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# Discourse 3: Lack Of Public Satisfaction From Abu Bakr's Caliphate

# **Historical Documents**

Ibn Abil Hadeed Motazalli (d. 656) narrates from Abu Bakr Jauhari (d. 323):

"When the refusal of Ali to do Bay'at with Abu Bakr became a topic of public discussion and Abu Bakr and Umar became harsher on Ali ('a) Umm Mossattah bin Athatha came out to the grave of the Prophet and recited the following verses:

Unpleasant, dreadful things have occurred;

Had you witnessed, little you would have uttered.

We miss you as the earth is of rain deprived,

See your Ummah in confusion, alas, if you had lived."1

Amirul Momineen ('a), in order to prove the lack of people's approval for Abu Bakr's Caliphate and their lack of satisfaction from that rule says as follows:

"If you have taken their (people's) affairs in hand on the basis of consultation, then how it is that the very consultants themselves are absent."2

The norm of general popularity is that the approval of people should precede the takeover of affairs.

But even though in Saqifah, only a few had accepted. 3 the government was announced formally and took on legitimacy. After that others were forced to give Bay'at.

When one is at power, to get Bay'at from people or any particular person becomes easier. The conditions of Bay'at are freedom, liberty and choice. If these elements are absent the Bay'at is worthless. Bay'at must be the right of masses – to accord. Bay'atis not the right of rulership to be obtained from the people by force.

"The fundamental discussions regarding Saqifah are about identification of opponents of Abu Bakr. The most important result of it is that the claim of consensus disappears and loses its worth.

Names of opponents are not recorded in history. Generally, names of reputed personalities are paid attention to. Prominent personalities come to mind. The common ones glide into oblivion. Those personalities have a following to whom opinion of their role models is acceptable.

Some have been mentioned in groups. For instance, in the early stage Bani Hashim refrained from Bay'at.4

In fact, Kinda tribe refused to pay the Zakat. They did so because they opposed Abu Bakr's becoming Caliph.

So opponents of Abu Bakr's selection are many in number. A multitude of them cannot be mentioned here.

Most opponents of Abu Bakr later were either killed or bribed or promised future gains, so their number diminished. They later did the required Bay'at. It needs a separate chapter to discuss this.

We could gather the names of following fifty opponents:..."5

After that he has listed these names in alphabetical order.

Another look at Historical Documents about Public Allegiance to Abu Bakr

## **Document No. 1**

In Sahih Bukhari, which is the most reliable source of Sunni sect, it is mentioned from Ayesha that people were threatened to give Bay'at to Abu Bakr.

This document is most important testimony that establishes incredibility and worthlessness of peoples' Bay'at to Abu Bakr. When Bay'at is wrong and of no worth it overruns peoples' acceptance or their acknowledgment of Abu Bakr's Caliphate.

Ayesha narrated after narrating developments of Sagifah:

"Umar had threatened the people."6

# **Document No. 2**

On authority of Abu Bakr Jauhari (d. 323) Ibn Abil Hadeed (d. 656) narrates: Umar behaved with those who had taken refuge in Fatima's house as follows:

"Then he said: I swear by God in Whose hands lies my life that I will take you to perform Bay'at. If not, I will burn this house over you. Then he pulled them out by ropes around their necks. He dragged them by force until they gave Bay'at to Abu Bakr."7

## **Document No. 3**

In the same way he writes about his (Umar's) roughness and atrocities to strengthen Abu Bakr's Caliphate:

"It was Umar who established Bay'at of Abu Bakr. He suppressed all those who opposed Bay'at, he broke the sword of Zubair when Zubair pulled it out. He hit at the chest of Miqdad. He, in Saqifah plotted against Saad bin Ubadah and shouted: Kill Saad. May God kill Saad. He defeated Bani Habbab Mundhir. He threatened and pulled out those from Bani Hashim who had taken refuge in Zahra's House.

And if there was not Umar, Abu Bakr's rule would have never established."8

# **Document No. 4**

On this matter, historical sources, proofs and documents are so numerous that Shaykh Mufeed (d. 413) writes:

"The incidents of forcing people to do Bay'at with Abu Bakr and taking them to Abu Bakr against their will and pleasure are so numerous that this book would fall short of pages if we were to mention all of them."9

### **Document No. 5**

For instance, Shaykh Ahmad Tabarsi (6th century) narrates:

"Umar belted his waist tightly and started roaming the streets of Medina. He was shouting: Beware! Abu Bakr has been acknowledged as Caliph. So hurry up to do Bay'at with him.

People rushed and crowded at and in the mosque to do Bay'at with Abu Bakr.

Umar knew that some remained in their houses to avoid Bay'at. He attacked them by surprise and brought them by force to the mosque to give Bay'at." 10

His support was an armed gang, blacks and nomads from Bani Aslam tribe, who by the admission of Umar himself had a very important role in the success of Saqifah party.

# **Document No. 6**

"Tabari narrates that after their arrival in Medina they gathered in the streets in such large numbers that the streets were jammed and Umar said: When I saw Bani Aslam tribe I became certain of victory."11

# **Document No. 7**

Ibn Athir has mentioned in the book Kamil:

Bani Aslam tribe arrived and its members did Bay'at. Then Abu Bakr became strong and at that time people gave Bay'at to Abu Bakr. 12

### **Document No. 8**

More eloquent than these two is Shaykh Mufeed in the book of Jamal. His quotes from Abu Mikhnaf that: A group of nomad Arabs came to Medina to buy rations. People did not attend to them because on that day the Prophet of God had passed away.

They also did Bay'at with the new Caliph and accepted his rulership. Then Umar called them and said:

Whatever rations you need, will be given to you free provided you go into the lanes and streets of the town, gather the people and take them to Abu Bakr to do Bay'at with him. You are free to break head or nose of anyone who resists.

The narrator says: I saw those rough Arabs all of a sudden tightening their waists and then without any warning they started hitting people with canes and forced them to do Bay'at. 13

That is why afterwards many tried to justify these atrocities to exempt them from shame of desert dwelling and being nomads.

Ayesha by way of thanks for their beneficial service to her father fabricated a saying of Prophet in praise of these Arabs. But the falsehood of this tradition can well be understood by the readers. 14"15

# **Document No. 9**

In the same way Masoodi says in Athbaat al-Wisaya, page 116:

"Umar paid allegiance to Abu Bakr. That is he did by hitting by his hand over that of Abu Bakr. Then the desert Arabs who were at that time in Medina did Bay'at with Abu Bakr. Then non–Muslims who were in Medina under protection of Muslims enjoining their hospitality and kind treatment and consideration also performed Bay'at to show their gratitude and to please them. They saw themselves indebted to Muslims for their favors. So they thought it was a proper time and befitting opportunity to return their thanks. After them others did Bay'at."

# **Document No. 10**

Ibn Abil Hadeed (d. 656) has also narrated from Baraa bin Azib that:

"I saw Abu Bakr with Umar and Abu Ubadah and a group of Saqifah associates coming forward. They had tied their waists tight. Whomever they came across, they beat up and forced to give Bay'at to Abu Bakr. It did not matter to them whether he liked it or not." 16

## **Document No. 11**

Zubair bin Bukkar in his book Mawafaqiaat has quoted from Sharh Nahjul Balagha of Ibn Abil Hadeed, Vol. 6 Pg. 287 that:

"Abu Bakr became strong with the Bay'at of Bani Aslam. But it is not known when Bani Aslam turned their backs at him." 17

More interesting is that ignoring all these historical testimonies regarding the attitude of Amirul Momineen ('a) they still claim:

"The reason of this Bay'at was to honor public opinion."! 18

"When the majority of people concentrate on someone else, it becomes necessary to preserve unity in society by Bay'at."! 19

In the end, it is pointed out:

"The thought of selecting a Caliph through general consensus is like searching for causes after something has already happened. It is creation of fanciful elements of history and not a justification applicable to the event that has already occurred. Sunni scholars also do not claim thus. They do not think it is necessary for Imamate.

Sometimes a social phenomena appears or takes to itself existence in a way or other, occasionally the base of monitoring movements is geared by a handful of conjectures. It is justified only for the sake of justification. But the very spirit that brought the phenomena into being is ignored.

Justification of the Caliph's rule by means of public opinion or its being a government of majority over minority is a formula that obviously serves the ground with regard to Caliphs. The issue of public opinion was never applied, nor ever occurred to them.

In order to decorate Caliphate of Caliphs with an outer show of its being with the people or having had come from the people, some writers have tried to justify it. It exists only in the imaginations of those who justify Caliphs. Reality is something else. It is among those causes that come into being after the happening of a thing.20

### Even though it is claimed:

"Imam Ali ('a) did Bay'at after a period to guard unity among Muslims."21

- 1. Ibn Abil Hadeed: Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, Pg. 50 & Vol. 6, Pg. 43.
- 2. Sayyid Razi: Nahjul Balagha, Saying No. 190.
- <u>3.</u> Mawardi (died 450) has explained it to be equal to the number of fingers in a hand and he writes: "The Bayyat of Abu Bakr was effected through the unanimity of five persons." (Mawardi: Al-Ahkaam as-Sulataniyah, Pg. 6).
- 4. Quoted from: Tabari: Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulook, Vol. 3, Pg. 208; Ibn Athir: Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 10 & Pg. 14; Ibn Abil Hadeed: Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, Pg. 21.
- 5. Sayyid Hasan Fatimi: Article 'Saqifah' quoted in Danish Nama Imam Ali ('a), Vol. 8, Pg. 443.
- 6. Muhammad Ismail Bukhari: Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 4, Pg. 195.
- 7. Ibn Abil Hadeed: Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 2, Pg. 48.
- 8. Ibid. Vol. 1, Pg. 174.
- 9. Shaykh Mufeed: Al-Jamal, Pgs. 118-119.
- 10. Tabarsi: Ihtijaaj, Vol. 1, Pg. 80.
- 11. Quoted from: Tabari: Tarikh al-Umam wal Mulook, Vol. 2, Pg. 459; Qalaqshandi: Nihayatul Arab, Vol. 4, Pg. 35.
- 12. Quoted from: Ibn Athir: Al-Kamil fit Tarikh, Vol. 2, Pg. 331.
- 13. Quoted from: Shaykh Mufeed: Al-Jamal, Pg. 119 We would like to add that this narration is related by many. Some among them are Abu Mikhnaf Lut bin Yahya al-Azadi. His source is Muhammad bin Sayyid al-Kalbi and Abu Salih. The green light shown to them by Umar resulted in that the people had no alternative but to pay allegiance to Abu Bakr or to be beaten by the Arabs.
- 14. Refer: Ibn Saad: Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 8, Pg. 294.
- 15. Masoodpoor Sayyid Aaqai: Chashma dar Bistar, Pgs. 76-78.
- 16. Ibn Abil Hadeed: Sharh Nahjul Balagha, Vol. 1, Pg. 219.
- 17. Allamah Sayyid Murtadha Al-Askari: Saqifah, Edited by Mahdi Dashti, Pg. 50.
- 18. Abdul Ali Bazargan: Shura-O-Bayat (Consultation and Allegiance), Pg. 90.
- 19. Ibid. Pg. 88.
- 20. Ustad Ja'far Subhani: Peshwayi az Nazar-e-Islam (Leadership in the view of Islam), Pgs. 285-286.
- 21. Abdul Kareem Bi-Aazaar Shirazi: Article quoted in Collected Papers of International Conference on Imam Ali, Vol. 1, Pg. 70.

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