بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

History and Development of the Shia

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Lesson: 3

Topic: The Shia and *Saqifa*

Some underlying questions regarding the Shias at the time of the demise of the Holy Prophetﷺ and the caliphate of Abu Bakr?

There are specific questions that are raised to deny the claim that ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīnؑ was the appointed *Wali* by the Holy Prophetﷺ:

- What happened to all those who paid allegiance to ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīnؑ on the day of Ghadeer?
- Why did the majority go with Abu Bakr and leave ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīnؑ?

A misconception that the Muslim nation was united behind Abu Bakr.

- Some have claimed that the ummah was united behind Abu Bakr, and there was a consensus (ijma') that Abu Bakr would become the caliph. However, the truth is that neither all the Muslims were happy nor all of them agreed that he deserved to be in power. Most Muslims were against this decision but were forced to accept it.
- If someone extensively studies the history of Islam, he can easily understand how there was a coup against the Prophetﷺ, the Quran, and ʾAmīr al-Muʾminīnؑ.
- There was no consensus behind Abu Bakr from the first moment, not even in *Saqifa.* Abu Bakr took power unlawfully while he was quarreling with others.

Seizure of Power by Abu Bakr and The Story of *Saqifa*.

- When the Prophetﷺ passed away, Umar started to make a scene in the Masjid saying that the Prophetﷺ was not dead. He threatened anyone who said that he was dead. Abu Bakr joined him in a while and said that the Prophetﷺ was dead, but Allahﷻ was around.
- After being informed of the meeting at *Saqifa,* where a small group of *Ansaars* was gathered to discuss the issue of the Prophet's successorship,

Abu Bakr, Umar, and Abu *Ubaydah* went there. Abu Bakr started talking about the virtues of the *Muhajireen*. A chaotic situation occurred, and Umar suddenly asked Abu Bakr to stretch out his hand for allegiance. He pledged his allegiance to Abu Bakr, and then the others followed.

- The *Ansaar* held this gathering because they had seen apparent signs that a coup was about to happen. They said that if the power was going to be taken from Ali ibn Abi-Talib, then one of us should have it.

Reasons why 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn did not stand against those in power:

1. He expected a massacre of his supporters since they were a lot less than the supporters of those in power.
2. Imam Ali did not want to cause division in the Muslim ummah. He protected the religion and was willing to sacrifice himself for its safety.

Where were the Shias?

- They were termed "المُتخلّفون عن البيعة": They refused to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr and revolted against him. They went to the Imam and told him they were ready to fight—the Imam stopped them from giving their opponents any excuse to initiate a war.
- In a Hadith, the Prophet said to Imam Ali, "You are to me like Haroun was to Musa! And the nation after me is like the people of Haroun and his followers, and al-*Sameri* and his followers"; The Imam asked, "O Prophet! In that case, what do you order me to do?" He replied, "If you have supporters, then fight them. But if you don't, be patient and protect the blood of Muslims until you reach me oppressed."
- Since all the Shias were not at the same level, once forty people voiced their support of 'Amīr al-Mu'minīn, but when it came to action, only 4 or 5 out of the forty stood with the Imam. So, the followers of Imam Ali voiced their opinion against the establishment, but Amīr al-Mu'minīn did not have as many loyal supporters as he needed.