

Mu`awiya and his successors

Mu`awiya son of Abu Sufyan was a perfect specimen of the qualities and characteristics of Bani Umayyah. When we study the characteristics of Mu`awiya carefully we come to know that he did not possess even an atom of Islamic human values and did not have any quality of the Muslims of that neat and clean age. If we consider Islam to be a revolt against the ways and manners of the Arabs of the age of ignorance (for example acting with personal interests in view and treating common people to be animals and a source of income for the nobility and aristocracy) it can be said with certainty that, as we shall explain later, Mu`awiya had nothing to do with Islam.

And alternatively if Islam is the name of the religion whose orders apply to every individual it is quite clear that Mu`awiya had also no connection with Islam of this type. This was admitted by Mu`awiya himself. He used to wear silken dress and eat his food in gold and silver vessels. Abu Darda, a companion of the Prophet objected to this and said: "I have heard the Prophet saying that hell-fire will be poured into the belly of one who takes his meals in gold and silver utensils". Mu`awiya, however, replied unconcernedly: "I do not consider it to be objectionable".

When we find that the early Muslims were very strict in religious matters, paid due respect to what was ordered or prohibited by the Prophet, and sacrificed even their lives for the sake of their faith, and then look at the impudent reply which Mu`awiya gave to Abu Darda in clear defiance of the Prophet we are convinced that Mu`awiya never joined the group of those Muslims who sincerely believed in the moral and spiritual teachings of Islam.

The conduct of Mu`awiya after embracing Islam was identical with that of his father Abu Sufyan during the age of ignorance viz. that of an aristocrat who took forced labour from the people and treated them like slaves. He became a Muslim reluctantly and also continued to remain a Muslim reluctantly.

Who can be more aware of the mentality of Mu`awiya and the worth of his faith in Islam than his contemporaries who had seen him with their own eyes. Did all his contemporaries not accuse him of the things which we shall mention later? Did Ali not know him more than anyone else and did he not draw a true picture of his when he said in his letter: "You are imitating your forefathers in making false claims, deceiving the people, claiming to enjoy a position higher than that which you possess and grabbing

things which are prohibited?”

Was there even one among the Muslims of the days of the Prophet or the orthodox caliphs who was a false pretender or a liar and was called a Muslim? Was there a Muslim during that pure period of the Muslims about whom Ali had said: “All those members of your family who embraced Islam embraced it reluctantly”.

As regards some qualities of Mu`awiya like forbearance, softness, and generosity, it may be said that they were all means to achieve his selfish ends. He had realized it on account of his intelligence that to realize his objects and to attain to kingship these things would be very useful for him. I think that Mu`awiya had understood it very well that the people did not like the characteristics and character of his forefathers and those of the Umayyads of his own time, and the power and authority, which his ancestors once wielded, had ceased to be of any value.

He endeavoured to beguile the people by making a show of forbearance and generosity so that the people might not know the facts and get enamoured of his forbearance and generosity, because if competence magnanimity and nobility of birth had been treated to be the criterion for rulership Bani Umayyah could not at all compete with Bani Hashim. He showed forbearance in order to gain support of the people, and thus acquire powers and what could be a more effective plan to win the people and hide the evils of his family than to bestow gifts on them?

The supporters of Mu`awiya praised him much for his forbearance and generosity but in fact his policy was the one adopted by the oppressor with the oppressed it was the policy of cruelty, oppression, tyranny and looting which he left as a legacy for the Umayyad rulers who succeeded him.

What sort of forbearance and generosity of Mu`awiya is praised by his supporters when he sent Busr bin Artat with instructions to loot the people telling him: “Go on plundering and pass through Madina, and put the people to flight. Loot on your way every habitation whose people are supporters of Ali”.

What kind of courtesy and forbearance was that when he sent Abu Sufyan son of Ghamadi to Iraq on a plundering expedition and gave him these instructions: “March on by the bank of the Euphrates and reach Hait. If you meet there the troops of Ali attack them, otherwise move on and reach Anbar and plunder its citizens. If you do not meet any resistance even there then march on till you reach Ctesiphon (Mada'en). You should know that attacking Ctesiphon and Anbar is as good as attacking Kufa itself. O Sufyan! These attacks will terrify the people of Iraq and those among them who are our supporters will become happy. Invite people to us and put those people who do not agree with you to sword. Loot every village you pass through, and snatch away every property that you can by your hands and plundering the property is like murder, rather more heart-rendering”. (Commentary on Nahj al-Balaghah by Ibn Abi'l Hadid, p. 144).

Zuhhak bin Qais Fehri was sent by Mu`awiya to attack some cities, which were under the control of Imam Ali and was given these instructions: “Proceed and reach Kufa. Attack on your way all those Arabs

who are supporters of Ali and loot their arsenals, if any”.

Zuhhak carried out Mu`awiya's orders in the same way in which Busr bin Artat and Sufyan bin Ghamadi had carried them out. He massacred and plundered the people and treated them with extreme brutality.

Mu`awiya made a strange display of his forbearance and kindness when he expressed his views about millions of non-Arabs. He said about them. “I find that the non-Arab Muslims are going to outnumber us, and if this state of affairs continues I am afraid that the day is not far off when they will obliterate the names of our forefathers. I feel like letting only half of them to live so that the bazars and the highways may remain intact”. If Akhnaf bin Qais had not dissuaded him from acting on his program in this behalf, Mu`awiya would have killed thousands of innocent persons whose only offence was that they were non-Arabs.

Mu`awiya was kind and forbearing only when he had to face a powerful person who, he feared, might curb his power and topple down his government. He tolerated whatever such a person said, flattered him and agreed to whatever he suggested.

Whenever he was sitting among his friends and associates and some distinguished person rebuked him he immediately showed meekness and forbearance lest the other person might attack him. He also asked his scribes to write down the words of rebuke saying; “It is a piece of wisdom”. However, if the other party was not powerful and influential, Mu`awiya did not show any meekness. And even if that person had not said anything harsh he wished to kill him in a most ruthless manner.

Mu`awiya became meek, kind and forbearing when he expected some benefit from the other party. He agreed to whatever the other person said, even though he might be oppressive and unjust, provided that he assisted in making his rule stable. To such a person he could present Egypt and the inhabitants of Egypt as he did in the case of `Amr bin `Aas.

On the one hand Mu`awiya's kindness was so extensive that he bestowed Egypt and its inhabitants upon Amr bin Aas and on the other hand it was so limited that he took away the right of Egypt and the Egyptians to live and made a gift of them to one person. If this is what is called kindness and forbearance, then Nero, Genghiz (Changez) Khan and Halagri (Halaku) were also very kind and forbearing.

When a person studies Mu`awiya's policy carefully he is stunned to find what means he employed to win the people. The duplicity practised by him in statecraft was cent per cent Machiavellian. Murder, plunder and terrorism formed his basic policy and making attractive promises and administering threats were also parts of it. It also included murder of good and innocent persons, holding rogues and vagabonds in esteem, false propaganda and seeking assistance of cruel and characterless persons.

Mu`awiya admitted several times that his politics was devoid of equity and justice and he did not on any occasion lend support to truth. The incident narrated below throws light on his politics and explains his views about equity and justice. Mutraf bin Mughira bin Sho`ba says:

“I accompanied my father Mughira to see Mu`awiya. My father visited him every day and praised him very much on his return. When he came back one night he was very sad and he did not even take his dinner. On my having enquired about the reason for his sadness he said: My son! Tonight I have come after meeting the most evil person. On my having enquired as to who he was he said: “I told Mu`awiya in seclusion: You have achieved all your desires. It will now be in the fitness of things if you behave with the people kindly. You have grown old now. You should behave well with Bani Hashim who are your kith and kin. There is no reason for you to be afraid of them now!

Mu`awiya replied: `Never! Never! The man belonging to the Family of Taym (Abu Bakr) became caliph. When he died he was no longer talked about. Now he is called only `Abu Bakr' by the people. After him Umar became caliph and ruled promptly for ten years. With his death he also ceased to be talked about and people now call him `Umar'. Then our brother Uthman became the caliph. He belonged to the noblest family. He ruled justly but when he died he too ceased to be talked about. However, the name of the son of Bani Hashim (i.e. Muhammad) is announced five times during the day and night (i.e. everyone says: I acknowledge that Muhammad is the Prophet of God). Now what else can be done with his name except that I should destroy it completely". (Murooj al-Zahab, vol. 2, page 241).

Mu`awiya was brought up in an atmosphere of people who denied prophethood. He belonged to a family which hated religion. From his very childhood he had seen his father preparing to fight against the Muslims, leading big armies against them, and planning to kill the companions of the Prophet as well as the Prophet himself, in order to safeguard his chiefship, authority and material gains. He had seen that his father wanted to remain a chief even though this might result in the annihilation of the spirit of justice created by the Prophet and the death of the Prophet and his companions, and the misfortune of entire Arabia.

In all these matters Mu`awiya had inherited the spirit of his great grandfather Umayyah son of Abd al-Shams.

Just as Abu Sufyan's nature had a great influence on the character of Mu`awiya, who was a true picture of his father in the matter of selfishness and greed for power, in the same way his mother Hind, the liver-eater, made a strong impression on his disposition. Both of them greatly influenced his nature and habits.

In the entire history of Arabia it is not possible to find another woman who may equal Hind in egotism, harshness, savagery and villainy. She was so hard-hearted that even the most blood-thirsty person cannot equal her.

The polytheists of Quraysh had come fully prepared to fight against the Prophet at Badr and a severe battle was fought. Many polytheists were killed. The women of Mecca mourned the death of their relatives for one month. Then they came to Hind, mother of Mu`awiya and said to her “Why don't you mourn like us?” She said in a tone full of grudge and rancour not found in any other woman: “Why

should I weep? Should I weep so that the news may reach Muhammad and his friends, and they may feel happy and the women of the Ansar may also be happy? By God I shall not weep until I have taken revenge on Muhammad and his companions and I shall not oil my hair unless a battle has been fought against them". Thereafter she continued to instigate the polytheists against the Muslims and eventually the Battle of Uhad took place.

The sentences quoted above show how cruel and hard-hearted she was. She did not believe in relieving herself of grief by weeping and mourning. Women are tender-hearted by nature, but she was of a different disposition. She saw things with the eyes of a man. She believed that chiefship and sovereignty meant enduring hardships of warfare to keep the standard of one's superiority and dignity high.

When the polytheists of Mecca proceeded to Madina making full preparations to fight the Battle of Uhad, Hind also prepared a detachment of women and reached the battlefield accompanied by them to instigate men to fight bravely, so that she might satisfy her desire of vengeance by looking at the flowing blood and the dead bodies of those who were killed.

A man objected to the women going to the warfront. However, Hind shouted in reply: "We will certainly go and see the fighting with our own eyes".

Hind stuck to her decision and went to the battle-field along with other women. She did all she could to satisfy her desire of taking revenge. When severe fighting began she along with other women went to each row of the army of the polytheists. They played on tambourines and sang the following verses:

"O descendants of Abd al-Dar! Make haste there are at your back those persons (i.e. women) whom you must defend; unsheathe your swords".

"If you move to the battlefield we shall embrace you and shall place soft pillows under your heads. But if you fly away from the battlefield we shall forsake you, because in that case we cannot love you".

Hind had made many promises of reward with the Ethiopian slave named Wehshi if he killed some Muslim especially the Prophet's uncle Hamzah for whom she nursed an extreme grudge. In this battle the polytheists fared better and the Muslims had to sustain severe losses. Hind was very much pleased. One of those martyred at Uhad was Hamzah who was killed by Wehshi. When he was killed Abu Sufyan shouted: "Today we have taken the revenge of the Battle of Badr. We shall meet again next year".

His wife Hind was not however, satisfied that a valiant man like Hamzah had been killed. She approached the dead bodies of martyrs along with other women of Quraysh. They cut off the hands, feet, noses and ears of those killed and made necklaces out of them and thus manifested brutality, which even the most cruel tyrants could not think of. Then she tore off the belly of Hamzah like a butcher, and pulled out his liver. She wanted to munch and swallow it but could not do so. This act of hers was so abominable that even her husband Abu Sufyan expressed disgust at it. He said to a Muslim: "The dead bodies of your men, who were killed, were amputated. By God I was neither pleased nor displeased on this account. I neither ordered that this thing might be done nor forbade it". On

account of this incident Hind began to be called the liver-eater.

When Abu Sufyan embraced Islam reluctantly at the time of the conquest of Mecca his wife Hind addressed Quraysh loudly in these words: “O Quraysh! Kill this evil and dirty man who does not possess any virtue. I have never seen a worse defence force than you people. Why have you not defended your city and your lives?”

Hind was not at all impressed by the kind treatment which the Prophet meted out to her husband and her children. It was the same Abu Sufyan and the same Hind who brought up Mu`awiya. Furthermore, he possessed the special traits of his forefathers by birth (viz. love for power and authority, use of all fair and foul means to achieve one's purpose, which is called 'diplomacy' in modern terminology, bribery, simulation, oppression etc.) In short he was a perfect specimen of his forefathers.

He had been brought up by, and had imbibed the ideas of the people about whom Ali the Commander of the Faithful said: “They are corrupt and treacherous persons who lead a life of debauchery at the expense of others. If they are allowed to rule the people they would oppress them, consider themselves superior to others, display domination, indulge in violence and create trouble on the face of the earth”.

The Umayyads continued their nefarious activities to promote their family interests as in the age of ignorance even during the life time of caliph Umar but they did all this secretly and with great dexterity under the cover of flattery. However, when Uthman, who belonged to their family, assumed the caliphate their machinations became apparent. From that time onwards they endeavoured their best to ensure that the government should become their family government and should be inherited by their sons and grandsons. They had no regard either for the caliphate or for Islam. They grabbed as much wealth as possible. They also recruited a large army.

They treated the public treasury, which belonged to all the Muslims, to be their personal property. They bribed the influential persons with public money and won their support. They were awaiting an opportunity to secure rulership for themselves and their descendants. They were waiting to establish a kingdom for the family in the sense in which their ancestor Abu Sufyan had interpreted 'prophethood' when he said to the Prophet's uncle Abbas: “Your nephew has established a grand kingdom”. He considered the prophethood of the Prophet to be kingship, while he (the Prophet) had never even thought of establishing such an institution.

The murder of Uthman provided another opportunity to the Umayyads. We shall show in the following pages that Mu`awiya himself had a hand in the killing of Uthman. From that time onwards the Mu`awiya's cunning, deceit, and conspiracy, was known to all, and from that time onwards contention started between two natures which were opposed to each other. On the one side there was virtue, steadfastness and purity of nature and on the other side there was greed for authority, egoism, fascism, corruption and other vices Ali represented the first set of qualities and Mu`awiya and his kith and kin the second one. Ali's mottoes were:

“I shall not deceive anyone nor shall I do any ignoble or improper act.

Like for others the same thing which you like for yourself.

Do not like for others what you do not like for yourself.

Do not oppress others just as you do not like to be oppressed by others.

In comparison with the maltreatment of your brother, you should be competent enough to do good to him”.

On the other hand Mu`awiya used to say: “The army of God is in honey”. By `honey' he meant the poisonous honey with which he used to do away with his enemies, so that the path might be cleared for his attaining to rulership. Mu`awiya treated all those good and pious persons to be his enemies who stood in the path of his achieving nefarious ends.

As and when Mu`awiya feared that a person could become an obstacle in the achievement of his desires he finished him, even though he might have been a virtuous and pious man. So much so that he did not spare even his fast friends who had been his supporters. He killed Imam Hasan with the same honey. He purchased friends and bribed influential persons with the money of public treasury which ought to have been spent for purposes of public welfare.

When he went to Mecca to compel the people to take oath of allegiance to Yazid he kept a strong army on one side and stocks of gold and silver on the other and said to the Meccans: “I only want that Yazid should be a caliph only in name. Authority to appoint or to dismiss the officers or to incur expenditure will remain with you”.

However, when the people did not agree to accept Yazid as their caliph he (i.e. Mu`awiya) said to them threateningly. “I have informed you of the consequences for which I take no responsibility. I am going to address you. If any person stands up to refute me his neck will be severed before he utters a word. So you should take care of your lives”.

When Mu`awiya was reproached for squandering away the money of the public treasury – the same money which Ali used to spend for purposes of public welfare – he (Mu`awiya) used to utter this Umayyad sentence: “The earth is God's property and I am His representative. Whatever I take is mine and I am also entitled to take that which I do not take”.

When he was asked to allow freedom of opinion and beliefs to the people he used to reply: “So long as a person does not stand between me and my sovereignty I have nothing to do with him”.

In his book entitled `Islam and Political Dictatorship' Prof. Muhammad Ghazal while commenting on the dictatorial policy of Mu`awiya says: “It is the greatest offence to be selfish and obstinate. If a person attains to rulership he should hold that office and the people should lend him support only till such time that he fulfils the needs of the people and works according to their wishes.....”

At another place he writes: “Obstinacy and fascism of the kings is disliked by God and his Prophets as

well as by the people. It is an undeniable fact that in all ages the way of thinking of the kings has remained the same. These kings do not forsake their egotism even if their supporters and well-wishers may love them beyond measure”.

Mu`awiya grabbed sovereignty by means of his Machiavellian policy. He converted the caliphate into kingship and left it as a legacy for his descendants.

In this regard Mu`awiya was a perfect specimen of the selfish nature of Bani Umayyah—the same Bani Umayyah who were ill-natured during the age of ignorance and remained so even after embracing Islam. After Ali met martyrdom at the hands of Ibn Muljim, Mu`awiya began planning to do away with any person who was not prepared to accept him as the caliph of God. He said openly: “We shall leave the people to themselves only when we have enslaved them”. He also said: “We have nothing to do with a person unless he stands between us and our sovereignty.

He told the people in clear terms: “Sovereignty belongs to me and after me it will belong to Bani Umayyah. People are free so long as they do not become an obstacle between Bani Umayyah and their rulership”. He began arresting and punishing people on mere suspicion, although this had never happened during the period of the former caliphs. He began killing relentlessly the companions of the Prophet, the companions of the companions and other believers, who represented public opinion and pursued the right path.

As soon as he gained control over the state he began registering the wealth and property of the people as inheritance for his wicked son. He used thousands of means to obtain oath of allegiance for Yazid by force. We narrate below an incident which will go to show on what bases the governments of Yazid and some other Umayyad caliphs were founded.

Mu`awiya decided to remove Mughira son of Sh`oba from the governorship of Kufa and to appoint Sa`id bin Aas in his place. When Mughira came to know about it he went to see Mu`awiya and suggested to him that he should nominate Yazid to be the caliph after him. Mu`awiya was pleased to hear this suggestion and said to Mughira: “I allow you to continue as Governor of Kufa. You should go back and put this proposal before the persons whom you consider reliable”.

Mughira came back to Kufa and placed the proposal before some such persons. They concurred; Mughira selected ten persons out of them and sent them to Mu`awiya in the form of a deputation. He also gave them thirty thousand dirhams and appointed his son Musa as their leader. These persons saw Mu`awiya and highly praised the proposal regarding Yazid's succession. Mu`awiya asked Musa: “What has your father paid these persons to purchase their religion?” Musa told him that Mughira had paid thirty thousand dirhams for the purpose. Mu`awiya said: “It is a good bargain”.

Mu`awiya then sent the proposal to all the governors and directed them to send deputations to him from every town and district. Many deputations came and exchanged views on the subject. Then Yazid son of Muqanna stood up and said pointing to Mu`awiya: “He is the Commander of the Faithful”. Then pointing

to Yazid he said: “When he (i.e. Mu`awiya) passes away he (i.e. Yazid) will be the Commander of the Faithful”. Then he pointed to his own sword and said: “This is for him who does not agree with us”. Then Mu`awiya said, “Come, sit down you are the chief of the orators”.

The compulsion and force, which Mu`awiya used to obtain the oath of allegiance for Yazid from the people of the Hijaz is surprising as well as astonishing. In order to obtain their concurrence he went to them with an army as well as with many bags of dirhams and dinars. However, when they were not intimidated by the army and were not ensured by wealth, Mu`awiya said: “I have done my duty. So far the practice has been that whenever I delivered a speech and some one from among you rose and refuted me I tolerated it and forgave him. However, I am going to deliver a speech now and I swear by God that, if anyone of you utters a sentence against what I say, a sword will reach his head before he utters the second sentence. You should, therefore, take care of your lives”. Then he ordered his police-officer to post two persons by the side of each one of the audience and ordered that if any person spoke anything in support of or against what he (i.e. Mu`awiya) said they should sever his head.

Mu`awiya and other members of the Umayyad Family put into practice the fascist authority of the age of ignorance. They were despots who owned everything, and the Muslims were as good as their slaves, who were not expected to raise any objection. They beheaded those who declined to take the oath of allegiance to Yazid. As regards those who took the oath their hands were tattooed, as it was a special sign of the person concerned being a slave.

The successors of Mu`awiya were even more crooked and perverted. Some of them excelled him in matters of crimes and perverseness, but did not possess in the least the apparent qualities which were possessed by him. The people therefore, suffered much during their time. They were compelled to place their wealth as well as their necks at the disposal of the rulers. Their agents and employees were cruel and corrupt. They oppressed the people wherever they were deputed.

They humiliated the non-Arabs who had embraced Islam. They also maltreated the Zimmis with whom good and kind behaviour has been enjoined by Islam. They did not spare even the Arabs and killed those who declined to feed them with their flesh and blood. They appointed as their rulers the persons who imposed heavy taxes on them and realized the same with extreme high-handedness and in a very shameful manner. That is why Sa`id bin Aas who was appointed by Uthman as the Governor of Iraq used to say: “Iraq is the garden of Quraysh, we shall take from it what we desire and leave what we do not desire”. And when a *Zimmi* enquired from Amr bin Aas as to how much tax they had to pay he replied: “You are our treasure” (i.e. we shall realize from you whatever we wish).

The Umayyad caliphs were keen to appropriate the public treasury to themselves and to make their friends and associates as wealthy as they could. The officers appointed in Islamic territories grabbed whatever they could and also realized large sums of money from the people as a proof of their faithfulness to the rulers. For example, Khalid son of Abdullah Qasra, who was one of the governors of Hisham son of Abdul Malik, used to take one million dirhams from the public treasury every year. He

also took millions of dirhams besides this amount.

The edifice of justice erected by Islam and Imam Ali was pulled down by the Umayyads. Two classes viz. the rich and the poor appeared among the people. Consequently some of them were rolling in wealth whereas others could not make both ends meet. One of the Umayyad caliphs gave twelve thousand dinars to a singer named M`abad, because he liked his performance, while there were innumerable persons who longed to live as free men. Before Sulaiman bin Abdul Malik became caliph the number of slaves had reached hundreds of thousands. This is proved by the fact that seventy thousand slaves and slave-girls were set free by him.

During the period of Bani Umayyah party-spirit had become acute to an extent which was not at all sanctioned by Islam, the Prophet and Ali. An inhabitant of Yemen did not enjoy the rights which were enjoyed by a member of the tribe of Qais, and a non-Arab did not have the privileges available to an Arab.

It was during the Umayyad period that the number of pleasure-loving courtiers had increased by leaps and bounds. They did not do any work but got huge stipends from the public treasury as is the practice even now in some Arab countries. History tells us that Walid son of Abdul Malik stopped payment of stipends which were being given to as many as twenty thousand persons.

The Umayyad rulers also committed grave atrocities to keep their hold on various cities. Abdul Malik was an absolute despot who ruled in a very shameful manner. He got the wells and springs of Bahrain filled with dust so that the people might become helpless and indigent and consequently submissive to the rulers (Vide Ibn Rayhani's books entitled 'Muluk al-Arab' vol. 2, p. 206) and al-Nukabat p.64. He entrusted the government of Iraq and the Hijaz to the despicable and bloodthirsty person known as Hajjaj bin Yusuf.

It would be sufficient to quote one example (that of Yazid son of Abdul Malik) to show what value the Umayyad kings attached to the common man and how they desecrated the caliphate as well as looked down upon the people. One day he drank too much wine and became over-intoxicated. His favourite slave-girl Hubaba was sitting by his side. He said to her, "Let me fly away" she asked, "And to whom are you entrusting the Muslims?" "To you" was his reply.

Writing about Bani Umayyah Amin Rayhani says: "Administration of justice to the subjects is the foundation of a government. Those who occupied the throne, however, thought otherwise. As you have come to know there were among the Umayyad rulers worthless persons, drunkards and tyrants". (al-Nukabat page 70).

It should also be not forgotten that the Umayyad rulers introduced the shameful practice of abusing Ali and his descendants. However, the noblest among them was Umar son of Abdul Aziz who gave dignity to the rulers of the East as well as to mankind. As soon as he ascended the throne he relieved the people of oppression, restored their rights, appointed just officers, and instructed the governors to deal

with the people justly and leniently. He introduced real equality between the Arabs and the non-Arabs and the Muslims and the non-Muslims.

As a mark of respect to human dignity he stopped further conquests. He abolished all taxes except those which were paid by the people willingly. He also stopped the abusing of Ali which had continued for long. He took back from the nobles and the aristocrats the property and wealth, which had been grabbed by them illegally, and advised them to work for their living. The rule of this great man did not continue for long and he fell a victim to the conspiracies of the Umayyads themselves and lost his life. They killed him just as they had killed Mu`awiya son of Yazid earlier – his only offence being that he had mentioned their evil doings, expressed displeasure over their violating the rights of the people, admitted that his father and grandfather had been at fault and preferred secluded life to rulership.

It is very surprising that some modern writers are very active in justifying the acts of the tyrannical and obstinate Umayyad rulers and their agents. They say things with which they themselves must not be satisfied. They do so only to support their ancestors and, therefore, put forth very funny and meaningless defence on their behalf. Were the contemporaries of Bani Umayyah who were eye-witnesses of their rule not more true? Do their statements not belie those of the modern writers and provide a true picture of the conditions during the Umayyad rule? What will these modern writers say after reading the following narration?

One day Ubaydah bin Hilal Yashkari met Abu Harabah Tamimi, Ubaydah said to Abu Harabah: “I want to ask you some questions. Will you give me correct replies?” Abu Harabah replied in the affirmative. Thereupon the following conversation took place between them:

Ubaydah: What do you say about your Umayyad caliphs?

Abu Harabah: They used to shed blood without any justification.

Ubaydah: How did they utilize wealth?

Abu Harabah: They obtained it illegally and spent it illegally.

Ubaydah: How did they behave with the orphans?

Abu Harabah: They grabbed the property of the orphans, deprived them of their rights and outraged the modesty of their mothers.

Ubaydah: Woe betide you O Abu Harabah! Are such persons fit to be followed and obeyed?

Abu Harabah: I have told you what you enquired about. Now you should not censure me.

Abu Harabah's words “you should not censure me” go to explain incidentally that during the rule of Bani Umayyah and their agents it was not possible for any person to form an opinion of his own and express

it.

How will the modern defenders of Bani Umayyah explain the views of the people of Madina which they expressed before the Kharijite Abu Hamzah? After expelling the Umayyads from Madina Abu Hamzah enquired from the residents of that city as to what hardships they had to bear at the hands of the Syrian caliphs and their agents. They said in clear terms that they used to kill them on mere suspicion, and considered those things to be lawful which had been declared to be unlawful by Islam, and which are also unlawful in the eyes of reason, conscience, and human dignity. In the speech delivered by Abu Hamzah on this occasion he also said these words:

“Don't you see what has happened to the divine caliphate and the Imamate of the Muslims? So much so that Bani Marwan have been playing with it like a ball. They devoured God's property and played with His religion. They enslaved God's creatures. Every elder of theirs made the younger ones his successors for this purpose. They grabbed rulership and stuck to it like self-made gods.

Their hold was the hold of the tyrants. They took decisions according to their whims and caprices. If they got annoyed they killed the people. They arrested the people on mere suspicion and suspended punishment on recommendations. They made dishonest persons the trustees and disobeyed those who were honest. They realized revenue from the people even if it was not due from them and spent it for unlawful purposes”.

How will these defenders of Bani Umayyah explain the verse of Bakhtari in which he has expressed the thoughts of the people of that age and drawn a true picture thereof: “We consider that group of Bani Umayyah to be infidels who acquired the caliphate through fraud and deceit.

The evil doings, oppressive administration, and nefarious designs of Bani Umayyah which were certainly known to the earlier people were also known to those who came later, and the non-Arab writers have mentioned their atrocities and crimes in the same manner in which they have been described by the Arab writers. It is a reality which is admitted even by the Egyptian and other writers who actively support Bani Umayyah. They say: “Most of the eastern and western historians vehemently attack and censure Bani Umayyah only the attitude of Polios Wilharzan is moderate to some extent”.

It will be observed that the attitude of the single orientalist who is not in agreement with others is also not 'moderate' but we can call it 'moderate to some extent'.

This remark of the Egyptian writer is a clear acknowledgement of the fact that this solitary orientalist could not lay hands on sufficient evidence on the basis of which he could support Bani Umayyah more openly and his attitude towards them should have been moderate rather than moderate to some extent.

However, we would like to tell the Egyptian writer that there is also another orientalist, who has supported Bani Umayyah fully. He is the French historian La Mius who has lent complete support to that family for some special motive. We shall comment on the writings of this historian later. With the

exception of these two orientalists most of them have drawn a picture of the son of Abu Sufyan and the descendants of Marwan, which will not be liked by their supporters. Among these orientalists the most prominent is Kazanofa who says:

“The nature of Bani Umayyah was composed of two things: Firstly love for wealth to the extent of avariciousness; and secondly love for victory to plunder and for chiefship to enjoy worldly pleasures”.

However, whether they are the Arab historians or the orientalists none of them has drawn as true a picture of Bani Umayyah as has been drawn by the Umayyad caliph Walid bin Yazid in the verses translated below.

“Do not mention the people of Sa`di's Family. We are superior to them in the matter of numbers as well as wealth. We wield power over the people and humiliate them in every manner and torture them in various ways. We humiliate them and bring them on the brink of ruination and destruction and there too they meet with only humiliation and annihilation”.

Even if the supporters of the Umayyads reject all that has been said by the old and modern historians and orientalists about Umayyad mentality, can they reject what has been said by Walid son of Yazid?

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/voice-human-justice-sautul-adalatil-insaniyah-george-jordac/muawiya-and-his-successors#comment-0>