

# Muawiya's Reign

The following points are the main features of his rule.

## 1. Authority

Muawiya assumed authority by sheer force; he did not hide this fact and put it plainly in his address at Kufa. He said "O people of Kufa, do you think I fought you to establish prayers or giving alms (Zakat) or perform pilgrimage?" He continued, "I know you pray, pay alms, and perform pilgrimage. Indeed, I fought you in order to command you with contempt, and God has given me that against your wishes. You must be certain that whoever has killed any of us, then he will be killed. And the contract between us of amnesty is under these feet of mine".

## 2. Terrorism

Muawiya's rule caused terror throughout the whole Muslim land; this was spread by him sending convoys to various regions of the country. It was narrated that Muawiya summoned Sufyan ibn Auf Al-Ghamidi, one of his army commanders, and said "This Army is under your command, proceed along the river Euphrate till Heet. Any resistance in the way should be crushed, and then invade Anbar. After that, penetrate deep into Madaain"

He further said "O Sufyan, these invasions will frighten the Iraqis and please those who like us. Such campaigns would attract frightened people to our side. Kill whoever (those) having different opinions from ours, loot their villages and demolish their houses. Indeed, the War against money is similar to killing but is more painful to their hearts".

Another commander, Basar ibn Artat, was summoned and ordered to proceed towards Hijaz and Yemen. Muawiya instructed him, "Proceed to Madina and expel its people, meanwhile (any) people in the way who are not from our camp should be terrorized. When you enter Madina, let it appear as if you are going to kill them. Make it appear that your aim is to exterminate them. Then pardon them. Terrorize the people around Mecca and Madina and scatter them".

### 3. Islamic Concepts and Laws

During Muawiya's reign even basic human rights were denied to people, no-one was free to express their opinion, spies were employed to terrorize people and the army and police spared no opportunity to crush the people and silence their voices.

Some of the documents of the time reveal Muawiya's instructions to his governors, including the following letter, which was addressed to all his judges. "Do not accept the witness of Ali's followers or his descendants in courts", another letter stated "If you have evidence that some person likes Ali and his family, then omit his name from the rations of Zakat", another letter continued, "Punish whoever is suspected to follow Ali and bring his house down". Such was the situation of Muawiya's rule.

Historians who were recording the waves of terror described them as unprecedented within history; the people were so frightened that they did not mind even being called atheists or thieves, just not followers of Imam Ali.

Another facet of Muawiya's rule was the discrimination between Arabs and non-Arabs. It is an established fact that non-Arabs during Muawiya's reign were treated as third class citizens, although they embraced Islam they still had to pay Kharaj and Jizyah! Non-Arab soldiers in the state armies used to fight for bare subsistence level.

Once a dispute between an Arab and a non-Arab was presented to a court, the Judge was Abdullah ibn Amir, during the procedure the non-Arab sadly remarked to his opponent "May God not multiply people of your kind (meaning Arabs)", The Arab answered him light heartedly "O God, increase their population among us (meaning non-Arabs)". The people who were present asked the Arab in a state of bewilderment "How do you pray for their increase while he prays for your decease?" The Arab answered "Yes indeed, they clean our streets, make shoes for our animals, and weave our clothes".

Perhaps the most dangerous mischief Muawiya had embarked upon was the fabrication of Hadiths. When he was facing Imam Ali (as) as an adversary, he found his case to be hopeless, his past was dark and shameful, whilst that of Imam Ali was glorious and shining. In order to sustain his campaign and boast his followers, Muawiya had to attract weak character companions and employ them to fabricate Hadiths.

Naturally, his aim was to boast his campaign, challenge adversaries, and legalize his claim to rule. Muawiya's order was to not narrate any Hadith or incident in favour of Imam Ali but to fabricate a similar one and attribute it to Uthman, Umar and Abu Bakr. The second phase of this psychological warfare was to put Hadiths in Muawiya's favour. The third phase was to silence people and keep them calm at what he did whether in wronging Muslims or his violation of Islamic laws.

This trend of fabrication of Hadiths, was constituting a grave danger to the integrity of Islam. Hadiths are

considered as the secondary source of Islamic legislation after Qur'an, therefore it was very important to divert such a danger. The exposition of this trend to the Muslims at large was very vital, this was done by disgracing those who embarked upon this terrible mischief and those who nurtured it. A few samples of the fabricated Hadiths are as follows.

Through Abu Hurairah, the Prophet said "God has trusted three for his revelation: myself, Jabriel and Muawiya". I wonder what God was doing for the revelation when Muawiya was 'part of the non-Muslims' camp. Again, Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet had given Muawiya an arrow and told him "Take this arrow until we meet in Paradise". What a lucky arrow to enter Paradise. Abdullah ibn Umar claimed that the Prophet said "You will see greed after me, and things which you would disagree with", the people asked "O Prophet of God, then what do you order us?" The Prophet said, "Do the governor's right and ask God for yours".

Another fabricated Hadith said to be narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar "Endure what you do not like of your governors, because if you separate from the group (Jama'a) one foot and then died, you would have died as an unbeliever"

These fabricated Hadiths are not only principally contradicting the Quran and other verified Hadiths but are calling Muslims to be slaves of their rulers, exactly what the Ummayyads' were aiming for.

## 4. Appointing Yazid

Muawiya was not ruling as an individual, but was representing a way of thinking different in nature from that of Islam. He was not content to leave the ruling stage without making sure that it was properly looked after, his pragmatic and materialistic mind drove him to prepare the crowning of his son, Yazid, even though he made many promises that he would not even contemplate so.

Muawiya had a difficult job to perform before leaving this world, because the conditions at the time were such that there were still Muslims who were politically conscious and wanted to see the restoration of Islamic laws and values. Indeed, he tried his best at buying allegiances for his son from; Army commanders, chiefs of tribes and distinguished personalities. But his efforts failed with many and he left general instructions of the way to deal with them.

## Imam Hasan's Policy

Wars and internal strife during five long years caused tremendous strain among the people and Imam Ali's speeches at Kufa manifested this phenomenon very clearly, with the people being tired of war, because they were worn out economically.

The murder of Imam Ali was disastrous politically. The apparent dispute between the two parties, which was symbolized by Imam Ali and Muawiya, was worsened after the murder of Imam Ali (as) and

Muawiya gained a stronger hand within the political field, since his opponent had disappeared from the stage of opposition.

Although Imam Hasan assumed authority after his father, his power was not established. Thus, some Iraqi tribes defected to Muawiya's camp when the latter promised them high donations and animated their hopes of success and good reward. The scene in Kufa was hopeless, the majority of people were longing for peace, however they did not realize at the time the price of peace they were wishing for.

Nevertheless the political scene required nothing but wise manipulation and patience. The Iraqis and the rest of the Muslim world seemed to be in need of direct exposure with the Umayyad rule. Imam Hasan (as) gave them this chance in order to polarize them permanently against the Umayyads.

In such conditions, the most daring Islamically conscious person would get killed and Imam Hasan wanted to spare such people from such a fate and utilize them for the greater task of the purity of Islam and the existence of Islamic ideals and practices within the society. Those people were entrusted with the propagation of Islamic concepts, unveiling the un-Islamic character of the Umayyads and exposing their deviations to the society.

Thus Imam Hasan's answer to Hujr ibn Uday Al-Kindi came "I found people wishing to reconcile and who disliked war. I did not want to go through something which they disliked. I reconciled especially for the sake of our followers to be spared from being killed. However, I have only postponed the war, and God has a surprise every day".

It is noteworthy that Imam Hasan's move was politically sound, he actually scored many points against Muawiya in that incident. First, he showed his keen concern for the lives of Muslims and their wellbeing. Secondly, he displayed his integrity and disinterest in power if that was seen being seen as an aim. Thirdly, he respected the contract while Muawiya broke it as soon as it was signed. Fourthly, the very conduct of Muawiya's ruling and his clique exposed the seriousness of his danger and put people in a continuous struggle against his power.

Thus, Muawiya's religious mask was stripped off, and at least, some responsible people had no doubt about his real character. Therefore the danger of his deeds was partly eliminated.

## Yazid's Claim

Muawiya was busy preparing the installment of Yazid as his heir in ruling the Muslim world. In writing to Imam Husayn he found no pleasant answer to his demands and thus Muawiya reminded his son to beware of Imam Husayn. Yazid took his father's advice and promptly wrote to his governor at Madina, Al-Waleed ibn Utabah, to secure recognition from Imam Husayn, but Al-Waleed's efforts were in vain.

Imam Husayn's reply was definite and direct. He said "We, the family of the Prophet, the essence of the message and the visiting place of angels . . . . While Yazid is a corrupt, drunkard, murderer and fostering

his sins. A person like me cannot obey a person like him".

Yazid's ascent to power was arranged by his father and all the power at Muawaiya's disposal was transferred to Yazid, and he used every of these means to obtain submission for his unholy policies of oppression and aggression. Therefore, Yazid had no legal right whatsoever in his claims and demands. On the contrary, he was responsible for many illegal deeds which demand scorn and required punishment.

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