Chapter-II

Husain’s Resentment to Yazid’s Khilafah
After a long and prosperous reign, Muawiyah died in Rajab 60/April 680 at about eighty years of age.¹ Since the abdication of Hasan, there had been peace throughout the empire. Wise, courageous, and fore bearing, he held the dangerous elements around him in check; consolidated and extended the already vast area of Islam; and nursed commerce and the arts of peace, so that they greatly flourished in his time.

The nomination of Yazid as Muawiyah’s successor was sure to meet with opposition after Muawiyah’s death. Atiquur Rahman Sambhali on the authority of Tabari writes that from his deathbed, therefore, Muawiyah sent a message to Yazid, who was absent and was at his hunting place, warning him about the three persons whom he must beware of. The two Abdullahs, sons of Umar and Zubair and Husain son of Ali. The first, a pious devote, would easily be put aside, as for Husain, he continued:

“The restless men of Iraq will give him no peace till he attempted for the empire. The people of Iraq are treacherous and would surely incite him. If he rises against you and you win, forgive him, for he is a near relative of ours and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). But beware of Abdullah bin Zubair. He is clever like fox and bold like a lion.”²

However, this shows Muawiyah’s love with his greater family Banu Abd Manaf — as well as his political sagacity and diplomatic genius.
According to Sayyid Amīr Ali, on his assumption of Caliphal power and authority in Rajab 60/April 18, 680, Yazid inherited Governors of Madinah, Makkah, Kufah and Basrah in Walīd bin Utbah bin Abu Sufyan, Amr bin Sa‘eed, Numan bin Bashīr and Ubaidullah bin Ziyad respectively, and directed them to take the oath of allegiance to the new Khalifah afresh especially from Husain bin Ali and Abdullah bin Zubair, who had not acknowledged him as heir-apparent during the time of Muawiyah. He, therefore, wrote a letter to Walīd bin Utbah, the governor of Madinah, directing him to obtain allegiance from these persons. He wrote the following letter to Walīd:

“In the name of the most merciful God. From Yazid, the commander of the faithful, to Walīd, the son of Utbah. Muawiyah was one of the servants of God, who honoured him and made him Khalifah, and extended his dominions and established him. He lived his appointed time, and God took him to his mercy. He lived beloved, and died pure and innocent. Farewell. Hold Husain and Abdullah, the son of Zubair, close to the inauguration without any remission or relaxation.”

According to Abdul Wahīd Khan and Taha Husain, to accomplish this task Walīd called Marwan bin Hakam for consultation. The scholars like Taha Husain and Abdul Wahīd Khan opine that Walid bin Utbah invited Husain and Abdullah bin Zubair with the intention of obliging them to pay oath of
allegiance to Yazid, both of them realized that Muawiyah was
deading having decided to stand by their refusal to make the
pledge. In this way both of them refused to take the oath of
allegiance to Yazid.\textsuperscript{4}

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad asserts that \textit{Ahl-i-Bait} (family of
the Prophet) had a valid claim to Khilafah for themselves. Soon
after the death of Muawiyah his son Yazid declared himself the
Khalifah since he had been nominated as successor to Muawiyah
during his lifetime. Yazid demanded allegiance from Husain bin
Ali. As the nomination to Khilafah was contrary to the spirit of
Islamic constitution Husain was averse to it and he, therefore,
refused to take the oath of allegiance in favour of Yazid.\textsuperscript{5}

According to Maududi, when Husain revolted against the
established Khilafah of Yazid the majority of Sahabah were alive
and the notable \textit{Fuqaha} (Jurists) among the Tabiun were almost
present. None of these have stated that Husain was going to
commit an unlawful act. All those who tried their level best to
stop him from going to Kufah, were of the opinion that the people
of Iraq were not trustworthy and Husain could not be successful in
his dealings, instead he would place himself in trouble by this
attempt. In other words, the opinion of all these people was in
accordance with that of Imam Abu Hanifah, developed later on.
Maududi argues that the revolt against controversial Khilafah was
not in itself unlawful but it was imperative to look into the issue as to whether there were any chances of improvement or change in the existing system of Governance.\(^6\)

**Husain leaves for Makkah to avoid taking pledge of Yazid**

Maududi states that Husain was deceived by the repeated requests made by people of Kufah which developed a wrong notion in him that he has got ample representation and support with whom he can set in revolution and decided to leave Madinah. Contrary to this, the Sahabah who were preventing him from this move, were of the opinion that in the light of past behavior of the people of Kufah with his father Ali and his brother they were not worth trust. So the difference between Sahabah and Husain was based on strategies and not because of lack of evidences and reasons.\(^7\)

According to Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, though Husain refused to swear allegiance to Yazid and remained adamant in his decision, the state officials regarded his refusal to be more significant than the rejection of the oath by Ibn Zubair and few others, since they were fully aware of the prestige and influence Husain commanded owing to his kinship with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW).\(^8\) However, reports show that Husain was requested for *Bay'ah*, but he succeeded in delaying it for two days, taking the leave of the governor of Madinah to think over the
issue. Meanwhile, Husain summoned a group of his supporters and told them to arm themselves. He said to them:

"Walid has called me just now, and I think that he will propose something which I may not accept. In that event I cannot trust him. You should, therefore, come with me and when I enter his house you should stay at the door and as soon as you hear me speaking aloud enter the house to prevent him from causing me any harm."  

This clearly shows that Husain was in no mood to pay the oath of allegiance to Yazid. Other scholars like Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, Atiqur Rahman Sambhali and several others hold on the authority of Imam Bukhari that the Sahabah like Abdullah ibn Umar had acknowledged Yazid willingly and continued in their fealty even after the death of Muawiyah especially during the black days of Harrah. Bukhari narrated on the authority of Nafi that when the people of Madinah broke the Bay'ah (pledge) of Yazid, Abdullah Ibn Umar gathered his family members and servants and said:

"A flag will be fixed for every betrayer on the day of resurrection, and we have given the oath of allegiance to his person (Yazid) in accordance with the conditions enjoined by Allah and his Messenger and I do not know of anything more faithlessly than fighting a person who has been given the oath of allegiance in accordance with the conditions
enjoined by Allah and his messenger, and if ever I learn that any person among you has agreed to dethrone Yazid, by giving the oath of allegiance (to some body else) then there will be separation between him and me."\textsuperscript{10}

In addition to this Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi on the authority of Baladhuri says that Ibn Umar further said, "Muawiyah's son, Yazid is among the pious members of his family, you sit at your place, obey him and be firm to his oath."\textsuperscript{11} These scholars argue that all these narrations clearly prove that all the people accepted the choice of Yazid by their free will.

In this connection a Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as narrated by Abdullah ibn Abbas, is also quoted:

"Whoever notices something which he dislikes done by his ruler, then he should be patient for whoever becomes separate from the company of the Muslims even for a span and then dies, he will die as those who died in the Pre-Islamic period of ignorance (as rebellious sinners)."\textsuperscript{12}

A Shiah Scholar Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi quotes the words of Abu Hanifah Dinawari who writes that Marwan told Walid bin Utbah to entertain no anxiety concerning Abdullah bin Umar and Abdul Rahman bin Abu Bakr who would, in any case, make no bid for the Khilafah. He however, cautioned him about Husain and Abdullah ibn Zubair and asked him to demand from them the oath of loyalty to Yazid and to kill them if they declined to submit, and
that all this should be done before the news of Muawiyah’s death came to be generally known, for he opined, if they become aware of the tidings of Muawiya’s passing away, each one of them would openly defy Yazid and endeavor to rally support for his claim.13

The scholars like Maulana Aslam Jairajpuri, Mīr Mahmud Ali Qaisar, Rashīd Akhtar Nadvi, Abdul Qayoom Nadvi, Muhammad Abdur Rahman Sayyid Siddiqui, Hamiduddīn and Akbar Shah Khan Najibabadi hold that Ibn Zubair fled the following night to Makkah and Husain asked that the pledge should be delayed, under the pretext that, in order to be valid, it must be made in public.14 These scholars also hold that Husain also said a man like him could not take such an important step alone, so let the people know and see their reaction. Abdullah bin Zubair also wanted a day’s time to think over the matter. Walīd agreed. But Abdullah ibn Zubair left Madinah that very night and reached Makkah. Hafiz Salahuddin Yousuf and Khurshid Ahmad Fariq hold that both Ibn Zubair and Husain were feigning time for consideration in order to escape to Makkah.15 Irfan Faqih and Khurshīd Ahmad Fariq write that these two persons who themselves were claimants to the Khilafah remained adamant till the last.16 According to Julius Wellhausan, in the meantime both Abdullah ibn Zubair and Husain who refused to take oath of
allegiance to Yazid avoided the Umayyad governor of Madinah and fled to Makkah on 28th Rajab 60 A.H./May, 680 A.D.  

From the above discussion it can be clearly said that Husain and Ibn Zubair could not tolerate the Khilafah of Yazid and due to this fact they avoided to pay oath of allegiance to Yazid and escaped to Makkah. Had Husain recognised the Khilafat of Yazid by paying pledge to him he could have saved himself and averted the horrors of Karbala.
Notes and References


6. Abul Ala Maudidi, Khilaft-o-Mulukiat, op. cit., pp. 253

7. ibid., pp. 253-254.


