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Relating to the death of Mu'awiyah bin Abu Sufyan

Mas'oodi and other historians narrate, that in the former days of his illness (because of which he died) one day Mu'awiyah went to the bath house. When he looked at his weak and feeble body, he started weeping, for he realized that his end was near and he recited the following couplet: "I see that time has hastened to break me, and has taken some of my part from me and left some, the deflection of my length and breadth has made him sit down, after having stood for a lengthy period of time."

And when his death and the days of separation of the world drew near and his illness increased, while the chances of his recovery seemed less, he recited some couplets in remorse: "I wish I had not been a sovereign for a instant, nor would I have been blinded while being absorbed in worldly pleasures, (I wish) I would have been similar to the poor, who suffices upon the necessities until he joins the people of the grave."

Ibn Aseer Jazari says that during his illness Mu'awiyah said, "I am like that livestock whose time of harvesting has neared. My kingship and rulership over you has been for a long time, because of which I am sick of you and you are sick of me. I desire to be separated from you and you wish the same, but I am better than the one who will rule over you after me, as those who were before me were better than me. It is said that whoever likes to meet the Almighty, the Almighty too likes to meet him.

O Allah! I like to meet You and I request You to like my meeting too and make it a means of prosperity for me." After some time the signs of death became apparent upon him and when he realized his certain death, he called his son Yazid and said:

Mu'awiyah's will to his son Yazid

"O my dear son! I have fastened the load of pain and have warded off rebellion from you, and have straightened up matters. I have tamed the enemies, have brought the reins of the Arabs in your hands,

and have accumulated that for you which no one has ever done. Thus consider the people of Hijaz, who are your foundation and your roots. Give respect to those among the people of Hijaz who come to you, and keep inquiring about those who are not present among them.

Besides, consider the people of Iraq, and if they desire that you depose a Governor every day, do not refuse, for it is easy to change a Governor than to face ten thousand swords drawn forth facing you.

Favor the people of Syria for they are your near-ones and your reservoirs, and if you fear an enemy, ask for their help. And when you have accomplished your goal (of defeating the enemy) return them back to the cities (of Syria), for if they remain elsewhere their manners will change.

I do not fear anyone opposing or fighting with you on the question of Caliphate except four persons. Those being Husayn bin Ali, Abdullah bin Umar, Abdullah bin Zubayr and Abdul Rahman bin Abu Bakr. 1

As regards Abdullah bin Umar, (excessive) worship has broken him, if no one remains to assist him, he shall succumb to you. As regards Husayn bin Ali, he is light-minded person, and the people of Iraq will betray him until they force him to rebel. If he revolts and you gain victory over him, excuse him, for he is linked to us through relation and he keeps greater right while having relation and nearness of the Holy Prophet. As regards the son of Abu Bakr, he follows that what his companions like, and his aspiration are only women and play. While the one who like a Lion lies in ambush, and the Fox who is playing a game with you and is in track of an opportunity to pounce upon you is the son of Zubayr. And if he revolts and you gain victory over him, separate every joint of his. Try and keep safe the blood of our own people.”

It is said that during the days of the illness and death of his father Mu'awiyah, Yazid was not present in Syria. Hence Mu'awiyah called for Zahhak bin Qays and Muslim bin Uqba Murri and instructed them to hand over his will to Yazid, while this seems quite acceptable.

Ibn Aseer further says that in his illness Mu'awiyah had become delirious and would sometimes say, “What is the distance between ourselves and Gootah (the name of a fertile oasis on the south side of Syria)” Hearing this his daughter started wailing aloud, “O Sorrow!” Mu'awiyah regained consciousness and said, “If you are incongruous (you have the right to do so), for you have seen the incongruous one.”

When Mu'awiyah died, Zahhak bin Qays came outside his house and ascended the pulpit when the shroud of Mu'awiyah was in his hands. He praised and glorified the Almighty and said, “Verily Mu'awiyah was a support, brave and a fortunate Arab by whose hands Allah turned away conspiracies and mischief. And Allah bestowed him the sovereignty upon His slaves, and the cities and towns were under his control. But now he has died and this is his shroud. And we will cover him with this shroud and enter him in his grave, and we shall leave him in the intermediate period (barzakh) until the day of Judgment. Then whoever desires to pray the Prayer over him should gather at the time of Zuhr to do so.” Zahhak himself lead the Prayer over his dead body.

It is said that when Mu'awiyah became severely ill, his son Yazid was at Hawareen (a town in Halab, Syria). A letter was sent to him to hasten to meet his father. When the letter reached Yazid, he recited the following couplet: "The messenger arrived with a closed letter by which the heart became tense, we said, woe be to you, what do you have in the document, he replied that the caliph is motionless, in pain."

When Yazid reached Syria, Mu'awiyah had already been buried, hence he recited the Prayer over his grave.²

1. In this narration the name of Abdul Rahman bin Abu Bakr is quoted which is an error, for he had already died before Mu'awiyah.

2. Some of the crimes committed by Mu'awiyah depicting his villainous character:

(1) The gravest sin being his poisoning Imam Hasan (a.s.), the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S), by alluring his wife Ja'dah bint Ash'as (Murujuz Zahab and Isbatul Wasiyyah – Mas'oodi Vol 2: Page 47, Tareekh – Abul Fida Vol 1: Page 182, Iqdul Fareed – Ibn Abd Rabbah Vol 2: Page 11, Rawzatul Manazir – Ibn Shahnah Vol 2: Page 133, Tareekhul Khamees – Husayn Dayarbakri Vol 2: Page 238, Akbarut Tiwal – Dinawari Page 400, Maqatilat Talibeyeen – Abul Faraj Isfahani, Isti'ab – Ibn Abdul Birr etc.

(2) Instigating the murder of Imam Ali (a.s.) (confirmed by the murderer Ibn Muljim as quoted by Hakim Sanai in Manaqibe Murta'awi Page 277)

(3) Murdering Muhammad bin Abi Bakr, companion of Imam Ali (a.s.) and son of Caliph Abu Bakr (Tareekh – Tabari Vol 4: Page 592),

(4) Murdering Malik bin Haris Ashtar, companion of Imam Ali (a.s.) and a Tabe'e (Tareekh – Tabari Vol 4: Page 521),

(5) Assassinating Hujr bin Adi, the companion of the Holy Prophet (S) and his companions (Tareekh – Ibn Asakir, Isti'ab – Ibn Abdul Birr, Tareekhe Kamil – Ibn Aseer Jazari, Dalailun Nubuwwah – Bayhaqi, Tareekh – Ya'qoob bin Sufyan,

(6) Harassing Abu Zarr al Ghifari, the distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (S) (Murujuz Zahab – Mas'oodi, Tareekh – Ibn Wadih Ya'qoobi),

(7) Laying the foundation stone of cursing Imam Ali (a.s.) the cousin and son in law of the Holy Prophet (S) and his progeny on the streets, Mosques, pulpits and in daily Prayers (Tareekh Kamil – Ibn Aseer, Iqdul Fareed – Ibn Abd Rabbah, Tareekh – Abul Fida, Rawzatul Manazir – Ibn Shahnah, Sharh Maqasid – Taftazani, Khilafat wa Mulukiyyat – Abul A'ala Mawdudi Page 100),

(8) Shamelessly disregarding the terms of the peace treaty entered into (and accepted by him) with Imam Hasan (a.s.) (Tareekhe Kamil – Ibn Aseer, Tareekh – Abul Fida, Rawzatul Manazir – Ibn Shahnah),

(9) Causing whole scale terror and bloodshed of Muslims while dispatching his blood thirsty commanders (Tareekh Kamil – Ibn Aseer, Tareekh – Abul Fida, Tareekhul Madina – Samhudi, Maqatilat Talibiyeen – Abul Faraj Isfahani, Tareekh – Ibn Khalliqaan, Tareekh – Ibn Asakir, Tareekh – Tabari, Sharh Nahjul Balagha – Ibn Abil Hadeed Mu'tazili),

(10) Nurturing false traditionists like Abu Hurayra and provoking them to forge traditions against Ahlul Bayt (a.s.),

(11) Including Ziyad (the illegitimate son of a prostitute Sumayyah) among the Bani Umayyah by declaring him to be his brother (Tareekh – Abul Fida, Khilafat wa Mulukiyyat – Abul A'ala Mawdudi Page 162/3),

(12) Unlawfully appointing Yazid, his evil and immoral son, as his successor, Caliph of the Muslims and Vicegerent of the

Holy Prophet (S),

(13) Instigating the battle of Siffīn against the Commander of the faithful Imam Ali (a.s.) thus shedding the blood of devout Muslims and Prophet's companions like Ammar bin Yasir, Khuzaymah bin Sabit etc therein,

(14) A self styled monarch, a reveler worse than the Caesars and Chosroes (as witnessed by Umar bin Khattab in Isti'ab – Ibn Abdul Birr Vol 1: Page 253 and Tareekhe Kamil – Ibn Aseer Vol 3: Page 216, Al Bidaya wan Nihaya – Shahrestani Vol 8: Page 125),

(15) Disregard for lawful or unlawful (Muhaziratul Adibba' – Raghīb Isfahani Page 370), (16) A wine bibber as confirmed by Abdullah bin Buraydah in Musnad – Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal Vol 5: Page 347),

(16) Himself an illegitimate child (Rabi'ul Abrar – Zamakhshari, Sarguzashte Mu'awiyah – Mawlawi Abdul Wahid Khan Page 25, Masalib Bani Umayyah – Isma'il bin Ali Hanafi), apart from being an adulterer, gambler, gluttonous and evil personified (Ref. Sarguzashte Mu'awiyah – Abdul Waheed Khan).

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