



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Nahj al-Balagha

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Lesson: 17

Topic: Sermon #3: Shiqshiqiyya (Continuance): What happened in Saqifa?

The issues the companions find in Imam عليه السلام to betray him:

1. Imam عليه السلام's age (33)
2. Jealousy about Imam عليه السلام's credits.
 - They clearly stated this fact about the family of Bani Hashim. Arabs historically had some rivalries. In his Tarikh (History), Tabari narrates a conversation between Umar and Ibn Abbas. Umar told him that the caliphate was denied to him because Arabs and companions did not want Bani Hashim to have both prophethood and Imamate (caliphate).
3. He had killed nobles and aristocrats of the Meccans and Arabs.

The events led to Saqifa:

1. The companions knew that the Prophet ﷺ's departure would be soon (by the Prophet ﷺ's signals). Those companions who didn't want Ali to be the caliph started their conspiracy.
2. They knew that the Meccans would reject the imamate of Imam Ali عليه السلام.
3. When the Prophet ﷺ delivered a sermon in the Farewell Hajj in *Arafa* and the Meccans realized that he was talking about leadership, they created a noisy commotion to cut off the Prophet ﷺ.
4. These companions found the situation suitable and a great opportunity ahead. They started to discuss the tactics on how to assume the caliphate. **One of the tactics:** They made an alliance and a secret pact with the Bedouin tribe *Bani Aslam* (you help us, we share the power).
5. The calamity of the Thursday (رزية يوم الخميس) in which the Prophet ﷺ asked companions for ink and paper to write something that would stop them from going astray. They knew exactly what he would write, so they tried to cut him off.
6. The story of Usama's Army: The Prophet ﷺ commanded the companions to leave on the expedition with the Army, but they knew what was happening and refused not to lose this golden opportunity.



- Some say that they were concerned about the Prophet ﷺ's health.

Answer: The Prophet ﷺ commanded and cursed those who disobey and don't join the Army.

7. The story of the congregational prayers two years before the Prophet ﷺ's demise and how he stopped Abu Bakr from leading the prayers.

8. No one can wash the body of a prophet but another prophet or the will-executer of the prophet. The Prophet said his will to Ali and asked him to do it alone while the angels helped him: the story of the Prophet ﷺ's funeral service.

9. The companions were shocked by the Prophet ﷺ's demise. At that moment, Abu Bakr was in his house on the outskirts. Umar started rejecting his death and hitting people. Sunnis say he was shocked because of his love, while Amr ibn Za'ida had recited verses stating that the Prophet (s) can die.

- When Abu Bakr showed up, he told Umar to calm down and that Muhammad ﷺ had died, but his Lord hadn't. He recited the same verses as Amr (3:144): *If he is dead or he is killed*. Umar said that he ignored this.

10. Abu Bakr and Umar were informed about the Saqifa meeting and directly went there.

- *Saqifa* was basically a hangout for the Khazraji tribe. They assembled there to talk about tribal issues. Historically it is not clear how the discussions on the caliphate started that day.

- Ansar knew that the Prophet appointed Ali as his caliph; however, they could not settle for his caliphate and didn't find it viable for them. Why? Because of two primary reasons, they were concerned about their well-being.

- Fear of Meccans' coup d'état and revenge because of their grudge against Ali, as al-Habbab ibn Mundir said on the day of Saqifa. (Many Meccans didn't embrace Islam wholeheartedly). Ansar's first candidate for caliphate: *Sa'd ibn Ubada*

Saqifa events:

- Abu Bakr and Umar's attempt to dissuade Ansar from selecting Sa'd (Abu Bakr through a diplomatic way)
- Then he said *Muhajirun* were more acceptable and asked them to choose Umar or *Abu Ubaida*. Umar said Abu Bakr was more eligible and pledged his allegiance to him, and others followed. The first person from Ansar was *Bashir ibn Sa'd*. Sa'd ibn Ubada refused; he was ill and kicked to the ground. They showed a threat to any opposition.



- When they went to the mosque for public allegiance, 3000 soldiers from the Bani Aslam tribe filled the streets in Medina. Everyone was intimidated. Historians estimate that the population of Medina then was 5000.

حَتَّى مَضَى الْأَوَّلُ لِسَبِيلِهِ فَأَذَلَّى بِهَا إِلَى ابْنِ الْخَطَّابِ بَعْدَهُ

...Until Abu Bakr went his way and handed over the caliphate to Ibn al-Khattab.

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Imam عليه السلام recites a line of poem from *al-A'sha* (a famous poet):

شَتَانٌ مَا يَوْمِي عَلَى كُورِهَا * وَيَوْمٌ حَيَّانٌ أَخِي جَابِرٍ

Hayyan was the chief of the tribe of *Banu Hanifa* in *Yamama*. Jabir was his younger brother. The poet says there is a great distance between today and the day I was with *Hayyan*.

Why did Imam عليه السلام quote this line of poetry? Two interpretations:

- 1. Imam عليه السلام is saying in his heydays, he was with the Prophet ﷺ, protected and respected, and now he was marginalized.
- 2. Look at these two days. One day, those who assumed the caliphate now were nothing. The Prophet ﷺ couldn't entrust them with a simple thing.

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Imam عليه السلام then criticizes Abu Bakr:

فَيَا عَجَبًا بَيْنَنَا هُوَ يَسْتَقِيلُهَا فِي حَيَاتِهِ إِذْ عَقَدَهَا لِأَخْرَبِ بَعْدَ وَفَاتِهِ

It's so strange how Abu Bakr wished to be released from the caliphate in his lifetime, but he passed it to Umar.

What Imam عليه السلام is referring to here: a well-known statement by Abu Bakr after he usurped the caliphate (by different wordings):

أَقِيلُونِي فَلَسْتُ بِخَيْرِكُمْ

Depose me from the caliphate! I'm not the best one to rule you!

One of Sunni sources:

إِنَّ لِي شَيْطَانًا يَعْتَرِينِي

I have a Shaytan that engulfs me.

Imam عليه السلام is telling Abu Bakr that you were not yourself qualified for caliphate; how do you give it to Umar?

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Abu Bakr's remorse at the moment of the death (narrated by Sunnis like Tabarani in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer*) on three things:

1. He wished he would never have exposed Sayyida Fatima عليها السلام's house and attacked it even if it was the headquarter for war against him.
2. That he shouldn't have accepted the caliphate on the Day of Saqifa.
3. That he shouldn't have put *Fuja'a al-Sullami* in the fire alive.



Observation 1: Sunnis claim the Prophet ﷺ didn't appoint anyone as caliph. Whose sunnah did Abu Bakr follow in appointing Umar as his caliph? Who authorized him?

Observation 2: Umar was instrumental in making Abu Bakr caliph. There was an agreement.

There was such a conspiracy and Imam ﷺ confirms it: **لَشَدًّا مَا تَشَطَّرَا صَرَعَيْهَا**
Amir al-Mu'minin ﷺ says these two (Abu Bakr and Umar) undoubtedly shared its udders strictly among themselves.

It is a common expression. We milk a cow through udders. Imam ﷺ says that they shared the udder of caliphate among themselves. It was pre-planned.

Was Abu Bakr the first or 50th Muslim?

When we ask the sects why Abu Bakr is caliph and qualified, they first say: "He was the first Muslim."

Question 1a: Does being the first Muslim make you qualify for the caliphate?

Q1b: Who said he was the first Muslim? There is no single sahih and authentic hadith that he was the first. The famous Sunni historian (Tabari): He was the 50th person.

Q2: The Prophet ﷺ didn't find Abu Bakr worthy of marrying his daughter Fatima ﷺ. Why would he be qualified to become a caliph?

Q3: Did Abu Bakr or Umar make any sacrifices or show any bravery in the battles during the time of the Prophet ﷺ? Is there a single hadith that they have killed any mushrik in this era? What is he qualified to lead, then?

Abu Bakr's knowledge as a factor:

- Ahmad ibn Hanbal dealt with 750,000 hadiths, among which only 80 are attributed to Abu Bakr. He otherwise burnt the hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Bukhari's story that Umar and Abu Bakr started yelling at each other in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ and a verse revealed reproaching them and prohibiting companions from raising their voices in front of the Prophet ﷺ.
- Ibn Asakir says that Abu Bakr was «سَبَاب» (harsh with his tongue)
- Abu Bakr ruled for two years and three months.



- **Abu Bakr's caliphate was marked by Riddha Wars** in the name of apostasy. Many villagers attended *Ghadir* and only recognized Ali as the caliph (especially Malik ibn Nuwairah tribe and his story). *Khalid ibn Walid* who killed Malik and raped his wife on the same night, is known as *Saif al-Allah*

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- What Khalid did, infuriated the companions, even Umar. They said he should be stoned to death for rape. Abu Bakr justified that he had made a mistake and would never sheathe a sword God had unsheathed.
- Imam Ali عليه السلام in *Shiqshiqiyya* wanted the truth to stay in history.

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