

Departure of Madina

On 20th Rajab in 60 Hijra, Muawiya died. For more than twenty years the tyrant had ruled over Muslims. He was the son of Abu Sufyan and Hinda who had left no stone unturned in persecuting the Holy Prophet. Abu Sufyan became a Muslim only after he was convinced that Mecca would surrender to the Prophet. His son Muawiya, however, refused to accept Islam and went into exile in Yemen. It was only when he saw the whole of Arabia become Muslim that Muawiya was left with no alternative but to accept Islam.

After the death of the Holy Prophet Muawiya and his elder brother sided with the enemies of Hazrat Ali. He played an important part in usurping leadership from Hazrat Ali. For this, first the elder brother and after his death Muwaiya, were rewarded by the ruler of the time with the governorship of Syria.

When Hazrat Ali became Khalifa, he dismissed Muawiyaa for his corruption and anti Islamic behaviour. Muawiya refused to give up his position. This led to the battle of Siffeen. When Muawiya was about to lose the battle he managed to trick and bribe the majority of Hazrat Ali's army to insist upon referring the dispute to arbitration. Using the same methods he got the arbitrators to give a decision in his favour.

Muawiya then set himself up as an independent Emeer al-Shaam, (the Ruler of Damascus) while Hazrat Ali was the khalifa. Soon after the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali, Muawiya, making full use of his methods of bribery, treachery, tyranny and oppression succeeded in becoming the Khalifa.

Muawiya was not interested in Islam. He only used Islam for his power and glory. He never hesitated to trample over the laws of Islam. When any saying of the Holy Prophet did not suit him he ordered it to be struck off all records. He set up a special department under Abu Huraira to manufacture ahaadees which would favour him and his policies.

Muawiyah hated Hazrat Ali and all the members of Ahlul Bayt. The Shiahs were mercilessly persecuted. Any one who dared to say anything on favour of any member of Ahlul Bayt was put to death or thrown into a dungeon.

Now Muawiya was dead and his son Yazid made himself the Khalifa. Yazid was worse than his father. In

addition to all the evil qualities of his father, he openly mocked Islam. He was often found drunk, singing songs which made jokes of namaaz, the holy Prophet and his progeny.

The difference between the father and the son was this. Muawiya used Islam. Yazid was determined to destroy Islam.

As soon as he became Khalifa, Yazid sent a letter to his Governor of Madina, Waleed bin Utba, asking him to get Bai'at from Imam Husayn. Bai'at means an oath of allegiance. Yazid felt that if Imam Husayn declared bai'at to him, no one could then accuse him of having taken over khilafat illegally.

Waleed received the letter on 27th Rajab. He sent a message to Imam Husayn to go to the palace that evening. Accompanied by his brothers, sons and nephews Imam Husayn went to the palace.

Imam asked all who had come with him to wait outside while he went in alone. Waleed showed Imam no respect and rather arrogantly asked him to declare bai'at to Yazid. Imam replied that the question of Bai'at was a serious matter and should be discussed openly in day light.

Imam came out looking sad. He asked all his companions to go home and prepare for a journey at dawn the following morning. He requested Hazrat Abbas to take charge of the preparations adding, "Abbas, Faatimah Sughra is ill. She will not be able to stand a long journey. She will have to stay in Madina."

Imam began to walk slowly towards the mosque, deep in thought. Imam Husayn could not even consider bai'at to Yazid. It was not a matter of his pride or his right to khilafat. Bai'at to Yazid would mean Imam's approval of Yazid's way of life and this would decidedly lead to a total destruction of Islam. It was Imam's duty to uphold and defend Islam. If he stayed on in Madina while he refused to give bai'at, then Yazid would surely attack him in Madina. Imam would have the advantage of having all his own relatives as well as the people of Madina fighting on his side.

But this would have two serious disadvantages. Firstly, it would put all his friends in Madina in danger. Secondly, although Yazid might be defeated, history would look upon the battle as a battle of khilafat.

Even if Yazid were to be killed, the injustice, the oppression and the immoral way of life which Muawiya and Yazid had promoted would not die.

Imam Husayn's mission was to destroy the evil that these two men had let loose. For this he needed to awaken the spirit of Islam amongst the Muslims.

Imam arrived at the mosque. He lit a candle and walked towards the grave of the Holy Prophet. The thought that this might be the last time he would see the grave filled him with sorrow. He sat by the grave, put his cheek on it and began to sob. "I have come to say good-bye to you O grand-father. I have to leave Madina to save Islam. Pray that Allah grant me patience!!"

Imam then went to the grave of his mother, Bibi Fatimaah Zahra. He was unable to speak. He kissed the grave and said a silent farewell. Some Zaakirs say that as the Imam began to walk away, Bibi

Fatimaah's voice was heard from the grave: "Khuda Haafiz, my son. Go! I too will be with you."

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