



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Nahj al-Balagha

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### Lesson: 19

#### Topic: Sermon #3: Shiqshiqiyya (Continuance): Umar's Council (The Process by Which Uthman Was Chosen?!

« حَتَّى إِذَا مَضَى لِسَبِيلِهِ جَعَلَهَا فِي جَمَاعَةٍ زَعَمَ أَنِّي أَحَدُهُمْ »

...Till when he went his way (of death), he put the matter (caliphate) in a group and regarded me to be one of them.

- The story of the council of 6 members Umar appointed to choose the caliphate after him: Amir al-Mu'minin عليه السلام, Zubayr, Talha, Uthman, Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas.

If Umar appointed Imam as a member of the council, why did he say:

«زعم أي أحدهم» "He regarded me to be one of them?"

1. He devised the council to ensure that the Imam (as) wouldn't be the caliph. (In other words, it was preplanned.)
2. Umar was equating the Imam (as) with the other five, that all the six are equal. (Degrading the Imam to their level)

- Umar was stabbed by a man called *Pirooz* (entitled *Abu Lu'lu'*) when he was 60 or 63 in 23 A.H. Sunnis say it happened in *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, but most Shias say it happened in Rabi' Al-Awwal. Suhayb al-Rumi prayed on his body.
- In the book *the life of the Companions* (*حياة الصحابة*), in his last moments, Umar expressed a lot of regrets; e.g., I wish my mother never gave me birth. In fact, he was expressing regret at the caliphate.
- When companions asked him to appoint the next caliph from his family, he answered caliphate couldn't gather in the Ibn al-Khattab family, justifying why they pushed away Ali عليه السلام from the caliphate in Saqifa.
- Umar then appointed a 6-member council to decide who the caliph was. He explained why he chose those six: the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم died while he was satisfied with them.



- About the reason why he didn't choose one of them, he said because of observations about each one of them. They were summoned, and Umar told them his issue with them.

**Talha:** Umar told Talha that he was not chosen directly because the Prophet ﷺ was angry with him when the hijab verse was revealed. Talha insulted the Prophet by telling him he would marry his wives the minute he died. To console the Prophet, Allah revealed a verse prohibiting the marriage of the Prophet's wives after him.

- A discrepancy in Umar's word: Was the Prophet ﷺ satisfied with Talha, or was he angry with him?
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason Umar despised Talha: When Abu Bakr was dying, he objected and rebuked him for choosing a rough man like Umar as caliph. Umar didn't forget this.

**Zubayr:** Umar told him that he was very unstable and cheap and that he saw him once fighting over a loaf of bread.

**Discrepancy:** If Umar did not consider him fit for the caliphate, why did he choose him for the council?

**Amir al-Mu'minin** ﷺ: Umar told him he would take the Ummah to the right path, but he often jokes.

Points:

1. Umar admitted that Amir al-Mu'minin ﷺ will take people to the right path. So, if he was qualified for the caliphate, why wasn't he made the caliph?
2. When was Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ so playful? No basis for this claim. He just meant that Ali (as) was not as rough as he was.

In any case, whatever *دعابة* means in Umar's mind, Ali ﷺ was qualified, and he would establish justice.

**Uthman:** Umar told him that Quraysh would love you because:

1. He was from Umayyads, who were from Quraysh and enemies of the Prophet ﷺ historically.
2. He hadn't killed any of their warriors, so he had no personal grudges against him.



- Umar told Uthman that if he became the caliph, he would bring nepotism to the caliphate, so the people would revolt against him and kill him.

**Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas:** Umar told him he was too violent and rough.

**Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf:** Umar told him that he was the Qarun (Korah) of the ummah (symbol of greed for wealth and being submerged in materialism)

Conditions Umar made for this council:

1. If they split into three, the party of Ibn Awf will decide.
2. If it became 2 and 4, kill the 2;
3. If no one is chosen after three days, all of them will be killed.

Talha voted for Uthman because he hated Ali ibn Abi Talib عليه السلام.

Zubayr voted for Ali عليه السلام (his cousin).

Imam عليه السلام said:

« فَصَغَا رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ لِضَغْنِهِ »

*One of them gave in to his hatred.*

- Imam عليه السلام here refers to Sa'd. He had hatred toward Imam Ali عليه السلام. Umar ibn Sa'd was his son. Umar knew that he wouldn't vote for Ali عليه السلام.
- The primary reason Sa'd hated Imam Ali عليه السلام was because his mother was Umayyad, and Imam Ali عليه السلام killed his uncles in the battles.

« وَ مَالَ الْأَخْرِ لِصَهْرِهِ »

*The other one leaned towards his brother-in-law.*

- He was referring to Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf whose wife was half-sister of Uthman from his mother's side. That was how Umar ensured Imam عليه السلام wouldn't be chosen.
- Imam عليه السلام mentions that there were also other reasons they didn't choose him. Imam refers to his refusal to follow the path of *Shaykhayn* offered by Abd al-Rahman.

**Observation 1:** Where did Abd al-Rahman get this condition (following the path of *Shaykhayn*) from? On what basis?

**Observation 2:** How do you combine the *Sirah* of Umar and Abu Bakr when there was so much discrepancy between them?



Umar and Abu Bakr's conflicting *Sirah*:

E.g.1: Abu Bakr directly appointed the caliph after him, whereas Umar left it for the *Shura* to decide.

E.g.2: Abu Bakr loved Khalid ibn Walid, whereas Umar hated him.

The same question for Umar: On what basis did you set up this *Shura*, and why was the side of Abd al-Rahman given preference? Why should those who disagree be killed?

Another reason Umar wanted Uthman to be chosen was that he wanted to pay him back for writing his name as the successor of Abu Bakr in his will.

**Observation** on the Shura itself: Which sunnah is Umar following? The Quran? The Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ? The sunnah of Abu Bakr?

«فَيَا لَلَّهِ وَ لِلشُّورَى»

What had I to do with this consultation? I did not accept this Shura, but it was imposed on me.

«مَتَى اعْتَرَضَ الرَّيْبُ فِيَّ مَعَ الْأَوَّلِ مِنْهُمْ حَتَّى صِرْتُ أَقْرَنُ إِلَى هَذِهِ النَّظَائِرِ»

When was there a doubt about my status concerning theirs, that I was compared to them?

«لِكَيْي أَسْفَفْتُ إِذْ أَسْفُوا وَ طِرْتُ إِذْ طَارُوا»

Imam ؑ says: However, he went low when they were low, he flew when they flew.

Two possibilities regarding this statement:

1. Ultimately, we are a Muslim Ummah, and we have enemies. So, I'm in a flock of birds descending and ascending together. I didn't like what they did, but I had no choice.
2. I did not accept the result and demanded a caliphate, which is my God-given right.