

Meeting In Kufa

The two Parties (i.e., al-Hasan and Mu'awiya) had adopted the idea of peacemaking. Thus it was natural for them to appoint a certain place to declare the Peace Treaty. In other words the two sides wanted to hold their meeting at one place to be a practical way of the peacemaking which history witnessed, and to admit before the people the conditions which they had to fulfill. So they had chosen Kufa and went there. Large groups of people went with them. So the great capital (i.e., Kufa) was full of them. They were— at most— the soldiers of the two parties, who left their camps and hurried to witness that historical day when Kufa was expected to witness willingly or unwillingly.

For the first time, the Iraqi capital was full of thousands of red Syrian soldiers, who were Muslims and Christians. These two camps (i.e., Kufa and Syria) suffered from a series of historical enmities and bloody battles beginning from the events of Salman al Bahili and Habib b. Muslima al-Fahri, during the lifetime of `Uthman b. `Affan, to this day of peacemaking. Then what do you think about the loyal Kufan soldier who was expected to lay down his arms during the great wave of noise which the Syrian soldiers made in al-Masjid al-Jami` which was founded on piety from Allah?

The deadly disaster hit the loyal group from the supporters of the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. Also it hit those supporters who ignored the aims of al-Hasan through making peace with Mu'awiya or ignored the real motives that forced the former to make peace with the latter. As for the traitorous majority. They clearly showed their treason. Groups of the Kufans were seen among the masses of the Syrians. They wanted to take part in the cheated happiness of the Syrians during their cold festivals and to take part in their overcome victory.

The people were summoned to al-Masjid al-Jami' to listen to the two orators (i.e., al-Hasan and Mu'awiya) who had signed the Peace Treaty.

It was necessary for Mu'awiya to compete with al-Hasan for the pulpit, so the former got ahead of the latter and went up on it.¹ Then Mu'awiya addressed the people with his long speech which the references have not narrated except some prominent paragraphs.

Among them, as al-Ya'qubi has narrated, is: "Now then, indeed, if a community differs in opinion after its

prophet, its falsehood will overcome its truth." He (i.e., al-Ya'qubi) said: "Then Mu'awiya paid attention to what he had said, so he said: `Except what this community has done.²

Also among them is what al-Mada'ni has narrated: "Kufans, do you think that I have fought against you to make you pray and fast and pay zakat and perform the pilgrimage? Indeed I know that you pray, pay zakat, and perform the pilgrimage. However, I have fought against you to have power over you and to twist your necks and Allah has given that to me while you are reluctant (to that).

Indeed every blood which has been shed in this discord is postponed and every condition I have given to al-Hasan is under these two feet of mine. Nothing reforms the people but three (things): taking out the giving at its proper time, returning the soldiers at their suitable time, and attacking the enemy in his homeland. Indeed if you do not attack them, they will attack you."

On the authority of Habib b. Abu Thabit, Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani has narrated that Mu'awiya mentioned 'Ali in this oration and defamed him, then he defamed al-Hasan.³

Abu Ishaq al-Subay'i⁴ has added the following words to what he has narrated of Mu'awiya's oration: "Indeed everything which I have given to al-Hasan b. 'Ali is under these two feet of mine. I will not fulfill it."

Abu Ishaq said: "By Allah, he (i.e., Mu'awiya) was traitorous."

Then the people looked forward to al-Hasan. Suddenly, they saw the grandson of the Apostle of Allah, who was the most similar of them all to him in form, manners, dignity, and correctness, coming from the direction of the mihrab (prayer niche) of his father in the great mosque to go up on his pulpit. The mobs were fond of curiosity. They were eager to conclude the obscure things from the affairs of the great figures. So they remembered the stammering Mu'awiya made in his speech. They understood the plentiful self-possession of al-Hasan when he went up on the pulpit and began looking at the large gatherings of people who crowded in the wide mosque. They were eager to hear al-Hasan's answer to Mu'awiya who refused the conditions of the Peace Treaty, broke the covenants, shed blood, and attacked the innocent. Al-Hasan b. 'Ali, peace be on them, was a clever orator. He made a speech during that critical situation. His long eloquent speech was a wonderful document.

Through this speech, al-Hasan was able to explain the situation standing between the people and the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them, after the death of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. At the beginning of the speech, al-Hasan preached and advised the Muslims. Then he summoned them to conform to love, satisfaction, and unity. In the middle of the speech, he reminded them of the attitudes of his family, rather the attitudes of prophets. At the end of the speech, he answered Mu'awiya without any abusing or cursing. However, through his eloquent style, he was the most painful curser and abuser.

In his speech, al-Hasan said: "Praise belongs to Allah whenever a man praises Him. I testify that there

is no god but Allah whenever a man testifies Him. I testify that Muhammad is His servant and His apostle whom He sent with the truth and whom He entrusted with revelation, may Allah bless him and his family.

Now then, by Allah, I hope that I shall always be with Allah's praise and kindness. I am the sincerest of Allah's creatures in giving advice to them. I do not bear malice to any Muslim, nor do I wish evil misfortune for him. Indeed unity (jama`a) is better than division. I take care of you more than you take care of yourselves. Therefore do not oppose my commands and do not reject my judgment. My Allah forgive both me and you. May He guide me and you to that in which there is love and satisfaction. 5

"Men, indeed, Allah has guided you through the foremost one of us and spared your blood through the last one of us. Indeed there is a period of time for this authority, and the world changes. Allah, the Great and Almighty, said to his Apostle: `I do not know whether what you are threatened with is near or far. Surely He knows what is spoken openly and He knows what you hide. And I do not know if this may be a trial for you and a provision till a time.'⁶

"Indeed Mu'awiya has told you that I see him appropriate for the succession to authority, and I do not see myself appropriate for it. So Mu'awiya has told you lie. We are worthier of the succession to authority than the people in the Book of Allah, the Great and Almighty, and on the tongue of His prophet. We, the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), have been oppressed since Allah made His prophet to die.

So Allah is between him and us, who oppressed us, controlled us, provoked the people against us, deprived us of our share of booty, and deprived our mother of what the Apostle of Allah had allotted to her. I swear by Allah, if the people had pledged allegiance to my father when the Apostle of Allah left them, the sky would have given them its rain and the earth its boon, and you, Mu'awiya, would have not wished for it (the authority). When it (i.e., the authority) came out of its origin, Quraysh differed over it. So the freed prisoners and their sons, you and your friends, wished for it. Indeed the Apostle of Allah said: `If a community appoints a man over its authority and among it there is the one who is more knowledgeable than him (i.e., the man), their authority will come to nothing till they return to him whom they have left.' Indeed the children of Israel had left Harun (Aaron) while they knew that he was the successor of Musa (Moses) and they followed al-Samiri (Samaritan). This community had left my father while it certainly heard the Apostle of Allah say: `You are in the same position with respect to me as Harun (Aaron) to Musa (Moses) except prophethood.'

Indeed they (the community) saw the Apostle of Allah appointing my father on the day of Ghadir Khum and ordered the present to convey his order to the absent. The Apostle of Allah left his people while he was summoning them to (believe) in Allah so that he entered the Cave. If he had found supporters, he would have not left them. My father sufficed him (the Prophet) when he summoned and called them for help, but he was not helped. So Allah made Aaron at ease when they considered him weak and were about to kill him. Allah made the Prophet at ease when he entered the Cave and found no helpers. Also my father (was) and I am at ease from Allah when this community has deserted us. Indeed the (Divine)

laws and the examples follow each other.⁷

"By Him Who sent Muhammad with the truth, if someone decreases our right, we the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), Allah will decrease his act. When oppression befalls us, the final result will be for us, surely you will know its news after a time."⁸

Then al-Hasan turned to Mu'awiya again to refute the defamation which Mu'awiya ascribed to his father. So he said wonderful words: "O you who mention 'Ali, I am al-Hasan and 'Ali was my father. You are Mu'awiya and your father was Sakhr (Abu Sufyan).

My mother was Fatima and your mother was Hind. My grandfather was the Apostle of Allah and your grandfather was Harb. My grandmother was Khadija and your grandmother was Futayla. May Allah curse him who tries to reduce our reputation and to diminish our nobility, who does evil against our antiquity and yet who has been ahead of us in unbelief and hypocrisy."

The narrator said: "Groups of the people in the mosque shouted out: `Amen, Amen!' "Al-Fadl b. al-Hasan said: Yahya b. Main said: "I say: Amen!" Abu al-Faraj said: Abu `Ubayd said: Al-Fadl said: "I say: Amen!" 'Ali b. al-Husayn al-Isfahani (i.e., Abu alFaraj) said: Ibn Abu al-Hadid said: "Amen!" I said: `Abd al-Hamid b. Abu al-Hadid, the author of this book, (i.e., Sharh Nahj al Balagha) said: "Amen!"⁹

I (i.e., the author) say: Also we say: "Amen!"

In the history of world speeches, this is the only speech that finds favor with generations throughout history.

Such is the true speech. It ascends and nothing ascends over it!

After that, al-Hasan got ready to go to Medina.

The leaders of the Shi'a came to al-Hasan to see him off. Among them were al-Musayyab b. Nujayya al-Fazari and Zabyan b. `Ammara al Tamimi. So al-Hasan said: "Praise belongs to Allah Who overcomes His affair. If all creatures came together to prevent something from occurring, they would be unable to do that." Then al-Musayyab talked and showed his loyalty to the members of the House (Ahl al-Bayt), peace be on them. So al-Hasan, peace be on him, said to him: "Musayyab, we know that you love us."

Also al-Hasan, peace be on him, said: "I have heard my father say: I have heard the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, say: Whoever loves (a group of) people is with them." Then al-Musayyab and Zabyan asked him to return with them. So he said: "There is no way for that." Early in the morning, he left Kufa. The people saw him off while they were weeping. After the Peace Treaty, he stayed in Kufa for some days.

When al-Hasan arrived at Dir Hind¹⁰ (al-Hira), he looked at Kufa and said:

I have left the house of my folks not because of hate

It is they who defended my possessions and my family.¹¹

I (i.e., the author) say: How wonderful this angelic self is! Though al-Hasan suffered from the disobedience and disasters of this city (i.e., Kufa), he left it reciting this line of poetry. He remembered nothing of the long history of Kufa but the loyalty of the loyal who defended his possessions and his family, who protected him from those who attacked him at al-Mada'in, and who obeyed him when he faced hardships at Maskan. So they were sincere companions and good supporters though they were few in number.

Then the great caravan moved carrying the rest of the servants of Allah in the earth and the heritage of the Apostle of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, in Islam. They were unable to bear the situation in Kufa so that they headed for their homeland to seek protection in the grave of their grandfather against the adversities of the traitorous time.

After Muhammad's household had left Kufa, Allah punished the Kufans with plague. It was their immediate punishment because of their attitude towards these righteous ones. Al-Mughira b. Shu'ba, the Umayyad governor of Kufa, fled Kufa because he was afraid of plague. Then he returned to it, but was infected with plague and died.¹²

1. Jabir b. Samra said: "I have not seen the Apostle of Allah delivering a speech but he was standing. So whoever tells you that he delivered a speech and he was sitting, then accuses him of lying." Al-Jaza'iri has narrated this tradition in his book 'Ayat al-Ahkam', p. 75.

2. Al-Ya'qubi, Ta'rikh, vol. 2, p. 192.

3. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 4, p. 16.

4. He was `Amr b. `Abd Allah al-Hamadani al-Tab'i. Concerning him, it is said that he performed the noon prayer with the darkness ablution (Wudu' al-`Atama) for forty years. He ended the Qur'an in every night. No one worshipped Allah more than he did, and no one was more reliable than him in the tradition.

5. Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Irshad (Iran), p. 169.

6. Al-Mas'udi, Hamish b. al-Athir, vol. 6, p. 61- 2. Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya wa al-Nihaya, vol. 8, p. 18. Al-Tabari, Ta'rikh, vol. 6, p. 93.

7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 10, p. 114.

8. Al-Mas'udi, Hamish b. al-Athir, vol. b, pp. 61- 2.

9. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 4, p. 6.

10. Hind was the daughter of al-Nu'man b. al-Mundhir. She was a nun in this abbey of her in al-Hira

11. Ibn Abu al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 4, p. 6.

12. Al-Mas'udi, Hamish b. al-Athir, vol. 6, p. 97.

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