



147540 - Oath of allegiance (bay'ah) of 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib to Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with them both)

the question

Many of the Shi'a claim that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) never swore allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), and they say that when he held out his hand his fist was clenched (in contrast to the hand being open, as was the usual practice when swearing allegiance), and they say that he did not swear allegiance to him at all.

I was wondering whether the shaykh could help me to understand what actually happened, in sha Allah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The swearing of allegiance (bay'ah) by 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) [to Abu Bakr] is proven in as-Saheehayn (al-Bukhaari and Muslim), even though it happened a few months late.

It was narrated from 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that her father Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) entered upon 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) after he requested a meeting with him:

'Ali ibn Abi Taalib recited the Tashahhud, then he said: O Abu Bakr, we acknowledge your virtue and what Allah has given you. We do not envy you for any favour that Allah has bestowed upon you, but you did it without consulting us and we thought that we had the right (to be consulted) because of our kinship with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He kept speaking to Abu Bakr until Abu Bakr's eyes filled with tears. When Abu Bakr spoke, he said: By the One in Whose hand is my soul, kinship with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of



Allah be upon him) is dearer to me than kinship with my own people. As for this dispute that occurred between me and you concerning these properties, I have not deviated from the right path with regard to them, and I have not given up something that I saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) do with them, rather I have done it too.

'Ali said to Abu Bakr: Your appointment for my oath of allegiance is this afternoon. When Abu Bakr had prayed Zuhr, he ascended the minbar and recited the tashahhud, and he spoke of 'Ali and his delay in swearing allegiance, and the excuse that he had given, then he prayed for his forgiveness. And 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib recited the tashahhud and spoke highly of Abu Bakr, and said that what he had done was not due to jealousy of Abu Bakr, or a refusal to accept the favour that Allah had bestowed upon him, but we thought that we should have had a share in the matter, but it had been decided without consulting us, and we were upset with that. The Muslims were pleased with this and said: You have done the right thing. Then the Muslims became closer to 'Ali, when he did the right thing.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (3998) and Muslim (1759).

According to another version narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh:

Then 'Ali stood up and spoke highly of Abu Bakr, and he mentioned his virtue and the fact that he had been one of the first to enter Islam. Then he went to Abu Bakr and swore allegiance to him, and the people came to 'Ali and said: You have done the right thing, you have done well. And the people became close to 'Ali when he did the right thing.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) delaying swearing of allegiance (to Abu Bakr), 'Ali mentioned it in this hadith and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) apologised to him.

Moreover, this delay on 'Ali's part did not undermine the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr and it did not undermine 'Ali himself.

With regard to swearing allegiance, the scholars are unanimously agreed that for an oath of



allegiance to be valid, it is not essential that all the people, or even all the decision-makers and prominent people, should swear allegiance. Rather there should be a group of scholars, leaders and prominent figures who do so.

With regard to it not undermining 'Ali or his character, that is because it was not essential for everyone to come to the leader, put his hand in his and swear allegiance to him; rather once the decision-makers and prominent figures have sworn allegiance to the leader, the individual is required to accept his leadership, not show dissent and not rebel against him.

That was the case with 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) during that period, before he swore allegiance, because he did not show dissent towards Abu Bakr or rebel against him. But he was held back from coming to him for the reason mentioned in the hadith. In order for swearing allegiance to be valid and proper, that did not depend on him being present, and neither he nor anyone else was required to attend for that purpose. As it was not required, he did not come.

Nothing has been narrated from him to suggest that he thought that the oath of allegiance was not valid, and he never expressed any objection (to Abu Bakr being appointed caliph). However he did have some misgivings in his mind, hence his coming was delayed until that matter had been dealt with.

The reason for his misgivings was that, because of his high status and the fact that he himself was a person of virtue in all aspects, and was closely related to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and so on, he thought that no decision should be made without him being consulted and being present. But the excuse given by Abu Bakr, 'Umar and the rest of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them all) was quite clear: it was because they thought that hastening to swear allegiance was in the greater interest of the Muslims, and they were afraid that if they delayed it, that could lead to problems and disputes that would in turn lead to serious negative consequences. Therefore they delayed burying the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) until they had sworn allegiance, because that was the most important matter, so as to ensure that no dispute would arise concerning his burial, shrouding, ghusl, funeral prayer and so on, without having anyone who could have the final say on such matters. Hence they thought



that giving precedence to swearing allegiance was the most important issue at that time. End quote.

Sharh Muslim (12/77-78)

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It was as if they excused him for not coming to swear allegiance to Abu Bakr whilst Faatimah was still alive, because he was preoccupied with caring for her during her illness, and consoling her for the grief she felt at the loss of her father (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Moreover, when she got upset with Abu Bakr's response when she asked him about inheritance, 'Ali decided to go along with her in keeping away from him.

End quote. Fath al-Baari (7/494)

Secondly:

There is also a report which says that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) swore allegiance to Abu Bakr at the very beginning, and he did not delay doing so, but there is some doubt as to whether the report which mentions that can be confirmed.

The hadith was narrated via Wuhayb ibn Khaalid, from Dawood ibn Abi Hind, from Abu Nadrah, from Abu Sa'eed.

The hadith was taken from Wuhayb ibn Khaalid by four of his companions, three of whom narrated a brief version which does not mention 'Ali and az-Zubayr swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) at the beginning of his caliphate. These three are:

1. 'Affaan ibn Muslim

as we shall see the report narrated from him, and we will explain that anyone who narrated from 'Affaan ibn Muslim concerning the issue of the oath of allegiance (bay'ah) was mistaken

2. Abu Dawood at-Tayaalisi in al-Musnad (1/495, no. 603)



And it was narrated via him by Ibn 'Asaakir in Tareekh Dimashq (19/314)

3. Zuhayr ibn Ishaq

who is a da'eef narrator, as it says in Mizaan al-I'tidaal (2/82). He narrated it via Ibn 'Adiyy in al-Kaamil (3/223) and said: I do not know that anyone narrated it from Dawood apart from Zuhayr ibn Ishaq and Wuhayb. Zuhayr has some strong hadiths, and the one who narrated the most from him among the Basris was Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Maqdimi. I hope that there is nothing wrong with him. Ibn Ma'een only objected to him for an interrupted hadith, as I have mentioned. As for his hadiths that have isnaads, most of them are sound. End quote.

As for the fourth narrator from Wuhayb ibn Khaalid, he narrated a lengthy version which mentions 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib and az-Zubayr swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all).

This narrator was al-Mugheerah ibn Salamah Abu Hishaam al-Makhzoomi, who was trustworthy, as it says in Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb (10/261). Imam al-Bayhaqi narrated it from him in as-Sunan al-Kubra (8/143) and said:

Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Haafiz al-Isfaraa'eeni said: Abu 'Ali al-Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Haafiz told us: Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah and Ibraaheem ibn Abi Taalib informed us: Bandaar ibn Bashaar told us: Abu Hishaam al-Makhzoomi told us: Wuhayb told us: and he mentioned a similar report.

Abu 'Ali al-Haafiz said: I heard Muhammad ibn Ishaq ibn Khuzaymah say:

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaaj came to me and asked me about this hadith, and I wrote it for him in a document, and read it to him, and he said: This hadith is worth a camel. I said: Worth a camel? It is worth a pearl the size of the full moon! End quote.

The words "and he mentioned a similar report" refer to the report which mentions the oath of allegiance, as was clearly stated in the report of Ibn 'Asaakir in Tareekh Dimashq (30/277), via Imam al-Bayhaqi himself.



Imam adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after quoting the report which mentions the oath of allegiance:

Although its isnaad is good, it contains some objectionable matters, so think about it. End quote.

Al-Muhadhdhab (6/3239)

With regard to the difference of opinion concerning 'Affaan ibn Muslim, there follow some details concerning this matter:

The difference of opinion concerning 'Affaan ibn Muslim was due to two reasons:

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the first reason was that it was narrated by senior imams who had learned the brief version of the report from 'Affaan, in which there is no mention of 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib and az-Zubayr swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all). The wording of this report is as follows:

When the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) died, the spokesmen of the Ansaar stood up and some of them said: O Muhaajireen, when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent a man from among you, he would pair him with a man from among us, so we think that two men should take charge of this matter, one man from among you and one man from among us.

Zayd ibn Thaabit stood up and said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was one of the Muhaajireen, and we were the helpers of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). So the leader should only be from among the Muhaajireen, and we will be his helpers as we were the helpers of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)).

Abu Bakr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: May Allah reward you with good, O Ansaar, and may He keep your spokesman steadfast. By Allah, if you had said something other than this, we



would not have accepted it from you.

Narrated from him by Ibn Abi Shaybah in al-Musannaf (7/430)

And by Imam Ahmad in al-Musnad (35/489) – Mu’sasat ar-Risaalah edn.

And by Ibn Sa ‘d in at-Tabaqaat (3/212)

And by al-Balaadhuri in Ansaab al-Ashraaf (3/318)

Ahmad ibn al-Qaasim ibn al-Musaawir al-Jawaahiri, as narrated by at-Tabaraani in al-Mu’jam al-Kabeer (5/114)

Ja’far as-Saayigh, as narrated by Ibn ‘Adiyy in al-Kaamil (3/223). He said: ‘Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Marwaan narrated it to us: Abu’s-Saqr al-Warraaq, who is Yahya ibn Dawood al-Baghdaadi, narrated it to us, and Muhammad ibn Muneer ibn Sagheer told us: Ja’far as-Saayigh told us: ‘Affaan told us.

Adh-Dhahabi said concerning this report:

This is a saheeh isnaad. End quote.

Siyar A’laam an-Nubala’ (2/433)

Al-Haythami said concerning this report:

It was narrated by at-Tabaraani and Ahmad, and its men are the men of as-Saheeh. End quote.

Majma’ az-Zawaa’id (5/183)

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the second reason is that it was narrated by one of the companions of ‘Affaan ibn Muslim, who narrated the longer report which mentions ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib and az-Zubayr swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with them all). The wording is as follows:



When the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) died, the spokesmen of the Ansaar stood up and one of them said: O Muhaajireen, when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) appointed a man from among you, he would pair him with a man from among us, so we think that two men should take charge of this matter, one of them from among you and the other from among us.

And the spokesman of the Ansaar began to speak, one after another, along the same lines.

Then Zayd ibn Thaabit (may Allah be pleased with him) stood up and said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was one of the Muhaajireen; the leader should only be from among the Muhaajireen, and we will be his helpers as we were the helpers of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Abu Bakr (may Allah have mercy on him) stood up and said: May Allah reward you with good, O Ansaar, and may He keep your spokesman steadfast. Then he said: If you had done something other than this, we would not have accepted it from you.

Then Zayd ibn Thaabit took Abu Bakr's hand and said: This is your leader, so swear allegiance to him; so they began to swear allegiance to him.

When Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) sat on the minbar, he looked at the faces of the people, and he did not see 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), so he asked about him, and some of the Ansaar got up and brought him. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) said: O son of the paternal uncle of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his son-in-law, do you want to cause division among the Muslims?

'Ali said: Not at all, O successor of the Messenger of Allah. And he swore allegiance to him.

Then he did not see az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwaam (may Allah be pleased with him), so he asked about him and they brought him, and he said: O son of the paternal aunt of the Messenger of Allah and his disciple, do you want to cause division among the Muslims? He said the same as 'Ali had said: Not at all, O successor of the Messenger of Allah. And they both swore allegiance to him.



Narrated by Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Shaakir from 'Affaan in this lengthy version. It was also narrated thus by al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (3/80), and from him and from his shaykh Abu Muhammad al-Muqri', by al-Bayhaqi in as-Sunan al-Kubra (8/143). Al-Haakim said: This hadith is saheeh according to the conditions of al-Bukhaari and Muslim, although they did not narrate it. End quote. Adh-Dhahabi did not say anything about it in at-Talkhees.

Although Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn Shaakir was classed as thiqah (trustworthy) by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi, Ibn Manaadi and Maslamah ibn Qaasim - as it says in Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb (2/102) - he differed from the senior imams who had memorised the hadith of 'Affaan ibn Muslim better than he did. The correct version of the hadith from 'Affaan ibn Muslim is the shorter version, in which there is no mention of 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) at that time.

Sa'd ibn Iyaas al-Jareeri followed Dawood ibn Abi Hind in narrating from Abu Nadrah, and his version mentions 'Ali and az-Zubayr swearing allegiance to Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all), as it says in Tareekh Dimashq (30/278). But its isnaad includes 'Ali ibn 'Aasim ibn Suhayb al-Waasiti, who made a lot of mistakes in narration. 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni said concerning him: 'Ali ibn 'Aasim made a lot of mistakes, but if he made a mistake and someone pointed it out, he would not repeat it. This was the verdict of all the critics concerning him.

End quote from Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb (7/348)

Thirdly:

Conclusion: the oath of allegiance of 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) which is proven is that which is mentioned in the Saheehs of al-Bukhaari and Muslim. As for the earlier oath of allegiance which is mentioned in the hadith of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri, there is some doubt as to whether it is proven.

With regard to the claim of the Raafidi liars, that the oath of allegiance given by 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) was sworn under compulsion, this is a false and fabricated claim that stems from obvious stubbornness and wilful blindness to the facts narrated with sound



isnaads. If someone is like this, you cannot debate with him, because he is ignoring all rational, logical principles that you should both agree on as a reference point. And Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “and turn away from the ignorant” [al-A ‘raaf 7:199]. And Allah knows best.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is known from mutawaatir reports that no one refrained from swearing allegiance to him – namely Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (may Allah be pleased with him) – except Sa’d ibn ‘Ubaadah. As for ‘Ali and Banu Haashim, all of them swore allegiance to him, according to scholarly consensus, and none of them died without having sworn allegiance to him. However it was said that ‘Ali delayed his oath of allegiance for six months; it was also said that in fact he swore allegiance to him on the second day. Whatever the case, they swore allegiance to him without being forced to do so. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah (8/232)

And Allah knows best.