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<u>Home</u> > <u>The Life of Imam Husayn ('a) Research and Analysis</u> > <u>Eliminating Great Shia Thinkers</u> > Banishment of Shias to Khorasan

Eliminating Great Shia Thinkers

Muawiyah indulged in the elimination of prominent Shia personalities and their thinkers in such a way that he took a group of them to the killing fields and filled their houses with sorrow and grief. Some of such personalities were as follows:

1. Hujr bin Adi

Hujr bin Adi raised the banner of protest and in defense of rights of oppressed people he took up arms and he defeated the aim of the Umayyad rulers who had taken the destinies of the people as their playthings and changed them into their personal fieldoms and destroyed everything'

Hujr considered death as nothing serious and ridiculed life and relished the taste of martyrdom for faith and became a defender of the religion of Ahlul Bayt ('a).

Hujr bore terrible difficulties and calamities when he saw that the administration of the regime was openly abusing Amirul Momineen ('a) and forcing the people to become aloof from His Eminence. Thus he spoke up against it and denounced the rulers of Kufa.

Ziyad bin Abih declared that it was lawful to kill Hujr. He got him arrested and with a group of his supporters dispatched him as a prisoner to Muawiyah. They were stopped at 'Maraj-e-Azra' till the order of their execution was issued from Damascus. Executioners appointed for this job carried out their duty and his body fell to the ground smeared in the blood of martyrdom and greatness so that it may illuminate the path of life for the people without injustice and rebellion.

Protest of Imam Husayn ('a)

When Imam Husayn ('a) received the news of Hujr's martyrdom he was devastated with sorrow. He wrote a letter of protest to Muawiyah pointing out his ill deeds and he also reminded him of the most terrible and atrocious action of his with respect to Hujr and his companions. Imam Husayn ('a) also flayed the crimes and innovations that Muawiyah had committed:

"Are you not the one who killed Hujr, brother (a member of the tribe) of Kinda, (and his companions) those who prayed, the worshippers who condemned oppression, regarded as great sins the heresies, and did not fear the censure of any censurer? Unjustly killed them out of aggression after your giving them a strong oath and sure covenants that you would not punish them according to an incident (that had happened) between you and them nor according to malice you had harbored against them."1

This letter of protest contains the following points:

- 1. A severe objection against Muawiyah's killing of Hujr and his companions without any crime committed by them or their having spread mischief in the land.
- 2. It praised the brave qualities of those martyrs, the brave ones of them as all had objected to injustice and considered seriously rising up against oppression, innovations and evils that Muawiyah's regime had initiated. They were of those who hastened to the field of Jihad for establishment of truth and to confront falsehood.
- 3. That memorandum stated that Muawiyah had previously made agreement with Hujr and his companions that he would ensure them security and that he would not go back on his word and he would cause them no harm. But Muawiyah disregarded the promise and did not fulfill it in the same way as he violated the terms of his treaty with Imam Hasan ('a). Rather he violated each and every term as he has announced in his address at Nakhila.

Hujr's murder was a great disaster in Islam and objections continued to be raised against Muawiyah due to this from all parts of Islamic lands and we have described them in detail in our book on Imam Hasan ('a).

2. Rushaid bin Hijri

In the days of great calamities that Shias bore under the son of Sumaiyyah (Ziyad) Rushaid Bin Hijri was involved in the most terrible adversities because Ziyad sent his officials to him and when he came to him he cried to him. "Did your friend (His Eminence, Ali) tell you what we shall do with you?"

Rushaid replied with truthfulness and faith to him, "You would cut off my hands and my feet and that you would crucify me."

That dirty man ridiculed this and said, "By Allah, I will prove his prophecy wrong. Set him free."

His men released him but that rebellions Ziyad regretted it, and he told them to arrest him again. Then he shouted to him, "We can find for you nothing better than what your friend said. You will bring about evil to us if you remain alive. Cut off his hands and feet."

The executioners at once amputed the limbs of Rushaid but he did not care for the pain that afflicted him.

Historians say: He spoke about the evils of Bani Umayyah and caused awakening in the people for revolution which angered Ziyad greatly and he ordered that Rushaid's tongue be cut off. 2 The tongue which was demanding truth and justice and which was protesting in favor of the rights of the poor and deprived.

3. Amr bin Hamaq al-Khuzai

Among the martyrs in the path of religion was Amr bin Hamaq al-Khuzai. The Prophet prayed for him: "O Allah! Make him enjoy his youth." The Almighty Allah answered the plea of His Messenger and even when Amr reached the age of eighty not a single hair of his beard was seen to have grayed.3

Amr learnt the mannerisms of Ahlul Bayt ('a) and benefited from their sciences and became a prominent Shia personality.

As a result of the great mischief that had started due to the rulership of that tyrant Ziyad and their pursuit of Amr, Amr became sure that the regime was after his life. So he, along with a friend, Rufa bin Shaddad fled from Kufa and took shelter in a cave and after that he went to Mosul.

The police became tense and they set out in search of Amr. But Rufa was able to escape and they could not lay their hands on him. They took Amr as prisoner to Abdur Rahman Thaqafi the governor of Mosul. He reported the arrest to Muawiyah. Muawiyah ordered that he be executed with nine stabs of dagger because he had stabbed Uthman Ibn Affan.

Executioners began to stab him but he passed away in the very first stab. At that time they severed his head and sent it to the tyrant at Damascus. He ordered that it be taken around in Syria.

Historians say: It was the first severed head in Islam that was taken around in different areas. After that Muawiyah ordered that it be taken to his wife Amina, daughter of al-Shareed who was in one of Muawiyah's prisons. The head was brought and put into her lap while she was inattentive and had no information about her husband's affair. She was shocked and on the verge of death. After that she was taken from the prison to Muawiyah. A dialogue ensued between her and Muawiyah which proves Muawiyah's baseness and his disregard for Arabian Islamic values. That is good behavior to ladies and not punishing them for the actions of their husband.

Imam Husayn's Memo

Imam Husayn ('a) was greatly affected when he learnt of Amr's murder and he wrote a memo to Muawiyah enumerating his evil deeds and his atrocities that the community of that time was bearing. This memo was especially about Amr:

"Are you not the one who killed Amr bin Hamaq, companion of the Messenger of Allah (S), may Allah bless him and his family, the righteous servant (of Allah)? Worship exhausted him, and so his body

became weak and his face yellow. That was after you had given him security and given to him some of Allah's promises and covenants, to the extent that if you gave them to a bird, it would come to you from a peak of a mountain. Then you killed him showing audacity to your Lord and making light of that covenant."4

Muawiyah violated his covenant that he had made at the time of treaty that he would not harm this respected companion of the Prophet.

4. Awfa bin Haseen

Awfa bin Haseen was of the righteous Shias in Kufa and one of the famous and prominent personalities there. He was a severe critic of Muawiyah who made the people aware of his evil deeds and atrocities. And when the son of Sumaiyyah (Ziyad) learnt of this he ordered his policemen to arrest him. As soon as Awfa came to know about it he went into hiding. One day when Ziyad was watching a parade, Awfa passed before him. Ziyad was not sure about his identity so he inquired about it and Awfa's name was mentioned to him. He issued orders for his arrest.

When Awfa was brought to him, he asked him his view regarding his policies. Awfa criticized and objected against Ziyad. Ziyad issued orders that he be executed and the executioners attacked him with their swords and he fell down lifeless.5

5. Hadhrami and his companions

Abdullah Hadhrami was a companion of Ali ('a) and one of his sincere partisans. He was also a military officer about whom the Imam said during the battle of Jamal, "O Abdullah glad tidings to you as you and your father are from the police of al–Khamees because the Messenger of Allah (S) informed me about your name and that of your father's that you two shall be from al–Khamees police."6

When Imam Ali ('a) was martyred, Abdullah was devastated at the tragedy. He left Kufa and built a monastery cell for himself so that he may worship therein. He was joined by a group of his Shia friends there in worship.

Ziyad ordered that he should be brought to him. When he was brought, Ziyad issued an order for his execution and he was executed unjustly.7

The tragedy of Abdullah was like the tragedy of Hujr bin Adi because both of them were innocent and they were killed unjustly for no fault of theirs except that they were devoted to the Progeny of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Objection of Imam Husayn ('a)

Imam Husayn ('a) was devastated at the news of the killing of Hadhrami and his righteous companions.

He protested against it by sending a memorandum to Muawiyah. His letter included the following: "Did you not have Hadhrami killed when Ziyad wrote to you complaining that he was a Shia of Ali and you wrote to him: Kill anyone who is on the religion of Ali? And Ziyad killed him and as per your order had him cut into pieces while the religion of Ali is same as the religion of his cousin (S) which has enabled you to occupy the position that you are now in, and if he hadn't been there, the greatness of your father and you would have had to bear difficulties of two journeys, journey of winter and journey of summer."8

This letter of protest clearly explains that it was Muawiyah who issued orders to kill anyone who followed the religion of Ali ('a) inspite of the fact that it was the same religion of the Holy Prophet (S). It also shows that Ziyad, after having them killed had them cut into pieces in order to take his revenge from them for their devotion towards the Progeny of the Messenger of Allah (S).

6. Juwayriyya Abadi

Among the famous companions of Imam Ali ('a) was Juwayriyya bin Mushar Abadi. During the terrible circumstances through which the Shias lived during the reign of Ziyad in Kufa he was pursued and then orders were issued to have his limbs amputed and then to have him crucified on a short trunk of palm tree.9

7. Saifi bin Faseel

Saifi bin Faseel was a person of a solid Islamic faith who showed an unmatchable example of firm faith because he spoke up against the tyrant Ziyad in his very presence. When he was brought Ziyad shouted at him, "O enemy of God, What do you say about Abu Turab?"

"I don't know who Abu Turab is." 10

"You very well know him, do you not know?" "Yes, I know him."

"He is only Abu Turab."

"Never, he is Abul (father of) Hasan and Husayn."

The police chief of Ibn Ziyad scolded him and said, "The Amir is saying that he is

Abu Turab and you refute it!"

That great brave man cried at him and ridiculed his chief saying, "If the Amir is saying something wrong, should I also say it? Shall I testify falsely like he has falsely testified?"

Pride and arrogance of the tyrant was defeated and he didn't know what to reply. At last he said, "This has increased your crime."

Then he ordered his men, "Get me the cane." They brought the cane to him. He asked: "What do you

say?"

The brave and fearless man with a firm determination and without any worry said, "It is the best statement that I said with regard to the right of a person from the believing servants of God"

That blood-shedder told his executioners, "Beat him so hard that his shoulder falls down."

They rushed to him and beat him so hard with their sticks that he fell down. At that time he told them to stop the beating and asked him, "Good! What do you say about Ali?"

That cruel man thought that the torture would take him away from his faith, therefore he said, "By Allah, even if you cut me into pieces by swords and knives I would not say anything other than what you have already heard."

The murderer lost his temper and he screamed, "You must invoke curse on him or I shall cut off your head."

Saifi shouted at him, "By Allah, in that case before that you cut off my neck if you don't want anything else. I am satisfied with the Lord, but you shall be an unjust oppressor."

At that time he ordered that Saifi be bound in chains and shackles and thrown in a dungeon. 11 And after that he was sent along with Hujr bin Adi and was martyred with him. 12

8. Abdur Rahman Anzi

Abdur Rahman Anzi was one of the best Shia men. Ziyad's mercenaries arrested him. He asked them to allow him to go and meet Muawiyah in person. May be he would give him amnesty. His captors agreed to his request and sent him in captivity to Damascus. When he arrived before the tyrant, Muawiyah asked him, "Well, O brother of Rabia, what do you say about Ali?"

"Leave me and do not ask me that, as it is better for you" "By God, I shall not release you"

That brave-hearted man began to narrate the merits and excellences of the Imam and praised the status and position of His Eminence: "I testify that he is the one who remembers Allah in excess and commands rightfulness and establishes justice and restrains people from sins'"

Muawiyah became infuriated and reiterated the excuse of Uthman that may be he would speak ill of him and become liable for capital punishment. So he asked him, "What do you say about Uthman?"

He told him about his views about Uthman and Muawiyah boiled with rage and screamed at him, "You have killed yourself!"

"Rather I have killed you, is there no one present from the tribe of Rabia?"

Abdur Rahman thought that his clansmen would defend him and rush forward to have him released. However, none came to his help and when Muawiyah became assured that he had none for his defense he sent him to Ziyad, the tyrant, and ordered him to have him executed. Ziyad in turn sent him to Qassun Naatif 13 and had him buried alive."14

This valiant personality raised the standard of truth and took up the hammer of demolishing the forts of oppression and in the way of defense of the most sanctified matter of Islam, reached martyrdom.

These were some of the martyrs among the prominent personalities of Shias who had taken up the torch of freedom and illuminated the path for other revolutionaries who destroyed the grandeur of Umayyad regime and who endeavored for its destruction.

Prominent Shia Personalities who bore tortures and sorrows Muawiyah subjected a large group of prominent Shias to intimidation, threats and terror. Some of them were as follows:

- a. Abdullah bin Hashim Mirgal
- b. Adi bin Hatim Tai
- c. Sa'sa bin Sauhan
- d. Abdullah bin Khalifa Tai

Muawiyah subjected these senior members of Shia community to severe persecution and his mercenaries pursued them hard and intimidated them. We have described in detail there terrible circumstances in our volume titled, Life of Imam Hasan ('a). 15

Intimidation of ladies

Muawiyah did not rest content merely by torturing and hurting Shia men. He also made ladies targets of his oppression and subjected them to the most terrible fear and had them terrorized. He ordered his governors to send some of them to him and they complied with his commands. Among the ladies who bore the brunt of his evil were:

- 1. Zarqa binte Adi,
- 2. Ummul Khair Barqiya,
- 3. Sawdah binte Ammarah,
- 4. Ummul Baraa binte Safwan,
- 5. Bukara Hilaliya,
- 6. Arwa binte Harith,
- 7. Akarsha binte Atrash, and
- 8. Daramia Hajooniya.

Muawiyah behaved with them with the worst type of behavior and exhibited great pride and arrogance to them and insulted them and expressed his power to take revenge from them instead of taking into consideration their weakness and helplessness. We have described in detail in our volume on Imam Hasan ('a) how he insulted them in public. 16

Demolishing Shias houses

Muawiyah proclaimed to all his governors to have the houses of Shia people demolished and they diligently followed these commands 17 leaving the Shias of Ahlul Bayt ('a) shelterless while they had no justification for these merciless actions except that they wanted to distance the people from the power of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Depriving Shias from Public Treasury

Among the atrocities that the Shia were involved in the tenure of Muawiyah was that Muawiyah had written to each of his governors regarding the stipulation of allowances of people: "Take care, that if you have a proof that anyone of them is devoted to Ali and his Ahlul Bayt you must remove his or her name from the register of stipends and cancel their allowance." 18

His governors willingly took upon this task of scrutinizing the registers to see if any Shia name appeared therein. If they found any such name they immediately removed it from the register and cancelled the stipend of that particular person.

Testimonies of Shias not accepted

Muawiyah tried his best to abuse the Shias and render them valueless socially. Therefore he ordered his governors not to accept the testimonies of Shia people 19 in any legal matter or judicial affair so that they may be abased and suppressed and their humiliation is maximized.

Banishment of Shias to Khorasan

Ziyad bin Abih decided to purge Kufa of Shias and thus have them scattered. So he banished 50000 Shias to Khorasan, an eastern province of Iran.20

By this act Ziyad hit the first nail into the coffin of Umayyad regime because the group of those exiles to Iran spread Shiaism in the lands till finally that province became the center of revolt against the Umayyads under the leadership of Abu Muslim Khorasani which brought the downfall of Umayyad rule.

These were some of the calamities on Shias during Muawiyah's rule that they were subjected to various tortures and intimidation. The terrible disasters that befell them were the most important of the factors that led to the rising of Imam Husayn ('a), because His Eminence raised the banner of revolution so that he may release them from their afflictions and difficulties and return to them peace and security.

- 1. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/372-373. Kishi, Rijal 47, Tr. No. 97
- 2. Safinatul Bihar 1/522, Sharh Nahjul Balagha 2/294
- 3. Al-Isabah 3/53
- 4. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/382, Ikhtiyar Ma'rifatur Rijal, Pg. 47, Tr. No. 97
- 5. Ibne Athir, Tarikh 3/462, Tabari, Tarikh, 5/235-236
- 6. Ikhtiyar Ma'rifatur Rijal, 6/Tr. No. 10. Al-Ikhtisas, Pg. 7. Biharul Anwar 42/151, Tr. No. 18
- 7. Ilalush Shara-I, Pg. 212 & 216, Biharul Anwar 44/3 & 9
- 8. Biharul Anwar 44/213
- 9. Ibne Abil Hadid, Sharh Nahjul Balagha 2/290-291
- 10. The Umayyads had given this derogatory title to Imam (a.s.) which was the name of a bandit. This matter is mentioned in Tarikh Siyasi Daulat Arabi. And also in Al- Aghani 13/168 it is mentioned: Ziyad used to insult the Shias and he used to call them by the title of 'Turabiya' (Tabari, Tarikh, 5/277)
- 11. Tabari, Tarikh, 5/266-267
- 12. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/371
- 13. Qassun Naatif is a locality near Kufa
- 14. Tabari, Tarikh, 5/276-277
- 15. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/377-403
- 16. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/404-423
- 17. Sharh Nahjul Balagha 11/43
- 18. Sharh Nahjul Balagha 11/45
- 19. Life of Imam Hasan (a.s.) 2/386, Sharh Nahjul Balagha 11/44
- 20. Tarikh Shaoob al-Islamiya Pg. 123

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