

Imam Husayn (a.s.) leaves for Mecca

According to Hisham Ibn Muhammad (al Kalbi) – Abu Mikhnaf: Yazid succeeded at the beginning of the month of Rajab in the year 60 (April 8, 680). Al Walid Ibn Utbah Ibn Abi Sufyan was governor of Medina, al Numan Ibn Bashir al Ansari of al Kufah, Ubaydallah Ibn Ziyad of al Basrah, and Amr Ibn Said Ibn al as of Mecca.

Yazid's only concern, when he assumed power, was to receive the oath of allegiance from the individuals who had refused to agree with Muawiya's demand for this oath of allegiance from Yazid. Muawiya had summoned the people to give an oath of allegiance to him that Yazid would be his heir. Yazid's concern was to bring their attitude to an end.

When he wrote to al Walid, he wrote to him on a parchment as small as a rat's ear:

Seize Husayn, Abdallah Ibn Umar, and Abdallah Ibn al Zubayr to give the oath of allegiance. Act so fiercely that they have no chance to do anything before giving the oath of allegiance. Peace be with you.

Therefore, al Walid sent in the night for al Husayn, peace be on him, and summoned him (to attend). Al Husayn, peace be upon him, was aware of what he wanted and so he called a group of his retainers and ordered them to carry arms.

Imam Husayn, peace be upon him, said, *“Al Walid has summoned me (to come to him) at this time (of night). I cannot be sure that he might not burden me with a matter I may be unwilling to respond, he is unpredictable man, so remain with me. When I go to him, sit at the door. If you hear my voice raised, come in to prevent him from (doing anything to) me.”*

Al Husayn, peace be upon him, went to al Walid, and Marwan Ibn al Hakam was with him. Al Walid gave him news of the death of Muawiya and al Husayn replied with the formula, *“We belong to God and to Him we will return.”*

Then al Walid read out Yazid's letter and his order to get the pledge of allegiance from him. Then al Husayn, peace be upon him, said to al Walid, *“I do not see that my pledge of allegiance to Yazid in private would be sufficient. Wouldn't you prefer me to give it in public so that people are aware?”*

“Indeed,” said al Walid.

“So see what you think about that in the morning,” suggested al Husayn, peace be on him.

“Go, then, in the name of God but come to us when the people gather,” said al Walid.

“By God,” interrupted Marwan, *“if al Husayn leaves you now without giving the pledge of allegiance, you will never have the same power over him until there are a great number of slain men between you and him. Imprison the man and don't let him leave you until he has paid homage (to Yazid), or you have executed him.”*

At that al Husayn jumped up and said, *“O son of a foreign woman, would you or he kill me? By God you are a liar.”*

With that he went out and walked away accompanied by his retainers until he reached his house.

“You disobeyed me,” Marwan told al Walid. *“No by God he will never give you the same opportunity over his life. “Then blame someone other than yourself,”* said Marwan.

Replied al Walid, *“Indeed, you had chosen for me something which would have involved the destruction of my own faith. By God, I would not want all the worldly wealth and dominion which the sun rises and sets over, (if it involved) killing al Husayn. Glory be to God, should I kill al Husayn because he said 'I will not swear allegiance' By God, I do not think that on the Day of Resurrection a man who is (responsible) for the blood of al Husayn (will weigh) little in the scale of God.”*

Al Husayn, peace be upon him, spent that night at his house. It was the night of Saturday when there were three days left on the month of Rajab in the year 680. Al Walid Ibn Utba was occupied with sending to Ibn al Zubayr about the pledge of allegiance to Yazid, and with his refusal to come to them.

Ibn al Zubayr left Medina at night heading for Mecca. In the morning al Walid sent men after him, he sent a party of eighty horse men under the command of a retainer of the Banu Umayya. They pursued him but did not catch up with him, so they returned.

Towards the end of Saturday he sent men to al Husayn, peace be upon him, to bring him to pledge allegiance to al Walid on behalf of Yazid Ibn Muawiya. Al Husayn peace be upon him, said to them, *“Come in the morning. Then you will have time to consider the situation and so shall we.”*

They left him that night without insisting upon him. He, peace be upon him, left under the cover of the night, it was the night of Saturday night with two days left in the month of Rajab, and he headed towards Mecca accompanied by his sons, his brother's (al Hasan's) sons and his brothers. There was most of the House except for Muhammad Ibn al Hanafiyya, may God have mercy on him.

When the latter had heard of his decision to leave Medina, he did not know where he was intending to

go. He said, *“My brother, you are the most loveable of people to me and the most dearest of them to me. I could not give advice to any creature except to you while you are more entitled to it. Avoid giving your pledge of allegiance to Yazid Ibn Muawiyah and avoid the towns while you can. Then send your messengers to the people and summon them to (follow) you.*

If the people pledge allegiance to you, God will not make your religion nor your reason deficient in that account, nor will He remove your manliness and outstanding merit because of it. Yet I am afraid that you will enter one of these towns and the people will differ with each other: a group will be for you and another against you. Then, the best of all this community, in person, in father and in mother, would be the one in it, whose blood was terribly exposed and whose family was most humiliated.”

“Where should I go,” asked al Husayn, peace be upon him.

“Go and stay at Mecca,” he answered, *“if that base is secure for you, it will be means for gaining power. However, if it becomes dangerous for you, then you can take to the deserts and the mountain peaks, and move from place to place so that you may see how the people’s attitude to the affair develops. Your best judgment will be made when you are facing matters directly.”*

“Brother,” replied, al Husayn, peace be upon him, *“you have given advice and shown concern. I hope that your judgement is correct and lucky.”*

Al Husayn, peace be upon him, left for Mecca reciting:

Then he left it out of fear while he kept on the lookout. He said: My Lord, save me from the unjust people. (28:21)

He kept to the high road and the members of the house suggested, *“If you had avoided the high road like Ibn al Zubayr did, the search party could not follow you.”*

“No by God,” he replied, *“I will not leave until God judges what He will judge.”*

When al Husayn, peace be upon him, entered Mecca, his entry occurred on the night of Friday (i.e. Thursday), 3rd of the month of Shaban. As he entered, he recited:

And when he set out towards Madyan, he said: Perhaps my Lord will guide me in the right path. (28:22)

Then he stayed there and its inhabitants began to visit him frequently, as did those who had some to make the lesser pilgrimage and other people from far and wide. Ibn al Zubayr had settled himself there, near the Ka'ba, where he used to stand in prayer and perform the circumambulation. He came to visit al Husayn, peace be upon him, with the others who came to visit him. He used to come to him at intervals of two consecutive days, and sometimes between the two day interval. He was the most troublesome of God's creatures to Ibn al Zubayr, who realized that the people of Hijaz would not pledge allegiance to

him as long as al Husayn, peace be upon him, was in the land. He was more capable of commanding the people's obedience than him, and was more respected.

Ref:

– The History of al Tabari Volume 19 The Caliphate of Yazid Ibn Muawiyah Translated by I.K.A Howard Pages 4 – 10, SUNY Press

– Kitab al Irshad by Shaykh al Mufid Translated by I.K.A Howard Pages 299 –303 Tahrike Tarsile Quran, Inc.

(I have mainly relied on the later reference but the reports are congruent with what has been stated in the History of al Tabari ... Shaykh al Mufid has taken the account of reports from this specific volume. Among one of the sources used by Tabari, is the account purporting to be that of the fifth Shia Imam, Abu Jafar Muhammad Baqir (May Allah bless him and his followers), as mentioned by the translator in the introduction of the work by Tabari.)

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