor of virtues or in benefit of tyrants.

For example, if it were not for the Muslims' resistance during Badr against the army of ignorance and their sacrifices for the sake of the religion, they wouldn't have won, nor would've Muslims become of importance.

But the people of Kufa then had been exposed to so many propaganda campaigns, tyranny, and doubt from those who claim to represent the religion and lords of benefit, that they didn't know that their abandonment of truth at that moment would have such a negative effect on the history of the movement.

During that time, the Umayyad regime was shook, and Damascus did not have a shrewd ruler like Muawiyah who could gather supporters to strengthen it. Basra was about to explode (in revolution) and so was Hejaz, and all the other cities.

But the Umayyad propaganda portrayed to those naive people that the Levantine army was outside their gates. Because the people of Kufa had been defeated once by the Levantine army, they believed this propaganda and abandoned the Messenger of al-Hussain ('a) and the caller to truth and freedom, Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a). After praying Maghreb (evening) prayer, he had only thirty troops in the Mosque, and within seconds, the thirty left and he was all alone.

The strength of his faith, the righteousness of his soul and the truth of his certainty (in Allah) was stronger than mountains. Surely, he is the virtuous son of Islam and the companion of the Quran and Household (of the Prophet). He is the best example for those men who fear no blame in the cause of Allah. If they were to find themselves with no supporter or helper on this earth, they would still not feel lonely in the path of truth due to the lack of its passers. So, you would see that they depend on their Lord and confront the obstacles alone, because they know with certainty that Allah is with them first, and the angels and believers are after him. So, he did not lose his determination, nor did he surrender to his fate, rather he walked in the streets of Kufa hoping that Allah would guide him in His way.

I swore to die free

She stood next to her door waiting for her son. It's late and he still hasn't come home, and Kufa is turbulent. What worried her most was that her son (Bilal) was a mercenary who saw the army as a job, so he did not care why he is fighting, for whom or against whom. Rather he fought for a few dirhams. When Ibn Ziyad came to Kufa, he promised to increase the soldiers' wage by ten if they fought the grandson of the Messenger of Allah ('a). So, they did not ask him ten of what, dirhams, dinars, or anything else. So, he increased their wages by ten dates, so they kept quiet.

After a long wait, she closed the door. But then she was not reassured, so she opened the door once again and looked out to the street. She saw a man approach the door, so she said: "Who are you? What do you want?"

He said: "Do you have a sip of water?"

She went inside and brought water which she gave to him.

He drank the water, then the old woman went inside. After some time, she came to the door once again due to her worries about her son. But she saw the man still standing.

She said: "Haven't you drank water?"

He said: "Yes."

She said: "Then go to your home!"

He kept quiet. So, she repeated what she said. But he continued his silence. So, on the third time she said: "Glory

be to Allah (used to exclaim bewilderment) O' servant of Allah! May Allah help you, head to your family. It isn't moral for you to sit on my doorstep, and I do not permit you to do so.

So, he stood and said: "O' servant of Allah, I do not have a family or tribe in this city. May you be rewarded in your kindness to me. Maybe I can pay you back someday."

She said: "O' servant of Allah, what is it?"

He said: "I am Muslim Ibn Aqil. These people have lied to me, deceived me and brought me out."

She said in astonishment: "You are Muslim?"

He said: "Yes."

She said: "Come in."

Tawaa welcomed her noble guest despite knowing the punishment awaiting her (for this act). She sheltered him in an empty room in her house and gave him food which he did not eat. That night, Muslim was unable to eat as he was worried about the fate of the nation which fell in the traps of the devil. How could it betray its Imam? How could it give allegiance to its enemies and defend falsehood rather than fighting for the truth?

Muslim, the companion of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, was not a politician who collapses before a calamity or allows defeat to enter his soul bringing in thoughts of retreat. He was of strong faith, piercing vision and his struggle was a reflection of his view of this life. He derived his strength and courage from his faith in Allah and the day of Judgement.

If anyone other than Muslim were in a city like Kufa that turned on him, his first thought would be to escape or surrender to the tyrant. In best cases, it would be to prepare for his fate of death with no resistance, but Muslim ('a) had determination to continue his struggle, so he spent the entire night in worship and supplied his soul with Divine love, which caused him to long for his meeting with his Lord. His eyes slept for moments in which he saw his uncle the Imam, the Commander of Faithful ('a) who said to him: "O' my nephew, you will be our guest in the upcoming night."

After awakening from his sleep, he returned to his prayer niche. Upon completing his Fajr (dawn) prayer, he heard clops of horses approaching.

In the meantime, Tawaa was unable to sleep as she was too worried about her great guest. She would check up on him every now and then to reassure herself of his safety. Later at night, her son returned home dreaming of the Commander's reward for the one who finds Muslim. The devil whispered to him to ask his mother: "Mother, why are you frequently checking this room?"

The mother was unable to hide the secret and told him about Muslim after making him swear and promise not to tell. But the evil-enjoining soul urged the disobedient son to use the opportunity of his mother praying Fajr to sneak to the House of Governance and notify Abdul-Rahman Ibn Mohammed Ibn al-Ashaath of Muslim's place.

Abdul-Rahman went to his father, a police captain, who was sitting near Ibn Ziyad and whispered to him the news of Muslim. The tyrant overheard their conversation and ordered al-Ashaath to bring him in immediately.

Tawaa was frightened by the approaching neighs of horses, so she ran to Muslim saying: "The people have come to you from the place you fear."

But Muslim very calmly said: "Don't worry, pass me my armor." Within seconds, Muslim changed from a night monk to a day knight and the horses entered the house of Tawaa.

Ibn Ziyad sent Mohammed Ibn al-Ashaath with a brigade to capture Muslim. The mission seemed easy to them; Muslim is one man, hiding in an old woman's house, preparing to escape Kufa (according to their claims) and the days of the siege of the House of Governance have tired him. Moreover, the failed siege would result in a psychological defeat in even the greatest warriors and Muslim is a stranger (to Kufa).

All factors of surrender were present in that hour, but Muslim, the Lordly (pious) man who vowed his life to Allah would not surrender. Instead, he asks for martyrdom. He asks for the martyrdom of heroes in the battlefield, not the death of the humiliated in prison cells.

It took only seconds for Muslim to drive the forces of Mohammed Ibn al-Ashaath out of Tawaa's house. Then he began killing and injuring them easily and calmly while poetically saying:

أقسمت لا أقتل إلا حراً

I swore to die free

وإن رأيت الموت شيئاً نكرا

Even though I see death as something forbidding,

وأخلط البارد سخناً مراً

I will blend the cold with bitter heat.

رد شعاع الشمس فاستقرا

The rays of the sun returned and settled.

كل امرئ يوماً ملاق شراً

Every human will one day face a difficulty,

أخاف أن أكذب أو أغرا

and I fear that I am lied to or deceived. ([16])

After realizing that they are unable to fight him, the soldiers persuaded their women to light their hay bales on fire and to throw them (at Muslim) from the roofs.

The house yards and intersecting streets were the worst, most difficult battlefields. But Ibn Aqil displayed rare courage and bravery in this battle as he would grasp the enemies and throw them towards the roofs of the nearby houses.

Quickly, the brigade's resistance collapsed, and Mohammad Ibn al-Ashaath called Ibn Ziyad asking for aid.

Upon receiving the message, Ibn Ziyad sent a message to him saying: "We have sent you to one man and he has defeated your companions horribly, what would you have done if we sent you to forces other than him?"

Ibn al-Ashaath messaged him back saying: "O' Commander! Do you think that you sent me to a grocer from Kufa or a shoemaker from Basra? Do you not know that you

([16]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg352 (Hamran Ibn Malik's poetry)

sent me to (capture) a brave lion and a sword in the hands of a great hero from the family of the best of mankind?"

Ibn Ziyad sent to him saying: "Promise him safety, you will not be able to capture him without it." Muslim showed great courage that day despite his loneliness, the number of his enemies and their use of trickery, bewildering his enemies.

The secret to his courage was his disregard of death and his preparation to meeting his Lord, as he would poetically say when he attacks them:

هو الموت فاصنع ويك ما أنت صانع

It is death so do as you like,

فأنت بكأس الموت لا شك جارع

As surely you will taste the cup of death.

فصبراً لأمر الله جل جلاله

So, endure patiently for the command of Allah,

فحكم قضاء الله في الخلق ذائع

As the will of Allah is widespread in creation. ([17])

He fought with Bukair Ibn Hamran who struck Muslim's mouth and ripped his upper lip, then quickly dragged the sword breaking two of his teeth. Muslim then lightly struck him on his head and again on his shoulder. The enemies then surrounded him and weakened him with stones and burning hay bales which, they threw from the roofs. He

([17]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg354

was unable to fight, so he leaned on a wall for protection (from the fires). Ibn al-Ashaath then said: "You are safe."

Muslim said: "You promise me safety?"

He said: "Yes."

Then he asked the fighters that came with him: "You promise me safety?"

They said: "Yes."

Muslim said: "If you had not promised me safety, I wouldn't have ever shook your hands (in peace)."

They then brought a mule which they carried him on. Then they surrounded him and took his sword. Upon realizing the trick, his eyes teared and he said: "This is the beginning of denial."

Mohammed Ibn al-Ashaath said: "I hope that you are not hurt (by Ibn Ziyad)."

He said: "It is only a hope, where is your promise of safety? We are to Allah and to Him we shall return (used to show submission to Allah)." Then he cried.

Ubaydullah Ibn al-Abbas asked him: "The one who asks for what you have asked for (martyrdom), does not cry when faced with what you have been faced with."

He said: "By Allah, I am not crying for myself, nor do I mourn its death ... I cry for my coming family. I cry for al-Hussain and the family of al-Hussain ('a)." ([18])

([18]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg354

Then he asked some of those near him to deliver the following message to Imam al-Hussain ('a): *"Return with your family, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you. Do not allow the people of Kufa to deceive you as they are still the companions of your father whom he wished for death or killing to leave. The people of Kufa have lied to you, and one who is lied to is not respected."* ([19])

Ibn Aqil's true certainty, belief and relationship with Allah (swt), the Prophet, and the Imam allowed him to elevate (his soul) beyond the difficult circumstances and calamities which faced him. He remained steadfast despite his injuries, capture and the nearness of death to him. On the gates of the House of Governance, while Ibn al-Ashaath awaited permission to enter, a man of those who chose this life over the afterlife named Muslim Ibn Urwah held a pot of water. Muslim was weakened by injuries, the season was Summer, and fighting, whipping and bleeding increased his thirst. So, he pointed to the water and said: "Give me some water."

Ibn Urwah said to him: "Do you see how cold it is? By Allah you will not taste a drop of it until you're fed lava in hellfire."

After recognizing him, Muslim Ibn Aqil said: "May your mother lose you. How cruel are you, and how cold is your heart? You O' son of Bahela are more entitled for eternity in hellfire." ([20])

Then our master Muslim sat and a cup of water was brought to him. He brought it near his mouth to drink and a drop of blood fell into it. So, he poured the water out and

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([19]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg353
([20]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg355

tried again to drink, but one of his teeth fell into it, so he said: "Praise be to Allah, I would have drank it if it had been destined for me." Then he was taken to the tyrant Ubaydullah Ibn Ziyad, but he (Muslim) did not greet him.

To Muslim, the oppressive regime represented by Ibn Ziyad and his commander Yazid, are nothing but a (devil's) temptation. Isn't life to a believer simply an illusion of enjoyment? Isn't he heading to his Lord with the document of martyrdom, so why should he have fear? The Holy Household of the Message ('a) and all those nurtured by the revelation with the love of martyrdom and chosen by their Lord to defend the virtues of truth are more entitled to attack the calamities of death to seek the pleasure of their Lord.

Muslim was betrayed by his supporters, then captured and filled with injuries, yet he stood strong like a high mountain and fought the tyrant Ibn Ziyad with logic and compelling proof. Let us hear him speak to an oppressive ruler who wants to kill him, maybe we can set him as an example to ourselves, as life is never free of cruel tyrants. Perhaps we can be defenders of the religion like Muslim Ibn Aqil. So, let us hear Muslim's words which flow with faith and certainty.

The tyrant Ibn Ziyad looked at Muslim with humiliation and said: "O' Ibn Aqil, you have come to the people as one whom you divided, differentiated their words and caused to fight one another."

The tyrant's use of safety is that of every tyrant in history. They accuse the free of being against safety and unity, but Muslim (like all reformers) focused on the virtues of truth, freedom and human rights, as he said: "No, that is not the reason which brought me. The people of this city claimed that your father killed their righteous, spilled their

blood and did actions like that of Caesar and Khosrow. So, we came to rule justly and call to the Book."

After realizing the strength of Muslim's logic, the tyrant found no way but to use weak, false accusations against Muslim's character. So, he said: "How can you do so (act righteously) O' depraved? How can you do that when you're a drunkard in Medina?"

But Muslim Ibn Aqil ('a) responded to him with strong proof. Firstly, he responded to the accusation as Ibn Ziyad falsely accused him. Then he explained that the one who spills the blood of Muslims is more wrongdoing and is more than able to drink wine. So, he ('a) said: "I am the drunkard? Surely, Allah knows that you are untruthful, that you have said that with no knowledge, that I am not like what you have said about me and that you are more entitled to drink wine than me. As the one who is more entitled to it is the one who slobbers for the blood of Muslims, kills the self which Allah has made sacred and spills the blood which Allah has prohibited unjustly while playing as if he had done nothing."

Like that, the firm fighter and patient believer, Muslim Ibn Aqil prosecuted the ruler of the Umayyad regime in his palace, the House of Governance in Kufa. This forced Ibn Ziyad to search his memory for the fate-related reasonings which tyrants use to justify their governance. The claim that if their governance was not rightful, Allah wouldn't have allowed it to be established, despite their knowledge of the distance between them and Allah, the revelation, the Messenger and the human virtues. So, Ibn Ziyad said: "O' wrongdoer! Your soul has deceived you. Allah wouldn't have prevented you (from governance) if He had found you qualified for it."

Muslim responded to that tyrant with the undefeatable strength of truth, he said: "Then who is qualified for it if we are not?"

Ibn Ziyad said: "The Commander of Faithful Yazid."

Muslim said: "Praise be to Allah in all circumstances. We have accepted Allah as a judge between you and us."

Here the disbeliever was confounded and he knew that Muslim's logic had defeated him. So, he said: "May Allah kill me if I do not kill you a killing (so horrible) that no one was killed like it in Islam."

So, Muslim said: "No one is more entitled to commit in Islam that which has not been done than you. No one is more entitled to commit horrible killings, horrific mutilations or wickedness than you.

The conversation ended. Ibn Ziyad began cursing Muslim, al-Hussain, Ali, and Aqil ('a) and Muslim does not respond to him.

Youth for Martyrdom

Since the day the light of faith shines in the hearts of the righteous, they wait for the moments of meeting with their merciful Lord. As our Lord (swt) said:

(مِّنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُواْ مَا عَـٰهَدُواْ ٱللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُم مَّن قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُۥ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَنتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُواْ تَبْدِيلًا)

"Among the believers are men who have proven true to what they pledged to Allah. Some of them have fulfilled their pledge [with their lives], others are waiting. They have never changed in the least." ([21])

The mission of the Messenger of al-Hussain ('a) to Kufa was not easy and Imam al-Hussain ('a) knew Kufa's changing nature. Yet, his answer to those who mentioned it to him in Mecca, hoping to prevent him from continuing showed the true goal of his revolution vaguely. He said: "This is what my grandfather commanded me," and "What will the creation be tested with." ([22])

Therefore, he chooses Muslim to be the vanguard of his revolution because he was worthy of this mission of martyrdom.

Muslim had brothers and children which he left to protect his Imam and cousin al-Hussain ('a), but when he was taken to the roof of the palace, he did not think about his family nor did he ask someone to take care of them. Rather, his only will was to Omar Ibn Saad who was the only Hashemite to be lured by the Umayyad's. He was another

([21]) al-Ahzab: 23
([22]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg330

version of Abu Lahab in the history of the Hashemites. His will to that traitor was summarized in three points: Paying his debt (which was about 700 dirhams) by selling his armor, burying him and most importantly notifying his Imam, al-Hussain ('a), of his fate.

Ibn Ziyad ordered Bukair Ibn Hamran who had fought with Muslim during the war to execute our master Muslim ('a), as he hated more than others. He took him to the roof of the palace, while Muslim ('a) was praising Allah, asking Him for forgiveness, reciting prayers on the Messenger of Allah and saying: "O' Allah, rule between us and between people who called us, deceived us, lied to us and abandoned us."

Then, after committing his crime, the executioner Bukair was called by Ibn Ziyad and asked: "Did you kill him?"

He replied: "Yes."

He (Ibn Ziyad) said: "What did he say while you were taking him upstairs to be killed?"

He said: "He was praising Allah and asking Him for forgiveness. Then when we placed him to be beheaded, he said: O' Allah, rule between us and between people who deceived us and lied to us, then abandoned us and killed us. Then I struck him with a strike that didn't affect him. So, he said to me: "O' slave! Is scratching me not enough loyalty to your blood?"

Ibn Ziyad said: "He has pride even in his death?"

He said: "So I struck him again and killed him." ([23])

([23]) Bihar al-Anwar: v44 / pg358

This was the wish which Muslim seeked all his life. He was the first martyr in the revolution of Imam al-Hussain ('a). Ibn Aqil began a new level of youth (activeness) for martyrdom for the sake of the religion, morals of the revelation and opposition to the tyrants and oppressors.

May the peace of Allah be upon him, the martyr whose blood will not rest until the rising (revolution) of the Greatest Vicegerent of Allah, the Awaited Proof ('aj), whose call is:

يا لثارات الحسين

Rise O' Avengers of al-Hussain

2nd Chance Books for Prisoners

Dedication

This initiative is dedicated to our beloved 11th Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (ʿa), who spent the majority of his life in prison and under house arrest by the corrupt ruler of the time. He is the great grandson of our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and father of our beloved 12th Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj).

Mission

Our mission is to deliver knowledge to those individuals who are less fortunate in life through the dissemination of various books. We strive to teach and inform those who are looking for a second chance and desire to walk the straight path, but are unable to access the necessary information passed down to us by the beloved Infallibles (peace be upon them all).

About Us

2nd Chance Books is a 501c3 non-profit organization that was founded in order to assist incarcerated Muslims by providing them with educational materials, a support system, and tools for rehabilitation. The organization is comprised of a team of dedicated, devoted individuals, including the founders of this organization, who came together to provide services for those in need and those seeking guidance. The partnered organizations 2nd Chance Books, SABA Prison Project, al-Kisa Prison Project, and IEC Houston. 2nd Chance is under the guidance of several scholars, Such as Moulana Nabi Raza Abidi, Shaykh Mateen Charbonneau, Shaykh Saed Ali Kulayni, Moulana Qamar Hasani.

This program is independently funded by donations from the community. We want to stress the importance of helping fellow believers who are less fortunate than ourselves.

Facts & Statistics

The USA has the highest incarceration rate in the entire world. While Americans only represent 5% of the entire world's population, it comprises nearly 25% of the entire world's incarcerated population, with 2.3 million inmates. Most of these prisoners will fall victim to the cycle of the revolving door and become repeat offenders if they do not have the proper resources to educate themselves properly while serving their sentences.

2nd Chance seeks to provide the proper tools for change: free Islamic books on topics such as beliefs, ethics, morality, and family structure in Islam. The aim is for these books to be used as a tool for self-development and reform.

Some goals of this program are molding leaders, transforming prisoners' bad habits into good ones, achieving social reform, producing better citizens who will actively help their communities, and promoting awareness of the true teachings of Islam by teaching the morals and ethics of the Noble Prophet and his divine household.

For prisoners who are reading this we want you to know that we are honored to be at your service. Please write us and let others who are interested in seeking knowledge about Islam to contact us at the address below.

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