

## The Companions in the Military Detachment under Usamah

The story in brief is as follows: The Prophet (saw) organized an army to be sent to Asia Minor two days before his death. He appointed Usamah ibn Zayd ibn Haritha, (who was eighteen years old), as its commander in chief, then the holy Prophet attached some important men, both MuHajjireen and Ansar, to this expedition, such as Abu Bakr, Umar, Abu Obaydah and other well-known Companions.

Some people criticized the Prophet for appointing Usamah as the commander in chief of that army, and asked how could he have appointed so young a man as their commander. In fact the same people had previously criticized the Prophet for appointing Usamah's father as an army commander before him. They went on criticizing until the Prophet became so angry that he left his bed, feverish and with his head bandaged, with two men supporting him and his feet barely touching the ground (may my parents be sacrificed for him).

He ascended the pulpit, praised Allah highly then said, "O People! I have been informed that some of you object to my appointing Usamah as commander of the detachment. You now object to my appointing Usamah as commander in chief as you objected to me appointing his father commander in chief before him. By Allah, his father was certainly competent for his appointment as commander in chief and his son is also competent for the appointment."<sup>1</sup>

Then he exhorted them to start without further delay and kept saying, "Send the detachment of Usamah; deploy the detachment of Usamah, send forward the detachment of Usamah." He kept repeating the exhortations but the Companions were still sluggish, and camped by al-Jurf.

Events like that made me ask, "What is this insolence towards Allah and His Messenger? Why all that disobedience towards the orders of the blessed Messenger who was so caring and kind to all the believers?"

I could not imagine, nor indeed could anybody else, an acceptable explanation for all that disobedience and insolence. As usual, when I read about those events which touch on the integrity of the

Companions, I try to deny or ignore them, but it is impossible to do so when all the historians and scholars, Shi'a and Sunnis, agree on their authenticity.

I have promised my God to be fair, and I shall never be biased in favor of my creed, and will never use anything but the truth as my criterion. But the truth here is so bitter, and the holy Prophet (s.a.w.) said, "Say the truth even if it is about you, and say the truth even if it is bitter..." The truth in this case is that the Companions who criticized the appointment of Usamah disobeyed all the clear texts that could not be doubted or misinterpreted, and there is no excuse for that, although some people make flimsy excuses in order to preserve the integrity of the Companions and "the virtuous ancestors".

But the free and sensible person would not accept such feeble excuses, unless he is one of those who cannot comprehend any saying, or is perhaps one of those who are blinded by their own prejudice to the extent that they cannot differentiate between the obligatory task that must be obeyed and the prohibition that must be avoided. I thought deeply to find an acceptable excuse for those people, but without success.

I read the points of view of the Sunnis which provide us with an excuse based on the fact that these people were the elders of Quraysh, and were among the early followers of Islam, whereas Usamah was a young man who had not fought in the decisive battles that gave Islam its glory, such as Badr, Uhud and Hunayn; and that he was a young man with no experience of life when the Messenger of Allah appointed him military commander. Furthermore, they thought that human nature, by its inclination, makes it difficult for elderly people to be led by young men, therefore they (i.e. the Companions) criticized the appointment and wanted the Messenger of Allah to appoint a prominent and respectable Companion.

It is an excuse which is not based on any rational or logical premise, and any Muslim who reads the Qur'an and understands its rules must reject such an excuse, because Allah– the Almighty – says:

***"Whatever the Messenger gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you, keep back."***  
***(Holy Qur'an 59:7)***

***"And it behooves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Messenger have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he surely strays off a manifest straying."*** (Holy Qur'an 33:36)

So what kind of an excuse could any rational person accept after reading all these clear texts, and what can I say about people who angered the Messenger of Allah, when they knew that the Messenger's anger is Allah's anger. They accused him of talking "nonsense", and they shouted and disagreed in his presence when he was ill (may my parents be sacrificed for him), until he ordered them to leave his room.

That did not seem to be enough for them, and instead of returning to the right path and asking Allah's

forgiveness for what they had done to His Messenger, and asking the Messenger for forgiveness as the Qur'an taught them, they went on criticizing him, despite all the care and kindness he had for them. They did not appreciate him or respect him, and two days after having accused him of talking "nonsense", they criticized him for appointing Usamah as military commander.

They forced him to come out in the appalling condition which the historians describe. Due to the severity of his illness, he had to walk with the support of two men, and then he had to swear by Allah that Usamah was a competent commander for the army.

Furthermore, the Messenger informed us that they had criticized him previously for appointing his father as a commander, which indicates that these people had had many previous confrontations with him, and that they were not willing to obey his orders or accept his judgment, rather, they were prepared to oppose him and confront him, even if such behavior went against the rules of Allah and His Messenger.

What leads us to believe that there was open opposition (to the orders of the Prophet), was that in spite of all the anger shown by the Messenger of Allah, and the fact that he himself tied the flag with his noble hand to the post and commanded them to march immediately, they were sluggish and reluctant to move, and did not go until he had died (may my parents be sacrificed for him). The Prophet (s.a.w.) died feeling sorry for his unfortunate nation, which he feared would go backwards and end up in hell, and no one would be saved except a few, and the Messenger of Allah described them as a handful.

I am surprised that those Companions angered the Prophet on that Thursday and accused him of talking "nonsense", and said, "It is sufficient for us that we have the Book of Allah," when the Holy Qur'an states:

***"Say if you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you." (Holy Qur'an 3:31)***

As if they were more knowledgeable about the Book of Allah and its rules than he to whom it had been revealed. There they were, two days after that great misfortune, and two days before he (the holy Prophet) went up to meet his High Companion, angering him even more by criticizing him for appointing Usamah, and not obeying his orders.

Whereas he was ill and bed-ridden in the first misfortune, in the second one he had to come out, with his head bandaged and covered by a blanket and supported by two men with his feet barely on the ground, and address them from the top of the pulpit. He started his speech with the profession of the unity of Allah and praised Him in order to make them feel that he was not talking nonsense, and then he informed them about what he knew regarding their criticism of his orders.

Furthermore, he reminded them of an incident which had occurred four years previously, in which he was criticized by them. After all that, did they really think that he was talking nonsense or that his illness had overcome him so that he was unaware of what he was saying?

Praise and thanks be to You, Allah, how did these people dare oppose Your Messenger? They

disagreed with him when he signed the peace treaty, they opposed him very strongly even when he ordered them to make the sacrifice and shave their heads, and even repeated it three times although no one cared to obey; and again they pulled him by his shirt to prevent him from praying for Abdullah ibn Ubay and said to him, "Allah forbade you from praying for the hypocrites!" As if they were teaching him what had been revealed to him, when You said in Your Holy Qur'an:

***"We have revealed to you the reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them." (Holy Qur'an 16:44)***

And You said:

***"We have revealed the Book to you with the truth that you may judge between people by means of that which Allah has taught you." (Holy Qur'an 4: 105)***

And You said, and Your saying is the truth:

***"We have sent among you a messenger from among you who recites to you Our Verses and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know." (Holy Qur'an 2: 151)***

I am astonished at those people who put themselves in a position higher than that of the Prophet. On one occasion they disobeyed his orders, and on another occasion they accused him of talking nonsense, and then talked loudly and without respect in his presence.

They criticized him for appointing Zayd ibn Harithah to the military command, and after him his son Usamah. How could they leave the scholars in any doubt, after all this evidence, that the Shi'a are right when they put a question mark on the position of some of the Companions, and show their resentment towards these positions purely out of respect and love for the Messenger and the members of his Household.

I have mentioned only four or five of these controversial issues to be brief and to use them as examples, but the Shi'i scholars could recount hundreds of situations in which the Companions contradicted the clear texts. In all this the Shi'a refer to sources written in books by Sunni scholars.

When I look at a number of positions taken by a few of the Companions with regard to the Messenger of Allah, I stand astonished; not because of the attitudes of those Companions alone, but because of the position of the Sunni scholars who gave us the impression that the Companions were always right and could not be criticized. Thus they prevented any researcher from reaching the truth and left him puzzled in the midst of all these contradictions.

In addition to the examples that I have mentioned above, I will bring some more in order to establish a better picture of those Companions, so that we may understand the position of the Shi'a towards them.

According to al-Bukhari in his Sahih, Vol. 4 Page 47, section "The virtue of Patience when one is hurt" and the words of the Almighty "...And those who are patient, surely they will be rewarded," in the Book of Conduct he said:

"Al-Amash told us that he heard Shaiq saying that Abdullah told him: 'Once the Holy Prophet divided something among a group of men, as he used to do, when one man from al-Ansar stood up and said, 'This division is not for the sake of Allah.' I said, 'For my part, I shall have a word with the Prophet (s.a.w.).' So I went to see him, and I found him with his Companions. I explained my grievances, and the Prophet's face changed and showed signs of anger, and I wished that I had not told him, and then he said: 'Moses was hurt more than that but he was patient.'"

Al-Bukhari mentioned in the same book – i.e. the book of Conduct – in the chapter concerning smiling and laughter that Anas ibn Malik was heard saying: "I was walking with the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.) who was wearing a Najrani cloak with a rather thin edge to it, and suddenly a man approached him and pulled harshly at his cloak.

Anas continued: I looked at the side of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and noticed that as a result of that harsh pull, the edge of the cloak went up to his shoulder, then the man said, 'O Muhammad, give me some of what you have from Allah's wealth!' The Prophet turned to him and laughed, and then he ordered his Companions to pay him something."

Al-Bukhari also mentioned the following incident in the Book of Conduct and put it in the chapter concerning "He who does not face people with blame", he said: "Aisha said that the Prophet (s.a.w.) did something and made it permissible, but no one followed what the Prophet did. The Prophet (s.a.w.) happened to hear about it, so he decided to address the people. He first thanked Allah then said: 'What is the matter with people who refrain from the thing I did? By Allah, I know more than any of them about Allah, and I fear Him most...!'

When we look deeply at incidents like those above we find that the Companions put themselves on a higher level than the Prophet, and thought that he was wrong and they were right. Furthermore, there were some historians who deliberately corrected the position of the Companions, even if that contradicted the action taken by the Prophet, and showed them at a level of knowledge and piety higher than that of the Prophet.

As is the case when they judge the Prophet wrong in the case of the Prisoners of War at the battle of Badr, so it appears that Umar ibn al-Khattab was right. They also tell wrong stories, such as the following saying attributed to the people: If Allah decided to inflict a disaster on us; no one will escape except Ibn al-Khattab. In other words, they were saying, "If it was not for Umar, the Prophet would have perished." God protect us from such a corrupt and shameful belief, and he who adheres to this kind of belief is surely far from Islam, and ought to review his thinking or rid himself of the devil.

Allah, the most High, said:

***"Have you considered him who takes his low desire for his God and Allah has made him err having knowledge and has set a seal upon his ear and his heart and put a covering upon his eye. Who can then guide him after Allah? Will not they be mindful?" (Holy Qur'an 45:23)***

I believe that those who think that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was subject to his emotions to the extent that he deviated from the right path and made a judgment not for the cause of Allah, or those who refrained from doing things which were done by the Messenger of Allah thinking that they were more knowledgeable and more pious than the Messenger, do not deserve any respect or appreciation from the Muslims.

They were put at the same level as the angels, as the best people in the whole of creation after the Messenger of Allah, so that Muslims are obliged to follow them and take them as an example, just because they were the Companions of the Messenger of Allah.

That contradicts the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah, who pray for Muhammad and his family, and then add all the Companions. If Allah, praise be to Him the Most High, appreciated them and put them in their correct position and ordered them to pray for His Messenger and the purified members of his family, they should have submitted and known their place with Allah. Why should we then put them in a position which is higher than they deserve and equate them with those people whom Allah has elevated and preferred above all people?

Let me then conclude that the Umayyads and the Abbasids, who opposed Ahl al-Bayt and exiled them and killed them with their followers, got the gist of that distinguished position and recognized its danger for them. For if Allah, praise be to Him, would not accept the prayers of a Muslim unless he prays for them (Ahl al-Bayt): how could they justify their opposition to them. Therefore, they attached the Companions to Ahl al-Bayt in order to give the impression to the public that they are equal.

Especially when we know that their masters and dignitaries were Companions who bought some other Companions known to have weak personalities and asked them to distribute fabricated sayings (of the Prophet) in praise of the Companions and the next generation, and in particular those who reached the position of Caliphs (i.e. the Umayyad and Abbasid) and they were the direct reason behind them attaining this position and becoming rulers over all the Muslims.

History is the best witness to what I am saying: Umar ibn al-Khattab, who was well known for his strictness towards his governors whom used to dismiss them on mere suspicions, was quite gentle towards Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan and never disciplined him. Muawiyah was appointed by Abu Bakr and confirmed by Umar throughout his life, who never even rebuked him or blamed him, despite the fact that many people complained about Muawiyah and reported him for wearing silk and gold, which was prohibited to men by the Messenger of Allah. Umar used to answer these complaints by saying, "Let him be, he is the Kisra (king) of the Arabs."

Muawiyah continued in the governorship for more than twenty years without being touched or criticized, and when Uthman succeeded to the caliphate of the Muslims, he added to his authority further districts

and regions, which enabled him to a mass great wealth from the Islamic nation and to raise armies to rebel against the Imam (Leader) of the nation and subsequently take the full power by force and intimidation. Thus he became the sole ruler of all Muslims, and later forced them to vote for his corrupt and alcohol drinking son Yazid, as his heir and successor.

This is a long story so I will not go into its details in this book, but the important thing is that we should understand the mentality of those Companions who reached the position of caliph and facilitated the establishment of the Umayyad state in a direct way, so as to please Quraysh which did not want to see both the Prophethood and the caliphate in the House of Bani Hashim.[2](#)

The Umayyad state had the right, or indeed was obliged to thank those who had facilitated its establishment, most of all the "story tellers" whom it hired to tell tales about the virtues of their masters. In the meantime it elevated them to a higher place than that of their enemies, Ahl al-Bayt, simply by inventing virtues and merits, which if (may Allah witness) examined under the light of logical and legal evidence mostly disappear, unless there is something wrong with our minds or we have started believing in contradictions.

For example, we hear so much about Umar's justice which the "story-tellers" attributed to him. It was even said about him "You ruled with justice, therefore you can sleep." It has also been said that Umar was buried in a standing position so that justice would not die with him...and you could go on and on talking about Umar's justice.

However, the correct history tells us that when Umar ordered that grants should be distributed among the people during the twentieth year of al-Hijrah, he did not follow the tradition of the Messenger of Allah, nor did he confine himself to its rules. The Prophet (s.a.w.) distributed the grants on an equal basis among all Muslims and did not differentiate between one person and another, and Abu Bakr did the same throughout his caliphate.

But Umar introduced a new method. He preferred the early converts to Islam to those who came later. He preferred al-MuHajjireen (immigrants from Mecca to Medinah) from Quraysh to other MuHajjireen. He preferred all the MuHajjireen to al-Ansar (followers of Prophet Muhammad in Medinah who granted him refuge after the Hijra). He preferred the Arabs to the non-Arabs. He preferred the freeman to the slave.[3](#) He preferred (the tribe of) Mudar to (the tribe of) Rabia for he gave three hundred to the former and two hundred to the latter.[4](#) He also preferred al-Aws to al-Khazraj.[5](#)

Where is the justice in all this differentiation, O people who have minds?

We also hear so much about Umar's knowledge, to the extent he was described as the most knowledgeable Companion, and it has been said about him that he agreed with his God on many ideas that were revealed in various Qur'anic verses, and that he disagreed with the Prophet about them. But the correct history tells us that Umar did not agree with the Qur'an, even after it had been revealed.

When one of the Companions asked him one day during his caliphate, "O Commander of the Believers, I

am unclean, but I cannot find water to wash." Umar answered, "Do not pray." Then Ammar ibn Yasir had to remind him about Tayammum (ritual cleaning with earth), but Umar was not convinced, and said to Ammar, "You are responsible only for the duties which have been assigned to you."[6](#)

Where is Umar's knowledge regarding the Tayammum verse which had been revealed in the Book of Allah, and where is Umar's knowledge of the Tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.) who taught them how to do Tayammum as well as Wudu (ritual ablution). Umar himself confessed on many occasions that he was not a scholar, and that all people, even women were more knowledgeable than him, and he was heard saying many times, "If it was not for 'Ali, Umar would have perished." And throughout his life he did not know the rule of al-Kalalah (relatives of the dead excluding the son and the father), although he passed various different judgments about it, as history witnesses.

We also hear a great deal about the courage and physical strength of Umar, and it has been said that Quraysh feared the day when Umar became a Muslim, and that Islam became even stronger when he entered the religion. It has also been said that Allah glorified Islam with Umar, and that the Messenger of Allah did not call for Islam openly until after Umar had become a Muslim.

But the correct historical references do not seem to indicate that courage, and history does not mention one famous or even ordinary person who has been killed by Umar in a duel or a battle like Badr and Uhud or al-Khandaq. In fact the correct historical references tell us exactly the opposite; they tell us that he escaped with the fugitives in Uhud, and escaped on the day of Hunayn, and that when the Messenger of Allah sent him to take the city of Khayber he returned defeated. He was never even the leader in the military detachments in which he served and in the last one (that of Usamah) he was put under the charge of young Usamah ibn Zayd. So where is all that courage compared to these historical facts...O people who have minds?

We also hear about Umar's piety and his great fear of Allah, to the extent of crying. It has been said that he was afraid of being accountable before Allah if a mule tumbled in Iraq because he did not pave the road for it. But the correct historical sources tell us that he was a rough man who lacked piety and did not hesitate to beat a man until he bled because he asked him about a Qur'anic verse, and even that women used to miscarry their babies out of fear when they saw him. Why did he not fear Allah when he raised his sword and threatened anybody who said that Muhammad had died, and he swore by Allah that he had not died, rather, he had gone to talk to his God in the same way as Moses did. Then he threatened to kill whoever said that Muhammad was dead.[7](#)

Why did he not fear Allah when he threatened to burn Fatimah al-Zahra's house if those who refrained from voting for the successorship of the caliphate did not come out?[8](#) It has been said that when he was told that Fatimah was inside, he answered, "So what!" He violated the Book of Allah and the Tradition of the Prophet and passed rules and judgments during his caliphate which contradicted the texts of the Holy Qur'an and the noble Tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.).[9](#)

So where was all that piety and fear of Allah in all these bitter and sad historical facts, O good worshippers of Allah? I took this great and famous Companion as an example, and I have summarized a great deal to avoid prolongation, but if I wanted to talk in some detail, I could have filled many volumes. But as I said I have mentioned these historical references as examples and not for specific reasons.

What I have mentioned is a small amount, but it gives us a clear indication as to the mentalities of the Companions and the contradictory attitudes of the Sunni scholars and historians. For on the one hand they forbid people from criticizing them or doubting their intentions, but on the other hand they write in their books things that make people doubt their deeds and criticize them.

I wish the Sunni scholars had not written about these matters in such a way that it clearly sullies the dignity of the Companions and ruins their integrity. If they had not we would have been spared all that confusion.

I still remember meeting a scholar from al-Najaf whose name was Asad Hayder (author of "Al-Imam al-Sadiq wa al-Madhab al-Arbaah") and as we were talking about the Sunnis and the Shi'a he told me a story about his father. He (i.e. the father) had met a Tunisian scholar from al-Zaytunah during the pilgrimage season some fifty years ago, and started a debate about the Imamate of 'Ali - may Allah's peace be upon him - and his eligibility to the succession for the caliphate. The Tunisian scholar listened attentively as the other man mentioned four or five reasons. When he had finished, the scholar from al-Zaytunah asked him, "Have you got any other reasons?" The man answered, "No." Then the Tunisian scholar said, "Get your rosary out and start counting, then he listed some hundred reasons that my father had not known before."

Shaykh Asad Hayder added, "If the Sunnis read what is in their books, then they would say similar things to what we are saying and we would not have any differences between us for a long time."

By my life! It is the inevitable truth, if only man would liberate himself from his blind prejudice and his arrogance and submit to the clear proof.

- [1.](#) Al-Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'ad Vol.; Tarikh Ibn al-Athir Vol. 2 page 317; Al-Sirah al-Halabiyah Vol. 3 page 207; Tarikh al-Tabari Vol. 3 page 226
- [2.](#) For more detail read: Al-Khilafah wa al-mulk by Abu al Aala al-Mawdudi.; Yawm al-Islam by Ahmed Amin.
- [3.](#) Sharh Ibn Abi al-Hadid Vol. 8 page 111.
- [4.](#) Tarikh al-Ya'qubi Vol.2 page 106.
- [5.](#) Futuh al-Buldan page 437.
- [6.](#) Sahih al-Bukhari Vol. 1 page 52.
- [7.](#) Tarikh al-Tabari and Tarikh Ibn al-Athir.
- [8.](#) Al-Imamah wal Siyasah by Ibn Qutaybah.
- [9.](#) See Al-Nas wal-Ijtihad by Abdul Husayn Sharaf al-Din.

<https://www.al-islam.org/then-i-was-guided-muhammad-al-tijani-al-samawi/companions-military-detachment-under-usamah#comment-0>