



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Nahj al-Balagha

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Lesson: 18

Topic: Sermon #3: Shiqshiqiyya (Continuance): Abu Bakr appointed Umar as his caliph!

Amir al-Mu'minin عليه السلام starts describing Umar.

The reason this discussion is sensitive: the other schools consider these caliphs:

- To be rightly guided;
- To be representatives of Islam
- To be the role models

« فَصَيَّرَهَا فِي حَوْزَةٍ خَشْنَاءَ »

Amir al-Mu'minin عليه السلام: Abu Bakr put this caliphate in a rough enclosure.

The literal meanings of «حوزة» (hawzah):

1. A container that holds something;
2. An enclosure and a place of gathering

- Islamic seminary is called *hawzah* because it provides a ground for gathering the students.
- It was termed a rough enclosure by the Imam (as) because Umar was known to be rough.

« يَغْلُظُ كَلْمُهَا وَ يَخْشُنُ مَسُّهَا وَ يَكْثُرُ الْعِتَارُ فِيهَا وَ الْاِعْتِدَارُ مِنْهَا »

Imam عليه السلام starts by making four references to the personality of Umar.

«كلم» (kalm) means: to injure and wound

Words in Arabic are called «كلمه» and «كلام» because they make an impact.

Imam عليه السلام says Umar was very rough: « يَغْلُظُ كَلْمُهَا »

- 1st: His words and utterance (verbal communication) were very rough and injured the listener.
- 2nd: His actions were very rough: « وَ يَخْشُنُ مَسُّهَا »
- 3rd: Many mistakes would happen in this enclosure: « وَ يَكْثُرُ الْعِتَارُ فِيهَا »
- 4th: He would constantly justify or even apologize for his mistakes: « وَ الْاِعْتِدَارُ مِنْهَا »



- Remember that Imam عليه السلام's objective was not to put down any personality or act out of emotions. He was simply describing what happened after the Prophet.

Some historical accounts supporting these words of Imam عليه السلام from Sunni references:

How Umar dealt with other people: ImamSadiq.tv

E.g.1: *Subaigh al-Iraqi's* story in *Sunan Daremi* and other books. Umar beat him three times just because he asked questions regarding the Quran.

E.g.2: Umar beat the women who gathered to mourn for Abu Bakr, including Abu Bakr's sister Umm Farwa, with his stick called *Dirra*.

E.g.3: He shouted at the women present with the Prophet and made noises. The Prophet told him they became silent because of his roughness.

E.g.4: He beat a female slave because she was wearing a hijab in her prayers, accusing her of resembling free women.

E.g.5: He beat his sister and brother-in-law after learning they embraced Islam.

E.g.6: Before he accepted Islam, once he kept beating a female slave of Banu Mu'ammal until he became tired and stopped.

E.g.7: When the Prophet's step-daughter Zainab passed away, the women started crying, and Umar beat them.

E.g.8: A woman miscarried her fetus when he heard Umar had heard of what she had done and that he was coming for her.

E.g.9: Once, he passed by a group of women, one of whom had put on perfume. He threatened them that he knew what to do with the one who had used it. That woman made herself wet out of fear.

E.g.10: Once, he heard a woman eulogizing at night. He went to their meeting and started beating her.

E.g.11: Ibn Hanbal in *Musnad* narrated from Ash'ath that Umar beat his wife in front of Ash'ath.

Then Imam عليه السلام talks about the mistakes Umar committed. Examples:

- 1st. Referring to a verse regarding Kuffar and applying it to himself, a young man reminded him that he had missed the context of the verse and that the verse talks about disbelievers. (46:20)
- 2nd. Umar used to go night-watching. He heard voices that made him certain people were drinking inside a house. He broke into the house and rebuked them. The man said, "If I did one violation, you did three."



- 3rd. He was about to pass punishment on a pregnant woman and an insane woman due to adultery.
- 4th. Umar announced on the pulpit that no woman has the right to take dowry more than what was common during the time of the Prophet (s). A woman answered, “But the Quran talks about *qintar*”; which was a bag full of gold.

Imam عليه السلام continues:

«فصاحبها كراكب الصعبة إن أشنق لها خرم وإن أسلس لها تقحم»

If you pull the reins of a camel too hard, it gets wild. And if you don't pull it and you are near danger, it will end up hurting you.

Imam عليه السلام uses this expression to state that we were stuck with Umar.

« فَمُنِيَ النَّاسُ لَعَمْرُ اللَّهِ بِخَبْطِ وَشِمَاسٍ وَتَلُّونَ وَاعْتِرَاضِ »

Imam عليه السلام says: “Consequently, by Allah, people got involved in recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness, and deviation.”

- Sunnis consider Umar's rule a shining period of history for Muslims due to conquests. Is it correct? Not. Allah did not send Islam to wage war and conquer people. The mission of Muslims is to deliver guidance.
- That's why Imam Ali عليه السلام never let his two sons, Imam Hassan, and Imam Hussain عليه السلام participate in any war because he did not recognize the legitimacy of these battles.
- This shallow understanding of people resulted from rulership, which focused on expansionist policies, wars, etc.
- Umar was the first one in Islam who instituted social stratification.

« فَصَبَرْتُ عَلَى طُولِ الْمُدَّةِ وَشِدَّةِ الْمُحَنَةِ »

Imam عليه السلام says, “Nevertheless I remained patient even though the calamity was very big and the struggles were very severe.”