

## Khutbah-al-Shiqshiqiyah(1)

IMAM ALI IBN-E-ABU TALIB(A.S)

Beware! By Allah<sup>swt</sup>, the son of Abu Quhafah (Abu Bakr<sup>l.a</sup>) dressed himself, by hook or by crook, into the robe of caliphate (2), although he knew my position very clearly- it was like the pivotal-axis of the hand-mill. I am the spring of bounties from which knowledge and aspiration overflow and no high-flyer can imagine to touch my eloquent position.

Even so, I buried the matters of caliphate and turned away from it. The situation, however, was (difficult), should I (without support) assault or endure calmly the blinding darkness of tribulations until the grown ups became flimsy and the young ones grew old and the true believer struggled under strain until he met Allah<sup>swt</sup> (on his death). I found that endurance thereon was wiser. So, I adopted patience although it was like a thorn in the eyes and suffocation (of mortification) in the throat. I watched the plundering of my inheritance till the first-one went his way but handed over the Caliphate to Ibn al-Khattab (Umar<sup>l.a</sup>) to succeed after himself

(Then Ali<sup>as</sup> quoted from al-A`sha's couplet).

*My days are now passed on the camel's back (in difficulty) while there were days (of ease) when I enjoyed the company of Jabir's brother Hayyan. (3)*

Indeed, it is strange that during his lifetime, he wished to be relieved from the (burden of) caliphate affairs but, on the contrary, he tied its knot to the second-one prior to his death. No doubt these-two shared its udders strictly among themselves. This one put the Caliphate in a tough enclosure where the utterance was arrogant and the touch was rough. Mistakes were in plenty and so were the excuses. One in contact with it (rule) was like the rider of a wild camel. If the rider would pull up its rein the very nostril be slit, but if he lets it loose he would be thrown down. Consequently, by Allah<sup>swt</sup> ! people got involved in the recklessness, wickedness, unsteadiness and deviation.

Nevertheless, I remained patient despite his lengthy and stiff trial, till when he went his way (of death) while putting the matter (of Caliphate) in a group (4) and regarded me to be one of them. But good Heavens! What had I to do with this "consultation"? Was there any doubt about my merit with regard to the first (successor to Prophet<sup>saw</sup>) but again, I was considered parallel to these ones? But I maintained (a strategy), when they became humble I showed kindness and when they became proud I exhibited my high status. One among them (from the group of 6) turned against me because of his hatred and the other got inclined the other way due to his in-law relationship and mutual benefits and common affairs, till the third one (of these people) stood up with heaving breasts between his dung and fodder. With him his children of his grand-father, (Umayyah<sup>l.a</sup>) also stood up swallowing up Allah<sup>swt</sup>'s wealth (5) like a camel devouring the foliage of spring, till his rope broke down, his actions finished him and his gluttony brought

him down prostrate.

At that moment, nothing took me by surprise, but the crowd of people rushing to me. It advanced towards me from every side like the mane of the hyena so much so that Hasan<sup>as</sup> and Hussain<sup>as</sup> were getting crushed and both the ends of my shoulder garment were torn. They gathered around me like the herd of sheep and goats. When I took up the reins of government one party broke away and another turned disobedient while the rest began acting wrongfully as if they had not heard the word of Allah<sup>swt</sup> saying:

*That residence in the hereafter, We assign it for those who intend not to exult themselves in the earth, nor (to make) mischief (therein); and the end is (best) for the pious ones. (Qur'an, 28:83)*

Yes, by Allah<sup>swt</sup>, they had heard it and understood it but the world appeared glittering in their eyes and its embellishments seduced them. Behold, by Him<sup>swt</sup> who split the grain (to grow) and created living beings, if people had not come to me, and supporters had not exhausted the argument and if it were not for the pledge to Allah<sup>swt</sup> that the learned should not consent the greed of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed. I would have cast the rope of Caliphate on its own shoulders, and would have given the last one the same treatment as to the first one. Then you would have seen that in my view, this world of yours is no better than the sneeze of a goat.

(1) This sermon is known as the sermon of al-Shiqshiqiyah, and is counted among the most famous sermons of Amir al-mu'minin(a.s). It was delivered at ar-Rahbah.

(2) Amir al-mu'minin(a.s) has referred to Abu Bakr's<sup>l.a</sup> accession to the Caliphate metaphorically as having dressed himself<sup>l.a</sup> with it. This was a common metaphor. Thus, when `Uthman<sup>l.a</sup> was called to give up the Caliphate he replied, "I shall not put off this shirt which Allah(swt) has put on me<sup>l.a</sup>."

(3) Hayyan ibn as-Samin al-Hanafi of Yamamah was the chief of the tribe Banu Hanifah and the master of fort and army. Jabir is the name of his younger brother while al-A`sha whose real name was Maymun ibn Qays ibn Jandal .

(4) When `Umar<sup>l.a</sup> was wounded by Abu Lu'lu'ah and he saw that it was difficult for him<sup>l.a</sup> to survive because of the deep wound, he<sup>l.a</sup> formed a consultative committee disclosed his<sup>l.a</sup> own view about each individual

(5) About the reign of the Usman<sup>l.a</sup>, Amir al-mu'minin(a.s) says that soon on `Uthman's<sup>l.a</sup> coming to power Banu Umayyah<sup>l.a</sup> got ground and began plundering the Bayt al-mal (public fund), and just as cattle on seeing green grass after drought trample it away, they recklessly fell upon Allah's(swt) money and devoured it..