

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

Home > When Power and Piety Collide > Chapter 6: Transition of the Group > The Cursed Tree

Chapter 6: Transition of the Group

And the parable of an evil word is that of an evil tree: It is torn up by the root from the surface of the earth: it has no stability. (Holy Qur'an, 14:26)

The Cursed Tree

Since the advent of the revelation of the Qur'an, the Bani Umayyah spearheaded a calculated fight against Islam. Having received full knowledge of their evil traits through revelation, the Holy Prophet repeatedly cursed them, 1 specifically Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb. 2 Even Allah, referring to them metaphorically in the Qur'an cursed them when He said, "And the cursed tree in the Qur'an..." (c. 17:60) Both Sunni and Shi'a commentators agree that this "cursed tree" is none other than the Bani Umayyah. 3

Generation after generation, they perpetuated their hatred towards the religion of Islam and their attempts to overcome it. Initially, in Mecca and Madinah, Abu Sufyan and his son Mu'awiyah severely tormented the Muslims. The attacks by Abu Sufyan led the reputable Sunni historian, Ibn Abd al–Birr to declare that, "Abu Sufyan was a shelter for all the hypocrites who were against the Muslims after he embraced Islam and what is correct (to say) is that he did not embrace Islam, but rather he unwillingly surrendered to the Muslims."4

His animosity prevailed some fourteen years after his "conversion" when he kicked the grave of the martyred uncle of the Prophet, Hamzah, and mocked him saying, "O *Aba Imarah*, the issue [Islamic leadership] which you fought against us with the sword is now in the hands of our children who are playing with it."5

Mu'awiyah, on the other hand, took a less vocal stance during his caliphate and simply killed those prominent companions of the Prophet who disagreed with his totalitarian policies. Among the souls whom he escorted out of the life of this world were the grandson of the Prophet, Imam Hasan, Hijr Ibn Uday, Malik al-Ashtar, Muhammad Ibn Abu Bakr, Ammar Ibn Yasir, Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abu Bakr, and

Sa'd Ibn Abu al-Waqqas.6

Mu'awiyah continued his mayhem by killing many of the Ansar and memorizers of the Holy Qur'an. Mu'awiyah's son Yazid continued the trend years later by murdering the other grandson of the Prophet, Imam Husayn in the tragic massacre at Karbala in the year 61 ah, in which he then took the women and children of the Prophet's household captive and dishonored them by parading them through Iraq and Syria. Yazid broadened his reign of terror and havoc by allowing his soldiers to rape the women and pillage the city of Madinah in the year 62 ah and topped his rule of tyranny with setting out to destroy the Ka'abah in the year 63 ah.

Anyone who indulges in such vile practices should not only have been banned from leading the Islamic government, but should have also been ostracized from the nation. Yet, despite the inclinations of the Bani Umayyah and the curse of Allah upon them, both the first and the second caliphs involved them in their power structure and exposed the ummah to their treachery.

They made 'Uthman a senior aide (vizier) and made use of others, such as Mu'awiyah, Utbah, Yazid, Sa'eed Ibn al-Aas, al-Waleed Ibn Uqbah, and Uttab Ibn Usayd, while other worthy men went unrepresented.

Ironically, at one time, the first caliph confided to al-Mugheerah Ibn Shu'bah his fear that the Bani Umayyah posed a serious threat to Islam and said, "By Allah, Bani Umayyah will cause Islam to become one-eyed." Yet ironically, 'Umar privileged people from the Bani Umayyah over others in his government.

When Mu'awiyah was only 18 years old, 'Umar appointed him governor of Syria, although 'Umar himself had refused to join the dispatch of Usama Ibn Zayd upon the order of the Holy Prophet on the pretext that Usama was only 18; and he also objected to the caliphate of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib because 'Ali was too young – 33 years old. In response to the criticism that Mu'awiyah was too young to govern, 'Umar retorted, "Are you criticizing me for appointing him? I heard the Prophet say about Mu'awiyah, 'God, make a guide (*hadi*), a guided one (*mahdi*), and guide the people by him."9

'Umar even knighted some well-known enemies of the Prophet and Islam with honored titles. Abu Sufyan was given the title of "Sayyid Quraysh (Leader of the Quraysh)," while he called Mu'awiyah, "Kisra al-Arab" – "kisra" being the word for a noble Persian king, and he called Hind, the mother of Mu'awiyah, "Karemat Quraysh (the Honorable Lady of Quraysh)." In reality, reports on Hind say otherwise about her honor as the report according to Ibn al-Katheer shows:

In the Battle of Uhud, Hind, the mother of Mu'awiyah who was the wife of Abu Sufyan was butchering the martyrs of the Muslims – including Hamzah the uncle of the Prophet – and amputating their limbs. 10

Is it possible that someone who had committed such horrendous acts be entitled as an "honorable woman?" Little evidence exists to indicate that Hind was sincere when she later embraced Islam. The

Bani Umayyah remained as the Qur'an had described them - "the Cursed Tree."

How easily did the Quraysh group forget the admonitions of the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophet, and yet they were to become the ruling dynasty of the Muslim world. Instead of the hadith of the Prophet warning the people against Bani Umayyah – or even the words of 'Umar Ibn al–Khattab warning himself against them – an exorbitant amount of false hadith began to appear claiming the high status of the Bani Umayyah in the sight of Allah. Indeed, the "evil word" of the "cursed tree" had begun to spread its roots.

- 1. Al-Hakim al-Hasakani, Al-Mustadrak, 4:480
- 2. Al-Isabah, 2:38; Usd al-Ghabah, 3:76
- 3. Al-Suyuti, Al-Durr al-Manthur; Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Dalail
- 4. Ibn Abd al-Birr, Al-Istiab, 2:690
- 5. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul Balaghah
- 6. Ibn al-Atheer 3:440; Al-Istiab, p. 839; Ibn Hajar, Al-Isabah, 3:384
- 7. Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, 7:78
- 8. Ibn Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul-Balaghah, 3:115
- 9. Ibn Katheer, Sunan al-Tirmidhi; Al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah, 8:120
- 10. Ibn Katheer, 4:42

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/when-power-and-piety-collide-sayyid-moustafa-al-qazwini/chapter-6-transiti on-group#comment-0