

Verse Of The Cave

Ahlul Sunnat present the verse of the cave to support the Caliphate of Abu Bakr. The complete verse is as follows:

“If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: grieve not, surely Allah is with us. So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see...”¹

Ahlul Sunnat people prove various merits of Abu Bakr from this verse. Even the Caliphate and rulership of Abu Bakr could be derived from this verse. The Imamites say that leave alone Caliphate, it does not prove any special quality of Abu Bakr. Rather, it seems to be just the opposite. To know the truth, we shall study the parts of this verse, there are many portions of this verse that are points of contention.

First of all is ‘Thani lthnain’ (the second of the two), secondly, ‘Le Saahebehi’ (for his companion), thirdly, ‘Laa Tahzan Inallah Maana’ (grieve not, surely Allah is with us), fourthly, ‘Sakanatahu Alaihe’ (tranquility upon him). Below, we shall discuss each of these portions in detail. First of all, regarding: “The second of the two”, Ahlul Sunnat say that the second of the two is Abu Bakr who is the second person after the Messenger of Allah (S) who is nominated for the fulfillment of religious responsibility after the Holy Prophet (S).

The Imamites say that the second of the two denotes the Holy Prophet (S) himself and not Abu Bakr and there is no indication of conferment of religious authority in the verse. The Almighty is complaining about those people who are not helpful to his Prophet (S). They are such that either they avoid Jihad or flee from the battlefield, instead of sacrificing their life. Abu Bakr himself was one of those who had fled the battlefield. Or there were such people, who could not help the Prophet in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Hunayn and they left him and ran away. Then the meaning of “second of the two” and the “third of the three” is “one of the two” and “one of the three.” Here the “second of the two” is that same “one of the two” who was one of the two people in the cave and who was comforting the other.

Apparently, this comforting one was the Holy Prophet (S) and not Abu Bakr. This portion of the verse in

no way proves the Caliphate of Abu Bakr and it has no relation to Caliphate or rulership. Although there is no cure for religious obstinacy.

Second: ‘Le Saahebehi’ (for his companion): Ahlul Sunnat say that ‘Le Saahebehi’ (for his companion) has proved the companionship of Abu Bakr. The Imamites do not deny the companionship of Abu Bakr, but they say that companionship on its own is not something that deserves to be praised, if there is absence of belief or faith. Only that companion of the Holy Prophet (S) is deserving of honor, who has faith; and mere companionship is of no use.

What is the use of such a companion, who is denounced in the words of Allah? As Allah mentions about those companions who avoided Jihad or who were the first to flee the battle, leaving the Holy Prophet (S) in danger. Apparently, this verse does not even mention those characteristics of companionship that are generally accepted by the people. Here, companion means one who was with the Holy Prophet (S) in the cave, that is Abu Bakr. This is the apparent meaning of that companion. Apart from this, the Arabic word of Sahab is not a word whose use is limited to special people. It can be used for ordinary people also, as mentioned in Surah Yusuf:

“O my two mates of the prison! Are sundry lords better or Allah the One, the Supreme?”²

It is used for people who had no sort of worldly or religious power. The Arabic word of Sahab does not prove any merit for Abu Bakr.

Thirdly: ‘La Tahzan Inallah Maana’ (grieve not, surely Allah is with us): Ahlul Sunnat say that these words prove that the Messenger of Allah (S) comforted Abu Bakr and made him his partner in receiving Allah’s help and peace. The Imamiyah say that these words do not indicate any merit for Abu Bakr or anyone else. The condition is that Abu Bakr did not give up his native place for helping the Prophet or the religion of Islam.

When he left Mecca with the Holy Prophet (S) in order to escape the enemies, the Holy Prophet (S) took refuge in a cave and Abu Bakr also entered the cave. But Abu Bakr was so nervous in the cave that he started weeping in fear of the enemies. The Holy Prophet (S) comforted him and asked why he was weeping? But despite this, he did not stop crying. Obviously, in such a condition, while the Holy Prophet (S) was inside a dark cave to escape the enemies, it was very much necessary that they should be quiet and peaceful. This untimely crying would have given them away, because the enemies had come out to search for the Holy Prophet (S).

It is surprising that when Saraqa reached the mouth of the cave, the weeping of Abu Bakr did not stop. If that enemy of Islam had entered the cave, Abu Bakr would hardly have been able to defend the Holy Prophet (S), keeping in mind that he was already crying in fear. The Holy Prophet (S) would have had to fight a duel with that enemy of Islam alone. Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) comforted such a chicken-hearted companion in the words:

“Do not grieve, certainly Allah is with us.”

So what is the merit of such a companion? Rather, it certainly indicates that the companion of the Holy Prophet (S), in spite of knowing that the Almighty will not allow His Prophet to be killed at the hands of infidels, had no faith in Allah.

We should know that as with ‘La Tahzan’ (Do not grieve...), Ahlul Sunnat prove many merits of Abu Bakr by the words ‘Inallaha Maana’ (certainly Allah is with us). They show many types of companionships with ‘Maana’ (with us).

Truly, priesthood (Maulviyat) is a strange thing. Sometimes they decorate their speeches to say that the companionship was of help and assistance and sometimes it was companionship in knowledge. In the end, they also show that the words of the Prophet prove the companionship of Allah with Abu Bakr. The Imamites say these are all wordplays. Actually, it is nothing worthy of mention that could prove any merit of Abu Bakr. The Holy Prophet (S) was comforting him not to be sorrowful, Allah is their helper and aider. ‘You think that enemies have arrived and who is it that will help you? Do not be aggrieved Allah is our helper and friend.’

The Imamites also refute Ahlul Sunnat saying, that here the Prophet has said ‘Maana’ (with us) denoting ‘Maaii’ (with me) and it is a style in Arabic to speak in plural form. In the Urdu language too, instead of singular, we speak in plurals. Thus instead of ‘I’ we say ‘We’. Is it necessary that ‘Maana’ (with us) should be considered ‘Maaii’ (with me)? The clear thing is that just as Allah was with the Holy Prophet (S), He was also with Abu Bakr and was with every creature; He was and He shall remain to be so. Thus, what merit could anyone have in this type of companionship?

Thus, the Holy Prophet (S) said ‘Maana’ (with us). This does not prove any merit of people, rather it proves the quality of Allah that He is with everyone. In my view, Shias are not required to say that ‘Maana’ (with us) is used in place of ‘Maaii’ (with me).

A Shia scholar says that if Ahlul Sunnat say regarding ‘Maana’ (with us) that we do not like to use plural instead of singular and it is necessary that instead of one, two people must be included in it, we shall say that the second person is Ali (a.s.). That when the Holy Prophet (S) asked Abu Bakr why he was weeping, as Shah Waliullah writes in Izalatul Khifa that Abu Bakr said: “I am not crying for myself. I am crying for Ali (a.s.). That he must have been killed and I am crying for you that soon you will be martyred.”

Then the Holy Prophet (S) said Allah is with both of us. This means that “Allah is the helper of me and Ali (a.s.).” On this point, both the scholars of Shia and Sunni have indulged in word play. The reply of each sect is as per the objection of every sect. On top of this is the statement of Shah Waliullah. Now I ask: O Imamites! What did you lose if ‘Maana’ (with us) includes Abu Bakr? Indeed, Abu Bakr was included in this ‘Maana’(with us). And if there had been a third, even an infidels, he would also have been included in this ‘Maana’ (with us). And Ahlul Sunnat are requested to consider what merit is

obvious from the fact if Abu Bakr was indeed included in this?

The fact is that those who indulge in religious argumentation are distanced from nature, which is why they are prone to such unnatural views. Here, the arguments of the two sects are mere arguments. It is astonishing that a scholar of the caliber of Shah Waliullah should write such weak statements, as mentioned above. No sane person will give importance and consider true, such imaginative affairs. Such a person would consider the writing of Shah Waliullah to be unreliable and away from truth.

It is surprising that the Holy Prophet (S) did not weep for Ali (a.s.) in the cave, while it was Abu Bakr who wept. The condition of Abu Bakr himself was so tense that it seems unlikely he would worry about Ali (a.s.) and weep for him. Indeed, the cause of this weeping was the weak-heartedness of Abu Bakr. The truth is that he never wept for anyone. If the statement of Shah Waliullah is that he wept for Ali (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet (S), it is an ignorant action. Fear is a natural feeling. Very few people could be said to possess bravery. Thus, one who is not made brave, cannot be blamed for cowardice.

I also do not agree with the claim of Imamite writers, who say that Abu Bakr was weeping and wailing, so that enemies may learn of their presence and enter the cave. In my view, Abu Bakr never wailed for this purpose. He had entered the cave with utmost sincerity. He started crying when faced with this difficulty. It cannot be construed that Abu Bakr desired that the Holy Prophet (S) should be caught. Abu Bakr stood to gain more if the Holy Prophet (S) remained safe and sound. He was not a wealthy person nor his tribe had any superiority. He had taken up companionship of the Prophet only because through this, he would gain monetary progress.

Thus, by living in Medina, and through trade and war booty, his economical conditions improved till the time that after the Holy Prophet (S) he also became the ruler of Muslims. Abu Bakr was a very clever person. He could never desire Prophet's death, while he was with him in the cave. Shah Waliullah agrees that the weeping of Abu Bakr was due to fear and fear is rooted in a weak heart.

Thus, this action of Abu Bakr is not deserving of any praise. In such a delicate moment, though it was indeed harmful for the Holy Prophet (S) if one wept loudly, but it was also against wisdom to weep quietly. In such a situation, it is the duty of every companion to reassure each other, rather than creating nervousness. But this incident shows that the Holy Prophet (S) was a very stable minded and a valiant person. That he kept his emotions intact in such perilous circumstances and even comforted Abu Bakr. In brief, what merit does this verse show of Abu Bakr? Except for Ahlul Sunnat, no one has become cognizant of any such points.

Fourthly: From the words 'Sakanatahu Alaihe' (Allah sent down His tranquility upon him) Ahlul Sunnat show that the Almighty sent peace on Abu Bakr and this informs us of the high status of Abu Bakr. Imamites say that peace was sent by Allah on His respected Prophet. That in such a serious situation, when his companion had started weeping due to fear, it was necessary for the companion to console his counterpart.

The Almighty Allah sent peace on the Prophet (S) and helped Him with armies invisible to the human eye. People of justice may see whether the relation of this peace is with the Prophet or Abu Bakr. It is well-known that the verse refers to peace on the Holy Prophet (S). It seems from the life history of Abu Bakr that apart from that cave he never had peace of mind. It seems irrational that one should be given peace of Allah and that he should leave the Prophet and flee from the battlefield, or when he goes for Jihad, he could not face the infidels due to the weakness of heart.

In such a situation, he should always have trusted Allah and he should have faced the enemies of Allah in the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Hunayn. But when he had never got that peace of heart, how he could be considered recipient of Allah's peace in the cave or anywhere else? Truth-loving people may weigh this reply of Shias in the balance of justice and the writer does not wish to express any opinion.

It should be clear that some Ahlul Sunnat people turn the pronoun of 'Alaihe' (upon him) towards Abu Bakr. Nawab Maulavi Sayyid Mahdi Ali Khan, the writer of Ayate Bayyinat, and some other non-famous scholars also do it. But the greatest exegesists of Ahlul Sunnat clearly apply the pronoun of 'Alaihe' (upon him) towards the Messenger of Allah (S), from which the Holy Prophet (S) becomes the recipient of the peace of Allah.

Indeed, the Almighty also intended this, but priesthood is a strange thing! They always try to use the play of words in debates and discussions, even though the incident may be murdered at the altar of argumentation, but they will not change their stance. Debate means that two groups take part in a discussion and arrive at a conclusion regarding something. When it is so, what is achieved by useless contests? Now, people of justice should see that if the pronoun of 'Alaihe' (upon him) is turned towards, Abu Bakr, what sort of grammatical blunder is committed.

All the pronouns in this verse are applicable to the Holy Prophet (S), in between, one pronoun is construed to be for Abu Bakr. Then the pronoun after this, that is 'Ayyadahoo' (strengthened him) is for the Holy Prophet (S). Is there any sense in it? No, but priesthood is always indulging in such nonsense. We should see that by turning the pronoun to Abu Bakr, the beauty of the language of the Quran is lost. In brief, the verse of the cave is not related to the Caliphate or rulership of Abu Bakr or anyone else, and it is not in praise of anyone.

The meaning of the verse is just that Allah says: "O enemies of Islam! If you don't help My Prophet, Allah helps him. He was even helped when infidels expelled him from his home and he took refuge in a cave. At that time, there were two people; he himself and his companion who was weeping and wailing.

In such a condition, the Prophet comforted him that Allah was with them. Then Allah sent peace on His Prophet and helped him with an army of angels." This is all there is to it. But the interpretations that have deformed this verse, do not require a mention. The people of justice may themselves compare truth with untruth. We also present two additional points that are found in this incident:

First of all, even if we agree that Abu Bakr bravely accompanied the Holy Prophet (S) in the cave, even then when this companionship is compared to the action of Ali (a.s.) for sleeping on the bed of the Prophet, we realize that Ali's action was more a feat of bravery than the companionship of Abu Bakr, because Ali (a.s.) slept fearlessly on the bed of the Holy Prophet (S). The natural bravery of Ali has no equal. He was a stable and a brave personality. It was the job of a loyal, Allah-knowing and religious person that Ali (a.s.) performed. Such a thing cannot be thought about Abu Bakr's presence in the cave.

Despite this, Abu Bakr is given precedence over Ali (a.s.) and is said to be deserving of the Prophet's successorship. It is a strange world where there is no justice! If there is justice, it is with Allah or it would be Judgment Day. In my view, it behoves a Muslim not to forgo justice. How can a bigot be a Muslim? The presence of Abu Bakr in no way makes him superior to Ali (a.s.).

But what would the people of justice say to that the Prophet said 'La Tahzan' (do not grieve): That clearly shows the dissatisfaction of Prophet (S) over an action of Abu Bakr. In such a situation, is Abu Bakr not proved to be inferior? Then to prefer Abu Bakr because of this, is very far from justice. Only Allah knows what this blind love for Abu Bakr will earn for Ahlul Sunnat in the hereafter? It is a strange unjust love that Quran, tradition, reason and understanding, all are murdered for it.

(2) Allamah Jalaluddin Suyuti writes that Abu Bakr was the bravest companion. If Suyuti had just referred to Abu Bakr, it would have been something else, but to say that he was the bravest companion is an astonishing statement. Over and above, he relates a tradition of Ali (a.s.) to say that Abu Bakr was the bravest of men. That is Abu Bakr was not only braver than Ali (a.s.) and the Prophet, he was the bravest among all the people. The action of Suyuti to call Abu Bakr the bravest of the people in the words of Ali has brought out two evils: one is that Abu Bakr, who was not even an ordinary brave, is said to be the bravest.

Secondly, Ali (a.s.) and the Holy Prophet (S) who were brave in their own right, were rendered inferior. It is clear from the incident of cave that of the Holy Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr, who was braver? In the same way, it is crystal clear from the battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq and Hunayn, how brave Abu Bakr was. Who deserves to be called braver, Abu Bakr or Ali? Till now the writer has not come to know from Quran, tradition, history, etc. how Abu Bakr was the bravest of the companions or bravest of the people. The incident of cave tells of no kind of bravery.

In fact, Abu Bakr had no experience of battles or war. But he had good experience of business. He used to go to the markets of Medina everyday and make a lot of money. It is not necessary that everyone must be a soldier. Providence neither made Abu Bakr a soldier nor Umar; both these gentlemen had different qualities. Just as Abu Bakr had business acumen, Umar was having a political mind. That is why, in the battles of the Prophet, these two gentlemen had no achievements worthy of mention. Those who fought in these battles were Ali (a.s.), other Bani Hashim and the Helpers (Ansar) of Medina. The sword of Ali (a.s.) performed great feats that are mentioned in the books of poetry and history.

If Ali (a.s.) had not been there, Islam would not have been established in Medina. The fact is that though anyone could be considered bravest, the quality of bravery was perfect only in Ali (a.s.). It is surprising that a scholar like Suyuti should also write such baseless things that are absolutely impossible.

Another inappropriate statement of Suyuti is that Abu Bakr was the most knowledgeable of the companions and the most pure. Indeed, this is only applicable to Ali (a.s.) and none else. But there is no doubt that Abu Bakr was more knowledgeable than Umar and cleaner. In brief, we could say that bigotry is the enemy of faith. May Allah give good sense to people to speak and love the truth. Without recognizing the truth, man cannot achieve salvation in the world and the hereafter.

[1.](#) Surah Taubah 9:40

[2.](#) Surah Yusuf 12:39

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