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## Bar' ibn 'azib, the Faithful

Bar' ibn 'azib, a very honorable companion of the Noble Prophet (S), a dignified narrator of traditions [*hadith*], a great warrior, and an *Ansār* and resident of Medina was only thirteen years old when he converted to Islam. His father, too, was one of the Noble Prophet's (S) companions [*sahābah*].

Bar' ibn 'azib was born in the second year of the prophetic mission and responded affirmatively to the divine call of Islam at the age of thirteen. After the Noble Prophet (S) migrated to Medina, Bar' ibn 'azib was often seen in the presence of Allah's Prophet (S).

Bar' ibn 'azib had memorized some of the long chapters [*sūrah*s] of the Glorious Qur'an, and was considered as one of the most renowned companions [*sahābah*] of the Noble Prophet (S).<sup>1</sup>

### His Presence on Battlefields

Since his adolescence, Bar' ibn 'azib was nurtured in the cradle of Islam and thus blossomed into a spiritually motivated young man. He was so deeply influenced by Islam that he volunteered to enlist and fight in the Battle of Badr in spite of being only fifteen years of age. However, the Noble Prophet (S) did not permit him and his group to take part in the war because of their age.<sup>2</sup>

Even if Bar' was deprived of the chance to fight in the Battle of Badr, he still took part in fourteen wars and eighteen of the Noble Prophet's (S) journeys.

He spared no pains to defend the faith, beliefs and sanctuaries of Islam.<sup>3</sup> After the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (S), he participated in the conquest of Rey, Abhar and Qazvin. This fact has also been recorded in a lot of historical documents. <sup>4</sup>

### Companionship with 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib (‘a)

Bar' ibn 'azib sincerely loved 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib (‘a). It was for this very reason that when Imam 'Alī (‘a) migrated from Medina to Iraq; he too followed suit and settled in Kūfah next to his Imām.<sup>5</sup> He took

part and fought on the side of ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib (‘a) in the wars of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawān; wars which the enemies of Allah and Islam had imposed on Imām ‘Alī (‘a).<sup>6</sup>

Bar‘ ibn ‘azīb narrates his love and affection for the Noble Prophet (S) and his Household in this way: “I always loved the Banī Hāshim. After the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (S), I feared that the government and caliphate would be usurped from them. When my fears came true and the caliphate was usurped, I was overcome with grief, but the anguish of losing Allah’s Prophet (S) was more intense.

So, I used to go and visit the Banī Hāshim whenever they gathered in the house specially reserved for the Noble Prophet (S). Sometimes, I used to go visiting the elders of the Quraysh. By doing this, I managed to keep their activities under careful observation and follow up on every event that occurred.

After the earthly departure of the Holy Prophet (S) was announced, I noticed that it did not take long for Abī Bakr and ‘Umar to disappear, and all of a sudden, news reached us that they had met with a certain other group and held secret discussions at the Saqīyah of Banī Sa‘īdah. After a short while, further news reached us that some of them had paid allegiance to Abī Bakr. After hearing this sad news, I came out of my house without delay.

I saw Abī Bakr surrounded by ‘Umar and Abī ‘Ubaydah Jarrāh along with another group of people. This gang was taking Abī Bakr round the streets of Medina. Wherever they met a person passing by, they would stop him and forcibly take hold of his hands and put them into Abī Bakr’s hand, saying, ‘You must pay allegiance to the Noble Prophet’s (S) successor.’ I got very disgusted by this kind of forced allegiance and rushed to the house of Banī Hāshim as fast as I could. I knocked the door of their house frantically, and insisted on seeing them. I said, ‘There is no hope left for this community because the people have paid allegiance to Abī Bakr.’”<sup>7</sup>

We can deduce from this historical narrative that Bar‘ loved the Noble Prophet’s (S) family very much and that he firmly supported ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib (‘a), who was busy with the burial rites of the Holy Prophet, while his absence was cashed upon by the politically motivated companions [*sahābah*] of the Holy Prophet (S).

## **The Transmitter of Divine Guardianship**

In addition to being a supporter and follower of the noble Prophet’s (S) Household, the other grace that Bar‘ enjoyed was transmitting the event of *Ghadīr-e Khumm*, when ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib (‘a) was appointed by Allah’s Prophet (S) as the Commander of the Faithful.

Ibn Jawzī says, “Bar‘ ibn ‘azīb recounts that on the day of *Ghadīr*, the call to afternoon congregational prayers was made. The Noble Prophet (S) led the congregational prayers. After the prayers, he took ‘Alī’s (‘a) hand into his own and said, ‘for whomsoever I am a leader and guide, this ‘Alī (‘a), is his leader and guide’.

Instantly after this divine appointment, ‘Umar came forward to congratulate ‘Alī (‘a) and said, ‘I compliment you, O son of Abū Tālib. From today onwards, you are the leader and Imām of all Muslim men and women’.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Bar‘ ibn ‘azīb is one of the narrators of the *Hadīth Ghadīr-e Khumm*. It is possibly because of this very fact that after the sad demise of the Noble Prophet (S), Bar‘ ibn ‘azīb was in a different state from the rest of the Muslims.

He had witnessed the events of *Ghadīr-e Khumm* and the appointment of ‘Alī ibn Abū Tālib (‘a) to the leadership and Imamate of the Muslims by Allah’s Prophet (S). That is why after the death of the Noble Prophet (S), he was always sad and could not be consoled.

Anyhow, Bar‘ ibn ‘azīb migrated to Kāfah along with ‘Alī ibn Abū Tālib (‘a) because of his belief in his divine guardianship, and took part in all the three wars that took place during the time of Imām ‘Alī (‘a).

Finally, while he was more than eighty years of age, he died in 72 AH in Kāfah where he was buried.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Ibn Sa‘d, *Tabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 367.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibn Hishām, *Al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyah*, vol. 3, p. 70; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 205; *Al-Istī‘āb*, vol. 1, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup>. *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 206; *Tabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 368.

<sup>4</sup>. *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>5</sup>. *Tabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 36; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup>. *Al-Istī‘āb*, vol. 1, p. 44; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>7</sup>. *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 154.

<sup>8</sup>. *Tadhkirat al-Khawāss*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup>. *Al-Istī‘āb*, vol. 1, p. 945; *Tabaqāt*, vol. 4, p. 368; *Usd al-Ghābah*, vol. 1, p. 205.

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