

Chapter 1: Regime of Mu'awiya

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 wholeheartedly. 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 a part 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 Hannan 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-Nasayah al-Kafiya Li Mun Yatawalla Mu'awiya: Ammar 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, Ammar 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! Ammar! 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".

Ammar'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 Ammar. 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 Ammar, 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 Ammar 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.

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