(The Shi‘ah among the Companions (Sahabah

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We said earlier that the first person to call the followers of ‘Ali (‘a) as “Shi‘ah” was the receiver of the divine revelation, Muhammad al-Mustafa (S). During the time of the Holy Prophet (S) a number of his Companions were known as “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali”. In Khatat ash-Sham, Muhammad Kird ‘Ali thus writes: During the period of the Holy Prophet (S), a number of the great Companions was known for their fellowship and friendship with ‘Ali such as Salman al-Farsi who used to say: “We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (S) that we would be the well-wishers of Muslims and that we follow and befriend ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib”; and Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri who used to say: “We were ordered five things, of which the people acted upon the four but have abandoned one of them.”

He was asked: “What are the four?” He replied: “Prayer, zakat, fasting in the month of Ramadan, and Hajj” He was again asked: “What is the thing that the people abandoned?” He replied: “The wilayah {mastership} of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib.”

The person asked: “Is this also obligatory like the others?” {Among the Shi‘ah were} also Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Khadiqah ibn Yaman, Khuzaymah ibn Thabit Dhu’sh-Shahadatayn, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Khalid ibn Sa‘id, and Qays ibn Sa‘d.

Regarding the pioneering Shi‘ah, Ibn Abi’l-Hadid also says, thus: The talk on the superiority of ‘Ali is an old subject in which a great number of the Companions and Followers {tabi‘un} believed. Among the Companions were ‘Ammar; Miqdad; Abu Dharr; Salman; Jabir; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b; Hudhayfah; Buraydah; Abu Ayyub; Sahl ibn Hunayf; ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf; Abu’l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Abu’t-Tufayl ‘Amir ibn Wathilah; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; and all members of the Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib. At the beginning, Zubayr also believed in ‘Ali’s superiority. They were a few from among the Banu Umayyah such as Khalid ibn Sa‘id and later on, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz.

In Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi‘ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi‘ah, Sayyid ‘Ali Khan ash-Shirazi has allotted a certain part to the Shi‘ah among the Companions. He has first mentioned the members of the Banu Hashim and then the other Shi‘ah among the Companions. In the first section which is related to the Shi‘ah Companions among the members of the Banu Hashim, it is thus stated: Abu Talib; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn al-‘Abbas; Fadhl ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Ubayd Allah ibn al-‘Abbas; Qithm ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-‘Abbas; Tamam ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Aqil ibn Abi Talib; Abu Sufyan ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Nawfal ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn Zubayr ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far; ‘Awn ibn Ja‘far;

Muhammad ibn Ja‘far; Rabi‘ah ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Tufayl ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Mughayrah ibn Nawfal ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi Lahab; ‘Abd al-Muttalib ibn Rabi‘ah ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; and Ja‘far ibn Abi Sufyan ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib.

In the second section (the non-Banu Hashim Shi‘ah among the Companions), Sayyid ‘Ali Khan has thus recorded: ‘Amr ibn Abi Salmah; Salman al-Farsi; Miqdad ibn Aswad; Abu Dharr al-Ghiffari; ‘Ammar ibn Yasir; Hudhayfah ibn Yaman; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Abu Ayyub al-Ansari; Abu’l-Haytham Malik ibn Tayyihan; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b; Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubadah; Qays ibn Sa‘d; Sa‘d ibn Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubadah; Abu Qutadah al-Ansari; ‘Udayy ibn Hatam; ‘Ubadah ibn Samit; Bilal ibn Rubah; Abu’l-Humara’; Abu Rafi‘; Hashim ibn ‘Utbah ibn Abi Waqqas; ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf; Sahl ibn Hunayf; Hakim ibn Jablah al-‘Adwi; Khalid ibn Sa‘id ibn al-‘As; Walid ibn Jabir ibn Talim at-Ta’i; Sa‘d ibn Malik ibn Sinan; Bara’ ibn Malik al-Ansari; Ibn Hasib Aslami; Ka‘b ibn ‘Amru al-Ansari; Rafa‘ah ibn Rafi‘ al-Ansari; Malik ibn Rabi‘ah Sa‘idi; ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Umar ibn Tha‘labah al-Ansari; Hind ibn Abi Halah at-Tamimi; Ju‘dah ibn Hubayrah; Abu ‘Umrah al-Ansari; Mas‘ud ibn al-Aws; Nadhlah ibn ‘Ubayd; Abu Burzah Aslami; Mardas ibn Malik Aslami; Musur ibn Shidad Fahri; ‘Abd Allah ibn Budayl al-Khaza‘i; Hujr ibn ‘Adi al-Kindi; ‘Amru ibn al-Humq al-Khaza‘i; Usamah ibn Zayd; Abu Layla al-Ansari; Zayd ibn al-Arqam; and Bara ibn ‘Azib Awsi.

The author of Rijal al-Burqa has also mentioned the Shi‘ah and supporters of ‘Ali (‘a) among the Companions of the Prophet (S) in a certain part of his book, thus: Salman, Miqdad, Abu Dharr, and ‘Ammar, and after these four persons, Abu Layla, Shabir, Abu ‘Umrah al-Ansari, and Abu Sinan al-Ansari, and after these four persons, Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari; Abu Sa‘id al-Ansari whose name is Sa‘d ibn Malik al-Khazraji; Abu Ayyub al-Ansari al-Khazraji; Ubayy ibn Ka‘b al-Ansari; Abu Burzah Aslami al-Khaza‘i whose name is Nadhlah ibn ‘Ubayd Allah; Zayd ibn al-Arqam al-Ansari; Buraydah ibn Hasib Aslami; ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Qays whose epithet Safinah Rakib Asad; ‘Abd Allah ibn Salam; ‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; ‘Abd Allah ibn al-‘Abbas; ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far; Mughayrah ibn Nawfal ibn Harith ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib; Hudhayfah al-Yaman who is included among the Ansar; Usamah ibn Zayd; Anas ibn Malik; Abu’l-Humra’; Bara’ ibn ‘Azib al-Ansari; and ‘Arafah Azdi.

A number of the Shi‘ah ‘ulama’ and rijali scholars believes that the Shi‘ah among the Companions were more than this number. For example, Shaykh al-Mufid regards all the Companions who have pledged allegiance to ‘Ali (‘a) in Medina especially those Companions who accompanied him in the battles as among the Shi‘ah and those who believed in his Imamate {imamah}. In the Battle of Jamal (Camel), one thousand five hundred Companions were present.

It is thus recorded in Rijal Kashi: Among the pioneering Companions who traversed the path of truth and believed in the Imamate of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali (‘a) are the following: Abu’l-Haytham ibn Tayyihan; Abu Ayyub; Khuzaymah ibn Thabit; Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah; Zayd ibn al-Arqam; Abu Sa‘id Sahl ibn Hunayf; Bara’ ibn Malik; ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf; ‘Ubadah ibn Samit, and after them are Qays ibn Sa‘d; ‘Udayy ibn Hatam; ‘Amru ibn Hamq; ‘Umran ibn Hasin; Buraydah Aslami; and others who are described as “basharun kathir” {many people}.

In the marginal note of Rijal Kashi on the definition and explanation of the term “basarun kathir”, the late Mirdamad says: “It means many people from among the prominent Companions and leading Followers {tabi‘un}.”

Sayyid Muhsin Amin has also said: Be aware that many of the Companions believed in the Imamate of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) to count them is not possible for us to do and the narrators of traditions have consensus of opinion that most of the Companions accompanied and sided with the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) in the battles.

In one of his letters to Mu‘awiyah, Muhammad ibn Abubakr identifies the presence of the Companions of the Prophet (S) at the side of ‘Ali (‘a) as one of the signs of his rightfulness.

Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah, a loyal supporter of ‘Ali (‘a) who was a maternal cousin of Mu‘awiyah, and owing to his friendship with ‘Ali (‘a), languished in the prison cell of Mu‘awiyah and finally died there, thus addressed Mu‘awiyah in one of their conversation: From the moment I have known you, whether during the pre-Islamic period of ignorance {yawm al-jahiliyyah} or during the advent of Islam, you have never changed and Islam has not been added to you. And one of the manifestations of this fact is that you are condemning me for loving ‘Ali notwithstanding the fact that all the ascetics and devoted worshippers of the Muhajirun and Ansar are in his company while in your company are perverts and hypocrites.

Of course, not all of those who were enlisted in the army of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) can be considered Shi‘ah. But since he (‘a) was the official caliph, they accompanied him (‘a). This statement can be said to be correct with respect to the other people, for the Companions who accompanied him (‘a) were always assisting the Imam (‘a) in proving his rightfulness. As Salim ibn al-Qays has narrated,

The Commander of the Faithful mounted the pulpit in Siffin and everyone including the Muhajirun and Ansar enlisted in the army gathered around the pulpit. The Imam praised and glorified Allah and then said: “O people! My virtues and merits are more than that which can be counted. It is enough to say that when the Messenger of Allah (S) was asked about the verse, “And the Foremost Ones are the foremost ones: they are the ones brought near {to Allah},” he (S) said: ‘God has revealed this verse about the prophets and their successors {awsiya’}.

I am superior to all prophets and messengers and my successor {wasi} ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is the foremost among the successors’.” At that moment, seventy persons from among the Companions who participated in the Battled of Badr, most of whom were from the Ansar, stood up and testified that they have heard the same thing from the Messenger of Allah (S).

Summary

The pioneering Shi‘ah were prominent Companions of the Prophet (S). Muhammad Kird-‘Ali in Khatat ash-Sham has recorded that a number of the Companions were known as the “Shi‘ah of ‘Ali” during the lifetime of the Prophet (S).

Sayyid ‘Ali Khan ash-Shirazi in Ad-Darajat ar-Rafi‘ah fi Tabaqat ash-Shi‘ah has examined the Shi‘ah among the Companions in two sections: the Shi‘ah Companions from among the Banu Hashim, and the Shi‘ah Companions who were not members of the Banu Hashim.

The writer of Rijal al-Burqa has also allotted a certain part of his book to the supporters of ‘Ali (‘a) from among the Companions of the Prophet (S).

In Al-Jamal, Shaykh al-Mufid regards all the Companions who accompanied and sided with ‘Ali (‘a) in the battles as Shi‘ah.

In Rijal Kashi, after enumerating the Shi‘ah from among the Companions, Shaykh at-Tusi thus says: “A large number believed in the Imamate of ‘Ali (‘a).”

The supporters of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) also used to point out to Mu‘awiyah the presence of the Companions of the Prophet (‘a) on the side of ‘Ali (‘a) as one of the indications of his righteousness.