

# Imam Ali (A.S.) and Caliphs

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If it is true to assume that at Messenger's time, Muhadjirun were of two different political fronts and some were trying to win the caliphate, then one must accept that the relations between Imam and Shiykhs were rather strained. Reports say nothing to prove their disputes, but nor does any reminiscence show their friendship. On 'Ayisha's own confession, her being at enmity with Imam went back to Prophet's time and this can be considered as bearing witness to the differences between the families of 'Ali and Abu Bakr. It has been said that when Fatima passed away, all Messenger's wives attended the Hashimites mourning ceremony except for 'Ayisha who feigning illness, didn't participate and even was told to be expressing joy of that. Anyway, Immediately after Abu Bakr's caliphacy and Imam's insistence on proving his rightfulness, unfriendly relations between them were developed. Attacking Imam's house, Fatima's being in sulk as well as not permitting Shiykhs to attend Imam's funeral, all aggravated the differences. following that, Imam secluded and went on with his own life. The administration expected Imam, in addition to taking the oath of allegiance, to refrain from assertion of rightfulness and embark on consolidating their authoritative realm while having swords in hand but he refused to do so. Naturally, adopting such a position Imam was to be humiliated by the administration in front of people. This policy could result in Imam's further solitude. Cursing Quraysh, Imam said,"Oh God, I seek your help against the Quraysh and those supporting them

"فإنهم قطعوا رحمي وصغروا عظيم منزلتي وأجمعوا على منازعتي أمراً هو لي "

*They have cut asunder my kinship,lowered my high position and joined together to contest the right to which I was entitled."*

Continues he, "I looked around but found no one to shield and help me except the members of my family. I refrained from fighting them to death, so I overlooked with grieved eyes" This remark refers to Caliphs' policy of humiliating Imam. In sermon of Shiqshiqiyya, referring to the consultation Imam states, "When he ('Umar) was due to die, he selected a group of candidates and included me among them. Oh, good Heavens! What had I to do with this consultation? I wonder why they never equaled me to the first of them but to these people while I was as competent as him."

It was intolerable for Imam to be among Talha, Zubayr and 'Uthman who held him in contempt. Strange to say, 'Umar blamed all 6 men chosen by him for some wrongdoings. What Imam was blamed for, in this regard, was extremely unfounded and humiliating. He was blamed for being Later, based on this very remark of 'Umar, Mu'awiya and 'Amr Ibn 'As, فيه دعاية, kind of a joker

He is a humorous man." فيه تلعة, told about Imam

Seriously rejecting this accusation laid against him by 'Amr Ibn 'As, Imam in fact rejected 'Umar's remark. The life of Imam who was secluded in Medina caused him to remain unknown. The time went by fast, and the Imam, by himself, in Medina, particularly among the old companions of Prophet(s) seemed as acquaintance. Yet, no one knew Imam in Iraq and Damascus. Just a few Yemeni tribes seeing him since his few-month-long trip to Yemen were acquaintance to him.

Djundab Ibn 'Abd Allah said, "Once after swearing (on oath of) allegiance to 'Uthman I went to Iraq, therein I quoted 'Ali's virtues for the people. The best answer I heard from the people was,

"Discard these remarks. Think of something of your benefit."

I answered, "These issues are beneficial for both of us." Yet, after my statement, he was to stand up and leave.

According to Ibn Abi I-Hadid, Muhammad Ibn Sulayman's interpretation was that one of the factors leading to discard in 'Uthman's era was the constitution of council. For, each member of the council had serious aspiration for caliphate. Typically, Talha was among those who looked forward to caliphate. Besides, Zubayr not only helped him but also regarded himself as deserving of governing. Their hope for the caliphate was more than that of Imam 'Ali (a). Inasmuch as the two Shiykhs discredited him and held him in low esteem. Hence, he was forgotten. Most of those knowing his virtues had been died at the time of the Prophet(s), and a new generation was found that deemed him the same as other Muslims. What merely left among his honors was that he is the cousin of the Prophet(s), his daughter's husband and his grandchildren's father. The remainder of facts was forgotten. Quraysh also felt such a hatred for him that was never felt for anyone. To the same extent, Quraysh loved Talha and Zubayr, since there was no reason for abhorring them.

Ibn Abi I-Hadid himself, having pointed out that the people in Siffin were waiting to regard 'Ammar's presence in a front as the rightfulness of that front, said, "How surprising the peoples are! Since they accept 'Ammar as the criterion of truth and error; however, they don't regard the very 'Ali (a) as a criterion about whom the Prophet(s) has cited the hadith of sainthood and Only the believer loves thee, and only the hypocrite" لا يحبك إلا مؤمن ولا يبغضك إلا منافق, also said loathes thee."

This is because all Quraysh tried to, from the very beginning, cover his virtues, remove public memory from him, ruin his features and eliminate his high status in the hearts of people. Ibn

Abi I-Hadid nicely analyzes the reasons behind the Quraysh's grudge against Imam 'Ali(a). Once Imam was asked: "Do you think if the Messenger(s) had a mature son, Arabs would hand the governorship over to him?"

Imam responded: "If he had done something different from what I did, he would have been killed."

Arabs hated what Muhammad (s) did and felt envious of what God had granted him... they from that time attempted to disentitle Ahl al-Bayt after his departure. Quraysh found his name a means of domination and ladder of promotion and if other wise, they never worshipped God even one day after him and would become apostate. A while after, conquests, come one after another, no hunger and poverty remained after starvation and destitution. This led to popularity of Islam and they kept religion in their many a heart because, however, truth brought this about. Afterwards, these conquests were attributed to strategy and thought of emirs. Among them, some were magnified and some others were forgotten

فكنا ممن ذكره وخبث ناره وانقطع صوته وصيته، حتى أكل الدهر علينا وشرب، ومضت السنون والاحقاب بما فيها، ومات كثير ممن يعرف ونشأ كثير ممن لا يعرف

*We were from someone whose memory was last whose luminosity was cut and whose outcry was stopped as if time swallowed us. Years passed this way, many known figures were dead and those unknown came into stage.* Under these conditions, what curled the son's son do? You know that the Messenger(s) never kept me close to himself for his kinship, with me but he did it in time of Djihad ad and advice. It was just for the same reason of Imam being forgotten in Muslim community he, in his caliphate time, tried to use every chase to introduce himself and speak about his efforts for Islam in the Messenger's time.

Imam held cold relationship with Abu Bakr with no seemingly left memory. In his contact with 'Umar, Imam's memories are many available, that mainly relied upon his judiciary assistance to 'Umar as well as response to some consultations discussed earlier. 'Umar refused to blatantly slander Imam and probably Imam did so.

But 'Uthman was different and never did he bear Imam's ideas and once he told Imam: "You are not better than Marwan Ibn Hakam to me?"

'Abbas asked 'Uthman to stand by Imam.

'Uthman said: "What I first fell you is that if 'Ali wants, no one stands dearer to me than him. Of course, Imam was unwilling to overlook deviations for his friendship with him. For this, Imam's

relationship with 'Uthman was partly closer and partly harsher."

Once an Ansari woman had a quarrel with one of the Hashimites women and when she was acquitted, she was told by 'Uthman, "This is your cousin, 'Ali's decision!"

Opposition to government was difficult for Imam. He attempted, in early years, to resort to seclusion to avoid faring the government. Sa'd Ibn 'Ubada was a good experiment. He failed to pay allegiance and immediately in time of caliph I or II, he was told to have been killed by Djinnns. Previously mention was made from some sources that his murder had been politically planned.

According to Ibn Abi I-Hadid, Abu Dja'far Naqib (Yahya Ibn Abi Zayd) was asked:"I am amazed how 'Ali survived this long after the Messenger's demise, from all Quraysh's vengeance."

Abu Dja'far said:"Had he not belittled and isolated himself, he might have been killed." He let himself off memories and became engaged in worshipping, Qur'an reading and prayer, leaving his first state of mind and sword as if he were like a sinner who had repented, probing the earth and living on the mountains like a monk. He survived because he obeyed rulers of the time; other wise he would have been killed".

He then refers to Khalid's action to kill Imam. Mu'min al-Taq also believe that Imam made no political effort in this time because he feared being murdered by jinns (like Sa'd). Of course, this did not mean that Imam never tried to use chances to take back his rights. From the very outset, he refused to swear allegiance for a few months. Further, from early times, he joined his family to homes of Ansar to revert back his rights. He insisted so much that he was blamed for having a greedy eye on caliphate.

Imam quoting someone said:"O son of Abu Talib! You raise a greed on this! He said:"No, by God, you are greedier than I am. You are for from the Messenger(s) and I'm closer to him. I asked for the right I possessed, but you refrain me from having it".

,Imam made reasoning of this kind a lot

يا معشر قريش! إنا أهل البيت أحق بهذا الامر منكم، أما كان فينا من يقرء القرآن ويعرف السنّة ويدين بدين الحق؟

*O Quraysh people! We, Ahl al-Bayt deserve more than you in caliphate! Are there no people among us who read Qur'an and follow Sunna and true religion."*

On Imam's evaluating successorship of three caliphs, it is to be said that he was in no time free to offer his appraisal of Shiykhs. Unlike 'Uthman, what he believed, he found a chance to retell it. It was why his troops in Kufa were included of those, except a few, had approved of Shiykhs and he could not talk freely about them. Once he found a chance to talk some part of his

,sufferings but he was stopped talking. Upon 'Abbas's insistence, he kept on talking

تلك شقشقة هدرت

*No, Ibn 'Abbas! What you heard was flame of grief that rose."*

Imam with all caution was never prepared to adopt conditions of 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn 'Awf for caliphate during council of caliphate. Ibn'Awf conditioned that if Imam were willing to act upon conduct of Shiykhs, he would place him caliph.

Imam said:"I would act according to my Idjtihad".

Imam openly rejected conduct of Shiykhs and believed that it was in the most part against conduct of the Messenger(s) and based on improper Idjtihad. Imam says he has obeyed Abu Bakr in affairs he obeyed God. Imam's words and his approach here show that he never admired past manners.

In later times, Mu'awiya wrote to Imam that he felt envious of early caliphs and rebelled against them!

Imam wrote back, "you think I am against them and want to take revenge. If so, why are you worried to be inquired? You are not blamed... and you said you found me like a camel harnessed to swear allegiance. By God, you wanted to scold, praise and scandalize but you're scandalized yourself. What belittles a Muslim who is oppressed and assured of his religion. His certainty is strong and his hesitation is aside? ... And I never apologize for caviling 'Uthman because of innovations.

Despite Imam's explicit criticism, particularly his attitude in council, one cannot refer to Imam's familial relationships with 'Umar, or 'Uthman for his belief in their proper rule. Even his praise of some caliphs compared to others cannot be a reason for his basic approval of them. When he learned that he could not face the party and a campaign waged is not beneficial to Islam, he chose to compromise. Imam justified his allegiance to Abu Bakr and his approval according to Muhadjir and Ansar as to a necessity and preservation of unity among Muslims.

,Imam referred to Aaron's speech in front of Moses(a) for justifying his silence, Aaron said

إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ.

*I feared lest thou shouldst say: Thou hast caused division among the Children of Israel."*

,Imam said of Saqifa

بل عرفت أنّ حقي هو المأخوذ وقد تركته لهم، تجاوز الله عنهم

*When I learned I am withdrawn with my rights, I left to them, may God punish them.”*

In the past, Sunnis never accepted that Ahl al-Bayt found themselves more qualified for caliphate than others, that is early caliphs. Yet, now somewhat broad-minded factions of Sunnis admit that ‘Ali(a) simply pledged allegiance just for unison with Abu Bakr while knowing himself rightful for caliphate.

Anyway, Imam’s isolated life in that society indicates that both Imam and caliphs knew they can not treat others in such a way that it might mean confirmation of their view, particularly about caliphate. Meanwhile, frequenting to the mosque and even establishing familial links like ‘Umar’s marriage to Umm Kulthum had been usual. This marriage was insisted by ‘Umar and Imam agreed in spite of his early opposition. Not to mention, Imam married Abu Bakr’s wife, that is Asma’, daughter of ‘Umays to himself after Abu Bakr died and brought up Muhammad, .Abu Bakr’s son in his house

**Note**

**:To study the book "History Of The Caliphs", please click [here](#)**