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Unlawful Matters of Abu Bakr and Umar's Caliphate

No. 1: According to Al-Milal wan Nihal of Imam Abul Fath Abdul Karim Shahrastani, during the days of his terminal illness, the Prophet issued a command to his followers to prepare for the departure of Usamah's army and invoked curse on one who avoids joining Usamah bin Zaid who was appointed as the commander of the forces by the Prophet.

A group of Muslims said that 'we are obliged to fulfill the command of the Prophet', and another group said that 'the Prophet's illness is progressing and in such a situation, we cannot stand separation from him.' And this was the beginning of differences in Islam. Anyway, Usamah left the boundaries of Medina with the Islamic forces.

According to books of biography and history, we come to know that Abu Bakr remained in Medina and did not go out of Medina with Usamah's army and Umar, Abu Ubaidah, Talha and Zubair returned to Medina from a place called Jarf. Ahlul Sunnat justify the above behavior of these characters saying that Abu Bakr had taken permission from the Prophet to remain in Medina and those who returned to Medina from Jarf, did so because the implementation of the Prophet's orders was not immediately demanded; and there was a great probability of disturbance from hypocrites of Medina.

It thus happened that later, after being assured of peace, Abu Bakr appointed Usamah as the commander of the forces and sent him on the expedition. Shia reject this by saying that according to the report of Qastalani, Usamah was a slave and the companions were nobles of Quraish; so they disapproved Usamah's leadership. Abul Fida also writes that Umar despised going under Usamah's command.

Obviously, when the Prophet orders that Usamah should take over the command of the army and fight the enemies of Islam, why other people should have any say in it? It was the duty of every person to obey the command of the Prophet without any ifs and buts, even if the Prophet has ordered them to obey someone lower in status than Usamah. As for Abu Bakr's remaining in Medina, the fact is that it is

not proved from any narration that he did so with the Prophet's approval.

The writer says: The fact is that the Holy Prophet (S) wanted Usamah to go out of Medina with his army and also Abu Bakr, Umar and their supporters as he wanted Ali to easily succeed to Caliphate after his death, which was very near as his deteriorating health showed. The Prophet knew well that Abu Bakr, Umar and their supporters and even the Helpers (Ansar) were concerned about Caliphate. They would not allow His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) to become the Caliph. And the same thing happened that the presence of the opponents of Ali (a.s.) in Medina did not allow him to become the Caliph.

The Prophet was also not unaware of their intention. Thus, Abu Bakr remained in Medina and Umar and his supporters returned to Medina from Jarf. The Prophet expired in the meantime, and the opponents of Ali (a.s.) settled the matter of Caliphate immediately. There is no doubt that if opponents of Ali (a.s.) had been out of Medina at the time of the Prophet's demise, according to the natural course of events, His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) would have become the Caliph.

No doubt, all these procedures of Saqifah seem to be tainted. The success of this procedure is the direct result of the non-participating of Usamah's army. No doubt, opponents of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) succeeded in their aim, but they also deviated from the commands of the Holy Prophet (S). It is a matter of great regret that the Prophet invoked curse on those who disobeyed his commands.

Let Sunni and Shia argue with each other, but the fact is that which the writer has mentioned above. It is obvious that Saqifah was a really a very hideous matter as Abu Bakr and Umar abandoned the Prophet's funeral for its sake! It was really a very unnatural act that the opponents of Ali (a.s.) indulged in. A Muslim can never abandon the dead body of a Muslim, what to say of Muslims who had to leave the holy body of the Prophet for the sake of rulership!

It seems to be a very grievous matter but Ahlul Sunnat have found a way out by framing the principles of their Imamate in such a way that it is not obligatory on Allah to appoint an Imam and the people are obliged to do so even if due to this they have to leave the dead body of the Prophet without burial¹. Refer to the book of Sharh Aqaid Nasafi, which says that priority is for selection of the Imam and the burial of the Prophet is only second in importance.

It is obvious that this principle was framed taking into consideration the matters of Caliphate, although it is absolutely against wisdom, honesty and modesty and such a principle cannot be called divine pleasure. Only those principles are divine pleasure which are based on the laws of Nature. Such an unnatural principle cannot be accepted as a point of divine law.

No. 2: In Tarikhul Khulafa², it is stated that Abu Bakr sent Umar to His Eminence, Ali (a.s.), as some people had gathered at the house of Fatima (s.a.), in order to break up the gathering of Ali's supporters so that it may not succeed in its purpose. Abu Bakr ordered that if they don't obey, they must be put to death. So Umar came to Fatima's house with this order and also brought a burning torch to burn down the house.

In the meantime, Umar met Lady Fatima (s.a.), who asked him, “O son of Khattab! Where are you going? Have you come to burn down my house?” Umar replied, “Yes, we have come to set fire to your house and all those present in it.” His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) suddenly came out and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr. The writer says that the matter of Ali’s allegiance seems to be a Sunni tactic of the author of Tarikhul Khulafa as mentioned in the previous section of this book.

But these tactics of Abu Bakr and Umar do not comply with any law of humanity. Shah Abdul Aziz has justified them in his Tohfa, but their excuses seem to be worse than their deeds. This incident seems to be extremely repulsive in the view of the people of justice. It seems that Abu Bakr and Umar had in their concern for guarding their seat of power, forgotten that Fatima Zahra (s.a.) was the daughter of their Prophet, and a daughter that was highly aggrieved and broken-hearted due to the separation of her father. How nicely Abu Bakr sent Umar to Fatima’s house to present condolences! Truly, condolence is given with sword and fire!

The tradition of Sahih Bukhari states that the Holy Prophet (S) said: ‘The greed of Caliphate would overcome you soon, and as a result of which, you shall be ashamed in the hereafter,’ is really true. As soon as the Messenger of Allah (S) passed away, Abu Bakr and Umar and their supporters wrought such actions that may Allah protect all the Muslims from such deeds. Attack on Fatima’s house, setting it on fire, intention of eliminating those who sheltered in it etc, they all are such ugly deeds that prove their greed for rulership. May Allah protect us all from such greed. What else can result from such greed, except regret in the hereafter.

No. 3: According to the report of Hasan Basri³, after taking the oath of allegiance, Abu Bakr delivered a sermon and said, “I am a human being and not one better than you. When I make a mistake, help me against it and when you see me going astray, correct me and know that a Satan is controlling me. When you see that I am talking nonsense, do not accept my words.”

The author says: It is a strange sermon. Abu Bakr says that he is a human being and not better than the people. There is no doubt that he was a human being and not free from human nature. But when he was certain that he was not most excellent for the followers of the Prophet, he had no right to take Caliphate in his hands. Even if you say that Abu Bakr said this by way of modesty, it was never so that there was none better than him among the followers of the Prophet. Ali (a.s.) was definitely many times superior to both, Abu Bakr and Umar, as proved from established Islamic texts. Abu Bakr knew this very well.

Did Abu Bakr and Umar not know that Islam gained strength through the sword of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.)? That if Ali (a.s.) had not been there, Islam would not have been established by anyone? Did Abu Bakr and Umar not know that Islam could not have been established through them? Did Abu Bakr and Umar not confess to their hearts that it was Ali (a.s.) who had borne all the difficulties of the battles of Badr, Hunayn, Khandaq and Khaybar, whereas the two of them (Abu Bakr and Umar) have not a single achievement to their credit, except that they either fled from the battlefield or found some excuse to avoid entering the field of the battle.

Did Abu Bakr and Umar not know that the action of Ali (a.s.) only on the day of Khandaq was, according to the statement of the Holy Prophet (S), equal to all the worship acts of all the men and jinns combined? What right Abu Bakr had to take advantage of Islam, when it was the sword of Ali (a.s.) that was instrumental in establishing it? Is it not the case of 'one takes pains while the other takes credit'? Thus, in this situation, Abu Bakr did not consider himself as the best of the people, and especially better than Ali (a.s.). Then why did he insist to take over the Caliphate?

The statement of Abu Bakr that a Satan dominated him is such that the writer cannot explain it further. It seems to be a matter between Satan and Abu Bakr. How can anyone else know its reality? It is said that a man's Satan is man only. Perhaps Abu Bakr meant to imply that it was a human Satan who interfered with his decisions. Allah knows best. Thus, in the view of the writer, this sermon of Abu Bakr, though carrying an aspect of humility, is not free from an aspect of censure.

No. 4: Among all the evil deeds of the two Caliphs the worst in the view of the writer was the way they went out of their way to revive and rejuvenate Bani Umayyah tribe in such a way as it had never been revived. The writer has explained this in the forgone pages. But here some repetition will not be inappropriate. It is not hidden from those who know that Bani Umayyah were the greatest enemies of the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Allah.

As long as the Prophet remained in Mecca, he continued to suffer at the hands of this tribe. After migration to Medina, the enmity of Bani Umayyah with the Holy Prophet (S) remained as it was before. Many a times the Quraish, which included Bani Umayyah, attacked the Prophet during his stay in Medina, but the sword of His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) suppressed them regularly till they were badly routed in the Battle of Hunayn. History and biographical accounts show that the Prophet subdued Bani Umayyah after a struggle spanning a period of ten years, as mentioned previously.

It is no secret that the Prophet completely hated the Bani Umayyah. So much so that he had even cursed them and they were symbolized by the accursed tree. But Abu Bakr and Umar destroyed the ten-years' efforts of the Prophet. How the Prophet had destroyed and weakened this tribe through toil and efforts! This wretched tribe also deserved such a treatment; but after the passing away of the Prophet, it started becoming affluent.

The story of Bani Umayyah's rise to riches is that when Abu Bakr became the ruler, Abu Sufyan, the chief of Bani Umayyah came to His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) and said, "O Ali (a.s.) stretch your hand, I want to give allegiance to you." And he also said, "Abu Bakr has become the Caliph and you remained quiet. If you allow me, I will fill the deserts of Medina with troops of Mecca and destroy the Caliphate in no time." Since His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) knew that the Holy Prophet (S) was dead against Bani Umayyah and had even cursed them, he did not pay any attention to Abu Sufyan's offer.

It is well known that His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) was not one to act against the policy of the Prophet and since he considered following the path of the Messenger as his faith, he could not co-operate with Abu

Sufyan in any way. When Abu Sufyan realized that Ali was not interested in seizing power, he went to Abu Bakr and Umar and said, “You have taken over the Caliphate without thinking of my share! I will destroy your Caliphate now.” Since the two Caliphs were too much concerned to save their Caliphate, without caring that the Prophet was displeased with Bani Umayyah, they rushed forward to satisfy Abu Sufyan by giving him the rulership of Syria.

So Bani Umayyah became richer by the day after the passing away of the Prophet. Up to the point that they became rulers of the whole Arab kingdom through the favor granted to them by Abu Bakr and Umar. These people acted against the Holy Prophet’s policy and made Bani Umayyah richer than they were ever before.

Although Bani Umayyah had no right to put their feet on this ground, because they were the greatest enemies of the Holy Prophet (S), his religion and his family members. They had no right to become prosperous through Islamic rule, but Abu Bakr and Umar, to safeguard their rule, helped this tribe in such a way that it is constituted the greatest sin. As a result of the generosity of the two Caliphs, Bani Umayyah became more and more powerful and all their ignoble traits of character came to light. These people were having a very bad character. They committed all sorts of prohibited acts after gaining temporal power. And no one, but the two Caliphs, could be said to be responsible for all these acts.

If Abu Bakr and Umar had not patronized Bani Umayyah, it would have remained in a miserable condition as left by the Prophet. It was as a result of the generosity of Abu Bakr and Umar that Bani Umayyah became rulers of their time and filled all the Islamic lands with their evil deeds.

It was as a result of the help rendered by Abu Bakr and Umar that His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) could not pass his tenure of Caliphate peacefully. Imam Hasan (a.s.) was poisoned; Imam Husayn (a.s.) and his relatives were martyred in Karbala’. This series of martyrdoms of Imams continued for many years; Sayyid blood flowed like water and the religion of Allah was destroyed from a thousand aspects; thousands of heresies came into being, etc. Without any doubt, the ones responsible for all this were Abu Bakr and Umar and there is no doubt that on Judgment Day they will be answerable before the Almighty Allah for empowering Bani Umayyah against the wishes of the Messenger of Allah (S).

No. 5: According to the traditional report of Qastalani⁴, Abu Bakr said, “I have never prostrated to idols.” Umar became angry at this and said, “You say that you have not prostrated to idols, though during the period of your infidelity, you indeed committed such acts.” When religion of Arabs, especially the people of Mecca was idol worship, Abu Bakr must also have worshipped idols during the period of Ignorance. Umar’s objection to Abu Bakr was not unreasonable. But the question is, why Abu Bakr denied worshipping the idols at that time?

From the falsification of Umar, it is clear that this refusal was unnecessary, but there must be some reason of his refusal. So far, the writer is unable to find the reason of this refusal. Perhaps Abu Bakr thought that idol worship was a defective behavior.

Especially with the official position he held, and also when he knew that right from the beginning, His Eminence, Ali (a.s.) had not worshipped idols; certainly this matter rankles in the heart that one who worshipped idols in the age of ignorance, how can he become a Caliph of the Prophet who was infallible since eternity? And one who was never a worshipper of idols, how he could be superseded? There is no doubt that:

“A strange thing is this, to be sure!”⁵

No. 6: It is mentioned in Mishkat⁶ and Muwattah⁷, that a woman was a grandmother of a dead person. She asked Abu Bakr about the share of her inheritance as a grandmother. Abu Bakr said, “Neither the Quran mentions any share for you nor traditions; go away for the time being, we will refer to knowledgeable people about this.”

If the Caliph of his time does not know about the share of a grandmother, it is a matter of great surprise and regret. According to Allamah Suyuti, in view of the Prophet, Abu Bakr was the most knowledgeable of the companions. Now if this is the case with Abu Bakr, what do you expect from Umar and others?

No. 7: In the book of Maghazi Waqidi⁸, Talha bin Abdullah, Ibn Abbas and Jabir bin Abdullah report that the Holy Prophet (S) prayed the funeral prayer for the martyrs of Uhud and said, “I am a witness for them.” Abu Bakr said, “O Prophet, are they not my brothers? They entered the fold of Islam and took part in the war as I fought.” The Prophet said, “Yes, but they never delighted from the prosperity of the world. I don’t know, what you will do after me.” Upon this, Abu Bakr wept and asked, “Would I really commit such acts?”

Dear readers! The Prophet’s saying cannot be without any purpose. Abu Bakr’s deeds certainly came to light after the passing away of the Messenger of Allah (S), as is clear to all. We should know that Waqidi who is also called Imam Maghazi, was such a reliable researcher that Ibn Khallikan, Khatib Baghdadi, Abul Fida, Allamah Suyuti, author of Sharh Qaushiji, Allamah Damiri, Ibn Hajar and Shah Abdul Aziz Dehalvi have testified to his capability.

¹. Ref. Aqaide Nasafi

². Pg. 74

³. Tarikhul Khulafa, Pg. 68.

⁴. Vol. 6, Pg. 152.

⁵. Surah Saad 38:5.

⁶. In the Book of Inheritance.

⁷. Pg. 386

⁸. Battle of Uhud, Pg. 102.

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