

The Sahaba According to Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`a

As for “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`a,” these have exaggerated the “infallibility” of the *sahaba*, attributing justice and equity to all of them without any exception. They, thus, went beyond reason and recorded documentation in their resentment of anyone who criticized them or charged them with being unfair, let alone of their being sinners. Let us provide you with some of their statements so that you may realize how far they are from Qur'anic precepts and confirmed authentic Sunnah of the Prophet as well as what reason and common sense have already proven:

Imam al-Nawawi is quoted in *Sharh Muslim's Sahih* says, “The *sahaba*, may Allah be pleased with them, are all the best of people, the masters of the nation, and are better than those who succeed them. They are all equitable and are role models in whom there is no blemish at all. Delirium is what those who followed them articulated, and residue are those besides them.”¹

Yahya ibn Ma`een says, “Anyone who vilifies Uthman or Talhah or any companion of the Messenger of Allah is an imposter who should not be quoted and who is cursed by Allah, the angels, and all mankind.”²

Al-Dhahabi says, “A major sin is to abuse any of the *sahaba*; whoever discredits or abuses them forsakes the creed and reneges from the religion of Islam.”³

Abu Ya`li, the judge, was asked once about what he thought of one who abused Abu Bakr. He described such a person as *kafir*, apostate. “Should funeral prayers be performed for him?” he was asked. He answered in the negative. “How will it be dealt with his corpse, then,” he was asked again, “especially since he used to testify that: There is no god except Allah?” His answer was: “Do not touch his corpse; just push it with wooden rods till you bury him in his hole.”⁴

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, “The best of the nation after the Prophet are: Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman, then Ali: they are all righteous caliphs who guided others to righteousness. Then come the *sahaba* of the Messenger of Allah next to these four men in being the best of the nation. It is not

permissible for anybody to mention any of their faults, nor should anyone discredit any of them by pointing out his shortcomings or defects.

Whoever does any of that has to be disciplined and punished. He must not be forgiven; rather, he must be penalized and required to repent. So, if he repents, his repentance must be accepted, but if he persisted, he should be punished again then confined till he dies or retracts what he had said.”

The Hanafi Shaykh Alaaud-Din al-Tarabulsi has said, “Whoever abuses any of the Prophet's *sahaba*: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Mu`awiyah, or Amr ibn al-As, by saying that they were misguided and apostates, must be killed. If he otherwise abuses them as people abuse one another, he should be severely punished.”⁵

Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawood briefly quotes such statements made by “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`a” then comments thus:

Sunnis are of the view that all the *sahaba* are just and fair, that all are accepted as equitable even if their degree of equity varies from one person to another. Whoever labels a *sahabi* as apostate commits apostasy himself, and whoever labels him as a sinner sins. Whoever discredits a *sahabi* does, in fact, discredit the Messenger of Allah himself. The most critical Sunnis are of the view that whatever historical events went on between Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and Mu`awiyah must not be discussed.

There are among the *sahaba* those who exerted *ijtihad* of their own and were accurate: these include Ali and those who follow his line. There are others among them who followed their own views and fell into error such as Mu`awiyah and Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her) as well as those who followed in their footsteps.

Sunnis think that we ought to draw the line here and not discuss anyone's defects. They [Sunnis] were prohibited from abusing Mu`awiyah, since he was a *sahabi*, and they were quite strict in denouncing anyone who abused Ayesha, since she was the second mother of the faithful after Khadija and since the Prophet loved her most.

Anything beyond this ought not to be discussed but must be referred to Allah, Glory to Him. In this regard, al-Hasan al-Basri and Sa`id ibn al-Musayyab say, “Such were issues from which Allah kept our hands and swords clean; so, we have to purify our tongues as well.” This is the summary of the views held by the Sunnis with regard to the *sahaba* being just and equitable and what our stand should be.⁶

If the seeker of the truth wishes to further investigate the *sahaba* to find out who “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” imply in the word “*sahabi*,” he will realize that they grant this badge of honor to anyone who had seen the Prophet !

In his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari says, “Whoever kept company with the Messenger of Allah or saw him is one of his *sahaba*.” Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, “The best of people, barring those who accompanied the

Messenger of Allah during the Battle of Badr, is whoever kept him company for a year, a month, or a day, or who even saw him. He is respected proportionately according to the length of time he accompanied the Prophet.”⁷

In his book *Al-Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba*, Ibn Hajar says, “Anyone who quotes one *single hadith* of the Prophet or even one word, or who has seen him and is a believer in him, is a *sahabi*. So is anyone who has met the Prophet believing in him then dies as a Muslim, whether he kept him company for a long or a short period of time, whether he quotes him or not, whether he has participated in a campaign with him or not, whether he saw him but did not meet him, or whether he could not see him due to certain obstacles.”⁸

The vast majority of “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” share this view. They label as *sahabi* anyone who saw the Prophet or was born during his life-time even if he had not reached the age of distinguishing right from wrong. There is no better proof than their counting Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr as one of the *sahaba* although when the Messenger of Allah died, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr was only three months old...!

This is why we find Ibn Sa`d classifying the *sahaba* into five categories or, as he calls them, classes (*tabaqat*) in his renown book *Tabaqat ibn Sa`d*. The Naisapuri governor who wrote *Al-Mustadrak*, however, categorizes them into twelve classes as follows:

First Class includes those who accepted Islam prior to the Hijra, such as the righteous caliphs.

Second Class includes those who attended *Dar al-Nadwa*.

Third Class includes those who migrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia).

Fourth Class includes those who attended the First Aqaba [allegiance swearing].

Fifth Class includes those who attended the Second Aqaba.

Sixth Class includes those who migrated to Medina following the Prophet's migration thereto.

Seventh Class includes those who participated in the Battle of Badr.

Eighth Class includes those who migrated after Badr and prior to the [treaty signing at] al-Hudaybiya.

Ninth Class includes those who participated in Bay`at al-Ridwan.

Tenth Class includes those who migrated after the Hudaybiya and prior to the conquest of Mecca such as Khalid ibn al-Waleed, Amr ibn al-As, and others.

Eleventh Class includes those who were called “*taleeqs*” by the Prophet.

Twelfth Class includes the youths and children of the *sahaba* who were born during the life-time of the

Prophet such as Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr...

“Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah,” then, unanimously regard all the *sahaba* and the Imams of their four sects as just and fair. They unhesitatingly accept their traditions, and they do not permit anyone to criticize or discredit them.

Critics and verifiers of *hadith* have taken upon themselves to subject the traditionists and narrators to their own critique in order to classify their traditions and purify them from any impurity. Yet when they arrive at a *sahabi*, regardless of his “class” or age at the time of the death of the Prophet, they halt there and fall short of discrediting the traditions he narrates no matter how many doubts arise about them, and no matter to what extent they contradict reason and documentation, saying that the *sahaba* are not subject to criticism or discrediting, and that they are all just and fair!

This, by my life, is obviously the bending of the rules, something which reason and nature find as contemptible; it is not endorsed by scholarship, and I seriously doubt that today's educated youths accept such ludicrous innovations.

I do not know, nor does anyone else, where “Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama`ah” derived such views from. They certainly are foreign to Islam, a religion based on scientific evidence and convincing proofs. I wish I knew, and I wish one of them can bring me one single proof from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah, or even from logic, which convinces me that each and every *sahabi* was fair and just!

We, by the Grace of Allah, have come to know the solution of the mystery of such false views, and this we will explain in the forthcoming section. Seekers of the truth have, in turn, to uncover some secrets.

1. Muslim, Sahih, Vol. 8, p. 22.

2. Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, Vol. 1, p. 509.

3. Both pages 233 and 235 of al-Dhahabi's book Al-Kabaair (major sins) record this statement.

4. This is recorded on p. 275 of the book titled Al-Sarim al-Maslool.

5. This is recorded on p. 187 of Mu`een al-Hukkam feema Yataraddadu baynal Khasmayn min al-Ahkam (rulers' aid with regard to injunctions relevant to opponents).

6. This statements continues from p. 8 to p. 9 of the author's book Al-Sahaba fe Nadar al-Shi`a al-Imamiyya (the companions as viewed by Imamite Shi`as).

7. This is stated on p. 51 of Al-Kifaya and also on p. 2 of Talqeeh Fuhum Ahlul Athaar.

8. Ibn Hajar, Al-Isaba, Vol. 1, p. 10.

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