

## Yazid and His Household

### Abu Sufiyan, Yazid's Grandfather

Before giving an account of the life of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, and before demonstrating his unscrupulousness and viciousness, especially through the brutal martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as) and the incident of Harrah, it is appropriate here to give a brief historical account of Yazid's background. Through awareness of Yazid's family standing, his actions can better be comprehended.

First, we will give a brief life account of his grandfather, Abu Sufiyan.

#### Abu Sufiyan's beliefs

During the 'Age of Ignorance', the majority of Arabs used to worship idols with the aim of gaining nearness to Allah through the intercession of their idols. The Holy Qur'an quotes them saying,

﴿ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى ﴾

***"We do not worship them save that they may make us nearer to Allah."***<sup>1</sup>

In spite of worshipping idols, they still believed in the creatorship of Allah. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an,

﴿ وَلَئِن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ ﴾

***"And if you ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth and made the sun and the moon subservient', they will certainly say, 'Allah'."***<sup>2</sup>

Abu Sufiyan, however, was a worldly apostate during the Age of Ignorance who did not believe in

anything at all, not even idols. Maqrizi says, “Abu Sufiyan was a bastion of hypocrisy. During the Age of Ignorance, he was considered to be an atheist.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Abu Sufiyan’s enmity towards the Holy Prophet (S)**

Abu Sufiyan was the leader of the enemies of the Holy Prophet (S) and Islam. One day, he came with a group of men to Abu Talib and said, “Your nephew denounces our gods and finds fault with our religion. He regards our thoughts to be foolish and says our fathers and forefathers were misguided and lost. Either stop him from saying these things or step aside and let us deal with him ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

Abu Sufiyan was also the mastermind behind a plot to kill the Holy Prophet (S). He planned to execute his plan at Dar al-Nadwah. He selected a youth from every tribe and gave each one of them a sword with orders to attack the Holy Prophet’s (S) house and kill him.<sup>5</sup>

For the Battle of Uhud, Abu Sufiyan alone spent forty measures of gold. Each measure contained forty-two pieces [*mithqal*] of gold. As well, he personally took part in the battle. Seventy-two companions of the Holy Prophet (S) were martyred in the battle, including Hamzah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet’s uncle.<sup>6</sup>

In order to incite and encourage the polytheists to fight at the Battle of Uhud, Abu Sufiyan shouted, “Long live Hubal! Long live Hubal!”<sup>7</sup> When they heard this, the Muslims replied, “Allah is more Elevated and more Majestic!” When he heard this, Abu Sufiyan personally answered, “We have (the idol) al-‘Uzza, whereas you have no ‘Uzza.” The Holy Prophet (S) ordered his followers to say,

«الله مولانا ولا مولى لكم.»

***“Allah is our Master and you have no master.”<sup>8</sup>***

After the martyrdom of Hamzah, Abu Sufiyan came to thrust spears into Hamzah’s corpse. He was doing this while saying, “Taste of this, you who has been disinherited and cursed.”<sup>9</sup> Even after the death of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Sufiyan came to the tomb of Hamzah and started trampling and stamping upon it saying, “O Aba ‘Ammarah! That over which you fought with us and for which you died has now fallen into the hands of our youths and they are playing with it.”<sup>10</sup>

One day Abu Sufiyan saw people walking behind the Holy Prophet (S). With a heart filled with jealousy and envy, he said, “If I can, I will organize an army against this man once again.” The Holy Prophet touched his chest and said, “On that day, Allah will make you abject, contemptible and despised.”<sup>11</sup>

## Abu Sufiyan's conversion to Islam

It is well known that Abu Sufiyan did not convert to Islam of his own volition and inclination. On the contrary, he became a Muslim out of a feeling of fear and intimidation.

When the Holy Prophet (S) conquered Mecca, Abu Sufiyan came with 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib before the Holy Prophet (S) and requested immunity and safe-conduct from the Holy Prophet (S). The Holy Prophet (S) said, "Woe unto you O Abu Sufiyan! Has the time not yet come for you to know that there is no god but Allah?"

Abu Sufiyan said, "May my mother and father be sacrificed for you. How generous and kind you are!" Again, the Holy Prophet (S) said, "O Abu Sufiyan! Has the time not yet arrived for you to accept that I am Allah's Prophet?" Abu Sufiyan repeated his previous statement and added, "This issue of you being Allah's Prophet has not yet been settled in my heart."

'Abbas said to him, "Woe unto you! Testify to the truth before your neck is cut." It was only at this time out of compulsion and fear that Abu Sufiyan testified to the truth and accepted Islam. [12](#)

## Abu Sufiyan's conspiracies against Islam

Here we provide only a brief account of one of the many conspiracies that Abu Sufiyan committed against Islam:

After the demise of the Holy Prophet (S), the people paid allegiance to Abu Bakr. Solely because he intended to create sedition in the Muslim community [*ummah*], Abu Sufiyan said, "I surely foresee disturbances and civil disorders which will not be extinguished save by Allah. O Children of 'Abd al-Manaf! How can Abu Bakr become your leader?

How can he be the one who holds responsibility over your affairs? Where are those two oppressed people who have been sidelined and made inferior?" (He meant Imam 'Ali (as) and 'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib) Then he turned to Imam 'Ali (as) and said, "Give me your hand so that I may swear allegiance to you. I swear upon Allah!

If you wish, I will fill the battleground with horsemen and footmen willing to fight for you!" However, Imam 'Ali (as) withheld his hand and said,

والله ما أردت بهذا إلا الفتنة، وأنتك والله طالب بغيت للإسلام شراً، لا حاجة لنا في نصحك

"I swear upon Allah! You intend nothing but sedition. I swear upon Allah! For a long time now, you have been looking for an opportunity to make mischief and deliberately cause trouble for Islam. We are not in need of your help and advice." [13](#)

## Denial of the existence of resurrection and hereafter

One of the incredulous things that Abu Sufiyan did after his apparent acceptance of Islam was to deny and repudiate the Day of Resurrection.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr says, “One day during the caliphate of ‘Uthman, Abu Sufiyan came to see him. He addressed ‘Uthman as follows: ‘After a lot of fighting and tribulation, the caliphate has finally come to you, one of our own kinsmen.

You should therefore nail its foundations strongly in our family. You must strengthen its roots in the family of Bani Umayyah. Beyond any shadow of a doubt, this is the very same sultanate that was previously in our hands. And I believe in neither heaven nor hell.’ ‘Uthman shouted at him and said, ‘Leave me! May Allah chastise and punish you!’” [14](#)

It has been narrated in the book “*Tarikh Tabari*” that Abu Sufiyan said to ‘Uthman, “O Bani Umayyah! You should pass the caliphate to one another from among yourselves only, in the same way that teammates pass a ball to each other in a game, because neither heaven nor hell exist.” [15](#)

Mas‘udi recounts the story this way: “Abu Sufiyan said, ‘O Bani Umayyah! You should preserve the caliphate for yourselves, just like teammates preserve control over the ball by passing it among themselves. I swear upon the one whom Abu Sufiyan swears upon, I always wished this for you. You must preserve it for the inheritance of your children’.” [16](#)

Abu Sufiyan said this on a day when ‘Uthman gave him two thousand *dinars* from the Islamic public treasury. On the same day, ‘Uthman also gave Marwan ibn al-Hakam (one of his cousins) a thousand *dinars* from the Islamic public treasury. [17](#)

Ibn ‘Asakir quotes Anas saying that after Abu Sufiyan became blind, he came to ‘Uthman and said, “Are there any strangers with you here?” ‘Uthman said, “No.” Then Abu Sufiyan said, “(I swear) Upon Allah! You must reverse the circumstances to what they were during the Age of Ignorance.” [18](#)

## The curse of the Holy Prophet (S) upon Abu Sufiyan

It is well known that the Holy Prophet (S) has cursed Abu Sufiyan on seven instances:

1. One day the Holy Prophet (S) was traveling from Mecca towards Ta’if to invite the tribe of Thaqif to accept the religion of Islam; Abu Sufiyan obstructed the Holy Prophet (S) and reviled him using abusive comments. As if this were not enough, in order to further torment and injure the Holy Prophet (S), he swore to take revenge against Allah’s Prophet (S). This is one incident when Allah and his Prophet (S) cursed him.
2. The Muslims intercepted a trade caravan of Meccan polytheists returning from Sham. When news

about this incident reached Abu Sufiyan, he tried to hinder the Muslims from obtaining the booty and spoils. The Holy Prophet (S) cursed Abu Sufiyan for this action and it was this incident that led to the Battle of Badr.

3. On the day of the Battle of Badr, Abu Sufiyan was at the bottom of the mountain and the Holy Prophet (S) was at the top. Abu Sufiyan was incessantly shouting, “Long live Hubal! Long live Hubal!” This caused the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims to curse him ten times.

4. Another incident that caused the Holy Prophet (S) to curse Abu Sufiyan was when he, along with members of the Ghatfan tribe and the Jews, assaulted and attacked Medina.

5. On the day of Hudaibiyyah (one of the important days on the Islamic calendar), Abu Sufiyan together with a group of people belonging to the tribe of Quraysh obstructed the Holy Prophet (S) from entering Masjid al-Haram. On this day, the Holy Prophet (S) cursed Abu Sufiyan.

6. Another occasion when the Holy Prophet (S) cursed Abu Sufiyan was the Day of the Red Camels.

7. One day a gang of scoundrels camped at ‘Aqabah with the aim of startling the Holy Prophet’s camel when he rode by. They numbered twelve people in all. Abu Sufiyan was one of these villains. The Holy Prophet (S) cursed and damned them all. [19](#)

## Hadrat ‘Ali’s (as) viewpoint of Abu Sufiyan

In one *hadith*, Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (as) describes Mu’awiyah and Abu Sufiyan in this way,

معاوية طليق ابن طليق، حزب من هذه الاحزاب، لم يزل لله عزّ وجلّ ولرسوله وللمسلمين عدوّاً هو وابوه حتى دخلا في الاسلام كارهين.

“Mu’awiyah is unrestrained. He is the son of one who was unrestrained, and he is a party of this party. He and his father have always been enemies of Allah, the Holy Prophet (S) and the Muslims. This enmity continued until the time they were compelled under duress to become Muslims.” [20](#)

In a letter addressed to Mu’awiyah, Imam ‘Ali (as) writes, “O son of the ill-fated one! O son of the accursed one...” [21](#) It seems that Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (as) was referring here to the curses which the Holy Prophet (S) pronounced on Abu Sufiyan, his son Mu’awiyah and his grandson Yazid.

It has been recounted that one day Abu Sufiyan was riding a horse and one of his offsprings (either Mu’awiyah or Yazid) was in front and the other in back. When the Holy Prophet (S) saw them, he said,

«اللهم العن الراكب والقائد والسائق»

“O Allah! Banish from your mercy the rider of this horse and those that are leading it.”<sup>22</sup>

In another letter to Mu‘awiyah, Amir al-Mu‘minin (as) writes,

«مَنَّا النبي ومنكم المكذَّب»

“The Prophet (S) is from us, and the denier of his prophethood is from you.”<sup>23</sup>

Commenting on this, Ibn Abi al-Hadid says, “Imam ‘Ali (as) was referring to Abu Sufiyan ibn Harb, because Abu Sufiyan was one of the Prophet’s (S) most vicious enemies and a denier of his prophethood.”

Addressing Mu‘awiyah, Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) said,

وانك يا معاوية! واباك من المؤلفة قلوبهم، تسرون الكفر، وتظهرون الاسلام، وتستمالون بالاموال

“Without doubt, you, Mu‘awiyah, and your father, are among the people who have used money from the Islamic public treasury for the sake of pleasing your hearts. You have concealed your infidelity and unbelief [*kufr*] and instead displayed your false belief in Islam. You have lured people towards yourselves by means of your possessions.”<sup>24</sup>

<sup>1.</sup> Surat al-Zumar 39:3.

<sup>2.</sup> Surat al-Ankabut 29:61.

<sup>3.</sup> 2 Kitab al-Niza‘ wa al-Takhasum, p. 54.

<sup>4.</sup> Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, vol. 1, p. 283, vol. 2, p. 58.

<sup>5.</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, p. 126.

<sup>6.</sup> Kitab al-Niza‘ wa al-Takhasum, pp. 52–53.

<sup>7.</sup> Hubal was the name of one of the important idols at the Age of Ignorance.

<sup>8.</sup> Ibn Hisham, Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, vol. 3, p. 99; Ibn al-‘Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 23, p. 444, no. 2849.

<sup>9.</sup> Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah, vol. 3, p. 99.

<sup>10.</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 16, p. 136.

<sup>11.</sup> Al-Isabah, vol. 2, p. 179.

<sup>12.</sup> Al-Isti‘ab, vol. 4, p. 86; Kitab al-Niza‘ wa al-Takhasum, vol. 3, p. 356.

<sup>13.</sup> Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol 2, p. 11, events that occurred in the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet’s (s) migration to Medina.

<sup>14.</sup> Al-Isti‘ab, no. 3005.

<sup>15.</sup> Tarikh Tabari, vol. 10, p. 58, events that occurred in the eleventh year after the Holy Prophet’s (s) migration to Medina.

<sup>16.</sup> Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 2, p. 360.

<sup>17.</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1, p. 199, sermon [khutbah] 3.

<sup>18.</sup> Tarikh al-Madinah al-Damishq, vol. 23, p. 471, no. 2849.

<sup>19.</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 6, pp. 290–291, sermon [khutbah] 83.

<sup>20.</sup> Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, p. 8, events of the year 37 AH.

<sup>21.</sup> Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 15, p. 82.

<sup>22.</sup> Tarikh Tabari, vol. 10, p. 58, events of the year 284 AH.

[23.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 15, p. 196.

[24.](#) Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 288–289.

# Mu‘awiyah, Yazid’s Father

## Mu‘awiyah before accepting Islam

In all the wars that the Quraysh declared on Islam and fought against the Muslims, Abu Sufiyan and his son, Mu‘awiyah occupied positions at the forefront of the army of the polytheists. Even though Mu‘awiyah had heard the marvelous sound of the Holy Qur’an in Mecca, and although he had witnessed people entering the fold of Islam in great multitudes, he remained a polytheist [*mushrik*] up to the conquest of Mecca.

Finally, Mu‘awiyah and his father became Muslims, albeit not of their own accord, but rather out of fear and compulsion. This period was sufficient for any impartial and reasonable person to embrace Islam, but Mu‘awiyah was not such a person. Had Mecca not been conquered, Mu‘awiyah would have surely remained an uncompromising polytheist and continued fighting against the Muslims.

## Mu‘awiyah’s antagonism against Islam

Under the pretext of Islam, Bani Umayyah possessed and controlled the caliphate for nearly a century. During this period, they utilized massive power, deceit and diplomacy for the destruction of Islam. They tried to obliterate the religion by distancing the people from the legacy of the Holy Prophet (S).

Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan, the forerunner of this corrupt dynasty, aspired to destroy every manifestation of Islam, and he followed his aspirations with a firm resolution and strong determination.

Zubayr ibn Bakkar writes, “Mutraf the son of Mughayrah ibn Shu‘bah says, ‘My father and I had gone to Sham during the rule and caliphate of Mu‘awiyah. During our stay in Sham, my father used to go and see Mu‘awiyah on a daily basis.

Upon returning, he would praise and extol Mu‘awiyah with great excitement. One night, however, he refused to eat dinner. Instead, he anxiously sunk into deep and worried thought.

This happened after returning from seeing Mu‘awiyah. I feared that some very unpleasant event had happened in our life. An hour later, I asked him what had happened. He said, ‘My son, I have just come from the presence of the most evil infidel among mankind.’ I said, ‘Why do you say this?!’

He replied, ‘Tonight, the gathering at Mu‘awiyah’s place was devoid of strangers and outsiders, so I

seized the opportunity and said to Mu'awiyah, 'O Leader of the Believers! You have attained your worldly desires and aspirations.

If you act fairly and equitably towards your kith and kin, the Bani Hashim, and adopt kindness towards them and observe the bonds of relationship, you will leave behind a good reputation for yourself when you die. I swear upon Allah! They possess nothing that should arouse your anxiety and apprehension.'

Mu'awiyah replied, 'Far be it! Far be it! This is not possible at all. The name of this Hashemite man (i.e. the Holy Prophet of Islam) is called five times daily all across the Islamic world from the minarets when the Islamic call to prayer [*adhan*] is being recited, and in this way the people remember his greatness.

In such circumstances, what effects and reputation will ever remain for me, O motherless one? I swear to God that I will not attain peace until I do everything in my power to bury his name'." [1](#)

## **Mu'awiyah and his great [kabirah] sins**

Mu'awiyah the son of Abu Sufiyan was not a person who refrained from committing great sins. He was so daring that he openly committed illegitimate actions among the people. Here, reference will be made to some of the actions he committed that were in flagrant contradiction to the divine law [*shari'ah*] of Islam:

## **Mu'awiyah drank alcoholic beverages**

Ahmad ibn Hanbal quotes 'Abd Allah ibn Buraydah saying, "My father and I went to visit Mu'awiyah. He spread a carpet for us and made us sit on it. Then, he brought us some food, which we ate. After that, he brought us some alcohol. Mu'awiyah drank from it and invited my father to partake of it, but my father refused and said, 'Since the time that the Noble Prophet (S) made alcohol *haram* (forbidden), I have not drunk it'." [2](#)

Mu'awiyah did this heedless of the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«شارب الخمر كعابد وثن»

"One who drinks alcohol is the same as one who worships idols." [3](#)

## **Mu'awiyah engaged in usury**

'Ata' ibn Yasar says, "Mu'awiyah sold a cup made out of gold at a price more than its weight. Abu al-Darda' said to him, 'I heard Allah's Prophet (S) forbidding this kind of action. Selling and buying should not be concluded unless the deal is equal as regards weight.' Mu'awiyah boldly answered him, 'I see

nothing wrong with taking usury.’

Abu al-Darda’ said, ‘Who will justify Mu’awiyah’s actions? I am telling him what Allah’s Prophet (S) has said, and he is telling me what he himself thinks. From now on, I will never live in the same territory with Mu’awiyah’.”[4](#)

Mu’awiyah used to take usury in spite of the fact that Allah has cursed the one who takes usury, the one who gives it, the two witnesses required for recording such a contract, and the writer of the transaction.[5](#)

The Holy Prophet (S) said, “Refrain from seven actions because these seven deeds invite Allah’s punishment and wrath.” The people asked, “O Prophet of Allah! What are those seven deeds?” He said, “Associating others with Allah (polytheism), sorcery and witchcraft, killing of a life which Allah has made honorable except by justice, consuming that which belongs to orphans and taking usury.”[6](#)

On his own chain of transmission, Bukhari quotes from Abi Juhayfah that the Holy Prophet (S) cursed both the giver and taker of usury.[7](#)

## **Mu’awiyah altered the practice of obligatory rituals**

In his book entitled “*Kitab al-Umm*”, Shafi’i recounts that Zuhri said, “The the Islamic call to prayer [*adhan*] was never recited for the two festival prayers (*‘Id al-Qurban* and *‘Id al-Fitr*) during the time of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. The only time when the *adhan* was recited before the two *‘Id* prayers was when Mu’awiyah innovated and introduced it during his reign in Sham, and Hajjaj followed up on this innovation when he became the governor of Medina.”

Ibn Hajar says, “On a sound chain of transmission, Ibn Abi Shaybah narrates from Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib that the first person who innovated and introduced the *adhan* into the two *‘Id* prayers was Mu’awiyah.”

Shafi’i also quotes Zuhri who recounts from a truthful and trustworthy person that it was Mu’awiyah who innovated and introduced the *adhan* into the two *‘Id* prayers.[8](#)

Mu’awiyah, the son of Abu Sufiyan, brought about this innovation in the two *‘Id* Prayers despite the fact that there is no legitimate justification in Islam for the *adhan* and *iqamah* to be read for any prayers except the obligatory daily prayers. This is a legal verdict in the practical laws of Islam which is undisputed by any school of Islamic thought.

Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah says, “I was present when the Holy Prophet (S) offered prayers on the day of *‘Id*. He offered the prayers before the sermon and without reciting either the *adhan* or *iqamah*. Then, while he was leaning on Bilal, he invited the people to piety and obedience of Allah.”[9](#)

Ibn ‘Abbas and Jabir say, “The Holy Prophet (S) never recited the *adhan* for the prayers of *‘Id al-Fitr* or *al-Qurban*.”[10](#)

## Failure to recite the traveler's prayer on journeys

Tabarani and Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrate from 'Ibad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr on an authentic chain of transmission that he said, "When Mu'awiyah intended to go for the *hajj*, he came to inform us about his intention and we traveled together to Mecca. He prayed two *rak'ats* for the noon prayers with us.

Then, he went to Dar al-Nadwah. 'Uthman was there and was praying full prayers (four *rak'ats*). When Mu'awiyah reached Mecca, he also prayed four *rak'ats* for the *zuhr*, *asr* and *'isha* prayers. After leaving Mina and 'Arafat, he shortened his prayers. And after leaving the *hajj*, he stopped and camped at Mina and prayed full prayers until he left Mecca."<sup>11</sup>

Notice how the son of Abu Sufiyan daringly scorns, mocks and derides Allah's laws and acts in whatever way he pleases regardless of the fact that everyone knows that the prayers of a person on a journey must be shortened.

## Friday Congregational Prayers done on Wednesday

Mas'udi narrates, "The obedience of the people of Damascus to Mu'awiyah had reached such an extent that, when Mu'awiyah intended to travel towards Siffin, they allowed him to pray the Friday congregational prayers for them on Wednesday!"<sup>12</sup>

Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan made this innovation in spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) always prayed the Friday congregational prayers at its proper time under all circumstances. Muslim quotes Salamah saying, "We used to pray *jum'ah* prayers on Friday with the Holy Prophet (S), while the walls had no shadows under which we could take refuge."<sup>13</sup>

Bukhari quotes from Anas ibn Malik, "The Prophet of Allah used to pray the Friday congregational prayers on Friday when the sun started its incline just after high noon."<sup>14</sup>

## Mu'awiyah provides verdict opposed to the Qur'an

Ibn Mundhar quotes from Qasim ibn Muhammad, "A certain tribe asked Mu'awiyah about the Islamic verdict of a man who owned two slave girls. The slave girls were blood sisters, and this man used to have intimacy with both of them. Mu'awiyah advised, 'There is no problem with this'."<sup>15</sup>

The son of Abu Sufiyan provided this improper verdict even though in the Holy Qur'an Allah, the High, clearly prohibits marrying two sisters at the same time:

وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ

***“Forbidden to you...and that you should not have two sisters together.”*** [16](#)

## **Innovations due to enmity with Imam ‘Ali (as)**

Nassa’i and the other transmitters of *hadith* quote Sa’id ibn Jabir saying that on the Day of ‘Arafah, Ibn ‘Abbas asked him, “Why is it that I do not hear the people saying the *talbiyah* (*labbayk*)?” Sa’id ibn Jabir answered, “The people are afraid of Mu‘awiyah.” At that moment, Ibn ‘Abbas came out of his tent and defiantly said, “*Labbayk! Allahumma Labbayk!* (Here I am! O my Lord, here I am at Your service!).”

I say this even though Mu‘awiyah hates it and becomes debased by it. O my Lord! Curse these people because they have forsaken and abandoned the Holy Prophet’s (S) way of life [*Sunnah*] because of their enmity towards ‘Ali.” [17](#)

On an authentic chain of transmission, Ibn Kathir narrates that Mu‘awiyah previously used to say the *labbayk* during the ‘*isha*’ prayers at ‘Arafah, but when he learned that ‘Ali also says the *labbayk* during the same ‘*isha*’ prayers, he immediately quit and abandoned it for the sake of opposing ‘Ali (as). [18](#)

Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan did this in spite of the fact that his actions were opposed to the clear tradition of the Holy Prophet (S). Fadl says, “The Holy Prophet (S) and I set off from ‘Arafat, and the Holy Prophet (S) kept saying the *talbiyah* until he started throwing stones at ‘*Aqabah*. He would say *takbir* (*Allah-u Akbar*) with every stone that he threw, but he did not stop saying the *labbayk* until he threw the last stone.”

Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah, Usamah and Ibn ‘Abbas also narrate that the Holy Prophet (S) always continued to say *labbayk* until he threw stones at ‘*Aqabah*. [19](#)

## **Mu‘awiyah and abandonment of divine limits**

Al-Mawardi and other transmitters of *hadith* have recounted that a number of thieves were brought before Mu‘awiyah for judgment. He cut the hands of all the thieves save one. Then, Mu‘awiyah said to the remaining thief, “I have cut the hands of all of your companions. What should I do with you?”

The mother of the thief whose hands had not yet been cut interjected and pleadingly said, “O Amir! Consider this to be one of those sins which you forgive.” Mu‘awiyah let the thief go free. This was the first Islamic injunction that was abandoned. [20](#)

The son of Abu Sufiyan did this despite the fact that, according to the explicit text of the Holy Qur’an, a man or woman who steals must have their hand cut off.

The Holy Qur’an says,

... وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا

***“The Man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off their hands for what their hands have earned.”<sup>21</sup>***

Therefore, in circumstances where all the evidence has been presented and guilt proven, no one has the right to overlook the limits set forth by Allah.

Allah, the Most High, says,

﴿... وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ...﴾

***“And whoever goes beyond the limits of Allah, he indeed does injustice to his own soul.”<sup>22</sup>***

## **Mu‘awiyah wore clothing that was prohibited**

Abu Dawud quotes from Khalid, “Miqdam ibn Ma‘di Karb, ‘Amru ibn Aswad and a man of Bani Asad from the tribe of Qansarin went to see Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan. Mu‘awiyah said to Miqdam, ‘Do you know that al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali has passed away?’ Miqdam quoted the Qur’anic verse that says we shall all return to Allah:

«إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ»

***“We are from Allah and to whom we shall return.”***

Mu‘awiyah said, ‘Do you think al-Hasan death is a tragedy?’ Miqdam said, ‘Why should I not regard it as a tragedy when I know that the Holy Prophet used to put al-Hasan on his lap and say,

«هذا مني وحسين من علي»

“This one is from me and al-Husayn is from ‘Ali’.”

‘Umru ibn Aswad said, ‘He was a fire that Allah extinguished.’ Miqdam added, ‘But today will not pass until I bring you to anger because I must give you annoying news.’ Then he added, ‘O Mu‘awiyah! If I tell the truth, confirm what I say. And if I lie, refute what I say.’

Mu‘awiyah answered, ‘Say whatever you want to say.’

Miqdam continued, ‘I swear upon Allah! Are you aware of the fact that Allah’s Prophet (S) forbade men from wearing silk?’ Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan answered, ‘Yes.’ Miqdam said, ‘Do you not know that Allah’s Prophet forbade wearing leather made from wild carnivorous animals?’ Mu‘awiyah answered,

‘Yes, I know.’ Miqdam said, ‘I swear upon Allah that I have seen your household engaging in all these forbidden actions.’ Mu‘awiyah said, ‘I know that I cannot escape your accusations, O Miqdam!’”[23](#)

## Ziyad attributed to Abu Sufiyan

Mu‘awiyah testified that Ziyad was the son of Abu Sufiyan, his father. Mu‘awiyah claimed that during the Age of Ignorance, his father had committed adultery with Sumayyah, the wife of ‘Ubayd. Mu‘awiyah claimed that Ziyad was born as a result of this sinful act. In order to prove his shameful claim, Mu‘awiyah relied on the testimony of Abi Maryam, a liquor seller who also acted as an intermediary for anyone who wanted to commit adultery.[24](#)

Mu‘awiyah claimed this child for his father paying no heed to the fact that the Holy Prophet (S) had said,

«الولد للفراش وللعاهر الحجر»

“The child belongs to the owner of the bed, and is forbidden to the adulterer.”[25](#)

It has been narrated on another authentic chain of transmission that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«من ادّعى أباً في الاسلام غير أبيه فالجنة عليه حرام»

“Heaven is forbidden to anyone who falsely claims someone as his father.”[26](#)

In addition:

«ليس من رجل ادّعى بغير ابيه وهو يعلم الا كفر، ومن ادّعى ما ليس له فليس منا»

“Anyone who falsely claims that someone is his father, while he knows that it is not true has become an unbeliever [*kafir*] and anyone who claims something that does not belong to him is not from us.”[27](#)

This issue has been reported in many other credible Sunni books of *hadith*.

## Coercion used to get allegiance for Yazid

One of Mu‘awiyah’s transgressions which was a clear violation of Islamic law, common logic and societal mores was getting allegiance from the people for his son Yazid by force and coercion. This allegiance was opposed by the council of elders which, according to Sunni traditional practice, is charged with the duty of choosing and appointing the next *caliph* after the death of the previous one.

This unlawful allegiance was also opposed by the Immigrants [*muhajirin*], the Helpers [*ansar*], and the eminent of the Holy Prophet's (S) companions [*sahabah*]. It was an allegiance that was obtained by the use of force and the sword. It was an allegiance characterized by intimidation, threats and terror, on the one hand, and bribery and extortion, on the other. Worshippers of the carnal passions were paid to give allegiance to Yazid.

Ibn Kathir says, "In the fifty sixth year of the Islamic calendar, Mu'awiyah called upon the people of Sham to pay allegiance to his son Yazid. This made his wicked son the crown prince and heir apparent after his death."[28](#)

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and other narrators of *hadith* have recounted that Mu'awiyah read a sermon for the people of Sham, and in the middle of the sermon, said, "O people of Sham! My age has increased and my death has drawn near. I want to arrange an agreement for the caliphate and leave someone in my place so that he may bring about order and discipline for you. Surely, I am one of you and I am concerned about your affairs. Please tell me your suggestions."

The people came together and after consulting one another, said, "We are pleased with 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid ibn Walid, one of the Prophet's companions."

This suggestion was unbearably painful for the son of Abu Sufiyan, but he kept his displeasure hidden in his heart. One day, 'Abd al-Rahman became ill. Mu'awiyah had a private Jewish doctor whom he held in high respect.

He instructed this Jewish doctor to go to visit 'Abd al-Rahman and give him a specific poison that would kill him. The Jew did as he was ordered, and gave the liquid poison to 'Abd al-Rahman. 'Abd al-Rahman's stomach was torn apart, resulting in his death.[29](#)

Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan committed this dishonorable act of murder and assassination in order to secure the caliphate for his son Yazid.

## **Mu'awiyah's rebellion against the righteous leader**

Another one of Mu'awiyah's disobedient acts was rebellion against the rightful and legitimate Imam of the Time, Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali (as). Mu'awiyah rebelled against the Imam who, besides being explicitly appointed by Allah and His Prophet (S) to be Imam and caliph for the Muslims, had also gotten unanimous allegiance from the Islamic community.

Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan used the pretext that he wanted to avenge the death of 'Uthman in order to bring about sedition and disturbances in the Islamic community and with the purpose of seizing power and transferring control from Medina to Sham, he initiated the Battle of Siffin.

He did this despite the fact that, according to Sunni *hadiths*, the Holy Prophet (S) had absolutely

forbidden Muslims from rebelling and rising up in arms against the Imam of the Time.

Muslim recounts that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

من خلع يداً من طاعة لقي الله يوم القيامة ولا حجة له، ومن مات وليس في عنقه بيعة مات ميتة جاهلية.

“A person who quits obeying the Muslim caliph will meet Allah on the Day of Judgment having no plea for himself, and anyone who dies without paying allegiance to the Imam of his time has died the death of a *kafir* [unbeliever] of the Age of Ignorance.”[30](#)

## **Mu‘awiyah’s heinous crimes against the Shi‘ahs**

Starting from the thirty ninth year of the Islamic calendar, Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan started to carry out widespread terrorist attacks on the Shi‘ahs of Amir al-Mu‘minin ‘Ali (as). He dispatched cruel and irreligious people to attack the Shi‘ahs. He intended to subdue Imam ‘Ali’s followers by sending gangs of faithless people to invade and attack anyone under the protection of Imam ‘Ali’s (as) government.

1. He sent Nu‘man ibn Bashir with a thousand people to crush and terrorize the people of ‘Ayn al-Tamar.
2. He sent Sufiyan ibn ‘Awf with six thousand men to suppress the people of Hit. After that, he sent them to Anbar and Mada’in for more acts of terror and plunder.
3. Mu‘awiyah sent a sworn enemy of Imam ‘Ali (as) by the name of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘adah ibn Hikmah Fazari with one thousand seven hundred men to attack the people of Tayma’.
4. He sent Dahhak ibn Qays with three thousand armed men to Upper Mesopotamia to plunder and loot the possessions of anyone known to be a follower and Shi‘ah of Imam ‘Ali (as). To counter this cowardly act of Mu‘awiyah, Imam ‘Ali (as) sent Hujr ibn ‘Uday with four thousand men to resist and confront this army.
5. Mu‘awiyah sent ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Qubath ibn Ushaym with a group of men to the land of the Arabian Peninsula. Imam ‘Ali (as) sent Kumayl to counter and resist their forces.
6. He sent Harath ibn Namr Tanukhi to the Arabian Peninsula to suppress anyone known to be a follower and Shi‘ah of Imam ‘Ali (as). Many people were killed in this confrontation.[31](#)
7. In the fortieth year of the Islamic calendar, Mu‘awiyah sent Busr ibn Artat with an army to Mecca, Medina and Yemen. When Busr ibn Artat reached Medina, Imam ‘Ali’s (as) agent and governor in Medina ‘Ubayd Allah ibn ‘Abbas was forced to flee to Kufah to join and be under the protection of Imam ‘Ali (as). However, Busr martyred two of ‘Ubayd Allah’s children who had remained behind in Medina.[32](#)

Another place that was plundered by Busr was an area inhabited by a tribe from Hamadan that were Shi'ahs of Imam 'Ali (as). Busr made a surprise attack on them. He killed many of their men, and took a large number of their women and children into captivity. This was the first time in the history of Islam up to that time that Muslim women and children had been taken into captivity.[33](#)

Mas'udi says, "Busr ibn Artat killed a large number of people who came from Khuza'ah, Hamadan and an area called "al-Anba'" who were people of Iranian origin living in Yemen. He killed anyone he suspected of being inclined to 'Ali (as)."[34](#)

Ibn Abi al-Hadid says, "Busr descended upon the people of Hasban. They were all Shi'ahs of Imam 'Ali (as). He entered into a vicious conflict with them and killed them savagely. After leaving that place, he went towards San'a, where he killed a hundred elderly men originating from Persia. The only crime they were guilty of committing was that two children of 'Ubayd Allah ibn 'Abbas had hidden in a home belonging to a woman of their clan.

In his wild and brutal attacks on the Shi'ahs, Busr killed about thirty thousand people in all. He even burnt a number of them alive."[35](#)

Ibn Abi al-Hadid further writes, "In a letter addressed to all his government workers, Mu'awiyah wrote, 'Do not give permission to anyone of 'Ali's followers or descendants to testify their faith. On the other hand, respect and protect the followers of 'Uthman.' In another letter addressed to his subordinates, he wrote: 'Erase the names of those who are proven to love 'Ali and his *Ahl al-Bayt* from the register, and stop giving them their share of stipends from the Islamic treasury.'

In a postscript to this letter, the son of Abu Sufiyan wrote, 'Anyone who is accused of loving the *Ahl al-Bayt* must be arrested and his house destroyed.' The people who suffered most as a result of these orders were people of Iraq, especially the people of Kufah..."[36](#)

## **Mu'awiyah's crimes after the peace settlement**

When Imam al-Hasan (as) was obliged to compromise and make peace with Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan, he felt great concern for the safety of Imam 'Ali's (as) followers.

It was for this reason that, in his peace agreement with Mu'awiyah, Imam al-Hasan (as) stressed that Imam 'Ali's followers (as) must be guaranteed truce and safety. Mu'awiyah agreed to this demand, but he had other plans in mind. In a clear act of treachery, he announced that he was not committed to the agreement and would not follow it.

He said, "The agreement I made with al-Hasan is null and void. It lies trampled under my feet." What aggravates the repugnancy of his actions is that Mu'awiyah committed himself to breaching the peace settlement on the very same day of signing it, in spite of having earlier promised to be faithful to the pact.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid quotes from Abi al-Hasan Mada'ini, "In a letter to his governors general, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan wrote, 'I have discharged myself from obligation to anyone who recounts *hadith* in praise of the virtues of Abu Turab [Imam 'Ali] and his *Ahl al-Bayt*.' After this command, his governors gave orders to all the public speakers employed by the government to start reviling Imam 'Ali (as) and making derogatory and defamatory comments about his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) from the pulpits.

The people of Kufah were the most seriously affected by this calamity because at that time Kufah was inhabited by a large number of the Shi'ahs. Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan appointed Ziyad to be the governor general of Kufah and Basrah.

Ziyad knew the Shi'ahs very well. Acting on orders from Mu'awiyah, he either killed or terrorized them wherever he could find them. After cutting off their hands and legs and removing their eyes from their sockets, he would hang their bodies from a scaffold. He also forcefully exiled a large number of them from Iraq."[37](#)

Ibn A'tham writes, "Ziyad was constantly searching for the Shi'ahs. He put most of them under state surveillance. He would kill them wherever he could find them, to such an extent that he killed a large number of them. He also cut their legs off and made them blind. Of course, Mu'awiyah himself killed a lot of the Shi'ahs with his own hands, too."[38](#)

Mu'awiyah himself gave direct orders for the hanging of a large number of the Shi'ahs of Imam 'Ali (as). Another of Ziyad's contemptible tactics was to gather the Shi'ahs in mosques and force them to show hatred and disrespect towards Imam 'Ali (as).[39](#)

In Basrah, also, Ibn Ziyad was constantly searching for 'Ali's (as) followers with the intention of killing them. A large number of the Holy Prophet's (S) renowned companions and *tabi'in* were martyred by the direct command of Mu'awiyah because they loved 'Ali (as) and his *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).[40](#)

In the year 53 AH, Hujr ibn 'Uday and his companions were killed on direct orders from Mu'awiyah. Hujr ibn 'Uday and his companions were the first people in the history of Islam that were killed by means of 'patience towards death'.[41](#)

'Amru ibn Humaq Khuza'i, named "the Master of Martyrs" by Imam al-Husayn (as), was killed by Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan. Mu'awiyah deceived him by promising to provide him with safety and then turned against him and, in a clear act of betrayal, killed him.[42](#)

Mu'awiyah is also guilty of killing Malik ibn Ashtar, one of the Arab nobles and a great and revered man in Islamic history. Malik ibn Ashtar was one of Imam 'Ali's (as) bravest commanders. Mu'awiyah killed him with poison that was given to him by one of his traitorous slaves while on his way to Egypt.[43](#)

Ziyad once requested one of Imam 'Ali's (as) special students named Rashid al-Hijri to curse and disown Imam 'Ali (as). Rashid al-Hijri flatly refused to do it. As a result, Ziyad cut both his hands, both

legs, and his tongue, and then hung his body from a scaffold.<sup>44</sup>

Juwayriyyah ibn Mashar al-‘Abdi was arrested for the crime of accepting the *wilayah* (spiritual and temporal guardianship) of Imam ‘Ali (as). His body was hung from a date tree after his hands and legs were cut off.

## **Mu‘awiyah himself cursed Imam ‘Ali (as)**

As long as the Holy Prophet (S) was alive, Bani Hashim and Imam ‘Ali (as) holding the foremost position among them, were held in great honor and high respect, but soon after the death of the Holy Prophet (S), hostilities and enmities began to appear. These antagonisms were especially directed towards Imam ‘Ali (as).

These enmities reached their climax during the reign of Bani Umayyah especially under the leadership of Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan.

Mu‘awiyah could not content himself with only going to war with Imam ‘Ali (as) for the sake of seizing and usurping the caliphate, an action that made him acquire the title “oppressor” with regard to Imam ‘Ali (as) even in the view of Sunni Muslims; in addition, he started cursing Imam ‘Ali (as) from the pulpits in a very public manner. This custom continued to prevail up to the time of the caliphate of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz who finally gave orders to discontinue the custom.

## **Mu‘awiyah’s purpose for annihilating Bani Hashim**

By trying to eliminate Bani Hashim, Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan was endeavoring to achieve two main aims: one of his goals was to annihilate the very roots of the religion and in this way nip Islam in the bud.

The other objective was to avenge the blood of his polytheist forefathers and the other elders of Bani Umayyah who had been sent to perdition by the holy sword of Imam ‘Ali (as). It was for this reason that during the Battle of Siffin, Imam ‘Ali (as) refused to allow anyone of the family members of Bani Hashim to enter the battlefield and gave orders preventing them from engaging in one on one battle with the enemy.<sup>45</sup>

Apart from employing savage methods, including assassination, terrorism, imposition of wars on his enemies, plunder and robbery, Mu‘awiyah also engaged in other tactics with the aim of annihilating and destroying Islam and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as).

We will now mention some of these tactics:

### **a. Obstruction of knowledge of the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (as)**

In his book called “*Al-Ihdath*”, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad ‘Abd Allah Mada’ini writes, “After usurping the

caliphate, Mu'awiyah announced to all his government officials and workers that for anyone that recounted the virtues of Abu Turab (Imam 'Ali) or praised his household, neither his life nor his property would be secure."[46](#)

## **b. Initiating enmity and cursing of Imam 'Ali (as)**

The insurgence that took place against 'Uthman was, in all truth, a peoples' revolt and uprising. The people came to Medina from all the corners of the Islamic world except Sham and Hams, because these lands were under the control of Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan.

The injustice, intimidation and oppression imposed upon the people by 'Uthman's government officials had caused a state of complete annoyance and utter frustration among the common people. It was this weariness of harassment which persuaded them to revolt and rebel and this insurgency led to the death of 'Uthman.[47](#)

After 'Uthman's death, Nu'man ibn Bashir Ansari took 'Uthman's blood soaked shirt to Sham.[48](#) Mu'awiyah was quick to exploit this opportunity. He gave orders that this shirt must be hung on the pulpit of the Sham's A'zam Mosque.

White haired old men were either compelled by force or paid to gather and hold mourning ceremonies next to the shirt. They continued mourning in this way for over one year. News of the event reached all the cities and towns that were under the domain of Mu'awiyah.[49](#)

In his first speech after this event, Mu'awiyah endeavored to portray 'Uthman as an innocent martyr and introduced Imam 'Ali (as) as the responsible party for 'Uthman's death. From then on, Mu'awiyah's politics took the form of creating unfounded charges against Imam 'Ali (as). On a daily basis, he sketched new plans to cause spite, animosity and malevolence against Imam 'Ali (as).[50](#)

The people of Sham and Hams were bombarded with heavy propaganda as regards the issue of 'Uthman's death. Imam 'Ali (as) was being used as a scapegoat for a killing which he had personally renounced and condemned. The issue of revenge was falsely presented under the guise of religion.

The plea that the caliph had been oppressed and unjustly killed excited the emotions and sentiments of the common people. Some who were gullible to state propaganda believed the lie and thus the people's feelings and emotions were vehemently raised against the people of Kufah and Imam 'Ali (as).

Mu'awiyah and the Umayyad government did not stop at this in their devious propaganda games, but undertook all possible means to cause lasting hatred and animosity against Imam 'Ali (as). They hoped to gain maximum benefit from the people of these two large provinces by resorting to such tactics.

'Amir, the son of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas recounts, "One day Mu'awiyah invited my father to his palace and said to him, 'Why don't you curse and insult Abu Turab (Imam 'Ali)?' Sa'd said, 'As long as I remember

the three things which the Holy Prophet (S) said in favor of him, I will never say anything unpleasant against 'Ali.

This is because if anyone of those three things had been said about me, it would be far more beloved for me than owning a host of fine red camels. During one of the battles, Allah's Prophet (S) appointed 'Ali (as) to be his representative in Medina. 'Ali said, 'O Prophet of Allah! Are you appointing me to be your representative and deputy among the women and children?'

The Holy Prophet (as) answered, 'Are you not pleased that with respect to me you hold the position which Harun (Aaron) held with respect to Musa (Moses), with the exception that there will not be a Prophet after me?' Secondly, on the day of Khaybar, I heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying, 'I will give the Islamic banner and commandership to a man who loves Allah and the Prophet dearly and whom Allah and the Prophet also love very much.' We all waited anxiously and were turning our heads to see who that lucky person was.

Then, the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'Tell 'Ali to come here.' They brought 'Ali forward and it became clear that he had sore eyes. The Holy Prophet (S) took some saliva from his mouth and rubbed it in 'Ali's eyes. 'Ali (as) instantly got well. Then, Allah's Prophet (S) gave the Islamic banner to 'Ali and through him Allah bestowed conquest and sweet victory for the Muslims.

Thirdly, when the following verse was revealed, Allah's Prophet (S) called 'Ali (as), Fatimah (as), al-Hasan (as) and al-Husayn (as). Then, he said, 'O Allah! These people are the ones who belong to me'." [51](#)

... فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ ...

***“And whoever disputes with you after what has come to you of the knowledge, then say: Come let us call our sons and your sons and our women and your women and our near people and your near people, then let us be earnest in prayer and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars...”*** [52](#)

'Ali ibn Muhammad Mada'ini recounts, "After usurping the government and gaining control of the caliphate, Mu'awiyah wrote orders to all his officials and agents that he was not duty-bound to provide protection or security to anyone who recounted any of the virtues of Abu Turab (Imam 'Ali) or narrated favorable *hadiths* about his household members.

Mu'awiyah commanded that the blood and property of such people should be taken without impunity. Government appointed speakers began distancing themselves from Imam 'Ali (as), cursing him and speaking ill of his household in every community and from every pulpit." [53](#)

Ya'qubi writes, "Whenever some Shi'ahs of Imam 'Ali (as), among them Hujr ibn 'Uday and 'Amru ibn al-Himaq Khuza'i, heard Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah and his likes cursing Imam 'Ali (as), they would arise and

cast the curses back at them.”[54](#)

After the martyrdom of Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as), Mu'awiyah intended to go to Mecca for the *hajj*. He first went to Medina. There, he requested to curse Imam 'Ali (as) from the Prophet's (S) pulpit.

The people told him that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas was present in the city and that it was very unlikely that he would be pleased or ascent to such an act. The son of Abu Sufiyan then sent someone to ask Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas for permission to curse Imam 'Ali (as) from the Prophet's (S) pulpit.

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas replied, “If you do such a thing, I will leave this Mosque forever and never return to it at all!” As long as Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas was the governor of the holy city of Medina, Mu'awiyah restrained himself from cursing Imam 'Ali (as) in Medina.

After the death of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan started cursing Imam 'Ali (as) again and wrote letters to his officials commanding them to revile Imam 'Ali (as) from the pulpits. They did as they were ordered. Umm Salamah, one of the Prophet's (S) wives, wrote a letter to Mu'awiyah complaining that Mu'awiyah and his agents were cursing Allah and his Prophet (S) from their pulpits because of their cursing of 'Ali (as) and those who love him. She declared, “I bear witness that Allah and his Prophet (S) love 'Ali.” Mu'awiyah did not pay the least attention to this letter.[55](#)

Jahiz narrates, “Verily, at the end of his sermons Mu'awiyah always used to say, ‘O Allah! Abu Turab (Imam 'Ali) has become an apostate and a hindrance in the way towards you. Therefore, curse him and punish him with painful chastisement.’ He wrote these words and sent them to all the horizons of the Muslim World to be repeated by his agents and public speakers. This curse continued to be said on the pulpits up to the reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Aziz.

Some members of Bani Umayyah told Mu'awiyah, ‘O Amir! You have attained your ambitions and worldly desires. Why don't you stop cursing this man?’ Mu'awiyah answered, ‘I swear by Allah that I will not stop reviling him until I am assured that all the newborn children are brought up on the custom of cursing him, and likewise, all the old ones become grey-haired while vilifying him. I want to make sure that no one ever remembers him kindly’.”[56](#)

Zamakhshari narrates, “During the days of the reign of Bani Umayyah, and in accordance with Mu'awiyah's custom, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was cursed and reviled from more than seventy pulpits.”[57](#)

Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri recounts, “Mu'awiyah appointed Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah to be the governor of Kufah. Mughayrah kept this post for nine years... and he was never negligent in his duty of slandering and vilifying 'Ali (as).”[58](#)

Hakim al-Neyshaburi narrates from 'Abd Allah ibn Zalim that Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah used to insult Imam 'Ali (as). He even appointed and delegated people to carry out this task.[59](#)

'Ubayd Allah ibn Abi Malikah recounts that a man from Sham vilified and used insulting language against

‘Ali (as) in the presence of Ibn ‘Abbas. Ibn ‘Abbas said, “O enemy of Allah! You have wronged the Holy Prophet (S). Do you not know that Allah has said,

﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴾

**‘Surely, as for those who speak evil things of Allah and His Apostle, Allah has cursed them in this world and the hereafter, and He has prepared for them a disgraceful chastisement’.**<sup>60</sup>

Then, Ibn ‘Abbas added, “If the Holy Prophet (S) were alive today, he would be annoyed by your conduct.”<sup>61</sup>

‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Baylamani says, “I was in the presence of Mu‘awiyah when a man stood up and started flinging abuses at Imam ‘Ali (as) one after the other. Sa‘id ibn Zayd ibn ‘Umru ibn Nafil stood up and protested, saying, ‘O Mu‘awiyah! Do I have to endure the pain of hearing them slandering ‘Ali (as) without you showing any indignation at it? Verily, I heard Allah’s Prophet (S) saying,

«هو منِّي بمنزلة هارون من موسى»

‘Ali is to me what Aaron was to Moses’.”<sup>62</sup>

Ahmad ibn Hanbal quotes from ‘Abd Allah ibn Zalim Mazani, “When Mu‘awiyah left Kufah, he appointed Mughayrah ibn Shu‘bah to be his agent there. Mughayrah ibn Shu‘bah appointed speakers to curse and slander ‘Ali (as). Mazani says, ‘I was seated next to Sa‘id ibn Zayd ibn ‘Umru ibn Nafil. I noticed that he had got very angry.

When I asked him why, he got my hand and took me to a corner. Then, he asked me, ‘Don’t you see that this man is committing injustice against himself by cursing ‘Ali (as), a man whose place is in paradise’”<sup>63</sup>

Ibn Abi al-Hadid relates that Mughayrah ibn Shu‘bah, Mu‘awiyah’s governor and agent in Kufah, commanded Hujr ibn ‘Uday to stand up and curse ‘Ali (as) in the presence of all the people. Hujr ibn ‘Uday refused. Mughayrah intimidated and threatened him with punitive action if he did not do as he had been ordered. Hujr ibn ‘Uday stood up and said to the people, “Your leader has commanded me to curse ‘Ali (as); therefore, curse him.”

The people of Kufah said, “O Allah! Curse him.” Of course, the people’s curse was meant for Mughayrah ibn Shu‘bah himself.<sup>64</sup>

## The Holy Prophet (S) forbade the cursing ‘Ali (as)

1. The Holy Prophet (S) said,

«لاتسبوا علياً؛ فإنه كان ممسوساً في ذات الله عز وجل»

“Do not curse ‘Ali, because he is heedless of any dangers in the way of Allah.”<sup>65</sup>

2. The Holy Prophet (S) also said,

«من سبّ علياً فقد سبني، ومن سبني فقد سبّ الله تعالى»

“Whoever vilifies ‘Ali has certainly vilified me. And whoever curses me has without doubt cursed Allah.”<sup>66</sup>

3. He also said,

«عادى الله من عادى علياً»

“O Allah! Hate anyone who hates ‘Ali.”<sup>67</sup>

4. Hakim al-Neyshaburi recounts that Abi ‘Abd Allah said, “One day I went to see Umm Salamah. She asked me, ‘Do you curse the Holy Prophet (S) among yourselves?’ I said, ‘I seek refuge in Allah’ or ‘Glory be to Allah’, or a similar phrase. Umm Salamah then said, ‘On several occasions I heard the Holy Prophet (S) say:

«من سبّ علياً فقد سبني»

‘Whoever curses ‘Ali has certainly cursed me’.”<sup>68</sup>

## The judgment for anyone who curses Imam ‘Ali (as)

1. On his own chain of transmission, al-Tirmidhi narrates from Umm Salamah that the Holy Prophet (S) always used to say,

«لا يحبّ علياً منافقٌ ولا يبغضه مؤمنٌ»

“No hypocrite loves ‘Ali, and no believer hates ‘Ali.”<sup>69</sup>

2. Al-Tirmidhi also recounts that Imam ‘Ali (S) said,

«لقد عهد الى النبي الأُمي صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: أَنَّهُ لَا يَحِبُّكَ إِلَّا مُؤْمِنٌ، وَلَا يَبْغُضُكَ إِلَّا مُنَافِقٌ»

“Verily, the unlettered Prophet (S) gave me a firm promise when he said that no one will love you except a true believer; and no one will hate you except a hypocrite.”<sup>70</sup>

Another *hadith* narrated by Muslim confirms the above-mentioned *hadith*.<sup>71</sup>

3. Al-Tirmidhi relates that Abu Sa‘id said,

«أَنَا كُنَّا لَنَعْرِفَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ - نَحْنُ مَعِشَرُ الْإِنصَارِ - بِبِغْضِهِمْ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ»

“Indeed, the Helpers [*ansar*], used to recognize and distinguish who the hypocrites were by observing who hated ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).”<sup>72</sup>

1. Zubayr ibn Bakkar, Al-Akhbar al-Muwafiqat, pp. 576-577; Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 454; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 176, vol. 5, p. 129.
2. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 6, p. 476.
3. Ibn al-Mundhir, Al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, vol. 3, p. 102.
4. Malik, Al-Muwatta’, vol. 2, p. 59.
5. Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 5, p. 500.
6. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 271.
7. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 5, p. 2219, hadith 6501.
8. Fath al-Bari, vol. 1, p. 353, 452.
9. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 332, hadith 935; Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 2, p. 284, hadith 4.
10. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 327, hadith 917; Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 2, p. 285, hadith 5.
11. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 5, p. 58, hadith 16415.
12. Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 42.
13. Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 2, p. 266, hadith 32.
14. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 1, p. 307, hadith 862.
15. Durr al-Manthur, Suyuti, vol. 2, p. 477.
16. Surat al-Nisa’ 4:23.
17. Al-Sunan al-Kubra, vol. 2, p. 419, hadith 3993.
18. Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 139; the events that occurred in the year 60 AH.
19. Sahih Bukhari, vol. 2, p. 605, hadith 1602; Ibn Majah, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 1011, hadith 3039.
20. Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah, vol. 2, p. 228; Tarikh ibn Kathir, vol. 8, p. 145; the events which occurred in the year 60 AH.
21. Surat al-Ma’idah 5:38.
22. Surat al-Talaq 65:1.
23. Abu Dawud, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 68, hadith 4131; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 5, p. 118, hadith 16738.
24. Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 220; Al-‘Aqd al-Farid, vol. 3, p. 2; Ibn ‘Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 5, p. 409.

- [25.](#) Sahih Bukhari, vol. 6, p. 2499, hadith 6432; Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 3, p. 256, hadith 37.
- [26.](#) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 6, p. 17, hadith 19883, 19953; Bayhaqi, Sunan, vol. 7, p. 403.
- [27.](#) Sahih Bukhari, vol. 3, p. 1292, hadith 3317; Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 1, p. 113, hadith 112.
- [28.](#) Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 86; the events which occurred in the year 56 AH.
- [29.](#) Al-Isti'ab, no. 1402; Al-Aghani, vol. 16, p. 209.
- [30.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 4, p. 126, hadith 58, Kitab al-Amarah.
- [31.](#) Al-Aghani, vol. 15, p. 44; Ibn 'Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 10, p. 152; Al-Isti'ab vol. 1, p. 65; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, p. 134; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 425.
- [32.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, p. 139; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 425; Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 10, p. 152; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 7, p. 356.
- [33.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 5, p. 11.
- [34.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 22.
- [35.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 1, pp. 116–121.
- [36.](#) Ibid., vol. 11, pp. 44–45.
- [37.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 11, p. 44.
- [38.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 4, p. 203.
- [39.](#) Al-Mahbar, p. 479.
- [40.](#) Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 9, p. 88.
- [41.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 3; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 3, p. 642.
- [42.](#) Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 4, p. 34.
- [43.](#) Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 91.
- [44.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 2, p. 294.
- [45.](#) Nasr ibn Muzahim, Waqa'atu Siffin, pp. 462–463.
- [46.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 3, p. 15.
- [47.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 5, pp. 59–60; Tarikh-e Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 150.
- [48.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 562.
- [49.](#) Waqa'atu Siffin, p. 127; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 562.
- [50.](#) Waqa'atu Siffin, pp. 31–32, 127–128.
- [51.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 7, pp. 120–121; Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, pp. 108–109.
- [52.](#) Surat Al 'Imran 3:61.
- [53.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 11, p. 44.
- [54.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 205.
- [55.](#) Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 4, p. 159.
- [56.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 4, pp. 56–57, sermon [khutbah] 56.
- [57.](#) Rabi' al-Abrar, vol. 2, p. 186.
- [58.](#) Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 5, p. 252; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, p. 254; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 488.
- [59.](#) Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 509, hadith 5898; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 3, p. 31.
- [60.](#) Surat al-Ahzab 33:57.
- [61.](#) Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 138, hadith 4618.
- [62.](#) Ibn Abi 'Asim, Al-Sunnah, p. 588, hadith 1350.
- [63.](#) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 1, p. 400, hadith 1644.
- [64.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 4, p. 58.
- [65.](#) Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 19, p. 148; Hiliyah al-Awliya', vol. 1, p. 68.
- [66.](#) Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 131.
- [67.](#) Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 11, p. 601, hadith 32899.
- [68.](#) Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 130, hadith 4615.
- [69.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 635, hadith 3717; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 10, p. 176, hadith 26569.

[70.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 635, hadith 3717; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 10, p. 176, hadith 26569.

[71.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 1, p. 86, hadith 78.

[72.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 635, hadith 3717.

## The Illegitimacy of Yazid's Caliphate

Some misguided traditionalists and historians have attempted to portray Yazid's caliphate and government as legitimate according to Islam. They have endeavored to demonstrate that the people pledged allegiance to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah.

By doing so, they try to make Yazid's government appear acceptable. At the same time, they try to show Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising against Yazid to be an illegitimate rebellion that was against the common will of the people. In this section, we substantiate the falsity of these claims, but first we mention some of the statements made in support of Yazid.

Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi writes, "The allegiance paid to Yazid was legally concluded, because one man paid allegiance to him, even though that one man was his father, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan."[1](#)

Muhibb al-Din Khatib writes, "Yazid was just, vigilant and perseverant in prayer. He used to perform good deeds. He always enforced the Prophet's (S) *Sunnah* and was very attached to it."[2](#)

Ibn al-'Arabi also writes, "Anyone who went to war against al-Husayn did so with the emphatic recommendation of his ancestor the Prophet (S). They say that the Prophet (S) said, 'Kill by the sword anyone who wants to sow discord and division in the Islamic community [*ummah*], no matter whom it may be'."[3](#)

Ibn Khaldun has said, "Al-Husayn was killed by his grandfather's sword."[4](#)

Muhammad Abu al-Yasr 'Abidin, the Mufti of Sham, says, "The Allegiance paid to Yazid was legal and legitimate. Therefore, whoever rebelled against him was an insurgent."[5](#)

Abul Khayr Shafi'i Qazvini writes, "Yazid was an *imam* and a supreme religious jurisprudent [*mujtahid*]."[6](#)

We will now survey and discuss the legitimacy of Yazid's claim to the caliphate.

### Evidence regarding the illegitimacy of Yazid's caliphate

Supporters of Bani Umayyah and Yazid's partisans among some Islamic sects have been persistent in trying to portray the issue of Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising against Yazid as a rebellion against a

legitimate Muslim caliph whose allegiance and caliphate was concluded in a correct and unflawed manner.

By this means, they have striven to depict Imam al-Husayn (as) as an insurgent who rebelled against the “rightful Imam” of the time. They have asserted that Yazid only intended to protect his legitimately acquired position when he brutally massacred Imam al-Husayn (as) and all his companions at Karbala.

In fact, however, the reality is quite the opposite. The real *imam* and caliph was Imam al-Husayn (as). His Imamate and caliphate were sanctioned by Allah and the Holy Prophet (S). It was actually Yazid who secured the caliphate by means of usurpation and extortion.

Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah’s caliphate, in fact, lacked any legitimacy. Therefore, Imam al-Husayn’s (as) uprising against Yazid was not only legitimate and rational, but also an obligatory and binding duty upon Imam al-Husayn (as) as well. Evidence for these assertions follows:

## 1. The Imamate of Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as)

In a sound and well-established *hadith* recounted by successive witnesses among the Sunnis, the Holy Prophet (S) explicitly mentioned the Twelve Imams who would come after him and introduced them as the rightful caliphs.

Jabir ibn Samrah recounts, “I heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying, ‘As long as the Twelve Caliphs govern, Islam will always be honored.’ Then, he said something I did not understand clearly. I asked my father, ‘What has the Prophet just said?’ My father answered, ‘They will all belong to the tribe of Quraysh’.”<sup>7</sup>

On his own chain of transmission, Bukhari, too, quotes from Jabir ibn Samrah that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “They will be twelve *Amirs* (leaders). Then he said something that I did not hear properly. My father said, ‘They will all belong to the tribe of Quraysh’.”<sup>8</sup>

With recourse to the *Hadith al-Thaqalayn*, we understand that these twelve people are of the Prophet’s (S) Household. With attention to the *Hadith Ghadir al-Khumm*, we come to know that the first of them is ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). All the *hadiths* mentioned above were quoted from the Holy Prophet (S) during the same period of time and can therefore be used to interpret each other, especially when it is born in mind that, according to other *hadiths*, the names of these twelve people were explicitly mentioned by the Holy Prophet (S).

In the book “*Fara’id al-Samtayn*”, Hamawayni recounts on his own chain of transmission from Ibn ‘Abbas that a Jewish person named Na‘thal was granted an audience by the Holy Prophet (S). Na‘thal asked him, “O Muhammad! I will ask you a number of questions about certain issues that have remained hidden in my heart for a long time. If you answer them all, I will believe in you.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said to him, “Ask O Aba ‘Amarah!” One of the questions which the Jew asked was

this, “Inform me about who will be the inheritor and executor of your will after your death? I am asking this question because there has never been a prophet who died and did not leave behind an administrator for himself.

Indeed, our Prophet, Musa ibn ‘Imran left Yusha‘ ibn Nun to be his administrator.” The Holy Prophet (S) answered, “Verily, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is my inheritor and the administrator of my will. After him, I will be succeeded by my descendants al-Hasan and al-Husayn; and after these two, there will come nine Imams one after another (in successive order) from the loins of al-Husayn.” Na‘thal said, “O Muhammad! Mention their names to me.”

The Holy Prophet (S) said, “After al-Husayn, his son ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, then Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, then his son Ja‘far ibn Muhammad, then his son Musa ibn Ja‘far, then his son ‘Ali ibn Musa, and after him his son Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, and after him his son ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, and then Hasan ibn ‘Ali and his son, the final and ultimate proof of Allah upon mankind, Muhammad Mahdi ibn al-Hasan will be the last Imam. These are the twelve people who will succeed me.”<sup>9</sup>

These twelve people have also been clearly mentioned in other *hadiths*.<sup>10</sup>

In another *hadith*, the Holy Prophet (S) has said,

الحسن والحسين إماما أمتي بعد أبيهما.

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two Imams of my Islamic community [*ummah*] after their father.”<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, if Imam al-Husayn (as) is the rightful *imam* and caliph nominated and appointed by the Holy Prophet (S) himself, it follows that Yazid’s caliphate is illegitimate and invalid.

## 2. Imam al-Husayn’s (as) infallibility

Imam al-Husayn (as) is one of the people included in the ‘Verse of Purification’ [*Ayah al-Tathir*] of the Holy Qur’an. Therefore, he is free of any sort of sin, error or forgetfulness. Imam al-Husayn (as) cannot commit any sort of wrongdoing because he has been purified of sin by the Almighty Allah.

On his chain of transmission, Muslim quotes ‘A’ishah recounting, “One morning Allah’s Prophet (S) left my house carrying a piece of cloth made from raw wool on his shoulders. Al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali, al-Husayn, Fatimah and ‘Ali all came to join the Prophet (S) in the order mentioned. Then, he recited this verse,

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴾

***“Allah only desires to keep away uncleanness from you, O people of the house, and to purify you***

***a thorough purifying.***”[12](#) [13](#)

If, as reported in these *hadith* from Sunni sources, Imam al-Husayn (as) is purified of sin, or infallible, it follows that his uprising is correct and justified. It also implies that the government of Yazid was not credible.<sup>f</sup>

### **3. Allah’s Prophet (S) is pleased with al-Husayn (as)**

On his own chain of transmission, Tabarani narrates from Rib’i ibn Harash that Imam ‘Ali (as) said, “I visited the Holy Prophet (S) one day while he had spread a piece of cloth on the ground. The Prophet, Fatimah, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and I sat together on that piece of cloth. Then, the Holy Prophet (S) picked up the corners of the cloth and spread it over all of us. After that, he said,

«اللَّهُمَّ ارْضَ عَنْهُمْ كَمَا أَنَا رَاضٍ عَنْهُمْ»

‘O Allah! Be pleased with these people in the same way that I am pleased with them!’”[14](#)

Haythami has recounted this *hadith* in his book “*Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id*”. He says, “Tabarani has narrated this *hadith* in the book “*Al-Awsat*”. All the people mentioned on this chain of transmission are well known for transmitting authentic *hadith*, while ‘Ubayd ibn Tufayl, one of the transmitters mentioned on this channel, is reliable and trustworthy [thaqah].”[15](#)

We can understand from this *hadith* that the Holy Prophet (S) is pleased with Imam al-Husayn (as) and, as a result of this pleasure, makes a supplication in his favor. We also know that Allah, the High, certainly accepts the Holy Prophet’s (S) prayers and supplications; therefore, it follows that Allah is certainly pleased with Imam al-Husayn (as).

We can deduce that Imam al-Husayn’s uprising and revolt against Yazid was also a source of pleasure for Allah. This point casts more doubt upon the legitimacy of Yazid’s claim for caliphate.

### **4. al-Husayn (as), the master of the youths of Paradise**

Abu Sa‘id recounts that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«الحسن والحسين سيدي شباب أهل الجنة»

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two leaders of the youths of paradise.”[16](#)

Al-Tirmidhi believes that this *hadith* is sound and correct, and al-Albani agrees with him.[17](#)

If Imam al-Husayn (as), according to the sayings of the Holy Prophet (S), is the master of the youths of Paradise, then it follows that all his actions and works in this world, including rising up against Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, are pleasing to Allah. Again, the legitimacy of Yazid's caliphate becomes subject to question and doubt.

## **5. The continuity and stability of the Prophet's (S) mission depended heavily on al-Husayn's (as) uprising**

On his own chain of transmission, al-Tirmidhi narrates from Ya'la ibn Marrah that the Holy Prophet (S) said,

«حسين منِّي وأنا من حسين.»

“Al-Husayn is from me and I am from al-Husayn.”<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that Imam al-Husayn (as) comes from the Prophet (S) because he is the Holy Prophet's (S) grandson born from his daughter Fatimah (as). However, what is the meaning of the second part of the Prophet's (S) saying that he is from al-Husayn (as)?

We can positively assert through examination of the results of his uprising that Imam al-Husayn (as) revived the Prophet's (S) mission by rising up against Yazid. His martyrdom and the martyrdom of the youths of Bani Hashim and all his companions kept the true message of the Holy Prophet (S) alive.

The survival of the religion of Islam and the continuity of the Holy Prophet's (S) mission were secured by Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising. Therefore, it can be said that the Holy Prophet's (S) characteristics is dependent on Imam al-Husayn's (as).

Al-Tirmidhi considered the previously mentioned *hadith* of the Prophet (S) to be good [*hasan*].<sup>19</sup> After recounting this *hadith*, Hakim al-Neyshaburi has also presented its sound and correct chain of transmission [*sahih al-asnad*], and Dhahabi agrees with him.<sup>20</sup>

In his book entitled “*Misbah al-Zajajah fi Zawa'id ibn Majah*”, Busayri says that the chain of transmission of this *hadith* is good [*hasan*] and the transmitters recounting it are all honest and trustworthy [*thaqah*].<sup>21</sup>

After narrating this *hadith*, Haythami says that its chain of transmission is good [*hasan*].<sup>22</sup>

## **6. Peace treaty with Imam al-Hasan and the caliphate**

The conditions that Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufiyan accepted in the peace agreement he signed with Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) are worthy of careful thought and consideration.

Mu'awiyah had mentioned certain conditions in his proposal for peace, and Imam al-Hasan (as) added other conditions.[23](#) Among the items that were agreed upon was a stipulation that Imam al-Hasan (as) would cede the caliphate to Mu'awiyah on the condition that, when Mu'awiyah died, the caliphate would be handed back to Imam al-Hasan (as).

In the event that Imam al-Hasan (as) were not alive, the caliphate would be handed over to his brother Imam al-Husayn (as).[24](#)

That is why as soon as Imam al-Husayn (as) heard that Mu'awiyah had died, he told 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr, "I will never pay allegiance to Yazid, because after my brother, al-Hasan (as), the caliphate returns to me. Mu'awiyah did as he wanted, and swore to my brother that he would never hand the caliphate over to anyone of his children. He promised that if I were alive, the caliphate would return to me."[25](#)

It has been clearly stated in many Sunni sources that Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba (as) put a condition on Mu'awiyah that he should not hand over the caliphate to anyone after he died.[26](#)

This peace agreement and its conditions, which were agreed upon by both parties of the treaty, substantiate the illegitimacy of the succession of Yazid to the caliphate after his father's death.

## **7. Mu'awiyah himself was not the legitimate caliph**

Sunni Islam accepts the legitimacy of the incoming caliph by relying on the oath of the previous caliph. However, the caliphate and Imamate of the previous caliph must indisputably be proven before his oath can be considered valid. In Mu'awiyah's case, this was not so. His caliphate was never proven legitimate, as the following information shows:

Firstly, Mu'awiyah gained control of the caliphate and predominance over the Islamic community by rebelling against the rightful Imam of the Muslims, Amir al-Mu'minin Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as). Therefore, Mu'awiyah's caliphate itself lacked legitimacy and was void of any reasonable religious or legal base.

Secondly, in Imam al-Hasan's (as) peace agreement, it was stated that the tax, revenue and tribute of Abjard must be handed over to Imam al-Hasan (as). This confirms that Imam al-Hasan (as) did not recognize Mu'awiyah as the rightful caliph of the Muslims. The reason is that the area of Abjard had come under the fold of Islam peacefully, and had not been conquered by force or the strength of an army.

According to the Islamic law, the tax from this kind of place is exclusively reserved for the legitimate Imam of the Muslims. Therefore, Imam al-Hasan (as), who was the legitimate Imam of the Muslims, demanded this share and allotment in his agreement with Mu'awiyah.[27](#)

Thirdly, one of the conditions that Imam al-Hasan (as) included in the peace pact was that Mu'awiyah would have to abstain from calling himself *amir al-mu'minin* (the Commander of the Faithful). This is a clear declaration from Imam al-Hasan (as) that he did not in reality support or endorse the legitimacy of the government of Mu'awiyah, the son of Abu Sufiyan.

## **8. The absence of allegiance for Yazid**

Some have ventured to prove that the people paid allegiance to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, but upon study of historical accounts and reflection regarding the events that happened, one can easily see that this assertion is not true.

Firstly, in a letter to his governor of Medina, Yazid wrote, "You must secure the allegiance of individuals who enjoy special honor and status among the people by whatever means there are at your disposal; secure the allegiance of such people as al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar, 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Bakr and 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr.

If they refuse to pay allegiance, kill them."<sup>28</sup> Of course, it must be pointed out that allegiance that is paid reluctantly or out of coercion is not considered to be legitimate or valid at all.

Secondly, the people of Iraq had written a letter to Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (as) in which they manifestly declared that they did not have an *imam* and were not going to pay allegiance to anyone save al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (as).<sup>29</sup>

Thirdly, Shabrawi Shafi'i strongly opposes any defence of Yazid's caliphate by certain scholars. First, he quotes and recounts the reasons which have been put forward by Ghazzali and Ibn al-'Arabi as their legal bases and reasons for prohibiting cursing or reviling Yazid.

Then, he gives a detailed account of the overstatements of these two people regarding the issue of cursing Yazid. He says, "The statements of Ghazzali and Ibn al-'Arabi are false, because they are founded on the assumption that the allegiance paid to Yazid—Allah's curse be on him—was correct and sound, in spite of the fact that this view is opposed by historians."<sup>30</sup>

## **The supporters of Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising**

Most Muslims, including the Sunnis, remember the historical epic of Imam al-Husayn (as) with unanimous honor and respect. In addition, after the event of Karbala, those who had either opposed the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) or had taken a position of neutrality and non-alignment soon abandoned these positions and in the course of events, the majority of them announced their support for the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) in various ways.

1. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Hurr Ju'fi was one who had initially refused to help Imam al-Husayn (as). After the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as), he became an intolerant opponent of Bani Umayyah's government.

He composed songs of lamentation for the martyrs of Karbala and started calling on the people to rebel and rise up against the rule of Yazid.[31](#)

2. Zayd ibn Arqam was a man who had tried to dissuade Imam al-Husayn (as) from continuing on his course of action by appealing to the Imam (as) in a devout and mystical manner. In the end, he was persuaded to give up his opposition because of Imam al-Husayn's (as) legitimate and moral right. When he saw the captives of Karbala being taken to Sham and the heads severed from the dead bodies of the martyrs being carried on lances, when he observed the shameful way in which Ibn Ziyad was behaving towards the victims, when he saw how low the Muslims had sunk and how abject they had become, he was deeply moved by the sorrowful event.

He could not help breaking down and crying. He said "O people! From now on, you will be worse off than slaves. You have killed the son of Fatimah (as), and have made yourselves subjects of the son of Marjanah. I swear upon Allah! He will kill the best of you and enslave the worst among you. Woe on he who is content with abjectness and disgrace!"[32](#)

3. Abu al-'Ala' Mu'arri says, "The brutal killing of al-Husayn (as) and the usurpation of the caliphate by Yazid was a wicked act of our age and our people."[33](#)

4. Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh is one who believes in supporting only a religious and just government. He maintains that opposing an unjust and tyrannical government is obligatory upon all Muslims. He considers Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising against Yazid as opposition against an unjust usurper and oppressor.[34](#)

5. 'Abd Allah 'Alayiki writes, "Al-Husayn (as) did not rise up against an *imam*. On the contrary, he revolted against a transgressor who had imposed himself upon the people or had been imposed upon them by his father. It is very likely that if this movement had been made by a person other than Imam al-Husayn (as), and against a person other than Yazid, the filthy propaganda apparatus of the rulers of that time would have easily and skillfully succeeded at distorting the lofty aims of the uprising. But al-Husayn (as) was a unique and different man; he had a very brilliant background and was famous among the Muslims. There was also much testimony given in his favor by the Holy Prophet (S). There were *hadiths* recorded which foretold this uprising.

Now we have a scenario where al-Husayn (as) is on one side of event, and the wicked Yazid and the corrupt household of Bani Umayyah is on the opposite side. This sharp contrast made the movement of al-Husayn (as) shine like a bright star in a dark night so much so that even where the positions of opponents of al-Husayn's (as) uprising are mentioned in Sunni books, it is for the purpose of negating and condemning them."[35](#)

6. 'Abbas Mahmud 'Aqqad believes that it is unfair to analyze and evaluate Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising using narrow human standards. He writes, "Al-Husayn's (as) exodus from Mecca towards Iraq is not a movement which can be judged according to ordinary standards because this uprising is among

rare historical movements that involve the invitation of the people towards religion and political awareness. The only people who are capable of making such unique movements are those who have been created solely for such missions. Exposing oneself to danger in the way that al-Husayn (as) did, does not even occur to the minds of ordinary people... Rather, this is an unparalleled movement in the history of mankind which calls for unique and remarkable individuals..."<sup>36</sup>

He criticizes orientalists for failing to understand the conditions surrounding Imam al-Husayn's (as) uprising. While protesting against their lack of perception, he states, "How good it would have been had the orientalists comprehended the issue of religious belief in the person of Imam al-Husayn (as). Orientalists have to be reminded that for Imam al-Husayn (as), Islam was not a temporal issue that could be compromised. Al-Husayn (as) was a person with the strongest faith in Islamic law. He was a man who believed that suspension of the limits set by Allah (cessation in the practice of Islamic laws) was the greatest of all calamities that would sooner or later befall not only him and His household, but the Arab nation and the Islamic community as whole..."<sup>37</sup>

## Yazid, Instigator of Imam al-Husayn's (as) Death

Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was an Umayyad caliph who committed uncountable crimes during his short-lived reign. In the first year of his three-year rule, he issued orders that the Prophet's (S) grandchild, Imam al-Husayn (as), must be put to death along with all his companions. The method in which this objective was carried out was so abominable that it gave birth to countless subsequent uprisings against Yazid.

To this day, this despicable action has remained a legitimate cause for constant sorrow and protest, and many Sunni scholars have voiced strong objections against Yazid. Unfortunately though, some biased and extremist 'scholars' and their narrow minded followers have ventured to come to Yazid's defence and have fabricated writings in praise of Yazid to try to deceive readers about his dark and treacherous role in history.

We will now examine this issue in detail and provide historical evidence to bear witness to the fact that Yazid was the direct instigator of the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as).

- [1.](#) Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi, Al-'Awasim min al-Qawahim, p. 222.
- [2.](#) Muhibb al-Din Khatib, Al-Khutut al-'Aridah, p. 232.
- [3.](#) Al-'Awasim min al-Qawahim, Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi, p. 222.
- [4.](#) Manawi, Fayd al-Qadir, vol. 1, p. 265, vol. 5, p. 213; The Introduction of Ibn Khaldun, p. 181.
- [5.](#) Aghalit al-Muwarikhin, p. 120.
- [6.](#) Tarajum Rijal al-Gharnayn, Al-Sadis wa al-Sabi', p. 6.
- [7.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 6, p. 3, Kitab al-Amarah.
- [8.](#) Sahih Bukhari, vol. 8, p. 127, Bab al-Istikhlaf.
- [9.](#) Hamawayni, Fara'id al-Samtayn, vol. 2, p. 132; Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, vol. 3, pp. 281-282.
- [10.](#) Ibid.
- [11.](#) Hamawayni, Fara'id al-Samtayn, vol. 1, p. 55.
- [12.](#) Surat al-Ahzab 33:33.

- [13.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, vol. 7, p. 130.
- [14.](#) Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 169.
- [15.](#) Ibid.
- [16.](#) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 3, pp. 3, 62, 64, 82; Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 321; Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, pp. 154, 166–167.
- [17.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 321; Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah, vol. 2, p. 423, no. 796.
- [18.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 324.
- [19.](#) Ibid.
- [20.](#) Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi, Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 177.
- [21.](#) Misbah al-Zajajah, vol. 1, p. 85.
- [22.](#) Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 181.
- [23.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 124.
- [24.](#) 'Umdah al-Talib, p. 67.
- [25.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 5, p. 12.
- [26.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 16, p. 22; Al-Futuh, vol. 4, p. 291; Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 13, p. 265.
- [27.](#) Futuh al-Buldan, p. 380.
- [28.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 5, pp. 10–11; Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 241.
- [29.](#) Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, pp. 151–152.
- [30.](#) Al-Ithaf bi Hubb al-Ashraf, p. 68.
- [31.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 5, pp. 469–470.
- [32.](#) Ibid., vol. 6, p. 262.
- [33.](#) Al-Mu'arri, Luzum ma la Yulzam, pp. 310–311.
- [34.](#) The Qur'anic Commentary of Al-Manar, vol. 1, p. 367.
- [35.](#) 'Ala'ili, Al-Imam al-Husayn, pp. 33–34.
- [36.](#) 'Iqad, Al-'Abqariyyat al-Islamiyyah, vol. 2, p. 222.
- [37.](#) Ibid., vol. 2, p. 228.

## Ibn Taymiyyah's defence of Yazid

Driven by undisguised hostility against the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), Ibn Taymiyyah rose in defence of Yazid. He endeavored by all means to exonerate Yazid of all corruption and unscrupulousness including his guilt in the killing of Imam al-Husayn (as). He has done so by shamelessly resorting to guile and deceit to justify Yazid's actions.

Ibn Taymiyyah writes, "Yazid was not pleased with the killing of al-Husayn. He even expressed his displeasure at this action."<sup>[1](#)</sup>

He also repudiates the truth of the events in which the Sham army carried the head of Imam al-Husayn (as) on a lance to Sham.<sup>[2](#)</sup> At one point, he even denies that Imam al-Husayn's (as) Household, the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as), were taken into captivity by Yazid's soldiers.<sup>[3](#)</sup>

At another juncture, Ibn Taymiyyah says, "Yazid did not issue orders to kill al-Husayn. Yazid's soldiers

did not bring the heads of those killed at Karbala on lances to Sham to be presented to Yazid. Yazid did not hit the teeth of al-Husayn with his stick. In fact, it was 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad who did all these actions."<sup>4</sup>

In this section, evidence will be cited to substantiate the fact that when Ibn Ziyad killed Imam al-Husayn (as), he was acting under strict and direct orders issued by Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah.

## **1. Yazid appointed Ibn Ziyad governor of Kufah**

Upon examination of historical evidence, it is apparent that it was Yazid that appointed 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad to the post of governor of Kufah. Before then, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad was the governor of Basrah.

This appointment sheds light upon the view that Yazid intended to confront Imam al-Husayn (as). Appointing Ibn Ziyad to the position of governor of Kufah was a premeditated plan because he was the only person Yazid deemed capable of carrying out the duty of killing al-Husayn (as).

It is worth noting that Yazid did not, previous to that time, have a good relationship with 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. He had even considered dismissing him from the governorship of Basrah.

However, because he did not deem Nu'man ibn Bashir, who was the incumbent governor of Kufah, capable of confronting Muslim ibn 'Aqil and Imam al-Husayn (as), Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was left with no option but to appeal to 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad for help.

He not only expressed his sudden pleasure with Ibn Ziyad, but also appointed him to the governorship of both Kufah and Basrah as well. In a letter to Ibn Ziyad, Yazid wrote, "Put Muslim ibn 'Aqil under strict surveillance. Follow and track him down. If you arrest him, put him to death."<sup>5</sup>

Muslim ibn 'Aqil had come to Kufah as Imam al-Husayn's (as) envoy. His mission was to inform the people that Imam al-Husayn (as) was on his way to Kufah.

## **2. Yazid and Ibn Ziyad were in constant contact**

History bears witness to the fact that when Yazid appointed 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad as the governor of Kufah, he ordered Ibn Ziyad to be in constant consultation with him on every matter, large or small, that involved Imam al-Husayn (as).

From this, one can rightly infer that all the crimes which the son of Ziyad committed, including the killing of Imam al-Husayn (as), were carried out on direct orders from Yazid.

Tabari writes, "After martyring Muslim ibn 'Aqil and Hani, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad cut their heads from their bodies and sent them together with a letter to Sham for Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. In his reply to 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad's letter, after mentioning various issues, Yazid pointed out, 'News has reached me that

al-Husayn ibn 'Ali has set off towards Kufah. Enlist spies to keep anyone allied to al-Husayn under strict surveillance and employ armed men to arrest his followers.

Imprison al-Husayn's followers on any accusation you can trump up, and inform me about everything that takes place. May God's peace, mercy and blessing be upon you'.<sup>6</sup>

We can deduce from this historical evidence that Yazid not only entrusted the city of Kufah and confrontation with Imam al-Husayn (as) to 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, but that Yazid himself was also personally involved in the events that took place and in direct command of all affairs. Consequently, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad kept reporting whatever he did to Yazid.

Additional evidence to substantiate that Yazid had complicity in all the crimes committed by 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad is that Yazid extolled Ibn Ziyad for every decision and action he took.

### 3. Yazid's order: allegiance or death

History bears witness that Yazid was determined to kill Imam al-Husayn (as) in the case that he refused to pay him allegiance. In his book of history, "*Tarikh Ya'qubi*", Ya'qubi writes, "In a letter which he wrote to Walid ibn 'Aqabah ibn Abi Sufiyan, his agent and governor in Medina, Yazid commanded,

'When my letter reaches you, summon al-Husayn ibn 'Ali and 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr. Make sure that you get allegiance from them on my behalf. If they refuse to pay allegiance, cut their necks and send their heads to me'.<sup>7</sup>

It is obvious from this historical record that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah had a premeditated intention to kill Imam al-Husayn (as) if the Holy Imam (as) refused to pay allegiance.

#### Question

Of course, it is true that some historians have recorded Yazid's letter in a different manner. For example, Tabari has recorded the letter in this way: "Yazid wrote to Walid, 'Adopt extreme harshness when you confront al-Husayn, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar and 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr. Do not permit them leave until they pay allegiance. May God's peace be upon you'.<sup>8</sup>

In this version of the letter, there is no talk of killing Imam al-Husayn (as) or his followers.

#### Response

Firstly, there is no real inconsistency between these two historical texts, because killing Imam al-Husayn (as) has not been explicitly prohibited in the wording of the text recorded by Tabari. Both letters are quite strong except that the ultimate order in the text quoted by Tabari does not mention killing Imam al-Husayn (as).

It is therefore possible that Yazid wrote both letters; the first one was recorded by Tabari while the second and stronger one in tone was recorded by Ya‘qubi. Bearing this in mind, we can accept both records.

Secondly, in the letter which Tabari has recorded, the expression that has been used is “adopt extreme harshness”. This might mean that the people mentioned in this letter should not be given permission to leave until they have paid allegiance. From this expression, three possibilities come to mind:

A. That “adopt extreme harshness” means a kind of sharp and hot-tempered verbal encounter with these people to insist on getting allegiance from them.

B. That the intention was to put pressure on Imam al-Husayn (as) so that he would be left with no option but to pay allegiance, but this encounter should not culminate in killing Imam al-Husayn (as). (Neither of these two possibilities seems logical, because Yazid knew Imam al-Husayn’s (as) character and personality well. He knew with certainty that Imam al-Husayn (as) would never pay allegiance to him no matter what the cost.)

C. The third possibility; the possibility which conforms to what really happened, is that “adopt extreme harshness” means Yazid had given Walid complete jurisdiction over the issue of Imam al-Husayn (as) and he was free to deal with Imam al-Husayn (as) in whatever way he deemed suitable to get the job done. If Walid felt compelled to kill Imam al-Husayn (as), should he refuse to pay allegiance to Yazid, it would have been acceptable.

This possibility is confirmed by the following points:

1. When Marwan ibn Hakam ordered Walid to kill Imam al-Husayn (as) in the case that he refused to pay allegiance to Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah, Walid excused himself from carrying out this abominable act. The reason he put forth was not that killing Imam al-Husayn (as) was not compatible with orders from Yazid, but because killing Imam al-Husayn (as) was *haram* and therefore forbidden by Islamic dictates.[9](#)
2. When Walid called Imam al-Husayn (as) to the governor’s palace, Imam al-Husayn (as) knew that Walid had been ordered to kill him if he refused to pay allegiance. Therefore, he went to the governor’s palace accompanied by a number of young men from the tribe of Bani Hashim. He also advised ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr to do the same.[10](#)
3. In the holy month of Ramadan of the same year in which he ascended to the caliphate, Yazid dismissed Walid ibn ‘Aqabah from his post as governor. It is important to mention that this happened only about two months after Yazid claimed the caliphate. Yazid discharged Walid despite reinstating in their posts all the governors who had worked for his father. The reason for dismissing Walid was that Yazid knew that Walid was not capable of carrying out his orders as regards killing Imam al-Husayn (as). So he dealt with him in the same manner that he had previously dealt with Nu‘man ibn Bashir, the governor of Kufah. Nu‘man ibn Bashir had been ordered to have a harsh and violent encounter with

Muslim ibn ‘Aqil. When he did not do this, Yazid replaced him with ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad.<sup>[11](#)</sup>

Yazid discharged Walid ibn ‘Aqabah just like he had previously dismissed Nu‘man ibn Bashir. Therefore, it can be deduced that Yazid wanted Walid to kill Imam al–Husayn (as) if necessary. Since Walid was not ready to do so, he paid the price and was dismissed.

#### **4. Yazid’s second letter to Walid ibn ‘Aqabah**

Ibn A‘tham recounts that Walid wrote a letter to Yazid informing him about the events that had transpired between him and Imam al–Husayn (as) and between him and Zubayr. Yazid was infuriated by what had taken place. In a reply to Walid, he wrote, “When my letter reaches you, get a second allegiance from the people of Medina.

Let ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr go free, because he cannot escape us. However, send the head of al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) to me together with the reply of this letter. If you do so, I will provide you with well-bred horses along with greater gifts and better rewards...”<sup>[12](#)</sup>

#### **5. Exposing Imam al–Husayn (as) to death**

Ibn ‘Asakir recounts, “When Yazid was informed about Imam al–Husayn’s exodus towards Kufah, he wrote a letter to his governor, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, in which he ordered him to battle Imam al–Husayn (as) and send the Imam to Sham.”<sup>[13](#)</sup>

Ibn A‘tham narrates, “Ibn Ziyad addressed the people of Kufah in this way, ‘Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah has sent a letter to me. Along with it, he has sent four thousand *dinars* and two hundred thousand *dirhams* for me to distribute among you. Yazid has ordered me to send you to war with his enemy al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali. Therefore, follow Yazid’s orders and obey him’.”<sup>[14](#)</sup>

Suyuti says, “In a letter to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, Yazid’s governor in Iraq, he ordered him to engage in battle with al–Husayn and kill him.”<sup>[15](#)</sup>

Ibn A‘tham writes, “When Ibn Ziyad killed Imam al–Husayn, Yazid paid him a reward of one million *dirhams*.”<sup>[16](#)</sup>

After the martyrdom of Imam al–Husayn (as), the brother of ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, Salam ibn Ziyad, went to visit Yazid. When Yazid saw him, he said, “O household of Ziyad, love and friendship has become obligatory upon you from the household of Abu Sufiyan.”<sup>[17](#)</sup>

When Ibn Ziyad went to see Yazid after killing Imam al–Husayn (as), Yazid came forward to welcome him. He embraced Ibn Ziyad and kissed him on the forehead. Yazid had Ibn Ziyad sit on the throne and even brought him his womenfolk.

He ordered a singer to sing a beautiful song for Ibn Ziyad. Yazid addressed his butler, “Make us drunk with wine!” Then, he gave Ibn Ziyad and ‘Umar ibn Sa’d a reward of one million *dirhams* each from the public treasury. He even ceded the revenue of Iraq to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad for a period of one year.”<sup>18</sup>

## **6. While in Mecca, Imam al-Husayn (as) foretold that the enemies of Allah were planning to kill him**

Tabari recounts that Imam al-Husayn (as) publicly addressed the people, “Do you know what Ibn Zubayr says?” The people said, “No, we don’t know. May Allah sacrifice us for you!” Imam al-Husayn (as) said, “Ibn Zubayr says, ‘Stay in this mosque. I will gather a group of fighters for you’.”

Then the Imam (as) said, “I swear upon Allah! It is better for me to be killed an inch outside Mecca than to be killed an inch inside it. I swear upon Allah! Even if I hide and seek refuge in caves, they will never rest until they pull me out and do to me what they have already decided to do.”<sup>19</sup>

We can conclude from this historical information that Imam al-Husayn (as) was aware of Bani Umayyah’s malicious intentions. He knew that the government headed by Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah had no other objective but to kill him.

## **7. Yazid issued the order to put Imam al-Husayn (as) to death**

Ya‘qubi recounts, “By the time al-Husayn started off towards Iraq, Yazid had appointed ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad to be the governor of that land. Yazid wrote to his newly appointed governor, ‘News has reached me that the people of Kufah have written a letter to al-Husayn inviting him to come to them. At this very moment as I write, he is moving towards Kufah...

If you kill him, then so much the better; there will remain no more duty on you. However, if you do not put him to death, I will send you to join your dead ancestors. So beware, and do not lose this opportunity’.”<sup>20</sup>

From this historical text, we can conclude that Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah had charged ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad with the duty of killing Imam al-Husayn (as). He had even gone so far as to intimidate Ibn Ziyad with death if he dared disobey his orders.

## **8. Ibn Ziyad’s letter to Imam al-Husayn (as)**

Ibn A‘tham narrates that Hurr ibn Yazid and his companions had descended upon Imam al-Husayn with the intention of encountering him at war. Hurr wrote a letter to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad informing him that Imam al-Husayn (as) had arrived at Karbala. The son of Ziyad decided to write a letter to Imam al-Husayn (as), in which he said, “... and after this, O al-Husayn!

News has reached me that you have arrived at Karbala. Amir al-Mu'minin Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah has written a letter to me ordering that I should not be content with anything save sending you to the Omniscient one or dealing with you in whatever way I wish..."[21](#)

This is yet another document that shows that Yazid himself had given 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad the responsibility of killing Imam al-Husayn (as) if he refused to pay allegiance.

## **9. Ibn 'Abbas's letter to Yazid**

One of the documents which serves as evidence to prove that Yazid played a direct role in the killing of Imam al-Husayn (as) is a letter which 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas wrote to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. In this letter, Ibn 'Abbas admonished Yazid to kill Imam al-Husayn (as). A Part of the letter reads, "From 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. And after this..."

O illegitimate child! It is you who killed al-Husayn with your contaminated and filthy hands. Do not suppose that I have forgotten that you have blood on your hands and that you have martyred al-Husayn and the youths of Bani Hashim who were bright shining lights and stars of guidance for those in darkness..."[22](#)

It is important to note that Ibn 'Abbas was known as a man that would not accuse any person falsely.

## **10. Yazid publicly boasted about killing Imam al-Husayn (as)**

Ibn Athir narrates, "After al-Husayn's martyrdom, Yazid called for a general meeting. The people of Sham were coming in to meet him while the blessed head of Imam al-Husayn (as) was placed next to him. He had a wooden stick in his hands with which he was hitting Imam al-Husayn's throat (as) while reciting poems composed by al-Husayn ibn Hamam. These actions made his arrogance and pride at killing Imam al-Husayn (as) obvious."[23](#)

If Yazid were in fact not pleased about killing Imam al-Husayn (as), why would he hit the throat, and according to narrations of other historians the lips and teeth, of the severed head of Imam al-Husayn (as)? Moreover, why would he recite poems which alluded to his pride at having done such a deed?

Suyuti writes, "After al-Husayn (as) and his father's progeny were massacred, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad sent their heads on lances to Sham for Yazid. At first, Yazid became very happy, but when he realized that the Muslims had started to regard him as their enemy and had begun to hate him with all their hearts for what he had done, Yazid showed superficial remorse and regret.

It was appropriate that the people had every right to hate him."[24](#)

Sibt ibn al-Jawzi recounts, "When they brought the head of Imam al-Husayn (as) to Yazid, he invited the people of Sham to come to his palace. He then started hitting Imam al-Husayn's (as) head with a

staff while reciting poems composed by Ibn Zab'ari.

The purport of these poems was: By killing the elders of Bani Hashim, we have taken revenge for our forefathers who were killed in the Battle of Badr. By killing the elders of Bani Hashim, we have gotten even.”[25](#)

## **11. Ibn Ziyad, highly regarded after killing al-Husayn (as)**

Ibn Athir writes, “When Imam al-Husayn’s (as) head was brought for Yazid, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad gained high esteem before Yazid. Yazid bestowed numerous favors upon him. He was extremely pleased with him. However, it did not take long before Yazid learnt that the people had been angered by what he had done, and were cursing and insulting him. He subsequently feigned remorse about Imam al-Husayn’s (as) killing...”[26](#)

Tabari narrates, “When ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad killed al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) and his father’s progeny, he sent their heads on lances to Sham for Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah. Yazid was initially pleased by this and the son of Ziyad acquired an excellent position before Yazid...”[27](#)

## **12. Declaration of one present in Yazid’s court**

Tabari recounts, “Then Yazid gave permission to the people to come to visit him. The people entered the king’s court and saw Imam al-Husayn’s (as) head placed opposite Yazid. Yazid was hitting Imam al-Husayn’s (as) head with a wooden stick in his hands. A man from among the Prophet’s (S) companions named Abu Bazrah Aslami addressed Yazid protestingly, ‘Are you hitting the throat of al-Husayn with your staff?

Be aware that your stick is hitting a place that I personally saw the Holy Prophet (S) kissing. O Yazid! You will arise on the Day of Resurrection without an intercessor save Ibn Ziyad, but al-Husayn will come on the Day of Resurrection with Muhammad (S), Allah’s Prophet, as his intercessor.’ Then, Abu Bazrah Aslami rose up, turned his back to Yazid and left the gathering.”[28](#)

## **13. Yazid was informed about everything**

History testifies to the fact that Yazid was completely aware of everything Ibn Ziyad did regarding Imam al-Husayn (as) even after his martyrdom. Ibn Athir narrates, “When the *Ahl al-Bayt* (as) of Imam al-Husayn reached Kufah, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad imprisoned them and sent the news of what had taken place to Yazid... Afterwards, a reply letter came from Yazid to Ibn Ziyad containing orders that the captives should be brought to Sham...”[29](#)

From this historical information, along with other information previously mentioned, we can deduce that the son of Ziyad did not perform any significant action without Yazid’s permission.

## **14. Yazid's son admitted his father's guilt**

Ya'qubi relates from Mu'awiyah ibn Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, Yazid's son, that after inheriting his father's position and ascending to the caliphate, he addressed the people in this way, "And after praising Allah...

Be informed that my grandfather Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufiyan had quarrelled and disputed about the caliphate with a person who was more deserving and worthy of it as regards blood relationship and proximity to the Holy Prophet (S).

Then, after him, my father got the reigns of power while he did not possess an acceptable moral character at all. In fact, he was overridden by his carnal desires." Then, Mu'awiyah, the son of Yazid, started crying and said, "One of the hardest things for us to bear is that we know what affliction and tragedy he was caught up in, and what a terrible fate he has endorsed for himself. He killed and disregarded the honor of the Holy Prophet's (S) progeny with impunity and set the Ka'bah on fire..."<sup>30</sup>

This historical text is excellent evidence to substantiate that Yazid had total involvement in the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as). There was no one closer to Yazid than his own son, and he publicly announced that his father was Imam al-Husayn's (as) killer.

## **15. Ibn Ziyad was not censured for killing Imam al-Husayn (as)**

If one were to assume, as some people say, that Yazid did not issue orders to kill Imam al-Husayn (as) and that Imam al-Husayn (as) was in fact killed as a result of 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad's independent actions and that Yazid was displeased by Ibn Ziyad's deeds, Yazid should have confronted him strongly with intense opposition to his insubordinate behavior. He ought to have reproached him in a way that suited his appalling act.

Even in the case that Yazid was opposed to Imam al-Husayn (as), if he in fact did not issue orders to kill the Imam and 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad committed this hideous crime without Yazid's authorization, he should have been sharply censured for overstepping his authority and defying the central government. However, what historians have recorded is that not only Ibn Ziyad was not rebuked by Yazid in the slightest, but was instead rewarded handsomely on many occasions.

Yazid's unanticipated behavior under the circumstances casts grave doubt on the veracity of the idea that Ibn Ziyad was acting independently rather than under direct orders from Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah.

## **16. Ibn Ziyad retained his high governmental post**

History bears witness to the fact that even after killing Imam al-Husayn (as), 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad was retained in his position of authority as the governor of both Kufah and Basrah. This in itself demonstrates that Yazid was satisfied with the actions of 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad.

Ibn Athir writes, “When Yazid died, news of his death was brought to Ibn Ziyad... a call for congregational prayer was made. The people gathered for prayer, and ‘Ubayd Allah went on the pulpit and informed the people about the death of Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah.”<sup>31</sup>

This shows that ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad remained in his position of authority as the governor of Kufah and Basrah up to the time of Yazid’s death. We also know that if ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad had acted in an independent manner when killing Imam al–Husayn (as), a manner which was displeasing to Yazid, he certainly would have relieved him of his post just as he had previously dismissed Nu‘man ibn Bashir and Walid ibn ‘Aqabah. Yazid had dismissed Nu‘man ibn Bashir from the governorship of Kufah and Walid ibn ‘Aqabah from the governorship of Medina because he was displeased with both of them.

## **17. Yazid sent rewards for ‘Ubayd Allah in Ziyad**

After the martyrdom of Imam al–Husayn (as), Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah sent numerous rewards for ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and he gained a very special proximity to Yazid.

1. Ibn Athir recounts, “When the head of al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali was sent for Yazid, ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad was raised in stature. He was now regarded with high esteem by Yazid. A lot of rewards and gifts were bestowed on him by the son of Mu‘awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan. Yazid made strenuous efforts to be sure that ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad was happy with his rewards for killing Imam al–Husayn (as).”<sup>32</sup>

2. Tabari narrates, “When ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad killed al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) and his father’s progeny, he sent their heads on lances to Sham for Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah. At first Yazid was pleased and held ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad in great esteem.”<sup>33</sup>

## **18. Yazid protected ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad from criticism**

Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah not only did not reprimand ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad for killing Imam al–Husayn (as), he even went so far as to prevent others from reproaching him.

Tabari and other historians recount “When the captives were brought to Yazid, Yahya ibn Hakam verbally reproached ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad for what he had done in two verses of poetry... but Yazid punched him on the chest and said, ‘Keep Quiet!’”<sup>34</sup>

This behavior, along with his obstinate defence and support of ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, is a sign of approval that Yazid was pleased with him for killing Imam al–Husayn (as) and that it is highly likely that the crime of killing Imam al–Husayn (as) was carried out under direct orders from Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah.

## **19. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad was Yazid’s courtier and advisor**

Mas‘udi and other historians have recounted, “Yazid was always a pleasure–seeking man... One day

after killing al-Husayn Ibn ‘Ali (as), he was seated in a gathering where liquor was being served with ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad on his right hand side. Yazid said to his bartender in verse,

إِسْقِنِي شَرِبَةً تَرَوِّي مَشَاشِي ثُمَّ مِلْ فَاسِقٍ مِثْلَهَا ابْنَ زِيَادٍ

صَاحِبَ السِّرِّ وَالْإِمَانَةِ عِنْدِي وَلِتَسْدِيدِ مَغْنَمِي وَجِهَادِي

*“Give me liquor that is strong enough to completely satisfy my whole being.*

*After you have served me, turn to Ibn Ziyad, and quench his thirst in the same way.*

*He is the possessor of my secrets and trusts.*

*And do it for the purpose of confirming his awards and endeavors.”<sup>35</sup>*

Sibt ibn al-Jawzi writes, “Yazid called for the son of Ziyad and gave him many rewards. He made him a close companion and elevated his position. Yazid even brought his womenfolk for Ibn Ziyad and gave him his goblet of wine. Then, he said to his private musician, ‘Play a song.’ Then, he himself recited the two previous verses.”<sup>36</sup>

Ibn A‘tham recounts that Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah gave a reward of one million *dirhams* to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad for killing Imam al-Husayn (as).<sup>37</sup>

## **20. Choosing one of two options**

In his book “*Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*”, Ibn Athir narrates that ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad addressed Musafir ibn Sharih Yashkari thus, “I killed al-Husayn because Yazid made it clear that I had to choose between killing al-Husayn or myself being killed. I preferred killing al-Husayn to being killed.”<sup>38</sup>

Ya‘qubi writes, “In a letter addressed to ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, Yazid wrote, ‘News has reached me that the people of Kufah have written to al-Husayn inviting him to come to them. I have been informed that right now, as I write, he has left Mecca and is traveling towards Kufah in order to join them.

Your territory, from among all other territories, is being put to the test and your life is on the line. If you kill al-Husayn, there will be no problem. However, if you do not kill him, you will join your forefathers. So beware that you do not lose this opportunity’.”<sup>39</sup>

## **21. Imam al-Sajjad (as) made the truth clear**

On various occasions, Imam al-Sajjad (as) made it clear that Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah was Imam al-

Husayn's (as) killer.

1. When they brought Imam al-Sajjad (as) to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, the son of Mu'awiyah addressed Imam al-Sajjad (as) in this way, "Are you the son of that man who has been killed by Allah?" Imam al-Sajjad (as) replied, "I am 'Ali, the son of the man whom you have killed." Then, Imam al-Sajjad (as) recited this verse,

﴿... وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا﴾

***"And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it forever."***[40](#)<sup>41</sup>

2. At another time, Imam al-Sajjad (as) said, "O Yazid! It is enough of your shedding our blood..."[42](#)

3. Ibn A'tham relates, "Imam al-Sajjad (as) addressed Yazid as follows, 'If only you could perceive what you have done against my father, if only you could comprehend what you have done against my Household, and if only you could understand what you have done against the rights of my brothers and uncles, then you would run away to the hills and mountains. There, you would spread gravel stones and roll yourself upon them. You would raise your voice high weeping for yourself. How is it possible that the head of al-Husayn (as), the son of Fatimah (as) and 'Ali (as), has been hung on the city gates when he was Allah's trust among you, the people?'"[43](#)

4. There is also Imam al-Sajjad's (as) address to Yazid in his famous sermon in Damascus, when he said, "Is the Muhammad that you talk about your ancestor or my ancestor? If you want to pretend that he is your ancestor, you have undoubtedly lied and become a disbeliever. And if you say that he is my ancestor, then why have you killed his progeny?"[44](#)

## **22. Yazid expressed pleasure at killing Imam al-Husayn (as)**

When we pay careful attention to diverse historical documents, it becomes clear that Yazid was very happy with killing al-Husayn (as). There are many historical documents which provide evidence beyond doubt that Yazid was pleased with what had transpired. We also have to pay attention to the *hadith* which says, "Anyone who is pleased with an action of a group of people is one of those people." Let us now refer to some evidence to prove our assertion.

1. While talking to Nu'man ibn Bashir, Yazid said, "Praise Allah because He has killed al-Husayn."[45](#)

2. Ya'qubi writes, "Yazid was in his garden when the news that Imam al-Husayn had been killed was brought to him. He shouted out aloud, '*Allah-u Akbar!*'"[46](#)

3. When the captives were brought to Sham, Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah called the elders of Sham to come

and congratulate him for the victory.[47](#)

4. Maqrizi and other historians have recounted that when ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad placed the head of Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) before Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah, he started hitting Imam al-Husayn’s (as) teeth with a rod. He was doing this while reciting poetry. Then, he gave orders that Imam al-Husayn’s (as) head should be hung in the palace for three days.[48](#)

Many Sunni scholars have opposed Yazid due to his pleasure at killing Imam al-Husayn (as), and even cursed him.

5. Suyuti narrates, “May Allah curse al-Husayn’s (as) killers. May Allah curse Ibn Ziyad and Yazid.”[49](#)

6. Some people asked al-Jawzi what his opinion was regarding cursing Yazid. He answered, “Ahmad ibn Hanbal permitted cursing him, and we say that we do not like Yazid because of what he did to the son of the Prophet’s daughter (as) and because he sent the Prophet’s (S) Household in a state of captivity to Sham aboard camel litter.”[50](#)

7. Dhahabi says, “Yazid was a cruel and hardhearted man. He used to drink wine and commit forbidden acts [*munkarat*]. His reign began with killing al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali and ended with the event of Harrah.”[51](#)

8. Ibn Khaldun recounts the killing of Imam al-Husayn (as) thus, “Without doubt, Imam al-Husayn was killed by Yazid. Killing Imam al-Husayn (as) is an action that underscores Yazid’s immoral nature. In this event, al-Husayn is a martyr in Allah’s way.”[52](#)

## **23. Yazid’s actions correspond with his personality**

For anyone who examines historical accounts, it becomes clear that Yazid had a treacherous personality. When one understands Yazid’s real personality, he can easily see why he could not refrain from killing such a revered person as Imam al-Husayn (as), and why doing so was an easy task for him.

Mas‘udi narrates, “Yazid was a pleasure-seeking person who owned slave girls, dogs, monkeys, leopards and drunken jesters. Whatever ugly act he committed was imitated by those close to him.

During the three years of his caliphate, music became widespread both in Mecca and Medina.

Instruments of pleasure and amusement were commonplace. The people openly and publicly engaged in wine drinking.”[53](#)

A group of people from Medina, among them ‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah and other noble men of Medina, went to see Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah. Yazid agreed to meet them. When they returned to Medina, some of the people of the group began talking ill of and castigating Yazid.

They announced that they were returning from the presence a man who lacked religion, drank wine and played the tambourine. They said that Yazid played with dogs. They reported to the people that Yazid

also had singers who sang seductive music for him...[54](#)

‘Umar ibn Sabi‘ah says, “During his father’s reign, Yazid went to Mecca for the *haji*. When he reached Medina, he sat at a wine drinking gathering and recited poetry.”[55](#)

Suyuti writes, “The reason the people of Medina retracted the allegiance they had made to Yazid was that he used to exceed limits in committing transgressions.”[56](#)

## **24. Yazid in the viewpoint of Sunni scholars [‘ulama’]**

As previously mentioned, many Sunni scholars have strongly criticized Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah for killing Imam al–Husayn (as) and for numerous other crimes he committed. We will now mention some of these scholars and some of their criticisms:

1. Alusi says, “Anyone who says that Yazid did not sin, and hence cursing him is not permissible, should be considered as one of Yazid’s helpers and partisans.”[57](#)

2. Ibn Khaldun writes, “Ibn al–‘Arabi Maliki erred when he said, ‘Al–Husayn was killed by his grandfather’s sword.’ By making such a statement, he openly declared his consent to Yazid’s iniquitous and immoral life.”[58](#)

3. Taftazani writes, “Yazid’s satisfaction and pleasure at the killing of Imam al–Husayn (as), and his contempt towards the *Ahl al–Bayt* (as), are among his many vices detailed in the traditions. We have no hesitation about his true status. On the contrary, we do not hesitate in saying that he was a man who lacked faith. May Allah’s curse be on him and his partisans.”[59](#)

4. Jahiz says, “The crimes Yazid committed including killing al–Husayn ibn ‘Ali, taking the members of his household into captivity, hitting Imam al–Husayn’s (as) teeth and severed head with a staff, intimidating and terrorizing the people of Medina, and destruction of the Ka‘bah are all evidence of his cruelty, wickedness, hypocrisy and apostasy. Without doubt, he is corrupt and cursed and anyone who prevents the damning of such a man is damned himself.”[60](#)

5. Doctor Taha al–Husayn, the Egyptian author, writes, “Some people suppose that Yazid is exonerated from the heinous massacre of al–Husayn (as). They make ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad the scapegoat for the savage killing. If Yazid is innocent of wrongdoing and Ibn Ziyad the guilty party, why did Yazid not reproach ‘Ubayd Allah? Why did he not punish him? Why did he not relieve him of his post?”[61](#)

## **Responses to doubts**

Now that Yazid’s role in killing Imam al–Husayn (as) has been examined, we will now analyze some of the objections put forth by Yazid’s supporters.

## 1. Mu'awiyah's last will and testament to Yazid

Some people say that Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan had ordered his son in his last will and testament not to offend al-Husayn (as) nor to interfere with him in any way whatsoever because al-Husayn (as) had a greater right of kinship and nearness to the Holy Prophet (S). They believe that it is therefore impossible and unreasonable to imagine that Yazid would have dared act against his father's wishes.

### ***Response***

Firstly, the text of Mu'awiyah's reads, "... If al-Husayn revolts against you and you become triumphant over him, forgive and overlook because he has ties of relationship and kinship to you, and hence has a great right due from you..."<sup>62</sup>

We can deduce from this text that Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan requested his son to forgive al-Husayn ibn 'Ali (as) if Yazid were to be militarily victorious over the Holy Imam, but we cannot conclude that Yazid was ordered not to have any conflict with Imam al-Husayn (as) at all.

Secondly, we have previously cited abundant evidence to substantiate that Yazid was responsible for Imam al-Husayn's (as) martyrdom. Therefore, there is no room left for doubt or skepticism about who Imam al-Husayn's killer is.

Thirdly, when we refer to history with special attention paid to Yazid's corrupt personality, it is obvious that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was not at all bound or obligated to act according to his father's will. There is no historical evidence to substantiate that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah felt a strong obligation to act according to his father's last wishes.

It is worthy reminding skeptics that Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufiyan had commanded his son Yazid in his last will and testament to consent to the people's wishes if they asked him to dismiss and change the governor of Iraq. Yazid did not act according to his father's wishes in this case.

## 2. Yazid exonerated himself of the killing of al-Husayn (as)

According to some texts, Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah claimed himself to be innocent of killing Imam al-Husayn (as). They say Yazid cursed 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad and laid the blame on him for this heinous crime.<sup>63</sup>

### ***Response***

Firstly, according to evidence previously cited regarding this issue, there is convincing testimony to substantiate that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah played a direct role in killing Imam al-Husayn (as). It has already been pointed out that some people have made intense efforts to deceive others by inventing stories for the sake of justifying Yazid's despicable actions.

The fantasy that Yazid was not responsible for killing Imam al-Husayn (as) must be regarded as an

effort by ill-intentioned people to deceive others because, after the event of Karbala, there were numerous public disclosures of Yazid's flagrant atrocities given by eye witnesses.

These public disclosures caused the people to become disgusted with Yazid. As a result, they rebelled against him. Yazid therefore found himself forced to lay the blame on another. By making Ibn Ziyad the scapegoat, he intended to exonerate himself from this savage crime and dissipate the people's anger.

Secondly, according to historical documents, a number of the Prophet's (S) companions such as Imam al-Husayn (as), 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas, 'Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah and most of the nobles of Medina have associated Yazid with moral corruption and debauchery. When we have indubitable testimony from such a group of highly respected companions of the Holy Prophet (S) confirming Yazid's immoral and corrupt nature, baseless claims of his innocence cannot be accepted.

### **3. The long distance between Sham and Kufah**

Some opponents say that because there is a long distance between Kufah and Sham, which was then the administrative centre of the Umayyad government, it is unreasonable to imagine that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah could have been getting accurate reports and detailed accounts of the events that were taking place. For this reason, they claim that Yazid was not able to issue direct orders to Ibn Ziyad.

#### ***Response***

Firstly, abundant historical testimony has already been presented to substantiate that Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah did in fact receive regular reports from Kufah and write direct orders to Ibn Ziyad regarding the killing of Imam al-Husayn (as), such that there can remain no room for doubt about his role as the main player in this hideous crime. So, although there was a considerable distance between Sham and Kufah, Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah was in fact in constant consultation with his agents through letter carriers and deliverers and in this way was able to issue all the necessary orders.

[1.](#) Ra's al-Husayn, p. 207.

[2.](#) Ibid., p. 206.

[3.](#) Minhaj al-Sunnah, vol. 2, p. 226.

[4.](#) Su'al fi Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah, p. 16.

[5.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 258; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 268; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 164.

[6.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 285.

[7.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 241; Al-Futuh, vol. 5, pp. 10-11.

[8.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 250.

[9.](#) Ibid., vol. 4, p. 251; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 264; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, pp. 157-158; Al-Akhbar al-Tawal, p. 228.

[10.](#) Ibid.; Al-Muntazam, vol. 5, p. 323; Al-Futuh, vol. 5, pp. 15-18.

[11.](#) Ibid.

[12.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 3, section [bab] 5, p. 18.

[13.](#) Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 14, p. 208.

[14.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 3, section [bab] 5, p. 89.

- [15.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 193.
- [16.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 3, section [bab] 5, p. 135.
- [17.](#) Ibid., p. 136.
- [18.](#) Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 290; Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 67.
- [19.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 289; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 276.
- [20.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 242; Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 28, p. 19.
- [21.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 5, p. 150; Khwarazmi, Maqatal al-Imam al-Husayn (as), vol. 1, p. 140.
- [22.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 248; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 318.
- [23.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 298.
- [24.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 208.
- [25.](#) Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 235.
- [26.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 300.
- [27.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, pp. 388-389; Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 238.
- [28.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 356; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 298.
- [29.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 298; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 254.
- [30.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 254.
- [31.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, pp. 319-320.
- [32.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 300; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 388; Tarikh Khulafa', p. 208; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 254; Kitab al-Futuh, vol. 5, p. 252.
- [33.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 288.
- [34.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 301; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 252; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 209.
- [35.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 77.
- [36.](#) Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 260.
- [37.](#) Kitab al-Futuh, vol. 5, p. 252.
- [38.](#) Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 324.
- [39.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 242.
- [40.](#) Surat al-Nisa' 4:93.
- [41.](#) Tadhkirah al-Khawass, p. 63, as narrated by Ghazali.
- [42.](#) Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 120.
- [43.](#) Ibn A'tham, Al-Futuh, vol. 3, section [bab] 5, p. 132.
- [44.](#) Ibid., p. 133; Khwarazmi, Maqatal al-Imam al-Husayn (as), vol. 2, p. 242.
- [45.](#) Khwarazmi, Maqatal al-Imam al-Husayn (as), vol. 2, p. 59.
- [46.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 222.
- [47.](#) Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 197; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 3, p. 309.
- [48.](#) Maqrizi, Al-Khitat, vol. 2, p. 289; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 3, p. 319.
- [49.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 207.
- [50.](#) Mir'at al-Zaman, vol. 8, p. 496; Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, vol. 2, p. 634.
- [51.](#) Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 69.
- [52.](#) The Introduction of Ibn Khaldun, p. 181.
- [53.](#) Muruj al-Dhahab, vol. 3, p. 77.
- [54.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 368; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 307; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 238.
- [55.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 317; Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 28, p. 24.
- [56.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 209.
- [57.](#) Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 26, p. 73.
- [58.](#) The Introduction of Ibn Khaldun, p. 254.
- [59.](#) Sharh 'Aqa'id Nasfiyyah, p. 181.
- [60.](#) Risa'il Jahiz, p. 298.
- [61.](#) Al-Fitnah al-Kubra, vol. 2, p. 265.

[62.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 238.

[63.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 300.

# Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and the Massacre of the People of Medina

Some biased scholars and partisans of Bani Umayyah such as Ibn Taymiyyah have endeavored to come to the defence of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. They have gone so far as to recognize him as the legitimate Muslim caliph of his time.

However, in the end, reality compelled most scholars to admit Yazid's atrocious crimes because his entire life was full of abominable actions and he was the cause of numerous calamities for the Muslims, especially during the three years of his usurped caliphate.

In the long term, biased adherents of Bani Umayyah could not continue to overlook Yazid's many atrocities. Therefore, some schemed to either completely deny or justify Yazid's brutal crimes.

One of the acts of sheer barbarity and inhumanity Yazid brought down on the Muslims was the event of Harrah. This incident resulted in the brutal killing of thousands of the Muslim people of Medina. The order for this massacre was issued by Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah himself. The event of Harrah is a well-known incident which has been discussed either briefly or in detail by numerous historians.[1](#) Now, let us examine this event.

## The event of Harrah

The deplorable atrocity of Harrah, which blackened the pages of history, took place in the sixty-third year of the Islamic calendar during the reign of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah between the powerful armies of Sham and the people of Medina.

Harrah literally means a rocky and uneven terrain full of black stones passage through which is quite difficult. This well-known event acquired its name because the assault, which the government armies of Sham made on the ordinary people of Medina, began in a rocky eastern region of Medina.[2](#)

The event of Harrah is in all truth one of the most savage and horrible crimes of human history and the most appalling incident which occurred during the reign of Bani Umayyah. Ibn Mushkuwiyyah narrates, "The incident of Harrah is one of the most dreadful and formidable events of history."[3](#)

## Origins of the uprising of the people of Medina

The uprising by the people of Medina occurred in 63 AH. Besides being an uprising against Yazid's authoritative reign and Bani Umayyah's tyrannical sultanate, it was more a peoples' uprising against government policies. The uprising of the people of Medina was a popular and self-perpetuating social movement rooted in the people's unanimous rejection of the rule of Yazid and Bani Umayyah.

The group of the Helpers [*ansar*] had chosen 'Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah to be their army commander and leader in the confrontation with Bani Umayyah and the Quraysh appointed 'Abd Allah ibn Matih to be their commander.<sup>4</sup>

This revolution and uprising was caused by various factors, some of which we will now discuss:

### Religious sentiments

Medina has always been an exceptionally important city because it is the city of Allah's Prophet (S) and the land where the divine message grew, developed and flourished. It is the land where divine knowledge and wisdom were introduced. It was in Medina where the Prophet's way of life was explained and people were instructed regarding it.

Medina is the land where people learned Qur'anic commentary and interpretation of the divine message from the Holy Prophet (S) himself. The Prophet's (S) distinguished companions, including the Helpers [*ansar*] and the Immigrants [*muhajirin*], had lived there since the Holy Prophet's (S) time. After the Prophet's (S) death, some of his most renowned companions preferred to stay in that city because of the fond memories they held about Allah's Prophet (S).

It is evident why the people of Medina had a fervent inclination towards Islamic tenets and stronger religious sentiments than the people of Sham; they were more familiar with the Prophet's (S) conduct [*sunnah*] and that of his successors and companions. It was for this reason that they were able to discern the wrong ways of Bani Umayyah earlier than others.

It was the people of Medina who previously were the first to voice their objections to 'Uthman ibn 'Uffan. Now, these same people were experiencing the rule of a raw inexperienced youth called Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. He knew absolutely nothing about politics and failed to uphold the sanctity of the tenets of religion. Accordingly, their disapproval and protest against Yazid sprang up.

'Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Sufiyan, the governor of Medina, had sent a group of men consisting of Immigrants and Helpers to meet with the caliph in Damascus, so they could present their grievances to Yazid and so Yazid could bestow gifts upon them to silence them.<sup>5</sup> During this meeting, not only did Yazid fail to win them over to his side, but his ignorant behavior proved his incompetence to them.<sup>6</sup>

When they returned to Medina, they explained what they had seen from Yazid. They gathered in the

Holy Prophet's (S) Mosque and started shouting to the people, "We have come from meeting a person who is deprived of religion, drinks wine, plays the tambourine and spends the night with base men, slave girls and female singers and as a result has abandoned prayer."<sup>7</sup>

The people asked 'Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah what news he had brought from the caliph. He replied, "I am coming from meeting a man whom, I swear by Allah, I would have fought if no one were present except my sons." The people said, "We have heard that Yazid has given you money and gifts."

'Abd Allah answered, "It is true, but I accepted his money and gifts only for the purpose of using it to acquire and prepare an army against Yazid himself." In this way, 'Abd Allah started inciting and instigating the people against Yazid and the people responded positively to his calls for an uprising.<sup>8</sup>

Suyuti writes, "The reason for the uprising of the people of Medina was that Yazid had exceeded all bounds and every limit in committing sins."<sup>9</sup>

### **Karbala and the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as)**

Ibn Khaldun recounts, "When Yazid's tyranny and the oppression by his deputies became widespread, and after he killed the Prophet's (S) son, the people of Medina started a rebellion and uprising."<sup>10</sup>

When Bashir ibn Jadhlan brought the news of the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (as) and the taking of captives, it seemed in Medina as though the trumpet had been blown announcing the Day of Resurrection. The women of Medina came out of their homes and marched towards the city gates. Men, women and children, came out of their houses barefoot and shouting, "O Muhammad! Alas Muhammad! O al-Husayn! O al-Husayn! O al-Husayn!" It was very similar to the day the Holy Prophet (S) passed away.<sup>11</sup>

Imam al-Sajjad (as) made a sermon and his words had a strong effect on the people of Medina. In addition to that, Zaynab Kubra and other women, all mothers who had lost children in the battle against Yazid, gave public speeches and detailed what had occurred at Karbala. Each of the survivors was explaining the event of 'Ashura and what had transpired at Karbala. They also gave comprehensive accounts of what had taken place for the captives on the way from Kufah to Sham and their meeting with Yazid. All this news had a deep impact on the community of Medina.

### **Political chaos and disorganization**

One of the main causes for the uprising by the people of Medina against the Umayyad government was the immoral behavior and corruption that characterized political decisions. 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr wrote a letter to Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah in which he criticized Walid ibn 'Aqabah, Yazid's governor and representative in Medina.<sup>12</sup>

Ibn Zubayr wrote, "You have sent a harsh and brutal man for us. He does not pay the least attention to

what is right and just. He does not pay any attention to the advice of well-wishers, nor does he heed the words of the wise. If you had sent a flexible person, we could be hopeful that complicated work might be made easier.”

Later, Yazid relieved Walid ibn ‘Aqabah of his post and replaced him with ‘Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Sufiyan. ‘Uthman, too, was an arrogant and vain youth who lacked experience.<sup>13</sup> It was during his time as governor of Medina that the event of Harrah took place.<sup>14</sup>

The accumulation of the mentioned factors laid the groundwork for an explosion; the only thing that was needed was a spark and it came as follows: Ibn Mina, Yazid’s financial representative and the man responsible for collecting tax, made the intention of taking all the wealth he collected from Harrah to Sham for Yazid.

A group of protesters from Medina blocked his way. They confiscated all the tax and wealth which Ibn Mina was carrying. Ibn Mina reported the issue to ‘Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Sufiyan, the governor of Medina. ‘Uthman reported the issue to Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah in a letter he sent to Sham. As a result of this, Yazid was incited against the people of Medina.<sup>15</sup>

Yazid became very angry when he heard this news. He said, “I swear by Allah! I will send a large army towards them, and in this way I will crush them under the feet of horses.”<sup>16</sup>

## **Direct confrontation**

‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah invited the people for the ultimate confrontation and battle with Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah and the whole of Bani Umayyah. His good public standing was the reason the people trusted him and organized around him. They even elected him to be the governor of Medina and paid their allegiance to him and deposed Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah from the caliphate.<sup>17</sup>

After this, the people expelled Yazid’s agent, ‘Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Sufiyan, from the city of Medina. This happened on the first day of the month of Muharram, the year 63 of the Islamic calendar (*hijrah*).

Then, they imprisoned all the family members of Bani Umayyah and their partisans among the Quraysh in the house of Marwan Hakam. They did not, however, harm the prisoners in any way.<sup>18</sup>

The deposed governor of Medina sent his torn shirt along with a letter to Sham imploring for help. He wrote to Yazid, “Answer our call for help. The people of Medina have driven our clan out of the city.”<sup>19</sup>

This letter reached Yazid at night. Yazid went to the mosque immediately, got on the pulpit and called out, “O people of Sham. ‘Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Sufiyan, the governor of Medina, has written to me saying that the people of Medina have expelled the family members of Bani Umayyah and all our partisans out of the city. I swear upon Allah, swallowing this news is harder for me than living without the

beauties and pleasures of the world.”[20](#)

## Dispatching the army to Medina

At first, Yazid chose Dahhak ibn Qays Fihri to be the army commander responsible for carrying out the attack on Medina, but he declined to accept this responsibility. Then Yazid chose ‘Amru ibn Sa‘id Ashdaq. He also declined to accept the responsibility. After him, Yazid chose ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad. However, all three men, in one way or another, refused to carry out this responsibility.[21](#)

Finally, a man named Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah accepted to be responsible for carrying out the attack on Medina. Yazid appointed him as army commander for this confrontation. This man agreed to carry out this responsibility in spite of the fact that he was an ill person aged over ninety years.[22](#)

Government heralds called out, “O people! Mobilize for war with the people of Hijaz[23](#) and come to collect your reward.” The government was handing out a hundred *dinars* in cash to every person who was ready to go to war. It was not long before nearly twelve thousand people were gathered. According to another report, twenty thousand mounted soldiers and seven thousand ground forces were mobilized.[24](#)

Yazid paid two hundred *dinars* to every mounted soldier and one hundred *dinars* to every soldier of the ground forces. He then ordered them to march towards Medina in company with Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah.[25](#)

Yazid himself accompanied the army for a distance of about three kilometres before he bade them farewell.[26](#) Sham Christians eager to fight the Muslims of Medina could also be seen among the soldiers of Yazid’s army.[27](#)

Yazid gave the following orders to Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah, “Invite the people of Medina to pay allegiance to me three times. If they respond positively and pay allegiance, let them go free. However, if they do not respond positively and refuse to pay allegiance, fight them. If you triumph over them, continue the massacre for three days.

Anything that belongs to that city will be permissible for your army to loot. Do not stop the Sham army from doing whatever it wishes with its enemy. After three days, stop the killing and pillaging. Then, again ask for allegiance from the people. They should promise to be Yazid’s slaves and servants. When you leave Medina, move towards Mecca for another attack and confrontation.”[28](#)

Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah marched from Wadi al-Qura’ towards Medina with his soldiers. They camped at a place called “Jurf”, which was three kilometers from Medina.[29](#)

On the other side, the people of Medina were preparing themselves for confrontation and defence. They had been informed that the people of Sham were moving towards Medina.

When the army of Sham gained proximity to Medina, ‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah called the people to the Prophet’s (S) Mosque. The people assembled near the Prophet’s (S) pulpit. ‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah requested that anyone who concurred with him about this uprising should pay allegiance and promise to stand by him to the death. The people responded positively and paid allegiance to him. They promised to stand by his side to the death.

‘Abd Allah went on the pulpit. After praising Allah and mentioning a few other issues, he said, “O people of Medina! We have rebelled for no other reason save that Yazid is a fornicating and adulterous man. He is a drunkard who does not pray. Tolerating his reign will bring Allah’s punishment and tribulation upon us...”<sup>30</sup>

## **Confrontation between Sham army and forces of Medina**

To protect Medina, the Islamic resistance forces of Medina used a trench which had remained since the Prophet’s (S) time. They neglected the eastern part of the city because they believed that there was a remote possibility that the Sham army would begin their attack from the rugged rocky area.

They thought that even if the Sham army were to begin their attack from this area, it was still improbable for them to achieve any success. However, the Sham army took them by surprise and began its attack on Medina from that same stony area which the Islamic resistant forces had ignored.

The battle continued from morning up to afternoon. The Islamic forces of Medina were fighting and resisting fiercely. At noon, ‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah asked one of his slaves to watch and protect him from behind so that he could recite his prayers. ‘Abd Allah then recited his prayers and returned to the battlefield to lead the valiant resistance against the Sham army. <sup>31</sup>

Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah asked Marwan to help him enter Medina. Marwan went to Medina and visited the tribe of Bani Harthah. There, he called for a man he was acquainted with and in the process of a secret conversation, Marwan managed to persuade this traitor to show him the way for the Sham army to penetrate Medina in return for generous rewards.

He showed Marwan a way which passed through the area of the tribe of Bani al–Ashhal and the Sham army used this route to infiltrate Medina.<sup>32</sup>

The first line of the Islamic resistant fighters responsible for defending Medina suddenly heard the shout of ‘*Allah–u Akbar*’ by the Sham army from right inside Medina. It was not long before they realized that they were being attacked from behind by the Sham army. Many of the Islamic resistance fighters left the battlefield and returned to Medina in order to defend their women and children.

The Sham army attacked and killed innocent civilians from every direction. When ‘Abd Allah ibn Hanzalah was finally killed, the Sham army gained the upper hand against the resistance movement of Medina. Finally, they gained complete control of the whole city.<sup>33</sup>

## Massacre and looting of property in Medina

Ibn Qutaybah recounts that, “The Sham army entered Medina on the twenty seventh day of Dhu al-Hijjah in 63 AH. For three days Medina was plundered by the Sham army up to the appearance of the new moon of the month of Muharram.”<sup>34</sup>

Following Yazid ibn Mu‘awiyah’s orders, and after the seizure of Medina, Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah told his soldiers, “Your hands are open and you are free to do whatever you want. You must plunder and loot Medina for three days.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the city of Medina was subjected to wholesale murder and plunder by the Sham army. Everything was permissible for the Sham soldiers. No man or woman remained safe from their harm. The civilians of Medina were killed and their property was looted.<sup>36</sup>

The brutal and wholesale massacre of the people of Medina was detestable. It was loathsome to see the descendants of the Prophet’s (S) companions, the Helpers and the Immigrants being butchered. The looting was despicable. However, the wholesale violation of females by the depraved and reckless soldiers of Sham was more contemptible and disgraceful than all else.

In this invasion of the Prophet’s city, thousands of women were violated. Thousands of children were born whose fathers were not known and these children later became known as ‘the Children of Harrah [*awlad al-harrah*].’<sup>37</sup>

The streets of Medina were filled with dead bodies. Blood flowed on the ground up to the Prophet’s (S) Mosque.<sup>38</sup> Children were mercilessly killed in their mothers’ arms.<sup>39</sup> The elderly companions of the Holy Prophet (S) were exposed to torture and dishonor.<sup>40</sup>

The scale of the killings was so great that because of his extravagance in killing people, Muslim ibn ‘Aqabah was from then onwards nicknamed “Musrif” ibn ‘Aqabah which in the Arabic language means ‘the one who is extravagant’. After this horrendous event, the people of Medina wore black mourning clothes and the sounds of their weeping could be heard from their homes for up to one year.<sup>41</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah narrates, “On the day of Harrah, eighty companions of the Prophet (S) were killed and after that day there was no *Badri* (person that took part in the Battle of Badr) left. Seven hundred members of the Quraysh and *ansar* were put to death and ten thousand innocent people of the community were killed from among Arabs, the *tabi’in* and other virtuous people of Medina.”<sup>42</sup>

Suyuti writes, “In the year 63 of the Islamic calendar, the people of Medina rebelled against Yazid. They even dismissed him from the caliphate. In retaliation, Yazid sent a huge army towards them with orders to kill anyone who had rebelled. After that, the army was commanded to go to Mecca and kill Ibn Zubayr.

The Sham army came to the holy city of Medina and the event of Harrah came to pass. But what can

make one comprehend what the event of Harrah was? Al-Hasan once narrated, 'I swear upon Allah! There was no man who was spared in that event. A large number of the Prophet's (S) companions and other people were killed. Medina was looted and a thousand virgin girls were violated. *We are from Allah and to whom is our return!*'

Allah's Prophet (S) had said,

«من أخاف أهل المدينة أخافه الله وعليه لعنة الله والملائكة والناس أجمعين»

'Anyone who terrorizes and intimidates the people of Medina will be terrorized by Allah and may the curse of Allah, the angels and all the people be upon him.'

This *hadith* has been narrated by Muslim'.<sup>43</sup>

Ibn Qutaibah recounts, "When Muslim ibn 'Aqabah finished his killing and looting in Medina, he wrote to Yazid, 'Peace upon thee O leader of the believers... I did not recite the noon [*zuhr*] prayers until I conquered Medina and prayed right in the Prophet's Mosque. This was, however, after a lot of killing and extensive looting. In keeping with your command, we followed anyone who escaped and killed all those who were wounded. We looted their houses three times just as you, the commander of the faithful, had ordered."<sup>44</sup>

Sibt ibn al-Jawzi narrates from Mada'ini in a book named "*Harrah*", that Zuhri said, "On the day of Harrah, seven hundred people, among them the elders of the Quraysh, the Helpers, the Immigrants, and the well known and honored of Medina were killed.

In addition to this, ten thousand others including men, women and slaves were killed. There was so much bloodshed in Medina that blood reached the Prophet's (S) tomb, and his mosque and garden were filled with blood."

Mujahid says, "The people of Medina even took refuge in the Prophet's (S) quarters and at his pulpit but there were swords that would even enter these places."

Mada'ini quotes from Ibn Qarrah who quotes Hisham ibn Hisan, "After the event of Harrah, a thousand unmarried women gave birth to children whose fathers were not known." Apart from Mada'ini, other historians too have narrated that a thousand women without husbands gave birth after this event.<sup>45</sup>

## Some well-known people who were executed

After gaining victory over the people of Medina, Muslim ibn 'Aqabah called for an assembly of some of the well-known personalities of the uprising. After a special and summary trial, he condemned all of them to death. The significance of these trials was to force these prominent people to promise publicly to

be Yazid's loyal slaves and servants.[46](#)

Some of the most prominent people that were tried and executed include:

1. Abu Bakr ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Ja'far ibn Abu Talib,[47](#)
2. Two daughters of Zaynab (daughter of Umm Salamah),[48](#)
3. Abu Bakr ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar ibn Khattab,[49](#)
4. Ma'qul ibn Sanan (One of the standard-bearers of the Prophet during the conquest of Mecca),[50](#)
5. Fadl ibn 'Abbas ibn Rabi'ah ibn Harith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib,[51](#)
6. Abu Sa'id Khudri (One of the Prophet's companions that had accompanied the Prophet in twelve of the holy wars [*ghazwahs*]),[52](#)
7. 'Abd Allah ibn Muti'.[53](#)

## [Jabir and the event of Harrah](#)

Ibn Qutaybah writes, "Jabir was a blind man when the event of Harrah took place. He used to walk in the streets of Medina and say, 'May the person who tormented Allah and the Holy Prophet (S) perish!' A man asked him, 'Who terrorized Allah and his Prophet?'

Jabir answered, 'I heard Allah's Prophet (S) say, 'Anyone who terrorizes the people of Medina has tormented that which I hold dear.'" A man from Sham who happened to hear this conversation attacked Jabir with a sword intending to kill him. Marwan stopped that man and ordered Jabir to be taken home."[54](#)

It has to be mentioned, however, that one of the houses which was attacked and looted by the Sham army was that of Jabir. All of his household property was plundered

[1.](#) Minhaj al-Sunnah, vol. 4, p. 575.

[2.](#) Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun al-Akhbar, vol. 1, p. 238.

[3.](#) Tajarub al-Umam, vol. 2, p. 79.

[4.](#) Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 106; Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 368.

[5.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 368; Al-'Aqd al-Farid, vol. 5, p. 135.

[6.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 179.

[7.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 368; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 6, p. 233.

[8.](#) Ibid.

[9.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 209.

[10.](#) Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 37.

[11.](#) Maqatal Abi Mukhnaf, p. 200.

[12.](#) Nihayah al-Arab, vol. 6, p. 216.

[13.](#) Ibid.

- [14.](#) Al-Ma'arif, p. 345.
- [15.](#) Tarikh Ya'qubi, vol. 2, p. 250; Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 206.
- [16.](#) Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 127.
- [17.](#) Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 47.
- [18.](#) Ibid., Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 111; Ibn Khaldun, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 37.
- [19.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 114; Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 127.
- [20.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 2, p. 9; Al-Mahasin wa al-Masawi, vol. 1, p. 46.
- [21.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 179; Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 176; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 11.
- [22.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 180.
- [23.](#) The area now considered as the Arab Peninsula where Medina lies.
- [24.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 112; Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 128.
- [25.](#) Tarikh Tabari, vol. 4, p. 371; Akhbar al-Tuwal, p. 310.
- [26.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 56.
- [27.](#) Tarikh al-'Arab, vol. 1, p. 248.
- [28.](#) Akhbar al-Tuwal, p. 310; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 112; Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 180.
- [29.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 211.
- [30.](#) Ibn Sa'd, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 47.
- [31.](#) Ibid., p. 48; Al-'lam, vol. 4, p. 234.
- [32.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 211; Akhbar al-Tuwal, p. 310; Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 129.
- [33.](#) Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 130.
- [34.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, pp. 220-221.
- [35.](#) Ibid., vol. 2, p. 10.
- [36.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 181; Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 17.
- [37.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 2, p. 10; Al-Futuh, vol. 3, p. 181; Al-Bada' wa al-Tarikh, vol. 6, p. 14; Wafiyat al-A'yan, vol. 6, p. 276; Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 209.
- [38.](#) Ibn Athir, Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 4, p. 113.
- [39.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 215.
- [40.](#) Akhbar al-Tuwal, p. 314.
- [41.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 220.
- [42.](#) Ibid., p. 216; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 242.
- [43.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa', p. 209; Siyr A'lam al-Nubala', vol. 4, pp. 37-38.
- [44.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 218.
- [45.](#) Tadhkirah al-Khawass, pp. 259-260; Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah, vol. 8, p. 242; Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 316.
- [46.](#) Al-Futuh, vol. 2, p. 182.
- [47.](#) Al-Nihayah al-Arb, vol. 6, p. 227.
- [48.](#) Ibid.
- [49.](#) Al-Ma'arif, p. 187.
- [50.](#) Wafa' al-Wafa', vol. 1, p. 133.
- [51.](#) Al-Nihayah al-Irb, vol. 6, p. 227.
- [52.](#) Hilyah al-Awliya', vol. 1, p. 369.
- [53.](#) Nasab al-Quraysh, p. 384.
- [54.](#) Al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, vol. 1, p. 214.

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