

Regimes of Mu'awiya and His Son Yazid

<"xml encoding="UTF-8?>

The topic of this book is an account of the sacred rising of Imam Husayn, which is a glorious chapter in the history of Islam. We propose to state briefly the important events of this period of less than a year which is quite short from the viewpoint of duration but extremely effective and eternal so far as its role is concerned.

Distortions have taken place and continue to take place in every chapter of Islamic and non-Islamic history. They change the very shape of events and make the task of the future researches more difficult. Usually these distortions are made either by the extravagant supporters or by spiteful opponents. There is not a page of history that has escaped distortion. We find that treacherous hands have changed the real features of historical facts. It can, however, be said in connection with the event of the rising of Imam Husayn that the spiteful enemies have not been able to temper with this chapter of history and this movement has been so explicit, clear, sacred and unblemished that even the enemies of his father Imam Ali and his brother Imam Hasan have bowed their heads respectfully before him and admired his movement whole-heartedly. Of course the circumstances in which this movement was started and the condition of the Islamic government of that time have helped understand the need for this movement, and whoever has undertaken to write about it has admitted the greatness, bravery, frankness, courage, and love for freedom, of its leaders.

It is a matter of great regret, however, that many baseless matters, vulgar stories, and misleading falsehoods by ignorant supporters and extravagant friends have become apart of the writings and speeches about this movement. One of the greatest services, which can be rendered to the Doyen of the martyrs, is to keep the event of Karbala free from every sort of falsehood, myth and baseless matter. However, this is a task, which the common and illiterate people cannot be expected to perform, because it is they, who have been instrumental in bringing about this calamity. They act against the sacred object of the leader of this revolution and think that it is possible to promote truth by means of falsehood, honesty by means of treachery and piety by means of impiety and carelessness.

To segregate the event of the movement of Imam Husayn from all sorts of unreliable, irrational and baseless matters and to content themselves with the writings of the writers of third and fourth centuries A.H. is the task of pious research scholars, and it is their duty to tell the truth with their tongues and pens and promote it, and refrain from telling false and baseless things

in their writings and speeches. It is possible that one day this very sacred, clear, and explicit chapter of the history of Islam as befits the magnanimous and infallible leader may be based on truth and honesty in writing and speech. It is in this way only that the value of this great movement, and the greatness of its leader, will become evident all the more, and even in the mourning groups signs of his greatness, devotion, sincerity, jihad, steadfastness and manliness will be clearly apparent.

About fifty years after the death of the Holy Prophet, twenty years after the martyrdom of Imam Ali, and ten years after the martyrdom of Imam Hasan, Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan breathed his last in the middle of the month of Rajab of the year 60 A.H. He was the governor and caliph in Damascus for about 42 years. He held the office of the governor of Syria for five years under the Second Caliph and for twelve years under the Third Caliph. He also ruled over Syria for a little less than five years during the Caliphate of Imam Ali and for about six months during the Caliphate of Imam Hasan and campaigned against both of them. He also held the Islamic Caliphate for a little less than twenty years, and towards the end of his life he obtained oath of allegiance from the people for his son Yazid for the office of Caliph.

Mu'awiya was the progenitor of the fourteen Umayyad caliphs, who were the descendants of Abu Sufyan and Marwan and held the Islamic Government in their hands for one thousand months from 41 A.H. to 132 A.H.

During the time of his caliphate Mu'awiya had complete control over the situation and could violate openly the agreement that he had concluded with Imam Hasan; for example, one of the conditions of the peace treaty was that the supporters of Imam Ali would not be persecuted and killed and all of them would enjoy security.

The name of Hujr bin Adi Kindi, who was one of the companions of the Holy Prophet and a supporter of Ali was specially mentioned in the Peace Pact. However, as the Islamic historians have written unanimously, Mu'awiya killed Hujr bin Adi and six of his companions, and one of them named Abdur Rahman bin Hanna-n Ghazzi was buried alive by Ziyad bin Abihi in Iraq. Mu'awiya's power and domination had assumed such proportions that he did what he liked and none could raise any objection.

Ali bin Husayn Mas'udi, one of the greatest Muslim historians and geographers of the 4th century writes thus in his book entitled Murujuz Zahab: At the time of return from the Battle of Siffin, a Kufian, mounted on a camel, came to Damascus. One of the Syrians disputed with him and said: "This she-camel which you have mounted is mine. It was looted in the Battle of Siffin and has fallen in your hands". Their dispute got prolonged and both of them went to Mu'awiya. The man belonging to Damascus produced fifty witnesses, who deposed that the she-camel

belonged to him. On the authority of the evidence given by fifty persons Mu'awiya also decided that the she-camel belonged to the Syrian and compelled the Iraqi to surrender it to him. The Iraqi said: "May Allah bless you. It is a he-camel and not a she-camel". Mu'awiya, however, said: "I have already given a decision and it cannot be altered". When the people dispersed Mu'awiya called the Iraqi and asked him as to what his she-camel was worth. Then he gave him something more than the price of the he-camel and said to him: "Tell Ali that to fight against him I have 100,000 men, who do not distinguish between a he-camel and a she-camel" (i.e. if I say that a he-camel is a she-camel or vice versa, they will not dispute).

After narrating this story Mas'udi writes that Mu'awiya acquired such a grasp over the people that at the time of proceeding for the Battle of Siffin he called them to Friday prayers on Wednesday and offered Friday prayers with them, but none asked him as to why Friday prayers was being offered on that day when it was Wednesday.

Thereafter he has narrated another incident which we reproduce below in detail from the book entitled *An-Nasa-yah al-Ka-fiya Li Mun Yatawalla Mu'awiya*: Amma-r Yasir was killed in the Battle of Siffin at the hands of Mu'awiya's men. As narrated by Bukhari in his *Sahih*, as well as by others, Amma-r was striving more than others at the time of the construction of the Masjid of Madina and when the Holy Prophet saw him he said: "Alas! Amma-r! An oppressive group will kill him at a time when he will be calling them to Paradise and they will be calling him to Hell". Amma-r's being killed made truth manifest, and it was established that the oppressive group was Mu'awiya and his supporters. In order to extricate himself from this difficulty he said: "We have not killed Amma-r. He has been killed by him, who brought him in the battlefield" (i.e. by Ali). When Imam Ali was informed about the stand taken by Mu'awiya he said: "If that be so Hamza, the Doyen of the Martyrs was killed by the Holy Prophet, because he brought him along with him to fight against the polytheists".

However, as Mu'awiya was confident that his friends would accept whatever he said, he remarked: "It is true that we have killed Amma-r, but the word *Baghiya* used by the Holy Prophet does not mean unjust and oppressive. On the contrary it means one, who seeks or demands, and it is we, who have risen to seek vengeance for the murder of Uthman. Hence the meaning of the Holy Prophet's remark is that Amma-r would be killed by those who rose to seek vengeance for the murder of Uthman and there is nothing wrong about it".

This argument of Mu'awiya was also absurd and the later part of the tradition provides a reply to it, because the Holy Prophet said: "Ammar will be killed by those, who will invite him to Hell, and whom he will invite to Paradise". However, Mu'awiya had become so powerful and dominant that none could convince his followers by argument. We do not intend to study the

period of Mu'awiya's rule and the short account given above appears to be sufficient to invite the attention of the readers to the social and religious conditions of those days. In case, however, someone desires to become fully conversant with the period of Mu'awiya's rule he should refer to An-Nasayah al-Kafiya Li Mun Yatawalla Mu'awiya and then judge fairly

Regime of Yazid

When Yazid attained to the caliphate, the Governors of Madina, Makkah, Kufa and Basra were Walid bin Utba bin Abu Sufyan, Amr bin Sa'id, Nuama-n bin Bashir and Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad respectively. In the first instance Yazid decided to obtain oath of allegiance from Husayn bin Ali, Abdullah bin Zubayr and Abdullah bin Umar, who had not acknowledged him heir-apparent during the time of Mu'awiya. He, therefore, wrote a letter to Walid bin Utba, the Governor of Madina, desiring him to obtain allegiance from these three persons as early as possible and not to accept any excuse from them. To accomplish this task Walid called Marwan bin Hakam for consultation, ignoring their previous strained relations. Marwan said: "Summon them immediately, and ask them to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid. If they agree to take the oath well and good otherwise execute them before they come to know about the death of Mu'awiya, because, if they learn about his death, everyone of them will become a claimant for caliphate and refuse to obey, excepting Abdullah bin Umar, who need not be feared, because he is not the type of man, who may rise or oppose".

Walid sent Abdullah bin Amr bin Uthman to Imam Husayn and Abdullah bin Zubayr. He found both of them in the mosque and conveyed to them the message of Walid. They said to him: "You may go back and we too shall meet Walid soon" Then the Imam said to Abdullah: "I think Mu'awiya is dead and the object of this untimely call is that we should take the oath of allegiance to Yazid".

Imam Husayn summoned a group of his men and told them to arm themselves. He said to them: "Walid has called me just now, and I think that he will propose something which I may not accept. In that event I cannot trust him. You should, therefore, come with me and when I enter his house you should stay at the door and as soon as you hear me speaking aloud enter the house to prevent him from doing me any harm".

The Imam went to meet Walid and saw that Marwan was also there. Walid informed him about the death of Mu'awiya and also conveyed to him the orders of Yazid. The Imam said: "You I will not certainly be contented with my taking the oath secretly and would like that I should take it in the presence of the people". Walid said: "Yes". Thereupon the Imam said: "Then you should wait till tomorrow so that I may arrive at a decision in the matter". Walid said: "All right. You

may go now and come tomorrow along with the people to take the oath of allegiance". Marwan said: "I swear by Allah that if Husayn bin Ali leaves this place without taking the oath of allegiance it will no longer be possible for you to lay hands on him without bloodshed. You should, therefore, detain him till he takes the oath and in the event of his refusing to do so, you should chop off his head. On hearing the words of Marwan the Imam got up from his place and said: "O bastard! Is it you, who will kill me or Walid? By Allah you have told a lie and become a sinner".

Then he departed and reached his house along with his men. Marwan said to Walid: "Now that you have not accepted my advice I swear by Allah that you will not be able to lay your hands on him again". Walid said: "Marwan! What are you saying? You have suggested to me something that must spoil my faith. By Allah, even if the entire wealth of the world is placed at my disposal I will never kill Husayn bin Ali. Should I kill him if he declines to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid? By Allah I believe that whoever sheds the blood of Husayn, the grandson of the Holy Prophet, shall be very unlucky and helpless before Allah on the Day of Judgment".

Marwan who did not like Walid's words said to him: "It is all right if you think so". On the following day which was Saturday the 28th of Rajab 60 A.H. Walid sent for the Imam again so that he might take the oath of allegiance from him. The Imam, however, told his messenger to tell him to wait for that night, so that he might take a decision by the following day. During the same night he left Madina along with his wives, brothers and nephews and most of the members of his family, and proceeded on his journey to Makkah, remembering the words of Prophet Musa, son of Imram: "So he left the city afraid and cautious saying: Lord!

Protect me against the unjust people." (Surah al-Qasas, 28:21)

When it was said to Imam Husayn that it would have been better if he had adopted a deviated path so that the enemies might not have been able to lay hands on him he replied: "By Allah I shall not go by a deviated path. Let that which Allah wills happen". Eventually he arrived in Makkah on Friday night after the 3rd of Shaban. Remembering the story of Prophet Musa, he said: "When he started his journey to Midian he said, "Perhaps my Lord will show me the right path '." (Surah al-Naml, 28:22)

The pilgrims used to visit the Imam in Makkah. Even Abdullah bin Zubayr, who knew very well that none would take the oath of allegiance to anybody in the presence of the son of the Holy Prophet and the Imam enjoyed a position higher than everyone in all respects, came to see the Imam every day.

The news of the death of Mu'awiya spread throughout Iraq and the people also came to know that Imam Husayn and Abdullah bin Zubayr had declined to take the oath of allegiance to

Yazid and had gone to Makkah.

The distinguished supporters of Imam Ali gathered in the house of Sulayman bin Surd Khuzai and thanked Allah for the death of Mu'awiya. Sulayman bin Surd then said addressing those present: "Mu'awiya has departed from the world and Husayn bin Ali has declined to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid and has gone to Makkah. You are the supporters of Husayn as well as of his father Ali. If you think that you are ready to assist him and to fight against his enemy and can lay down your lives for his sake, you should inform him of your readiness through a letter. In case, however, you are scared that you will show slackness and will abstain from rendering him assistance, you should not deceive him by claiming unduly to be his supporters and devotees".

When Sulayman bin Surd said these words he had in mind the fact that so long as there is no question of making sacrifices the people can distinguish very well between truth and falsehood and make no mistake about it. They understand clearly as to who is truthful and who is a liar, where lies the truth, and where lay the falsehood; who is wise and who is ignorant and who is a guide and who is a bandit. However, they can make such a correct assessment only so long as the question of profit and loss does not arise and they do not suffer any loss by supporting the truth and fighting against falsehood. But when the preliminaries for test become available and truth and falsehood stand facing each other most of the people side with falsehood, and as truth cannot be supported without sacrifice the views of the people alter and they abandon truth and support falsehood.

Sulayman bin Surd knew well that the sentiments of the people at that time could not be relied upon, because it might so happen that if Husayn bin Ali rose against Bani Umayya later and they employed their full strength to kill him and rendering him help became something dangerous, the same people might turn away their faces from him, ignore the letters written by them, close their doors in his face and even join his enemies. They might consider it a religious duty to kill him and might put him and his friends to sword to gain the pleasure of Allah and His Prophet. And after killing those godly persons they might stand and cry: "Allah is the Greatest. I testify that there is no God but Allah and I testify that Muhammad is His Prophet"; as if they had committed no sin at all! It was for this reason that he explained the position to the distinguished supporters and said: "Even now you should judge the result in your minds and visualize the situation which is bound to arise and then decide whether you can make him hopeful of your assistance and invite him to Iraq with perfect confidence and final determination. It should not be that today, when your sentiments are roused, you should be writing letters, making covenants and taking oaths and pull the son of the Prophet of Allah

from Allah's sanctuary to Iraq, but tomorrow when the enemy surrounds him and compels him either to take the oath of allegiance or lose his head you should desert him and forget the promises made by you". The distinguished supporters replied with one voice: "We are prepared to perform jihad and make sacrifices and shall lay down our lives for the sake of our Imam". Thereupon Sulayman said: "In that case you should write a letter to the Imam". They, therefore,

wrote a letter as follows:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This letter is being written by Sulayman bin Surd, Musayyab bin Najbah, Rafa bin Shaddad Bajali, Habib bin Mazahir and other Muslim and faithful supporters of Husayn bin Ali residing in Kufa. They write to Husayn bin Ali: Peace be upon you. We join you in praising the Almighty Allah except whom there is no god. Praised be Allah Who has destroyed your oppressive and spiteful enemy, the man who prevailed over this nation, assumed unlawfully the reins of government, usurped the public treasury and became the ruler of the Muslims without their consent. He then killed the pious persons and spared the bad ones and placed the property of Allah at the disposal of the oppressors and the rich. May Allah deprive him of His blessings as He deprived the people of Thamud. At present we, the Iraqis, do not have any leader and Imam. Hence, we request you to proceed to us. Maybe the Almighty Allah may draw us together on truth through you. We have nothing to do with Nau'man bin Bashir in the matter of Friday and Eid prayers. He is alone in the governor's House. If we come to know that you have left to join us we shall turn him out and shall, God willing, pursue him up to Syria".

They sent this letter through Abdullah bin Suba Hamda-ni and Abdullah bin wal and instructed them to leave for Makkah immediately. They reached the Imam in Makkah on the 10th of .Ramazan, 60 A.H. and delivered the letter to him