

Who Are Ahlul-Bayt? Part 7

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(Note: I apologize in advance, if my Sunni brothers/sisters feel offended by the content of these parts of the article due to their previous background on Aisha. The purpose of this article is not to make you feel bad, but to provide you with some pieces of information that the Sunni collections carry, but they have been ignored due to some scholars who prevented discussing them. The final judgment is with you.)

Aisha After The Prophet's Demise

Another important approach to realize who Ahlul-Bayt are, is studying the historical events after the demise of the Prophet. According to the purification sentence in Qur'an (the last sentence of Verse 33:33), Ahlul-Bayt are free from any dirt and impurity.

On the other hand, the documented Sunni history testifies that Aisha (one of the wives of the Prophet) was not righteous. If we examine her life after the demise of the Prophet, we will find her misconducts more horrible than what she did during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (S).

Undoubtedly, one of her most terrible misconduct was instigating the Battle of Camel during the Caliphate of Imam 'Ali (as). The battle was named Camel (Jamal) since Aisha was riding a Camel to lead the rebels. How can she be pure when she fought against the legitimate Caliph of his time and when she is responsible for shedding the blood of more than 10,000 Muslims? What impurity can be imagined greater than this horrible Fitna which caused to disunite the Muslim Ummah once and forever. Let us first briefly discuss the event preceding to this strife.

Agitation Against Uthman

Aisha claimed that the reason for her rise against Imam 'Ali (as) (which was manifested in the battle of Camel) was getting revenge of the blood of Uthman. Yet, the history testifies that Aisha herself was one

of the main figures of agitation against Uthman which ended up with his murder. Once she went to Uthman and asked for her share of inheritance from the Prophet (after so many years passed from the demise of the Prophet).

Uthman refrained to give Aisha any money, and reminded her that she was one of those who counseled Abu Bakr not to pay the share of inheritance of Fatimah al-Zahra (sa). So if Fatimah does not have any share, then why should she? Hearing this, Aisha became very angry at Uthman, and came out and said to the people:

"Kill this old fool (Na'thal), for he is unbeliever."

Sunni references:

- History of Ibn al-Athir, v3, p206
- Lisan al-Arab, v14, p141
- al-Iqd al-Farid, v4, p290
- Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid, v16, pp 220–223.

The following paragraph from the History of al-Tabari shows the struggle of Aisha to agitate against Uthman and to push the famous companions against him. It also shows her position toward Imam 'Ali (as), and her plots with Talha for overthrowing Uthman when Talha was able to take over the treasury of state during the siege against Uthman:

While Ibn Abbas was setting out for Mecca, he found Aisha in al-Sulsul (seven miles south of Medina). Aisha said: "O' Ibn Abbas, I appeal to you by God, to abandon this man (Uthman) and sow doubt about him among the people, for you have been given a sharp tongue. (By the current siege over Uthman) people have shown their understanding, and light is raised to guide them. I have seen Talha has taken the possession of the keys to the public treasuries and storehouses. If he becomes Caliph (after Uthman), he will follow in the path of his parental cousin Abu-Bakr." Ibn Abbas said: "O' Mother (of believers), if something happens to that man (i.e., Uthman), people would seek asylum only with our companion (namely, 'Ali)." Aisha replied: "Be quiet! I have no desire to defy or quarrel with you."

Reference: History of al-Tabari, English version, v15, pp 238–239

Another Sunni historian, al-Baladhuri, in his history (al-Ansab al-Ashraf) said that when the situation became extremely grave, Uthman ordered Marwan Ibn al-Hakam and Abdurrahman Ibn Attab Ibn Usayd to try to persuade Aisha to stop campaigning against him and to help him pass this difficult time. They went to her while she was preparing to leave for pilgrimage, and they told her:

"We pray that you stay in Medina, and that Allah may save this man (Uthman) through you." Aisha said: "I

have prepared my means of transportation and vowed to perform the pilgrimage. By God, I shall not honor your request... I wish he (Uthman) could fit to one of my sacks so that I could carry him. I would then throw him into the sea."

Reference: "al-Ansab al-Ashraf", by al-Baladhuri, v4, part 1, p75

The Battle Of Camel

Some traditions in Sahih al-Bukhari imply to the reader that the dislike of Aisha toward Imam 'Ali was because 'Ali suggested the Prophet to divorce her. The fact is that the Prophet was about to divorce her because he himself found her troublesome since Aisha and Hafsa backed each other against the Prophet to the extent that Allah sent down a revelation in this regard.

(Please see Part IV for the verses related to divorce of Aisha and Hafsa and the corresponding traditions from Sahih al-Bukhari). She often used to offend the Prophet (S) and caused him distress, but the Prophet (S) was compassionate and kind, his character lofty, his patience deep, therefore he frequently said to her, "Your Satan has confused you, O Aisha."

Even if we suppose the story is true (that Imam 'Ali advised the Prophet to divorce her), is it a sufficient excuse for her to disobey the words of God and her husband? Allah, in the beginning of the verse 33:33 of Qur'an, orders the wives of the Prophet saying:

And stay in your houses. Bedizen not yourselves with the bedizenment of the Time of ignorance. ... (Qur'an 33:33)

Aisha was required by the above verse of Qur'an to stay at home, but she disobeyed the order of God. Is this a sign of piety, purity and righteousness? All of other wives of the Prophet obeyed the above injunction with the exception of Aisha. Historians relate that Hafsa Bint Umar wanted to go with her for the battle of the Camel.

But her brother, Abdullah, reproached her and recited the aforementioned verse to her. Hafsa then canceled her plans. Aisha, however, rode the camel that that Prophet had forbidden her from riding and warned her about the barking of al-Haw'ab's dogs:

The Prophet (S) said to his wives: "I wonder which one of you will be the instigator of the Camel Affair, at whom the dogs of Haw'ab will bark, and she will be the one who has deviated from the straight path. As to you Humayra (i.e., Aisha), I have warned you in that regard."

Sunni references:

- History of Ibn al-Athir, v3, p120
- al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah, by Ibn Qutaybah

This prophecy of the Messenger of Allah (S) took place 28 years later in the plain of al-Haw'ab. The story that all historians tend to agree is that during her journey to Basra (to lead the war of Camel), Aisha passed by the waters of al-Haw'ab and heard the dogs barking. She remembered the warning of the Prophet, and she cried and said: "Take me back! Take me back!"

But Talha and Zubair brought fifty men and bribed them to testify in front of her that the place was not the plain of al-Haw'ab. Many Sunni historians believe that those fifty men gave the first falsified testimony in the history of Islam. (al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir, and al-Mada'ini who wrote on the events of the year 36 AH. See also "The Great Sedition"-- "al-Fitna al-Kubra", by Taha Husayn).

I believe that this narration was fabricated during the time of the Umayyad to reduce the severity of disobedience of Aisha, thinking that she would be exonerated after her nephew, Abdullah Ibn al-Zubair, deceived her, coming with fifty men who swore by God and gave false testimony that the water was not that of al-Haw'ab.

Did the fabricator of the report who forged this narration find an excuse for her disobedience to the order of the Prophet of Allah (S) to stay within her house and the prohibition of riding a camel before arriving at the well of al-Haw'ab, the watering place of the barking dogs? Did they find an excuse for her after she rejected the advice of the Mother of Believers, Umm Salama? Historians have recorded that:

Umm Salama said to Aisha: "Do you remember the day the Prophet of Allah (S) proceeded and we were with him and he turned left from (a place called) Qadid and sat alone with 'Ali and whispered to him for a long time? You wanted to force yourself on them; I tried to prevent you, but you disobeyed me and intruded. It did not take long before you returned in tears. I asked: 'What happened to you?' And you replied: 'I approached them and they were in conversation, so I said to 'Ali: 'I get with the Prophet of Allah one day out of nine, so can you not, O son of Abu Talib, leave me with him on my day?' The Messenger of Allah came towards me and he was red with anger, and said: 'Go back! By Allah, none except those who have abandoned faith can hate him'. Then you returned repentant and sad." Aisha said: "Yes, I remember that."

Umm Salama continued: "I also remind you that you and I were with the Prophet of Allah and he said to us: 'Which one of you will be the rider of the trained camel, at whom the dogs of Haw'ab will bark, and she will have deviated from the right path?' We said: 'We seek refuge from Allah and His Prophet from that'. He touched your back and said: 'Don't be that one, O Humayra.'" Aisha said: "I remember that."

Umm Salama said: "Do you not remember that day when your father came with Umar, so we put on our veils. They came in and spoke about what they wanted to, until they said: 'O Prophet of Allah (S) we do not know how long you will be with us. If only you were to tell us who will succeed you as Caliph over us, so that there will be after you a place we can turn to.' He said to them: 'As for me, I have seen his position (in front of you). Were I to do this, you would all fall into disunity as the Israelites dispersed from Aaron'. They remained quiet and left. After they had departed, we came out to the Prophet of Allah and

you said to him, as you were more forthcoming with him than all of us: 'O Messenger of Allah who did you appoint as Caliph over them?' He said: The wearer of the mended shoe.' we went out and we saw it was 'Ali. You said: 'O Prophet of Allah, I do not see anyone apart from 'Ali'. He replied- 'He is the one.' "Aisha said "Yes, I remember that." Umm Salama said to her: "So then, Aisha, how can you go ahead after all these"? She replied "I venture forth to reconcile the people."

Sunni reference: Commentary of Ibn Abil Hadid, v2, p77

Umm Salama also sought to prevent her from the uprising, using strong words, saying:

"The pillars of Islam, if they lean, are not set erect by women; and if they crack, are not joined by women. The praiseworthy things for women are lowering their gazes and protecting their chastity. What would you say if the Messenger of Allah (S) appear before you in one of these deserts and finds you driving your camel from one watering place to another? By Allah, if I were to embark upon this journey of yours, then it was said to me: 'Enter paradise' I would be ashamed to face Muhammad after having thrown off the veils he has placed upon me."

Sunni reference: Kitab al-Musanif fi Gharib al-Hadith, by Ibn Qutaybah, Chapter of Imamat and Politics.

Just as Aisha did not accept the advice of many sincere companions, al-Tabari in his history related that:

Jariyah Ibn Quddama al-Sa'di said to her: 'O mother of the believers, by Allah, the murder of Uthman is less despicable than you going out on this accursed camel from your house and bearing arms. Allah has imposed on you the veil and sanctity, you have destroyed your cover and defiled your respect. Surely, whoever sees your uprising, sees your destruction. If you come to us obeying, then go back to your house. If you have come to us in coercion, then seek the help of the people".

Sunni reference: History of al-Tabari, v6, p482

Historians have recorded that she was the general leader of the battle, supervising, separating people and issuing commands. Even when Talha and al-Zubair argued as to who should lead the prayer, and when both of them wanted to lead, Aisha intervened and removed them both and ordered Abdullah Ibn Zubair, her nephew, to lead the dissents in prayer.

She would dispatch messengers with letters which she sent to several regions, requesting their assistance against 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib and urging them with the Jahili zeal. She even recruited twenty thousand or more rabble and greedy Arabs to fight and depose the Commander of the Faithful. Her urging resulted in zealous discord, where large numbers of people were killed in the name of defending and aiding the mother of the believers.

The historians say that when the companions of Aisha came to Uthman Ibn Hanif, the governor of Basra, they took him along with seventy of his officers who were in charge of the public treasury as prisoners.

They brought them to Aisha who ordered that they be put to death. They were slaughtered as sheep are slaughtered. It is even reported there were 400 men in all and that they were the first Muslims whose heads were cut off whilst they were patient.

Sunni references:

- History of al-Tabari, v5, p178
- Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid, v2, p501

al-Sha'bi reported from Muslim Ibn Abi Bakra from his father "When Talha and Zubair reached Basra, I put on my sword as I wanted to help them. I visited Aisha, she was ordering, prohibiting; she was in command. I remembered a Hadith from the Prophet of Allah (S) which I used to hear him say: 'A community which has its affairs administered by a woman will never succeed.' I (therefore) withdrew from them and left them". (reported by al-Bukhari, v8, p97; al-Nisa'i, v4, p305; al-Hakim, v4, p525)

One of the things that makes us laugh and weep at the same time is that Aisha, went out of her residence in disobedience to Allah and His Prophet and then ordered the companions to remain in their houses. This is surely an amazing phenomena! Ibn Abil Hadid, in his Sharh, along with some other historians, reported that Aisha sent a letter when she was in Basra to Zaid Ibn Sawhan al-'Abdi in which she said to him: "From Aisha, the mother of the believers, daughter of Abu Bakr, the truthful one, wife of the Prophet. To her devoted son, Zaid Ibn Sawhan. Remain at home and make the people abandon the son of Abu Talib. I hope to hear what I would love from you, since you are the most trustworthy of my family...Wassalam".

This righteous man replied to her thus: "From Zaid Ibn Sawhan to Aisha Bint Abi Bakr: Allah issued a commandment to you and, He also issued a commandment to us. He ordered you to remain in your residence, and He ordered us to fight. Your letter has come to me instructing me to do contrary to what Allah has ordered me to do, (You have asked me) to do what Allah has ordered you to do, and that you do what Allah has asked me to do! Your order to me is (something) that I cannot obey, therefore there is no reply (necessary) to your letter."

From this, it becomes clear to us that Aisha was not content with leading the army of the Camel, but rather, she craved for absolute control over the believers in all the corners of the land. In all matters, she would command Talha and al-Zubair, who had been nominated for the Caliphate by Umar. Due to this, she made it lawful for herself to correspond with the chiefs of the tribes and with the governors, enticing them and seeking their help. If the heroes and men, famous for their courage, abandon and flee from the lines of battle when facing Imam 'Ali (as) and would not stand in front of him, she stood, inciting, screaming and arousing the people.

Aisha permitted the killing of innocent people, and led the first civil war against Imam 'Ali who was chosen by people as Caliph. The result was massacre of thousands of Muslims according to the

historians (See the History of al-Tabari and the History of Ibn al-Athir on the events of the year 36 AH). Allah to whom belong Might and Majesty stated in Qur'an:

"And Whoever kills a believer deliberately, his reward is Hell forever, and the Wrath of Allah is upon him, He cursed him and prepared a great punishment for him." (Qur'an 4:93)

Nevertheless, the Prophet (S) did not divorce her. So why all this hatred toward Imam 'Ali (as)? History has recorded some of her aggressive actions that could not be explained. When she was on her way back to Mecca, she heard that the plot of Killing Uthman finally took place, so she became very delighted.

But when she heard that people had chosen Imam 'Ali (as) to succeed him, she became very angry and said: "I wish the sky would collapse on the earth before son of Abu Talib (i.e., 'Ali) could succeed the Caliphate". Then she said: "Take me back," and thus she started the civil war against Imam 'Ali (as) whose name she disliked to mention. Sunni traditionists narrated that:

When Ubaydullah Ibn Utbah mentioned to Ibn Abbas that Aisha said "In his death-illness the Prophet was brought to (Aisha's) house while his shoulders were being supported by Fadhl Ibn Abbas and another person", then Abdullah Ibn Abbas said: "Do you know who this 'other man' was?" Ibn Utbah replied: "No." Then Ibn Abbas said: "He was 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, but she is averse to name him in a good context."

Sunni references:

- Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v6, pp 34,228
- al-Tabaqat al-Kabir, by Ibn Sa'd, v2, part 2, p29
- History of al-Tabari (Arabic), v1, pp 1800-1801
- al-Ansab al-Ashraf, by al-Baladhuri, v1, pp 544-545
- al-Tabaqat, by Ibn Sa'd, v2, part 2, p29
- al-Sunan al-Kubra, by al-Bayhaqi, v3, p396
- A milder version of the above tradition has also been mentioned by al-Bukhari. (See Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, traditions 3.761 and 5.727 and 5.736).

The hatred of Aisha toward Imam 'Ali (as) is well known. This was not just limited to waging war against Imam 'Ali. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal recorded that:

"Ata Ibn Yasar, who says that a certain person came to Aisha and began to use impudent and abusive words for 'Ali while Ammar, was in her presence. She said to him: "As regards 'Ali, I have nothing to tell

you, but as regards Ammar, I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying about him that if he has to make a choice between two things he will always choose that which is better from the point of view of good guidance and salvation."

Sunni reference: Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v6, p113

Aisha's hatred for Imam 'Ali (as) was so much that she always tried to distance him from the Prophet (S) whenever she could find the means to do so. Ibn Abil Hadid, in his commentary on the Nahjul Balagha reported:

The Prophet of Allah (S) beckoned to 'Ali to come close. He came close until he sat between him and Aisha, and he and the Prophet (S) were clung together. She said to him "Can you not find a seat for this one except on my thigh?"

Ibn Abil Hadid also reported that one day the Prophet of Allah (S) was walking with Imam 'Ali and the conversation became prolonged. Aisha approached as she was walking from behind until she came between them saying: "What is it between you two that you are taking so long?" Upon this the Prophet of Allah (S) became angry.

Sunni reference: Sharh Ibn Abil Hadid, v9, p195

It is also reported that she once came upon the Prophet (S) whilst he was conversing quietly with 'Ali. She screamed and said: "What is it with you and me, O son of Abu Talib? I have (just) one day with the Prophet of Allah (S)". Thereupon the Prophet (S) became angry.

Would the Prophet (S) be pleased with any believing man or woman whose heart was filled with hatred and malice towards his cousin, the leader of his progeny, about whom he said: "He loves Allah and His Prophet, and Allah and His Prophet love him"? He also said about him: "Whoever loves 'Ali has loved me, and whoever hates 'Ali has hated me." (al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p130 who said this Tradition is authentic as set by the two standards of Muslim and Bukhari).

Had Aisha not heard the saying of the Prophet about 'Ali that "None but a believer would love him, and none but a hypocrite would nurse grudge against him"? (Sahih Muslim, English version, Chapter XXXIV, p46, Tradition #141; Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p643; Sunan Ibn Majah, v1, p142; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal v1, pp 84,95,128; Tarikh al-Kabir, by al-Bukhari, v1, part 1, p202; Hilyatul Awliyaa, by Abu Nu'aym, v4, p185; Tarikh, by al-Khateeb al-Baghdadi, v14, p462).

This saying of the Prophet was so well-known that some of the companions used to say: "We recognized the hypocrites by their hatred of 'Ali." (Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p639, Tradition #1086; al-Isti'ab, by Ibn Abd al-Barr, v3, p47; al-Riyadh al-Nadhirah, by Muhibbuddin al-Tabari, v3, p242; Dhakha'ir al-Uqba, by Muhibbuddin al-Tabari, p91).

Moreover, Had Aisha not heard the saying of the Prophet: "Whoever I am his master, 'Ali is his master.

O God! Love those who love him and be hostile to those who are hostile to him"? (Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v2, p298, v5, p63; Sunan Ibn Majah, v1, pp 12,43) Undoubtedly she heard all of them, but she did not like them, and when she heard of the assassination of Imam 'Ali (as), she knelt and thanked Allah!!! (See the History of al-Tabari and the History of Ibn al-Athir on the events of the year 40 AH).

She was also involved in the intercepting the funeral procession of al-Hasan, the leader of the Heaven's youth, and prevented his burial beside his grandfather (the Prophet), and she said: "Do not let anybody that I don't like enter my house." She forgot, or maybe ignored the saying of the Prophet (S) about al-Hasan and al-Husayn that: "I love them, and Allah loves those who love them" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, Traditions 5.90 and 3.333), or the saying of the Prophet that: "Nothing has been dearer to me than al-Hasan." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, Tradition 7.772).

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