

'Ali: The Best of the Sahabah

Explicit Testimonies of Sahih Sunni Ahadith

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This book is an in-depth academic critique, and a thoroughly investigative refutation, of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's Minhaj al-Sunnah on the specific question of Abu Bakr's alleged superiority over Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib. The shaykh has adopted a two-pronged approach in his Minhaj. He presents arguments and proofs to support Abu Bakr's superiority and discredits all arguments and proofs in favour of 'Ali's superiority. Toyib Olawuyi has however placed all the primary submissions, evidences and denials of Ibn Taymiyyah under the microscope and punctured every single one of them severely using the Book of Allah, the sahih ahadith of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, and their strictest rijal verification methods. Full transparency, accuracy and accountability are strictly observed throughout our book, and we hope it will ease the way for every soul seeking to find out the real truth.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, *salawatullah wa salamuhu 'alaihi*, who is my *mawla* and the *mawla* of all believers.

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Preface

The question of who the best of the Sahabah, *radhiyallah 'anhum*, was has always been a thorny issue within the Ummah, especially among the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. Even the Sahabah disputed with one another over the topic. Specifically, the debate often revolves around Abu Bakr and 'Ali, *'alaihi al-salam*, only. It is very difficult to see anyone – whether Sunni or Shi'i – arguing that 'Umar, 'Uthman, Talhah, Zubayr or some other Sahabi – was the best of the Sahabah. Rather, the exact point of contention is, and always was: was Abu Bakr their best or 'Ali?

Expectedly, most of the Ahl al-Sunnah consider Abu Bakr to have been the best of the Sahabah, then 'Umar, then 'Uthman, and then 'Ali. By contrast, the Shi'ah believe that Amir al-Muminin 'Ali was the

best, then al-Hasan, then al-Husayn, and then Sayyidah Faṭimah, ‘*alaihim al-salam*. There is a minority among Sunnis – including some Sahabah and a lot of Sufis – who share the Shi’i view on the matter.

Ordinarily, the debate over who was the best should have been a mere, healthy academic exercise. However, it is linked with *Imamah* and *khilafah* in the Ummah. So, it is a very big issue, and provokes the deepest emotions of some people. In fact, countless Shi’is and others have been murdered for more than a millenium by Sunni extremists, only for their belief in the superiority of ‘Ali. The best of the Ummah at each point in time is the only one qualified for the *khilafah*. This is the Command of Allah and His Messenger, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) confirms:

ففي هذا الخبر إخبار عمر بين المهاجرين والأنصار أن أبا بكر سيد المسلمين وخيرهم وأحبهم إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ذلك علة مبايعته فقال بل نبايعك أنت فأنت سيدنا وخيرنا وأحبنا إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ليبين بذلك أن الأمور به تولية الأفضل وأنت أفضلنا فنبايعك

In this report is the declaration of ‘Umar among the Muhajirun and the Ansar that Abu Bakr was the *sayyid* of the Muslims and the best of them, and the most beloved of them to the Messenger of Allah. This is the reason for following him. So, he (‘Umar) said, “Rather, we will follow you because you are our *sayyid*, and the best of us, and the most beloved of us to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him”. He wanted to make clear through it that: **WHAT IS ORDAINED IS TO GIVE AUTHORITY TO THE BEST**, and you are the best of us. So, we will follow you. 1

The bottomline here is that *khilafah* by anyone who is not the best of his time is contrary to the Order of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, and is therefore both illegal and a *bid’ah*. That makes the *khalifah* himself and all his supporters ringleaders of a *bid’ah*, as long as they are aware of his deficiency and still uphold his *khilafah*. In that way, they would be guilty of creating a new provision in the religion to supplant that of Allah. The grave danger of all this is captured perfectly in these words of the Messenger of Allah, documented by Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H):

شر الأمور محدثاتها وكل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار

The worst of the (religious) affairs are their innovations, and every innovation is a *bid’ah*, **and every bid’ah is misguidance, and every misguidance ends to the Fire.**2

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) comments:

صحيح

Sahih3

The Command of Allah and His Messenger is that the best of the Ummah should *always* be their *khalifah*, as testified by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. Meanwhile, the innovation in this matter is to make or allow *any* inferior individual as the *khalifah*. This innovation is a *bid’ah*, and will land whosoever leads, practices or recognizes it in Hellfire. It is understandable then why some of our Sunni brothers are so hell-bent upon emphasizing the superiority over Abu Bakr over the whole Ummah, followed by ‘Umar and ‘Uthman, by all means – even to the extent of committing massacres. The survival of their *madhhab* depends very heavily on it. Should Abu Bakr, ‘Umar or ‘Uthman fall, Sunnism itself ceases to exist as a valid entity!

So, certain drastic steps were taken to address the challenge. First, a very wide re-definition was issued for Shi’ism. This, apparently, was to scare Sunnis away from researching into the issue. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) takes the podium:

والتشيع محبة على وتقديمه على الصحابة فمن قدمه على أبي بكر وعمر فهو
غال في تشيعه ويطلق عليه رافضي وإلا فشيوعي فإن انضاف إلى ذلك السب أو
التصريح بالبغيض فغال في الرفض وإن اعتقد الرجعة إلى الدنيا فأشد في الغلو

Shi’ism is love of ‘Ali and the placing of him over the Sahabah (except Abu Bakr and ‘Umar only). Whoever places him above Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, such is an extremist in his Shi’ism, and he is called a Rafidi.

If he does not (place ‘Ali over the two), then he is only a Shi’i. If he added to that (i.e. preference of ‘Ali over Abu Bakr and ‘Umar) abuse, cursing or open hatred (of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar), he is then an extremist in *Rafdh*. If he believes in *Raj’ah* into this world, then he is severe in (Rafidhi) extremism.⁴

Therefore, a Sunni is only someone who considers ‘Ali as inferior to Abu Bakr, ‘Umar AND ‘Uthman. Whosoever places him above ‘Uthman is a Shi’i, and whosoever views him as superior to Abu Bakr or ‘Umar is a Rafidhi. In the Sunni creed, being a Shi’i is a *bid’ah*. Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) says:

أن البدعة على ضربين: فبدعة صغرى كغلو التشيع، أو كالتشيع بلا غلو ولا
تحرف، فهذا كثير في التابعين وتابعيهم مع الدين والورع والصدق. فلو رد
حديث هؤلاء لذهب جملة من الآثار النبوية، وهذه مفسدة بينة. ثم بدعة كبرى،

كالرفض الكامل والغلو فيه

Bid'ah has two types:

The minor *bid'ah*: like extreme Shi'ism, or like moderate Shi'ism, for this was widespread among the Tabi'in and their followers, despite their devotion, piety and truthfulness. If the *ahadith* of these people were rejected, part of teachings of the Prophet would be lost, and that would be a clear evil.

Then **the major *bid'ah*: like complete *rafidh*** and extremism in it.⁵

By classifying the placing of 'Ali above 'Uthman as a *bid'ah* – which leads to Hellfire – the classical Sunni *'ulama* hoped to put a firm lid on all threats to their *madhhab*. However, their action has produced some horrible unintended consequences. Many of the Sahabah were *Rawafidh* by Sunni definition, and therefore heretics who will burn forever in the Fire! Imam Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H) identifies some of these Rafidhi Sahabah:

وروى عن سلمان وأبي زر والمقداد وخباب وجابر وأبي سعيد الخدري وزيد
بن الأرقم أن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه أول من أسلم وفضله هؤلاء على
غيره

Salman, Abu Dharr, al-Miqdad, Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri and Zayd b. Arqam narrated that 'Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to accept Islam, **and they considered him the most superior (among the Sahabah)**.⁶

These senior Sahabah considered 'Ali as superior to Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman! By Sunni standards, their *bid'ah*, therefore, was of the *major* type! They were complete Rafidhis. Another well-known Sahabi like them was Abu al-Tufayl, *radhiyallah 'anhu*. Imam al-Dhahabi states about him:

واسم أبي الطفيل، عامر بن واثلة بن عبد الله بن عمرو الليثي الكناني الحجازي الشيعي. كان من شيعة الإمام علي

The name of Abu al-Tufayl was 'Amir b. Wathilah b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr al-Laythi al-Kanani al-Hijazi, **the Shi'i. He was from the *Shi'ah* of Imam 'Ali**.⁷

Imam Ibn 'Abd al-Barr adds:

وكان متشيعا في علي وفضله ويثني على الشيخين أبي بكر وعمر ويترحم على عثمان

He was a Shi'i of 'Ali and considered him the most superior. He used to extol the two Shaykhs, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and would ask for Allah's mercy upon 'Uthman.⁸

Al-Hafiz explains the words of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr above:

قال أبو عمر كان يعترف بفضل أبي بكر وعمر لكنه يقدم عليا

Abu ‘Umar said: He accepted the merit of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar **but he considered ‘Ali to be the most superior.**⁹

This creates an impossible dilemma for Sunni Islam. If Sunnis stick with their view that Shi’ism – as defined by them – is a *bid’ah*, then they must agree that all these fine Sahabah were heretics with no hope of salvation in the Hereafter. By contrast, if they free the Shi’i Sahabah, then they must equally free all other Shi’ah and Rawafidh! What is good for the goose is equally good for the gander. Besides, the Sahabah, who met the Prophet, are in an even more accountable position on any Islamic matter than all the generations after them. It gets scary when one considers the possibility that the Messenger of Allah could have been of the same opinion as the Shi’i Sahabah! If he did, then it would have been Sunnah to place ‘Ali over Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. In that case, the majority view of the Ahl al-Sunnah on the matter would have been a *bid’ah* – in fact, a compounded *bid’ah*.

The other step taken by the Sunni ‘*ulama* was to confuse their followers on the status and meanings of explicit *ahadith* indicating the overall superiority of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib over all Sahabah. The most guilty individual in this regard was none other than “Shaykh al-Islam” Ibn Taymiyyah. Others, such as Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H), ‘Allamah al-Albani, Shaykh al-Arnau¹⁰ and others, have also followed his steps, albeit at a much lower level. In this book, we will be examining some of such *ahadith*, proving their authenticity absolutely, and analyzing their texts in the light of the Qur’an and *mutawatir* Sunnah. Our *manhaj* in this regard is open, transparent, mathematical and precise. For instance, we have relied very heavily upon the verdicts concerning the individual narrators by al-Hafiz al-‘Asqalani in his legendary reference work, *al-Taqrīb*. The reasons for this approach are two. First, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, often fondly referred to simply as al-Hafiz, is one of the greatest Sunni scholars of *rijal* and *hadith*. ‘Allamah al-Albani says about him:

لكن من كان في ريب مما أحكم أنا على بعض الأحاديث فليعد إلى فتح الباري فسيجد هناك أشياء كثيرة وكثيرة جداً ينتقدها الحافظ أحمد بن حجر العسقلاني الذي يسمى بحق أمير المؤمنين في الحديث والذي أعتقد أنا وأظن أن كل من كان مشاركاً في هذا العلم يوافقني على أنه لم تلد النساء بعده مثله.

But, whoever is in doubt concerning the verdicts I have given concerning some *ahadith* (in *Sahih al-Bukhari*), let him refer to *Fath al-Bari*, and he will find there lots and lots of things (in *Sahih al-Bukhari*) which have been criticized by **al-Hafiz Ahmad b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, who is rightly named the Amir al-Muminin in Hadith, and whom I believe – and I suppose that anyone who has this knowledge (i.e. science of hadith) would agree with me – that no woman has ever given birth to anyone like him after him.**¹⁰

The phrase “amir al-muminin” is of course a reference to the supreme master.

Secondly, al-Hafiz himself states in the Introduction to *al-Taqrīb*:

أنني أحكم على كل شخص منهم بحكم يشمل أصح ما قيل فيه، وأعدل ما وصف به

I have graded every individual among them with a verdict that contains the most correct of what is said about him, and the most just of the descriptions given for him.¹¹

In other words, a lot of things have been said about each of the narrators. But, not everything said about them is authentically transmitted, correct or accurate. So, al-Hafiz, who is a king in the Sunni science of *hadith*, has compiled only “the most correct” and “the most just” of the statements made about them. No wonder, top Sunni *hadith* scientists like ‘Allamah al-Albani and others have relied *very* heavily upon this *al-Taqrīb* in all their works. We will be doing the same throughout this book and others. There are two clear advantages in doing this. One, it would ensure the accuracy of our conclusions on the various narrators. Two, it would keep our book concise and neat. As such, we will firstly quote the criticisms of a Sunni scholar, mostly Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, against a particular *hadith* – which establishes ‘Ali’s superiority over all the Sahabah – and then examines the trustworthiness of all its narrators, primarily through *al-Taqrīb*. Where the name of the narrator is not present in *al-Taqrīb*, then we go for the books of Imam al-Dhahabi, who is equally a superweight in Sunni *hadith* sciences, as well as others like ‘Allamah al-Albani and Shaykh al-Arnau¹².

This humble author has adopted a very strict *takhrij* style throughout the book. This is why he has excluded *ahadith* which he believes to be true, but which do not meet the strict standards of authenticity in the Sunni *hadith* sciences. In particular, we focus on the reliability of the narrators and the full connectivity of the chains. We also seek if there are corroborative supports for either the chains or the texts of the *ahadith*. Most importantly, we also investigate any possible hidden defects in the chains, such as *tadlis*, poor memory and *irsal* of the narrators and present detailed researches to make clarifications wherever necessary. Sometimes, in order to save space, we do simply rely upon explicit authentications of chains and *ahadith* by the topmost Sunni *hadith* scientists. Through this methodology, we hope to give the full opportunity to whoever is researching the topic in order to determine the real truth.

Meanwhile, we do not neglect Sunni arguments and reports in favour of the superiority of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar either. We query their authenticity too, in line with strict standards of Sunni *rijal* and further test their compatibility with the Qur’an and undisputed history. The full details of our investigations are provided in our book, so that our esteemed reader can verify, reason and make his independent conclusions too.

Throughout our book, we have relied upon Sunni books only, and specifically those of the highest

standing in their respected categories. This way, we aim ensure full accuracy in everything. We implore Allah to forgive us all our mistakes, and to accept this as a worthy act of *'ibadah*.

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1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 565
 2. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasai, al-Mujtaba min al-Sunan (Halab: Maktab Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 3, p. 188, # 1578
 3. Ibid
 4. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Hadi al-Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H), p. 460
 5. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I'tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah; 1st edition, 1382 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 1, pp. 5-6, # 2
 6. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Asim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, pp. 1090, # 1855
 7. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut, Muhammad Na'im al-'Arqisusi and Mamun 'Aghirji], vol. 3, p. 468, # 97
 8. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Asim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 4, p. 1697, # 3054
 9. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-'Ahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh 'Adil Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh 'Ali Muhammad Ma'udh], vol. 7, p. 193, # 10166
 10. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Fatawa (Cairo: Maktabah al-Turath al-Islami; 1st edition, 1414 H), p. 525
 11. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 24

1. Hadith Al-Qadha, Investigating Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

وإما قوله قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لا قضاكم علي والقضاء يستلزم العلم و الدين فهذا الحديث لم يثبت و ليس له إسناد تقوم به الحجة ... لم يروه أحد في السنن المشهورة و لا المساند المعروفة لا بإسناد صحيح و لا ضعيف و إنما يروي من طريق من هو معروف بالكذب

As for his statement, “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘**The best judge among you is ‘Ali**’”, and justice dispensation requires knowledge and religious devotion. **But, this *hadith* is not authentic**, and it has no chain of transmission which makes it a valid proof ... **It is not recorded by anyone in the famous *Sunan* books**, and not (by anyone) in the well-known *Musnad* books – not with a *sahih* chain, nor with a *dha’if* chain. **It is only narrated through the route of notorious liars.** 1

Meanwhile, Imam Ibn Majah (d. 273 H) records in his *Sunan*:

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى ثنا عبد الوهاب بن عبد المجيد ثنا خالد الحذاء، عن أبي
قلاية، عن أنس بن مالك، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: أرحم أمتي
بأمتي أبو بكر وأشدهم في دين الله عمر وأصدقهم حياء عثمان وأقضاهم علي
بن أبي طالب.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – ‘Abd al-Wahhab b. ‘Abd al-Majid – Khalid al-Haza – Abi Qilabah – Anas
b. Malik:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “The most merciful of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is
Abu Bakr. The most severe of them in the religion of Allah is ‘Umar. The most shy of them is ‘Uthman.
And the best judge among them is ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.”²

This report cancels out the first leg of our Shaykh’s claims: that the *hadith* is not documented in any of
the authoritative *Sunan* and *Musnad* books – whether with a *sahih* chain or even a *dha’if* one!

So, the next question is: has the *hadith* truly been narrated by a liar or liars?

The first narrator, Muhammad b. al-Muthanna is *thiqah* (trustworthy) without absolutely any doubt. Al-
Hafiz (d. 852 H) for instance says about him:

محمد بن المثنى بن عبيد العنزي بفتح النون والزاي أبو موسى البصري.... ثقة
ثبت

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna b. ‘Ubayd al-‘Unaza, Abu Musa al-Basri.... ***Thiqah* (trustworthy), *thabt*
(accurate).**³

Elsewhere, he adds about him:

روى عنه) خ (مائة حديث وثلاثة أحاديث ومسلم سبعمائة وأثنتين وسبعين حديثاً

Al-Bukhari narrated 103 *ahadith* from him (in his *Sahih*), and Muslim also narrated 772 *ahadith* (from him in his *Sahih*).⁴

Apparently, he was a super-weight in Sunni *ahadith*.

Al-Hafiz also says about the second narrator:

عبد الوهاب بن عبد المجيد بن الصلت الثقفي أبو محمد البصري ثقة تغير قبل
موته بثلاث سنين

‘Abd al-Wahhab b. ‘Abd al-Majid b. al-Salt al-Thaqafi, Abu Muhammad al-Basri: **Thiqah** (trustworthy). He changed (i.e. his memory weakened) 3 years before his death.⁵

In his *Lisan*, he gives further, crucial information about him:

لكنه ما ضر تغيره حديثه فإنه ما حدث بحديث في زمن التغير

But, his change (in memory) does not harm his *ahadith*, for he never narrated a single *hadith* during the period of the change.⁶

So, what about the remaining narrators? Shaykh al-Arnau[®] saves us a lot of time with this *tahqiq*:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عفان ثنا وهيب ثنا خالد الحذاء عن أبي قلابة عن
أنس بن مالك عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم إسناده صحيح على شرط
الشيخين

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Affan – Wuhayb – **Khalid al-Haza** – **Abu Qilabah** – **Anas b. Malik** – the Prophet, peace be upon him **Its chain is *sahih* UPON THE STANDARD OF THE TWO SHAYKHS.**⁷

We understand from this that both Khalid al-Haza and Abu Qilabah are *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators of

both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, like Muhammad b. al-Muthanna.

Interestingly, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H), Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) and ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also confirm that the second narrator is like the others too in this regard. The ‘Allamah writes:

أخرجه الترمذي (2 / 309) وابن ماجه (154) وابن حبان (2218) و (2219) والحاكم (3 / 422) من طريق عبد الوهاب بن عبد المجيد الثقفي حدثنا خالد الحذاء عن أبي قلابة عن أنس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: فذكره، وقال الترمذي: " حديث حسن صحيح ". وقال الحاكم: " هذا إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين ". ووافقه الذهبي وهو كما قال.

Al-Tirmidhi (2/309), Ibn Majah (154), Ibn Hibban (2218) and al-Hakim (3/422) narrated it through the route of ‘**ABD AL-WAHHAB B. ‘ABD AL-MAJID AL-THAQAFI – Khalid al-Haza – Abu Qilabah – Anas** – the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Al-Tirmidhi said: “The *hadith* is *hasan sahih*”. Al-Hakim (also) said, “**This chain is *sahih* UPON THE STANDARD OF THE TWO SHAYKHS**”. Al-Dhahabi concurred with him, **and it is (indeed) as they both have stated**.⁸

In a simple summary, *Hadith al-Qadha* – as documented by Imam Ibn Majah – has a chain of transmission that is *sahih* upon the standard of al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) and Muslim (d. 261 H). All its narrators are relied upon in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, and there is no disconnection anywhere in the chain. Apparently, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s weird, unfounded claim that the *hadith* is narrated only by notorious liars is itself a sickening rape of the truth!

There is equally a *mutaba’ah* for Muhammad b. al-Muthanna copied by Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H):

أخبرنا أحمد بن مكرم بن خالد البرتي، حدثنا علي بن المديني، حدثنا عبد الوهاب الثقفي، حدثنا خالد الحذاء، عن أبي قلابة عن أنس بن مالك قال: قال رسول الله – صلى الله عليه وسلم: ارحم أمتي بأمتي أبو بكر، وأشدهم في أمر الله عمر، وأصدقهم حياء عثمان، وأقضاهم علي

Ahmad b. Makram b. Khalid al-Birti – ‘Ali b. al-Madini – ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Thaqafi – Khalid al-Haza – Abu Qilabah – Anas b. Malik:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The most merciful of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is Abu Bakr. The most severe of them concerning the Command of Allah is ‘Umar. The most shy of them is

‘Uthman. **And the best judge among them is ‘Ali.**⁹

We already know that the last four narrators – including Anas – are *thiqah* narrators of both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. So, we only have to find out the status of the first two narrators. Once again, Shaykh al-Arnau⁹ saves us time. Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) records this chain in his *Sahih*:

أخبرنا أحمد بن مكرم بن خالد البرتي قال حدثنا علي بن المديني قال حدثنا
معن بن عيسى قال حدثنا مالك بن أنس عن صفوان بن سليم عن عطاء بن
يسار عن أبي سعيد الخدري

Ahmad b. Makram b. Khalid al-Birti – ‘Ali b. al-Madini – Ma’n b. ‘Isa – Malik b. Anas – Safwan b. Sulaym – ‘Aḥa b. Yasar – Abu Sa’id al-Khudri¹⁰

Al-Arnau⁹ says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط البخاري رجاله ثقات رجال الصحيح غير علي بن
المديني فمن رجال البخاري

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of al-Bukhari. Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), narrators of the *Sahih*, except ‘Ali b. al-Madini because he is from the narrators of (*Sahih*) *al-Bukhari* (only).¹¹

So, both al-Birti and ‘Ali b. al-Madini are *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators of *Sahih al-Bukhari* too. As such, the *mutaba’ah* of ‘Ali b. al-Madini to Muhammad b. al-Muthanna in *Hadith al-Qadha* is *sahih* as well, upon the standard of *Sahih al-Bukhari*!

The *hadith* has equally been transmitted from other Sahabah, apart from Anas. Imam al-Haythami for instance records:

عن جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم :
أرحم أمتي بأمتي أبو بكر وأرفق أمتي لأمتي عمر وأصدق أمتي حياء عثمان
وأقضى أمتي علي بن أبي طالب

Narrated Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The most merciful of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is Abu Bakr. The kindest of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is ‘Umar. The most shy of my *Ummah* is ‘Uthman. **The best judge of my *Ummah* is ‘Ali b. Abi Talib**”.¹²

He comments:

رواه الطبراني في الأوسط وإسناده حسن

Al-Tabarani narrated it in *al-Awsa*¹³, and its chain is *hasan*.¹³

In modern prints of *Mu’jam al-Awsa*¹⁴ of Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H), this *hadith*, unfortunately, is no longer present! The previous existence of this report in *al-Awsat* is further confirmed by Imam al-Haytami (d. 974 H):

و في رواية الطبراني في الأوسط أرحم أممي بأممي أبو بكر وأرفق أممي لأمتي عمر وأصدق أممي حياء عثمان وأفضى أممي علي بن أبي طالب

In the report of al-Tabarani in *al-Awsat*, it is recorded: “The most merciful of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is Abu Bakr. The kindest of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is ‘Umar. The most shy of my *Ummah* is ‘Uthman. **The best judge of my *Ummah* is ‘Ali b. Abi Talib**”¹⁴

It has gone missing in the same *al-Awsat* after the time of al-Haytami.

Finally, ‘Allamah al-Albani has copied *Hadith al-Qadha* from yet another Sahabi, namely Ibn ‘Umar:

أرأف أممي بأممي أبو بكر وأشد هم في دين الله عمر وأصدقهم حياء عثمان
وأقضاهم علي

The most compassionate of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is Abu Bakr, and the most severe of them in the religion of Allah is ‘Umar. The most shy of them is ‘Uthman **and the best judge among them is ‘Ali**.¹⁵

The ‘Allamah says:

(صحيح) ... [ع] عن ابن عمر.

Sahih ... (Narrated) by Ibn ‘Umar¹⁶

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 512–513
 2. Ibn Majah Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yazid al-Qazwini, *Sunan* (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 55, # 154
 3. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 129, # 6283
 4. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 9, p. 378, # 698
 5. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 626, # 4275
 6. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Lisan al-Mizan* (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-‘Alami li al-Matbu‘at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 4, p. 88, # 168
 7. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 281, # 14022
 8. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhiah wa Fawaidihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma‘arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi‘; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, p. 223, # 1224
 9. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, *Mawarid al-Zaman ila Zawaid Ibn Hibban* (Damascus: Dar al-Thaqafah al-‘Arabiyyah; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotators: Husayn Salim Asad al-Darani and ‘Abd ‘Ali al-Kushk], vol. 7, pp. 161–162, # 2218
 10. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu‘adh b. Ma‘bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, *Sahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 16, p. 404, # 7393
 11. Ibid
 12. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, *Majma’ al-Zawaid* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 235, # 14918
 13. Ibid
 14. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-Haytami, *al-‘Awaiq al-Muhriqah ‘ala Ahl al-Rafd wa al-‘Alal wa al-Zindiqah* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1997 CE) [annotators: ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd Allah al-Turki and Kamil Muhammad Khurat], vol. 1, p. 226
 15. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Sahih al-Jami’ al-‘Aghir wa Ziyadatuhu* (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, p. 211, # 868
 16. Ibid

2. Hadith Al-Qadha, Confessions Of The Sahabah

The companions of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, used to admit, unanimously, that Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, *‘alaihi al-salam*, was indeed the best judge among them. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H), for instance records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا وكيع ثنا سفيان عن حبيب بن أبي ثابت عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس قال قال عمر رضي الله عنه: علي أقضانا وأبي أقرؤنا

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Waki’ – Sufyan – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “**Ali is the best judge among us**, and Ubayy is the best reciter among us.”¹

Shaykh al-Arnau² says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.²

Imam Ahmad further records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن سفيان حدثني حبيب يعني بن أبي ثابت عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: قال عمر علي أقضانا وأبي أقرؤنا

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Sa’id – Sufyan – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

‘Umar said: “**Ali is the best judge among us**, and Ubayy is the best reciter among us.”³

Al-Arnau² again comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁴

This is the third *athar* recorded on the same matter by Ahmad b. Hanbal:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا سويد بن سعيد في سنة ست وعشرين ومائتين ثنا علي بن مسهر عن الأعمش عن حبيب بن أبي ثابت عن سعيد بن جبير عن بن عباس قال خطبنا عمر رضي الله عنه على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال: علي رضي الله عنه أفضانا وأبي رضي الله عنه أقرؤنا

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Suwayd b. Sa’id – ‘Ali b. Mashar – al-A’mash – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said: “**Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, is the best judge among us**, and Ubayy, may Allah be pleased with him, is the best reciter.”⁵

Shaykh Shu’ayb al-Arnau⁶ has a simple verdict on it:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁶

Notably, ‘Umar mentioned this publicly and none among the Sahabah present – including the most senior ones – objected. This evidences their unanimous concurrence with him on the matter.

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records the same *athar* in his *Sahih*:

حدثنا عمرو بن علي حدثنا يحيى حدثنا سفيان عن حبيب عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس قال قال عمر رضي الله عنه: أقرؤنا أبي وأفضانا علي

‘Amr b. ‘Ali – Yahya – Sufyan – Habib – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “The best reciter among us is Ubayy, **and the best judge among us is ‘Ali.**”⁷

Apart from ‘Umar, all the other Sahabah also explicitly declared that the best judge among them – including their most senior ones living in Madinah – was none other than Amir al-Muminin. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

أخبرني عبد الرحمن بن الحسن القاضي بهمدان ثنا إبراهيم بن الحسين ثنا آدم بن أبي إياس ثنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد عن علقمة عن عبد الله قال كنا نتحدث أن أفضى أهل المدينة علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه

‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hasan al-Qadi – Ibrahim b. al-Husayn – Adam b. Abi Iyas – Shu’bah – Abu Ishaq – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid – ‘Alqamah – ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud):

“We used to SAY that the best judge among the people of Madinah was ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him.”⁸

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁹

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H), on his part, keeps silent about it. The reason is unclear since the *athar* has a perfectly *sahih* chain. Meanwhile, he has personally authenticated the *sanad* and all its narrators in the same book in other *ahadith*! For example, al-Hakim records this chain:

أخبرنا عبد الرحمن بن الحسن القاضي ثنا إبراهيم بن الحسين ثنا آدم بن أبي إياس ثنا شعبة عن منصور عن إبراهيم عن علقمة عن عبد الله رضي الله عنه

‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hasan al-Qadi – Ibrahim b. al-Husayn – Adam b. Abi Iyas – Shu’bah – Mansur – Ibrahim – ‘Alqamah – ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud), may Allah be pleased with him.¹⁰

The only differences in this *sanad* from that of the *athar* are Mansur and Ibrahim. Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.¹¹

Interestingly, al-Dhahabi confirms the verdict:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim. 12

This proves that ‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hasan al-Qadi, Ibrahim b. al-Husayn, Adam b. Abi Iyas, Shu’bah and ‘Alqamah are *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators!

But, what is the status Abu Ishaq and ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid – the only remaining narrators of Ibn Mas’ud’s *athar*? Note this chain documented by Imam al-Hakim:

أخبرنا أبو زكريا العنبري ثنا محمد بن عبد السلام ثنا إسحاق أنبأ يحيى بن آدم
ثنا إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد عن عبد الله رضي الله
عنه

Abu Zakariyah al-‘Anbari – Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Salam – Ishaq – Yahya b. Adam – Israil – **Abu Ishaq**
– **‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid** – ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud), may Allah be pleased with him. 13

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs. 14

Al-Dhahabi also reiterates:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim. 15

As such, all the narrators of the *athar* are *thiqah* (trustworthy).

But then, is there any break between Shu’bah and Abu Ishaq? We have seen the unbroken connection between all the other narrators except these two. This chain, recorded by al-Hakim, puts the seal on things:

حدثني محمد بن صالح بن هانى ثنا المسيب بن زهير ثنا عاصم بن علي ثنا
شعبة عن أبي إسحاق قال : سمعت وهب بن جابر يحدث عن عبد الله بن عمرو
رضي الله عنهما

Muhammad b. Salih b. Hani – al-Musayyab b. Zuhayr – ‘Asim b. ‘Ali – **Shu’bah** – **Abu Ishaq** – Wahb b.
Jabir – ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr, may Allah be pleased with them both¹⁶

Al-Hakim states:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.¹⁷

Al-Dhahabi agrees:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.¹⁸

Simply put, the chain of the *athar* of Ibn Mas’ud is *sahih*. All the narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), and there is no disconnection whatsoever in the *sanad*.

1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 113, # 21122

2. Ibid

3. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 113, # 21123

4. Ibid

5. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 113, # 21124

6. Ibid

7. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-^hahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 4, p. 1628, # 4211

8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-^hahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 145, # 4656

9. Ibid

10. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 372, # 7963

11. Ibid

12. Ibid

13. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 244, # 2888
14. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 536, # 8505
17. Ibid
18. Ibid

3. Hadith Al-Qadha, ‘Ali’s Superior Knowledge Of The Qur’an And Sunnah

There is no dispute about the fact that Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*, was the most competent in justice dispensation among all the Sahabah. In fact, he is the best judge in our whole *Ummah* till the Day of *al-Qiyamah* after its Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. On a specific level, he was better – in terms of justice dispensation – than Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman. So, what is the direct implication of this?

In Islam, justice dispensation is based squarely upon the Qur’an and Sunnah:

فاحكم بينهم بما أنزل الله

So, judge between them **by what Allah has revealed**.¹

The Qur’an itself, in its entirety, is described as “a judgment” by its Master:

وكذلك أنزلناه حكما عربيا

And thus We have sent it down as **a judgment** in Arabic²

As such, complete knowledge of everything in it is required for effective justice dispensation.

Moreover, the Sunnah is the divinely inspired explanations of this “judgment” called al-Qur’an:

وأنزلنا إليك الذكر لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم

And We have sent down unto you (Muhammad) *al-Dhikr* (i.e. the Qur'an) **that you may explain clearly** to mankind what is sent down to them.³

Apparently, a person does not know the Book of Allah until he has known its explanations by the Messenger of Allah. These explanations, according to the same Book, only originated from the Lord as well:

وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

He (Muhammad) never speaks of (his own) desire or caprice. **It is nothing but a *wahy* that is revealed (to him).**⁴

It is obvious. If anyone were more knowledgeable of the Qur'an and Sunnah than 'Ali in this *Ummah*, he ('Ali) would not have been its best judge. It is simply unfathomable that Allah and His Messenger would have conferred upon him such a rank while there was/is another – in the *Ummah* as a whole – who was/is more competent with the tools of justice dispensation than he was!

It is noteworthy that knowledge of the revelations of Allah surpasses mere knowledge of *al-halal* (the permissible) and *al-haram* (the prohibited). It covers everything from the Lord to humanity. Most importantly, merely knowing the legal status of a thing is not enough for justice dispensation. The judge must equally be fully aware of the penalties (if any) prescribed for it, and the best ways and circumstances to exercise personal discretion in different cases in line with the Wish of Allah. None, apparently, is as competent in these fields as 'Ali.

At this point, it is apposite to quote this groundbreaking *riwayah* referenced by al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H):

قال شعبة بن الحجاج ، عن سِمَاك ، عن خالد بن عَرَعَرَةَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلِيًّا وَشُعْبَةَ
أَيْضًا ، عن القاسم بن أبي بَزَّة ، عن أبي الطُّفَيْلِ ، سَمِعَ عَلِيًّا . وَثَبِتَ أَيْضًا مِنْ
غَيْرِ وَجْهِ ، عن أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب : أَنَّهُ صَعِدَ مِنْبَرِ الْكُوفَةِ فَقَالَ :
لَا تَسْأَلُونِي عَنْ آيَةٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ، وَلَا عَنْ سُنَّةٍ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ، إِلَّا أَنْبَأْتُكُمْ بِذَلِكَ .

Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj, from Simak, from Khalid b. 'Ar'arah that he heard 'Ali; and Shu'bah again narrated from al-Qasim b. Abi Barrah from Abu al-Tufayl that he heard 'Ali; and IT IS ALSO AUTHENTICALLY TRANSMITTED through many chains that Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib climbed the pulpit of Kufah and said, **"You will not ask me about ANY verse in the Book of Allah, or about ANY Sunnah from**

the Messenger of Allah, except that I will inform you about that.”⁵

None of the Sahabah was *ever* able to make a similar claim!

Secondly, justice must be administered with utmost fairness and equity:

وإن حكمت فاحكم بينهم بالقسط

If you judge, judge between them with fairness and equity.⁶

This verse allows the use of personal discretion in the administration of justice, especially in all cases where no divinely fixed penalties or judgments are available. But even then, it also reiterates the notion that the judge must know everything in the Qur’an and the Sunnah! Full knowledge of both is required to determine whether or not there is a fixed penalty or judgment concerning a particular case. If there is none, then the judge uses his discretion. Where the judge does not know whether Allah has already fixed the judgment for the issue before him – due to an insufficient knowledge of the Book and the Tradition – he is most likely to effect a miscarriage of justice, without even realizing it!

Moreover, the judge must give his judgments with the best interests of fairness and equity at heart. This is the second message of the above verse. Where there is a divinely fixed penalty or judgment, he must apply it in the fairest and most equitable manners. Where there is no such fixed penalty or judgment, then he equally must adopt his personal discretion in ways that best ensure a completely fair and equitable dispensation of justice.

Amir al-Muminin has been declared the best judge by Allah and His Messenger. Apparently, he is the one, within Islam, with the best knowledge and practice in justice dispensation. Most importantly, he is the fairest and the most equitable among us all – including the Sahabah – in the application of Allah’s Fixed Verdicts and in the just administration of personal discretion.

The most crucial part of this discourse, probably, is stated in this verse:

يا داوود إنا جعلناك خليفة في الأرض فاحكم بين الناس بالحق

O Dawud! We have appointed you a *khalifah* over the earth. Therefore, judge between mankind with the truth.⁷

First and foremost, it is clear from this verse that justice dispensation is the job of the *khalifah*, to the exclusion of all others. He is the judge of “mankind”. Every single other human beings comes under his

juridical authority. Of course, he might appoint subordinate judges to assist him, under his close supervision. However, the job belongs to him alone. Therefore, whoever is the most qualified to be judge is also the most qualified for the *khilafah*!

Besides, the competent judge is he who is able to discern the truth, and who judges with the truth. Judgment with the truth involves the objective application of Allah's Fixed Verdicts over relevant issues, as well as the selfless administration of personal discretion in deserving cases. The judge therefore must be very intelligent and completely truthful. Application of personal discretion to reach true justice requires an extremely high level of intelligence, selflessness, sincerity and honesty. An unintelligent person cannot be expected to skillfully detect the truth from a clog of complex arguments and proofs before him. Moreover, a corrupt or self-serving fellow cannot be expected to judge others with the truth, or to apply his personal discretion fairly. With these facts in mind, one can then safely conclude and proclaim that Amir al-Muminin – being the best judge in this *Ummah* – was the most qualified for the *khilafah* immediately after the Prophet. In addition, he is the most truthful, the most intelligent, the most selfless, the most sincere, the most honest, and the best in recognizing and applying the truth in this *Ummah* after the Messenger.

1. Qur'an 5:48

2. Qur'an 13:37

3. Qur'an 16:44

4. Qur'an 53:3-4

5. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-^{Bay}aybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 7, p. 413

6. Qur'an 5:42

7. Qur'an 38:26

4. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice I

The *khalifah* of Muslims is also their sovereign judge:

يا داوود إنا جعلناك خليفة في الأرض فاحكم بين الناس بالحق

O Dawud! We have appointed you **a *khalifah*** over the earth. Therefore, **judge between mankind** with the truth. 1

Since ‘Umar was recognized by most Muslims of his time as their *khalifah*, it follows naturally that he was also their sovereign judge. The question is: was ‘Umar a *competent* judge? To find the answer, we must look at some iconic cases decided by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H) records about an interesting case:

ثنا يونس بن عبد الأعلى و محمد بن عبد الله بن الحكم قالوا ثنا ابن وهب أخبرني
جرير بن حازم عن سليمان بن مهران عن أبي ظبيان عن ابن عباس قال: مر
علي بن أبي طالب بمجنونة بني فلان قد زنت أمر عمر برجمها فردها علي و قال
لعمر: يا أمير المؤمنين أترجم هذه؟ قال: نعم قال: أما تذكر أن رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: رفع القلم عن ثلاثة عن المجنون المغلوب على عقله
و عن النائم حتى يستيقظ و عن الصبي حتى يحتلم قال: صدقت فخلي عنها

Yunus b. ‘Abd al-‘A’la and Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Hakam – Ibn Wahb – Jarir b. Hazim –
Sulayman b. Mihran – Abu Zibyan – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Ali b. Abi Talib passed by a **lunatic woman** from so-and-so tribe, and she had committed adultery. **‘Umar ordered that she be stoned to death.** So, ‘Ali returned her and said to ‘Umar, “O Amir al-Muminin! Do you want to stone this (woman)?” He (‘Umar) replied, “Yes”. He (‘Ali) said, “Do you remember that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘The pen has been lifted about three people: the mentally ill, the person sleeping until he wakes up, and the child until he becomes an adolescent.’” He (‘Umar) responded, “You have said the truth”. So, ‘Umar freed her (i.e. the lunatic woman).²

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) comments:

حديث صحيح رجاله ثقات

It is a *sahih hadith*. Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy).³

Elsewhere, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah also records:

أنا أبو طاهر نا أبو بكر نا يونس بن عبد الأعلى و محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد
الحكم قالوا أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني جرير بن حازم عن سليمان بن مهران عن

أبي ظبيان عن ابن عباس قال: مر علي بن أبي طالب بمجنونة بني فلان قد زنت
أمر عمر برجمها فرجعها علي وقال لعمر: يا أمير المؤمنين ترجم هذه؟ قال:
نعم قال: أو تذكر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: رفع القلم عن
ثلاث عن المجنون المغلوب على عقله وعن النائم حتى يستيقظ وعن الصبي
حتى يحتلم قال: صدقت فخلى عنها

Abu Tahir – Abu Bakr Yunus b. ‘Abd al-‘A’la and Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Hakam – Ibn Wahb –
Jarir b. Hazim – Sulayman b. Mihran – Abu Zibyan – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Ali b. Abi Talib passed by a **lunatic woman** from so-and-so tribe, and she had committed adultery.
‘Umar ordered that she be stoned to death. So, ‘Ali returned her and said to ‘Umar, “O Amir al-
Muminin! Do you want to stone this (woman)?” He (‘Umar) replied, “Yes”. He (‘Ali) said, “Do you
remember that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘The pen has been lifted about three
people: the mentally ill, the person sleeping until he wakes up, and the child until he becomes an
adolescent.” He (‘Umar) responded, “You have said the truth”. So, he freed her (i.e. the lunatic
woman).⁴

‘Allamah al-Albani rules:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*⁵

The exact narration above is documented by Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) in his *Sahih* through the route
of his teacher, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah, with the same chain.⁶ ‘Allamah al-Albani again says:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁷

Shaykh al-Arnau⁸ also comments:

رجاله ثقات رجال مسلم

Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), narrators of (*Sahih*) Muslim.⁸

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H), a student of Ibn Hibban, records the *hadith* as well:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن إسحاق الفقيه وعبد الله بن محمد بن موسى قالا : أنبأ أحمد بن عيسى المصري أنبأ ابن وهب أخبرني جرير بن حازم عن سليمان بن مهران عن أبي ظبيان عن ابن عباس قال مر علي بن أبي طالب بمجنونة بني فلان وقد زنت وأمر عمر بن الخطاب برجمها فردها علي وقال لعمر : يا أمير المؤمنين أترجم هذه ؟ قال : نعم قال : أو ما تذكر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : رفع القلم عن ثلاث : عن المجنون المغلوب على عقله وعن النائم حتى يستيقظ وعن الصبي حتى يحتلم قال صدقت فخلي عنها

Abu Bakr b. Ishaq al-Faqih and ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Musa – Ahmad b. Isa al-Misri – Ibn Wahb – Jarir b. Hazim – Sulayman b. Mihran – Abu Zibyan – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Ali b. Abi Talib passed by a **lunatic woman** from so-and-so tribe, and she had committed adultery. **‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ordered that she be stoned to death.** So, ‘Ali returned her and said to ‘Umar, “O Amir al-Muminin! Do you want to stone this (woman)?” He (‘Umar) replied, “Yes”. He (‘Ali) said, “Do you remember that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘The pen has been lifted about three people: the mentally ill, the person sleeping until he wakes up, and the child until he becomes an adolescent.’” He (‘Umar) responded, “You have said the truth”. So, he freed her (i.e. the lunatic woman).⁹

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs¹⁰

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs:

على شرطهما

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of both of them¹¹

Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) documents a fuller version of the *hadith* that gives some disturbing details:

حدثنا عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا جرير عن الأعمش عن أبي ظبيان عن ابن عباس قال: أتى عمر بمجنونة قد زنت فاستشار فيها أناساً فأمر بها عمر أن ترجم فمر بها على علي بن أبي طالب رضوان الله عليه فقال ما شأن هذه؟ قالوا مجنونة بني فلان زنت فأمر بها عمر أن ترجم قال فقال ارجعوا بها ثم أتاه فقال يا أمير المؤمنين أما علمت أن القلم قد رفع عن ثلاثة عن المجنون حتى يبرأ وعن النائم حتى يستيقظ وعن الصبي حتى يعقل؟ قال بلى قال فما بال هذه ترجم؟ قال لا شيء قال فأرسلها قال فأرسلها قال فجعل يكبر

‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah – Jarir – al-A’mash – Abu Zibyan – Ibn ‘Abbas:

A lunatic woman, who had committed adultery, was brought to ‘Umar. **So, he consulted with some people about her, and therefore ordered that she be stoned to death.** But, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, *ridwanullah ‘alaihi*, passed by her and said, “What is the issue with this (woman)?” They replied, “She is a lunatic woman from so-and-so tribe. She committed adultery and ‘Umar ordered that she be stoned to death.” So, he (‘Ali) said, “Return with her (to ‘Umar).” Then he (‘Ali) came to him (‘Umar), and said, “O Amir al-Muminin! Do you know that the pen has been lifted in the case of a lunatic until he is cured, and of someone sleeping until he wakes up, and in the case of a child until he becomes mentally mature?” He (‘Umar) replied, “Yes, I do”. **He (‘Ali) asked, “So, why do you want to stone this (woman)?” He (‘Umar) replied, “There is NOTHING!”** He (‘Ali) said, “Free her”. So, he (‘Umar) freed her, saying *Allahu Akbar!*¹²

‘Allamah al-Albani says:

صحيح

*Sahih*¹³

Reading all the narrations together, one gets the full picture of what happened:

1. A lunatic woman was charged with adultery, which she apparently committed in her still extant state of insanity.
2. The *Shari’ah* provides that crimes committed in a state of insanity are not justiciable.

3. ‘Umar was well aware of this rule, and was fully convinced that the lunatic woman truly committed the adultery in a state of insanity. He nonetheless consulted with his team of judicial advisers (which excluded ‘Ali) on the matter, and eventually made up his mind to execute her.
4. While convicting the lunatic woman and passing the death sentence against her, ‘Umar fully remembered the above-mentioned rule of the *Shari’ah*.
5. Nonetheless, ‘Umar ordered the execution of the lunatic woman for “nothing”, in his own words.
6. Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali saw a clear miscarriage of justice in the judgment of ‘Umar, and stood against the order of the commander-in-chief, at great personal risks. He prevented ‘Umar’s executioners from carrying out their illegal orders.
7. ‘Ali asked ‘Umar if the latter knew the *Shari’ah* ruling concerning lunatic people. ‘Umar replied: “Yes, I do”. Surprised, he further asked the latter why he wanted to execute the lunatic woman in that case. ‘Umar made no secret of his intention. There was simply “nothing”! There was no reason. He only wished to kill the woman, and that was it!
8. ‘Ali reminded him of the *hadith* of the Prophet on the matter. Perhaps, ‘Umar had forgotten the source of the *Shari’i* ruling. Luckily, ‘Umar admitted to the truth of the *hadith*.
9. At this point, ‘Ali advised him to free the innocent lunatic woman. Fortunately for her, ‘Umar accepted ‘Ali’s advice and allowed her to go free.

Without ‘Ali’s timely intervention, ‘Umar would have deliberately executed the innocent woman for “nothing”!

1. Qur’an 38:26

2. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, *ʿAhih* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A’zami], vol. 4, p. 348, # 3048

3. Ibid

4. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 102, # 1003

5. Ibid

6. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu’adh b. Ma’bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, *ʿAhih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 356, # 143

7. Ibid

8. Ibid

9. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-ʿAhihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 389, # 949

10. Ibid

11. Ibid

12. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 545, # 4399

5. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice II

Imam Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 327 H) records about another iconic judgment delivered by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṣṣab in his capacity as the *khalifah* over the *Ummah*:

أخبرنا أبي ، ثنا أبو بكر محمد بن بشار ، ثنا ابن أبي عدي ، عن سعيد ، عن قتادة عن أبي حرب ، يعني : ابن أبي الاسود الديلي ، عن أبيه ، ان عمر بن الخطاب ، رفعت اليه امرأة ولدت ستة اشهر ، فهم برجمها ، فبلغ ذلك عليا فقال : ليس عليها رجم ، قال الله تعالى : والوالدات يرضعن اولادهن حولين كاملين وستة اشهر ، ذلك ثلاثون شهرا .

My father (Abu Hatim) – Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Bashar – Ibn Abi ‘Adi – Sa’id – Qatadah – Abu Harb b. Abi al-Aswad al-Dili – his father (Abu al-Aswad al-Dayli):

A woman was brought to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṣṣab. **She had delivered after (only) six months of pregnancy. So, he (‘Umar) resolved to stone her to death.** This (decision) reached ‘Ali. Therefore, he (‘Ali) said, “She does not deserve *any* penalty of stoning to death. Allah says: ‘The mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years (2:233)’. This (period) plus six months equals thirty months (mentioned in 46:15 as the total for both pregnancy and suckling)”¹.

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) submits about the first narrator:

أبو حاتم الرازي محمد بن إدريس بن المنذر بن داود بن مهران: الامام الحافظ،
الناقد، شيخ المحدثين

Abu Hatim al-Razi, Muhammad b. Idris b. al-Mundhir b. Dawud b. Mihran: ***al-imam* (the leader in *Hadith*), *al-hafiz* (the *hadith* scientist), *al-naqid* (the *hadith* critic), *shaykh al-muhadithin* (teacher of the *hadith* scientists and narrators).**²

About the second narrator, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says:

محمد بن بشار بن عثمان العبدى البصرى أبو بكر بندار ثقة

Muhammad b. Bashar b. 'Uthman al-'Abdi al-Basri, Abu Bakr Bandar: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.3

What of the third narrator? Al-Dhahabi submits:

محمد بن إبراهيم بن أبي عدي أبو عمرو، بصري، ثقة

Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Abi 'Adi, Abu 'Amr, from Basra: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**4

Al-Hafiz agrees:

محمد بن إبراهيم بن أبي عدي وقد ينسب لجدّه وقيل هو إبراهيم أبو عمرو
البصري ثقة

Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Abi 'Adi.... Abu 'Amr al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.5

The fourth narrator is Sa'id, and al-Hafiz comments on him in this manner:

سعيد بن أبي عروبة مهران اليشكري مولاهم أبو النضر البصري ثقة حافظ له
تصانيف لكنه كثير التدليس واختلط وكان من أثبت الناس في قنادة

Sa'id b. Abi 'Arubah Mihran al-Yashkiri, their freed slave, Abu al-Nadhar al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, **hafiz (a hadith scientist)**, he wrote books. However, he did a lot of *tadlis*, and became confused. **He was one of the most authoritative narrators from Qatadah.**6

Concerning the fifth narrator, al-Hafiz further submits:

قتادة بن دعامة بن قنادة السدوسي أبو الخطاب البصري ثقة ثبت

Qatadah b. Da'amah b. Qatadah al-Sudusi, Aboo al-Khaaab al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, *thabt* (accurate).7

Like the fourth narrator, he too is accused of *tadlis*, as proclaimed by al-Hafiz:

قتادة بن دعامة السدوسي البصري صاحب أنس بن مالك رضي الله تعالى عنه
كان حافظ عصره وهو مشهور بالتدليس وصفه به النسائي وغيره

Qatadah b. Da'amah al-Sudusi al-Basri, the companion of Anas b. Malik, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him. He was the *hafiz* (*hadith* scientist) of his time, **and he is famous for *tadlis***. Al-Nasai and others described him with it.⁸

The sixth narrator is trustworthy as well, as affirmed by al-Hafiz:

أبو حرب بن أبي الأسود الديلي البصري ثقة

Abu Harb b. Abi al-Aswad al-Dili al-Basri: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy)**⁹

With regards to the last narrator, al-Hafiz states:

أبو الأسود الديلي.... ثقة

Abu al-Aswad al-Dili....: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy)**¹⁰

In a word, all the narrators are trustworthy. But, there are three issues with the chain. The fourth narrator (Sa'id) did *tadlis* a lot and also became confused. The question is: does his *tadlis* affect his narrations from Qatadah, especially as he has narrated in an 'an-'an manner? Moreover, did the third narrator (Ibn Abi 'Adi) hear from him before or during his confusion? Lastly, Qatadah himself was famous for *tadlis*. So, does his *tadlis* affect his 'an-'an reports from Abu Harb?

Some of these questions are answered in the following *isnad* documented by Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) in his *Sahih*:

حدثنا محمد بن بشار حدثنا يحيى وابن أبي عدي عن سعيد عن قتادة عن أنس
بن مالك

Muhammad b. Bashar – Yahya and **Ibn Abi ‘Adi** – **Sa’id** – **Qatadah** – Anas b. Malik¹¹

Interestingly, this chain is almost identical to the one we are investigating! We see that Sa’id has narrated ‘an-‘an from Qatadah, and al-Bukhari considers the *sanad* to be *sahih*. This proves that Sa’id’s *tadlis* does not affect his ‘an-‘an reports from Qatadah. It is noteworthy that Qatadah’s ‘an-‘an reports from Anas are also accepted as *sahih*, as in the above chain.

In this *sanad* of al-Bukhari, Ibn Abi ‘Adi is conjoined with Yahya. However, in another chain in the same *Sahih*, he stands alone:

حدثني محمد بن بشار حدثنا ابن أبي عدي عن سعيد عن قتادة عن أنس رضي
الله

Muhammad b. Bashar – **Ibn Abi ‘Adi** – **Sa’id** – **Qatadah** – Anas b. Malik¹²

As such, Ibn Abi ‘Adi authentically transmitted from Sa’id. He apparently narrated from the Sa’id *before* the latter’s confusion. Moreover, this *isnad* reiterates the fact that Sa’id’s ‘an-‘an reports from Qatadah are *sahih*. In other words, his *tadlis* does not affect them.

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) confirms all our words:

حدثنا ابن المثنى: ثنا ابن أبي عدي عن سعيد عن

قتادة قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين.

Ibn al-Muthanna – **Ibn Abi ‘Adi** – **Sa’id** – **Qatadah**.... I (al-Albani) say: **This chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.**¹³

Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H) also records:

حدثنا محمد بن بشار و أبو موسى قالوا : حدثنا ابن أبي عدي عن سعيد عن
قتادة عن أبي تميمة عن الأشعري - يعني أبا موسى

Muhammad b. Bashir and Abu Musa – **Ibn Abi ‘Adi** – **Sa’id** – **Qatadah** – Abu Tamimah – Abu Musa al-Ash’ari. 14

Dr. Al-A’zami declares:

إِسْنَادُهُ صَحِيحٌ

Its chain is *sahih*¹⁵

Needless to say, Ibn Khuzaymah also considers the *sanad* to be *sahih*, and has therefore included it in his *Sahih*.

The bottom-line is as follows:

1. Ibn Abi ‘Adi authentically narrated from Sa’id, before the latter’s confusion.
3. The ‘*an-‘an* reports of Sa’id from Qatadah are *sahih*. The former’s *tadlis* does not affect them.
5. Some ‘*an-‘an* reports of Qatadah – like those from Anas and Abu Tamimah – are also *sahih*. Qatadah’s *tadlis* has no effect on them.

The big question, at this point, is: what is the status of Qatadah’s ‘*an-‘an* narrations from Abu Harb? According to high-ranking Sunni *muhadithun*, such narrations are *sahih*. For instance, ‘Allamah al-Albani states:

حدثنا مسدد: نا يحيى عن ابن أبي عروبة عن قتادة عن أبي حرب

ابن أبي الأسود عن أبيه عن علي.

قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح

Musaddad – Yahya – (Sa’id) b. Abi ‘Arubah – Qatadah – Abu Harb b. Abi al-Aswad – his father – ‘Ali.

I say: This chain is *sahih*.¹⁶

This chain, like some others, is almost identical with that of the report from Ibn Abi Hatim. Here, the ‘Allamah confirms that the ‘an-‘an reports of Sa’id from Qatadah are *sahih*, as well as Qatadah’s ‘an-‘an narrations from Abu Harb. Shaykh al-Arnauﻩ too backs him:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الصمد بن عبد الوارث ثنا هشام عن قتادة
عن أبي حرب بن أبي الأسود عن أبيه عن علي رضي الله عنه إسناده
صحيح على شرط مسلم

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Abd al-Samad b. ‘Abd al-Warith – Hisham – **Qatadah** – **Abu Harb b. Abi al-Aswad** – his father – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him....
Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of Muslim. 17

Imam Abu Ya’la further records:

حدثنا عبيد الله حدثنا معاذ بن هشام حدثني أبي عن قتادة عن أبي حرب بن
الأسود الديلي عن أبي الأسود عن علي بن أبي طالب

‘Ubayd Allah – Mu’adh b. Hisham – my father – **Qatadah** – **Abu Harb b. al-Aswad al-Duli** – **Abu al-Aswad** – ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. 18

Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih* 19

In a simple summary, the *athar* from Ibn Abi Hatim about how ‘Umar sentenced a woman to death for delivering the baby only after six months of pregnancy has an impeccably *sahih* chain. All the narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), and the *sanad* is fully connected.

There are some serious substantive and procedural problems with the judgment of ‘Umar, which reveal a lot about him. He sentenced the woman to death by stoning. This suggests that he had convicted her of adultery. His only proof against her was that she delivered her baby only after six months of her known pregnancy. In the obviously invalid view of ‘Umar, a six-month pregnancy was absolutely impossible. As such, the woman *must have been* secretly pregnant before her husband started counting

the days of her pregnancy – apparently, from the date of their last successful encounter (by his calculations). In other words, while her husband was having sexual intercourse with her (and most probably, it was their first time), she was already secretly pregnant for another man.

The Book of Allah has laid down the procedural law in all cases of *zina*:

والذين يرمون المحصنات ثم لم يأتوا بأربعة شهداء فاجلدوهم ثمانين جلدة ولا
تقبلوا لهم شهادة أبدا وأولئك هم الفاسقون

Those who accuse chaste women, **and do not produce four witnesses**, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever, **they indeed are the liars**.²⁰

So, in order to establish the charge of *zina* against anyone, four witnesses who saw the crime *with their own eyes* must be called upon to testify. Without the production of those four witnesses, the accuser himself must be penalized, and declared an eternal liar whose future testimonies must always be rejected.

Was ‘Umar aware of the above verse? The answer is not clear. What is undeniable however is that he paid absolutely no attention to it. He never demanded the testimony of four eye-witnesses to support his charge of *zina* against the woman. He simply convicted her based upon his mere *suspicion*. This singular incident casts a huge dark cloak over ‘Umar till the Hour.

Firstly, ‘Umar had wrongly convicted the woman of adultery *without evidence*. He never demanded or presented four witnesses to support his conviction (which in essence is also an accusation). Therefore, he himself deserved to be flogged with eighty stripes and declared a *persona non grata* within the Islamic *Ummah*. The other persons who dragged the woman to him also needed to be investigated. If they too had accused her of *zina* without calling four eye-witnesses to testify, then each of them must also be punished in the same manner as ‘Umar.

Secondly, let us assume that ‘Umar did not merely rely upon unfounded suspicion in convicting the woman. Rather, four eye-witnesses who saw her in the middle of the adultery were summoned, and they testified. Therefore, she was indeed guilty and truly deserved the stoning penalty. Where then was her partner in the crime? What sentence did ‘Umar hand down upon him? If two people committed *zina*, is it only the woman that can be punished? Are men supposed to go scotfree for their crimes of adultery? It is extremely strange that ‘Umar was itching to send the woman to her grave, without asking a single question about her accomplice!

1. Abu Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Hatim al-Razi, Tafsir Ibn Abi Hatim (al-Maktabah al-‘Asriyyah) [annotator:

As'ad Muhammad al-Tayyib], vol. 2, p. 428, # 2264

2. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the thirteenth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and 'Ali Abu Zayd], vol. 13, p. 247, # 129

3. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 58, # 5772

4. Shams al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Dhahabi al-Dimashqi, al-Kashif fi Ma'rifat Man Lahu Riwayat fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (Jeddah: Dar al-Qiblah li al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1413 H), vol. 2, p. 154, # 4700

5. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 50, # 5715

6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 360, #2372

7. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 26, # 5535

8. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Ta'rif Ahl al-Taqdis bi Maratib al-Mawsifin bi al-Tadlis (Jordan: Maktabah al-Manar; 1st edition) [annotator: Dr. 'Isim b. 'Abd Allah al-Qaryuni], p. 43, # 92

9. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 382, # 7073

10. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 356

11. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J'ufi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 1, p. 349, # 984

12. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1309, # 3379

13. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, 'Ahih Abi Dawud (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 3, p. 417, # 782

14. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, 'Ahih (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 3, p. 313, # 2154

15. Ibid

16. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, 'Ahih Abi Dawud (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 2, p. 225, # 403

17. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 76, # 563

18. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 1, p. 261, # 307

19. Ibid

20. Qur'an 24:4

6. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice III

The *khalifah* of Muslims is their supreme judge on every aspect of their religion, like the Messenger of Allah. As such, Muslims are required to refer all their religious problems and disputes to him for judgment, and his verdicts are binding over them. This function necessitates that the *khalifah* be the most knowledgeable of the *Ummah* throughout his administration. Otherwise, he would be unfit for the grand office. Issuing correct religious verdicts on all types of religious questions and disputes, from all persons of all calibres, certainly requires unparalleled knowledge.

During his rule, a man came to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb with his personal religious problem. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records about how the *khalifah* handled it:

حدثني عبدالله بن هاشم العبدى حدثنا يحيى (يعني ابن سعيد القطان) عن شعبة قال حدثني الحكم عن زر عن سعيد بن عبدالرحمن بن أبزي عن أبيه أن رجلا أتى عمر فقال: إني أجنبت فلم أجد ماء فقال لا تصل فقال عمار أما تذكر يا أمير المؤمنين إذ أنا وأنت في سرية فأجنبنا فلم نجد ماء فأما أنت فلم تصل وأما أنا فتمعكت في التراب وصليت فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم إنما كان يكفيك أن تضرب بيدك الأرض ثم تنفخ ثم تمسح بهما وجهك وكفيك فقال عمر اتق الله يا عمار قال إن شئت لم أحدث به

‘Abd Allah b. Hisham al-‘Abdi – Yahya b. Sa’id al-Qaṭṭān – Shu’bah – al-Hakam – Dharr – Sa’id b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abza – his father:

A man came to 'Umar and said: “I have seminal discharges and I cannot find water (to do the *ghusl*)”. He ('Umar) said, “Do not perform *Salat*.” So, ‘Ammar said, “Do you remember, O *Amir al-Muminin*, when I and you were in a military detachment and **we had seminal discharges and could not find water and you ('Umar) did not perform the *Salat***. As for me, I rolled myself in dust and performed the *Salat*. So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “It was enough for you to strike the soil with your hands and then blow and then wipe your face and palms”. **Umar said: “Fear Allah, O Ammar!”** Therefore, he ('Ammar) replied, “**If you so like, I would not narrate it**”.¹

There are some really interesting facts in this narration:

‘Umar and Ammar, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*, were both together in a military detachment, and they had seminal discharges.

Ammar rolled himself in the soil in order to cleanse himself for *Salat*, due to a lack of water. He had no divine guidance for the act. It was only his intuition.

‘Umar, on his part, completely refrained from offering any *Salat* as long as he could not find water.

Both recounted their experiences to the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, who taught them *tayammum* as the correct step should they encounter a similar situation.

During ‘Umar’s rule, a man came to him with the same problem that he personally had gone through. But, rather than offer to him the solution of *tayammum* as taught by the Prophet, ‘Umar instructed the man with his own initial wrong step!

‘Ammar attempted to remind ‘Umar of the Sunnah in such situations. But, the latter simply did not want to hear about it!

There are a number of questions here. First and foremost, did ‘Umar deliberately reject the Sunnah or not? This depends upon whether he actually remembered the incident involving him and ‘Ammar. If he did, and still gave the ruling that he gave, then he would have been contemptuous of the Sunnah. Moreover, even if he had completely forgotten it, why did he not act on ‘Ammar’s reminder? From the look of it, he was not convinced by ‘Ammar’s narration. He most probably had very serious doubts about the accuracy of ‘Ammar’s *hadith*. Therefore, he saw no real reason to alter his decision on the matter.

So, the best-case scenario is that ‘Umar had absolutely forgotten the incident of *tayammum*, which involved him personally and directly. In addition, when ‘Ammar attempted to revive his memory of the event, he had grave trust issues with the latter’s report. Therefore, he did not remember, and there was no other reliable source to bring back his memories of the incident. The worst-case scenario is that ‘Umar actually remembered the *hadith*, or was at least successfully reminded of it by ‘Ammar. Yet, he thought that his personal solution to the issue before him outweighed the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. As such, he was in contempt of Muhammad and his teachings.

We will go with the best-case scenario. ‘Umar had completely forgotten, and was not successfully reminded. This fact casts a mammoth shadow of doubt over ‘Umar’s memory power. Since he forgot the incident of *tayammum* so completely and absolutely, it is extremely uncertain that he was able to remember many – if not most – other teachings of the Prophet that were necessary in his discharge of his day-to-day judicial functions. The end result is that he lacked the requisite scholarly prowess for the office. The natural product of absolutely forgetting anything is complete ignorance of it.

Something that baffles the mind is how ‘Umar came to the conclusion that he could issue rulings in the *Shari’ah* with his *personal* opinions simply because he had forgotten, or did not know, the correct positions. Is ignorance an excuse for the adoption of personal opinions in the Law of Allah? The Qur’an answers:

ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل الله فأولئك هم الكافرون

Whosoever does NOT give rulings, verdicts, judgments, or commands based upon what Allah has revealed, **such people are the infidels.**²

Therefore, giving a ruling by personal opinion amounts to disbelief (*kufr*), according to Allah. Why did ‘Umar take such an extreme risk? He should have simply remained silent, or sought the advice of superior jurists like Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*, Ibn ‘Abbas, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*, and others. His reliance upon personal opinion in issuing a ruling in the *Shari’ah* of Allah was a *very* wrong step. It saved

neither him, nor the man who came to him for judgment.

Perhaps, the most disturbing part is that the ruling of *tayammum* is explicitly stated at two different places in the Book of Allah:

وإن كنتم مرضى أو على سفر أو جاء أحد منكم من الغائط أو لامستم النساء
فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا صعيدا طيبا فامسحوا بوجوهكم وأيديكم

And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or you have had sexual intercourse with women **and you cannot find water, perform *tayammum* with clean soil** and rub therewith your faces and hands.³

It is apparent. Despite the double presence of the ruling of *tayammum* in the Qur'an, 'Umar did NOT know it. This raises a blood-red flag on 'Umar's knowledge of the Book of Allah. Obviously, he was not a *hafiz* (memorizer) of the Qur'an. Secondly, his knowledge of its verses, and of *al-Fiqh*, must have been extremely deficient, as *tayammum* is only one of the beginner's courses in Islamic jurisprudence!

'Umar's controversial judgment expectedly split the *Ummah*. There were his loyalists who thought that his clearly invalid ruling was more correct than the Qur'an and Sunnah! There were also his opponents who sided with Allah and His Messenger. One of the staunchest loyalists of 'Umar was 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, a very senior Sahabi. Imam Muslim records:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى وأبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وابن نمير جميعا عن أبي معاوية
قال أبو بكر حدثنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن شقيق قال كنت جالسا مع عبد
الله وأبي موسى فقال أبو موسى ثم يا أبا عبد الرحمن رأيت لو أن رجلا أجنب
فلم يجد الماء شهرا كيف يصنع بالصلاة فقال عبد الله لا يتيمم وإن لم يجد
الماء شهرا قال أبو موسى فكيف بهذه الآية في سورة المائدة فلم تجدوا ماء
فتيمموا صعيدا طيبا فقال عبد الله لو رخص لهم في هذه الآية لأوشك إذا برد
عليهم الماء أن يتيمموا بالصعيد فقال أبو موسى لعبد الله ألم تسمع قول عمار
بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حاجة فأجنت فلم أجد الماء
فتمرغت في الصعيد كما تمرغ الدابة ثم أتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم
فذكرت ذلك له فقال إنما كان يكفيك أن تقول بيدك هكذا ثم ضرب بيديه
الأرض حصول واحدة ثم مسح الشمال على اليمين وظاهر كفيه ووجهه فقال
عبد الله أو لم تر عمر لم يقنع بقول عمار

Yahya b. Yahya, Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah and Ibn Numayr – Abu Mu’awiyah – al-A’mash – Shaqiq:

I was sitting with ‘Abd Allah (b. Mas’ud) and Abu Musa (al-Ash’ari). So, Abu Musa asked: “O Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman, what is your opinion: if a man had a seminal discharge and could not find water for one month, how should he do about the *Salat*? ‘Abd Allah replied, “**He should NOT perform *tayammum* even if he cannot find water for a month**”.

Abu Musa then said, “**What about this verse in Surat al-Maidah said, ‘And you cannot find water, then perform *tayammum* with clean soil’?**” ‘Abd Allah replied, “If they were allowed on the basis of this verse, there is a possibility that they would perform *tayammum* with soil even if water were available but cold.” So, Abu Musa said to ‘Abd Allah, “Have you not heard the statement of ‘Ammar: ‘The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent me on an errand and I had a seminal discharge, but could not find water. So I rolled myself in the soil just as a beast rolls itself. Then, I came to the Prophet, peace be upon him then and mentioned that to him and he (the Messenger) said: “It would have been enough for you to do thus”. Then he struck the earth with his hands once and wiped his right hand with the help of his left hand and the exterior of his palms and his face’.” ‘Abd Allah replied: “**Didn’t you see that ‘Umar was NOT satisfied with the statement of ‘Ammar?’**”⁴

Abu Musa was on the side of the Qur’an and Sunnah, and sought to correct Ibn Mas’ud on his diehard ‘Umarist stance on *tayammum*. The former quoted the Book of Allah and the explicit teaching of His Messenger. Ibn Mas’ud however rejected both, citing excuses. He could not allow the people to follow the Qur’an, because there was a “possibility” that they would abuse its ruling. Well, this same logic could be employed to turn down *everything* that Islam teaches! Moreover, Ibn Mas’ud equally refused the Sunnah of the Prophet only because ‘Umar was not satisfied with ‘Ammar’s *hadith*!

1. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 280, #112

2. Qur’an 5:44

3. Qur’an 4:43 and 5:6

4. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 280, #110

7. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice IV

Tayammum was not the only topic in Islamic jurisprudence that ‘Umar had great difficulty grasping. There were many others, even according to his own confessions. We will be briefly examining a few examples and their implications.

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) opens the discussion:

حدثنا أحمد بن أبي رجاء حدثنا يحيى عن أبي حيان التيمي عن الشعبي عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: خطب عمر على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال إنه قد نزل تحريم الخمر وهي من خمسة أشياء العنب والتمر والحنطة والشعير والعسل والخمر ما خامر العقل . وثلاث وددت أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لم يفارقنا حتى يعهد إلينا عهدا الجذ والكلالة وأبواب من أبواب الربا

Ahmad b. Abi Rajah – Yahya – Abu Hayyan al-Tamimi – Shu’bi – Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

‘Umar delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, “Verily, there was revealed an order making alcohol *haram*, and it is made from five things: grape, date, wheat, barley and honey. Alcohol is whatsoever clouds the mind. **I wish the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had not left us before he could explain three matters to us: the inheritance of the grandfather, *kalalah* and various types of *riba* (usury).**”¹

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records too:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا علي بن مسهر عن أبي حيان عن الشعبي عن ابن عمر قال: خطب عمر على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال أما بعد ألا وإن الخمر نزل تحريمها يوم نزل وهي من خمسة أشياء من الحنطة والشعير والتمر والزبيب والعسل والخمر ما خامر العقل وثلاثة أشياء وددت أيها الناس أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم كان عهد إلينا فيها الجذ والكلالة وأبواب من أبواب الربا

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – ‘Ali b. Mas-har – Abu Hayyan – al-Sha’bi – Ibn ‘Umar:

‘Umar delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. He thanked Allah and praised him. Then he said, “Now, coming to the point: verily, there was revealed an order making alcohol *haram* on the day it was revealed. It is made from five things: wheat, barley, date, raisin and honey. Alcohol is anything which clouds the intellect. **There are three matters, O people, that I wish the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had explained to us: inheritance of the grandfather,**

kalalah and various types of riba (usury).2

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents too:

وأخبرنا علي بن محمد بن عقبة ثنا الهيثم بن خالد ثنا أبو نعيم ثنا سفيان عن عمرو بن مرة عن مرة عن عمر رضي الله عنه قال ثلاث لأن يكون النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بينهم لنا أحب إلي من الدنيا وما فيها الخلافة والكلالة والربا

‘Ali b. Muhammad b. ‘Uqbah – al-Haytham b. Khalid – Abu Na’im – Sufyan – ‘Amr b. Marrah – Marrah – ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him:

“There are three matters. **Had the Prophet, peace be upon him, clearly explained them to us**, that would have been more beloved to me than this world and whatsoever is in it: **the *khilafah* (caliphate), *kalalah* and *riba* (usury)**”.³

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs⁴

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim⁵

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) has an even clearer report:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى عن ابن أبي عروبة ثنا قتادة عن سعيد بن المسيب قال قال عمر رضي الله عنه: ان آخر ما نزل من القرآن آية الربا وان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قبض ولم يفسرها فدعوا الربا والريبة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya – Ibn Abi ‘Arubah – Qatadah – Sa’id b. al-Musayyab:

‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “Verily, the last of what was revealed in the Qur’an was the Verse of *Riba*. **And verily, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died and never explained it.** Therefore, avoid *riba* and doubt.⁶

Shaykh al-Arnau⁷ comments:

حسن رجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين

It is **hasan**. Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), narrators of the two Shaykhs.⁷

Apparently, ‘Umar did not know the Islamic rulings and teachings concerning the inheritance of the grandfather (from his grandchild), *kalalah*, usury (*riba*) and the *khilafah*. He therefore placed the blame on the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, and accused him of never explaining them to his *Ummah*. His allegations however directly contradict these verses:

وما على الرسول إلا البلاغ المبين

The duty of the Messenger is **only to convey in a clear way**.⁸

وأنزلنا إليك الذكر لتبين للناس ما نزل إليهم

And We have sent down unto you (Muhammad) *al-Dhikr* (i.e. the Qur’an) **that you may explain clearly to mankind what is sent down to them**.⁹

Therefore, if the Prophet had not explained clearly a single item of his *risalah*, he would have failed in his mission. Allah however testifies in favour of His Messenger, that he actually conveyed and explained everything clearly to the *Ummah*. This was why He declared the religion completed and perfect:

اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا

This Day, **I have perfected your religion for you**, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for

you Islam as your religion. 10

This is an unmistakable testimony that the Messenger did explain everything in a clear, explicit and simple manner to his followers. He successfully fulfilled his mission. It was ‘Umar that had once again forgotten completely that the Messenger performed his duty.

One then wonders how ‘Umar handled questions and disputes regarding the inheritance of the grandfather, *kalalah*, usury and the *khilafah* that were brought to his court. He either relied upon his personal opinion – as in the case of *tayammum* – or rather guessed and gambled in his judgments. Another possibility was that he would refer those issues to superior jurists among the Sahabah, *radhiyallah ‘anhum*, for help. In all cases, his competency as even an ordinary judge falls into serious doubt. It gets really worse when one considers that ‘Umar was the sovereign judge, and that there was no right of appeal against his rulings and judgments.

Of the four subjects, ‘Umar had particular difficulty in grasping *kalalah*. He never understood it till his death. So, we will flash light upon it, as this situation reveals some more information about him. Imam Muslim records:

حدثنا محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي ومحمد بن المثنى (واللفظ لابن المثنى) قالوا
حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد حدثنا هشام حدثنا قتادة عن سالم بن أبي الجعد عن
معدان بن أبي طلحة أن عمر بن الخطاب خطب يوم الجمعة فذكر نبي الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم وذكر أبا بكر ثم قال إني لا أدع بعدي شيئاً أهم من الكلاله ما
راجعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في شيء ما راجعته في الكلاله وما
أغلظ لي في شيء ما أغلظ لي فيه حتى طعن بأصبعه في صدري وقال يا عمر
ألا تكفيك آية الصيف التي في آخر سورة النساء؟ وإني إن أعش أقض فيها
بقضية يقضي بها من يقرأ القرآن ومن لا يقرأ القرآن

Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Muqaddami and Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Sa’id – Hisham – Qatadah – Salim b. Abi al-Ja’d – Ma’dan b. Abi Talhah:

‘Umar b. al-Khattab delivered a sermon on Friday and mentioned the Prophet of Allah, peace be upon him, and also mentioned Abu Bakr. Then he said, “I do not abandon behind me anything more important than *kalalah*. **I did not refer to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, concerning anything as I referred to him concerning *kalalah*. And he was never as harsh to me concerning anything as he was harsh to me about it**, so much that he struck my chest with his fingers and said, “**O ‘Umar, is the Verse of the Summer, which is at the end of *Surat al-Nisa*, not sufficient for you?**” If I (‘Umar) lived longer, I would give judge concerning it (i.e. *kalalah*) with a judgment that would be the precedent for all

future judgments concerning it by those who could read the Qur'an and those who could not read the Qur'an."11

Imam Ahmad again documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا إسماعيل عن سعيد بن أبي عروبة عن قتادة عن سالم بن أبي الجعد عن معدان بن أبي طلحة قال قال عمر رضي الله عنه: ما سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم عن شيء أكثر مما سألته عن الكلالة حتى طعن بأصبعه في صدري وقال تكفيك آية الصيف التي في آخر سورة النساء

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Isma'il – Sa'id b. Abi 'Arubah – Qatadah – Salim b. Abi al-Ja'd – Ma'dan b. Abi Talhah:

'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said: **"I never asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, about anything more (repeatedly) than I asked him about *kalalah*** so much that he struck my chest with his fingers and said, "O 'Umar, is the *Verse of the Summer*, which is at the end of *Surat al-Nisa*, not sufficient for you?"12

Shaykh al-Arnau comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم رجاله ثقات

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of Muslim. Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy).13

So, 'Umar's most difficult topic was *kalalah*. Although he was basically clueless about the other topics as well, *kalalah* proved the most stubborn of them to him. He repeatedly questioned the Messenger of Allah about it. It was the Prophet's job to explain things clearly to him each time, and we believe he did that each time 'Umar came to him. In the end, the Messenger got frustrated and baffled by 'Umar's inability to comprehend a fairly straightforward topic like *kalalah*, even after several explanations! What exactly is so difficult about it? Moreover, the Prophet thought that there was a verse about *kalalah* at the end of *Surat al-Nisa*, which was fully self-explanatory and ordinarily should be sufficient for anyone without further commentary14. Why was 'Umar still unable to grasp it, despite the verse and the repeated explanations?

Surprisingly, 'Umar apparently read the *Verse of the Summer* (before or after the Messenger of Allah

referred him to it) but could not understand its simple rules. Worse still, the Prophet repeatedly explained it to him, and he nonetheless did not get it! This raises some grave concerns about ‘Umar’s comprehension skills. It also apparently reveals why the Messenger became frustrated and harsh with him.

Does justice dispensation require very high comprehension skills on the part of the judge? We leave the answer to our esteemed reader.

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1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-‘Aahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2122, # 5266
 2. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, ‘Aahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2322, # 32 (3032)
 3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Aahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 333, # 3188
 4. Ibid
 5. Ibid
 6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 36, # 246
 7. Ibid
 8. Qur’an 24:54
 9. Qur’an 16:44
 10. Qur’an 5:3
 11. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, ‘Aahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1236, # 9 (1617)
 12. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 26, # 179
 13. Ibid
 14. It is Qur’an 4:176, usually read together with Qur’an 4:12. Both are about *kalalah*. Meanwhile, the first is generally believed, among the Ahl al-Sunnah, to be about full siblings, while the latter concerns maternal siblings.

8. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice V

As the chief law enforcement officer of the *Ummah*, the *khalifah* has the authority to arrest and prosecute anyone who commits an offence in his presence. There is no requirement anywhere that the crime must be reported to him by someone else before he could arrest and prosecute. Imam ‘Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H) records an instance where ‘Umar, as the *khalifah*, invoked this authority:

أخبرنا عبد الرزاق قال: أخبرنا عبيد الله بن عمر عن نافع عن صفية ابنة أبي

عبيد. ومعمر عن نافع عن صفية قالت: وجد عمر في بيت رجل من ثقيف
خمرا، وقد كان جلده في الخمر فحرق بيته، وقال: ما أسمك؟ قال: رويشد، .
قال: بل أنت فويسق

‘Abd al-Razzaq – ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Umar AND Ma’mar – Nafi’ – Safiyyah b. Abi ‘Ubayd:

‘Umar discovered alcohol in the house of a man from (the tribe of) Thaqif. He (the man) had already been lashed for alcohol consumption in the past. **Therefore, he (‘Umar) burnt his house**, and asked, “What is your name?” He (the man) replied, “Ruwayshid.” He (‘Umar) retorted, “Rather, you are *Fuwaysiq* (an abusive word)”.¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about the first narrator:

عبد الرزاق بن همام بن نافع الحميري مولاهم أبو بكر الصنعاني ثقة حافظ

‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam b. Nafi’ al-Humayri, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-San’ani: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **hafiz** (a *hadith* scientist).²

There are two second narrators. So, this is what al-Hafiz has to say about *Second Narrator A*:

عبيد الله بن عمر بن حفص بن عاصم بن عمر بن الخطاب العمري المدني أبو
عثمان ثقة ثبت

‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Umar b. Hafs b. ‘Asim b. ‘Umar b. al-Kharrāb al-‘Umari al-Madani, Abu ‘Uthman: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **thabt** (accurate).³

He also says about *Second Narrator B*:

معمر بن راشد الأزدي مولاهم أبو عروة البصري نزيل اليمن ثقة ثبت فاضل

Ma’mar b. Rashid al-Azdi, their freed slave, Abu ‘Urwah al-Basri, he lived in Yemen: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **thabt** (accurate), **fadhil** (meritorious).⁴

Both second narrators transmitted from Nafi’, about whom al-Hafiz states:

نافع أبو عبد الله المدني مولى ابن عمر ثقة ثبت فقيه مشهور

Nafi', Abu 'Abd Allah al-Madani, freed slave of Ibn 'Umar: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, **thabt (accurate)**, a well-known jurist.⁵

Al-Hafiz seals it with these comments about the last narrator:

صفية بنت أبي عبيد بن مسعود الثقفية زوج بن عمر قيل لها إدراك وأنكره
الدارقطني وقال العجلي ثقة

Safiyyah b. Abi 'Ubayd b. Mas'ud al-Thaqafiyyah, the wife of Ibn 'Umar. It is said that she met the Prophet, but al-Daraqūni denies that. Al-'Ijli said: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.⁶

Safiyyah is also a narrator of *Sahih Muslim*.⁷

In summary, the above chain is impeccably *sahih*. Elsewhere, 'Abd al-Razzaq has recorded the exact same report with this chain:

أخبرنا عبد الرزاق قال: أخبرنا معمر عن أيوب عن نافع عن صفية

'Abd al-Razzak – Ma'mar – **Ayub** – Nafi' – Safiyyah⁸

The only new name is Ayub. So, who is he? Al-Hafiz answers:

أيوب بن أبي تميمة جلس السخثياني أبو بكر البصري ثقة ثبت حجة من
كبار الفقهاء العباد

Ayub b. Abi Tamimah al-Sakhtayani, Abu Bakr al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, **thabt (accurate)**, **hujjah (an authority in hadith)**, from the greatest jurists and worshippers of Allah.⁹

In other words, the *athar* about 'Umar is doubly *sahih*!

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also has some further words:

روى الدولابي في الكنى " (1 / 189) عن إبراهيم بن عبد الرحمن بن عوف قال: رأيت عمر أحرق بيت رويشد الثقفي حتى كأنه جمرة أو حمة وكان جارنا يبيع الخمر. وسنده صحيح. ورواه عبد الرزاق عن صفية بنت أبي عبيد كما في " الجامع الكبيرة " (3 / 204 / 1) وأبو عبيد في " الأموال " (ص 103) عن ابن عمر وسنده صحيح أيضا

Al-Dawlabi reported in *al-Kuni* (1/189) on the authority Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf that he said: “I saw ‘Umar burning the house of Ruwayshid al-Thaqafi until it became like firebrand or a hot spring. **He was our neighbour who sold alcohol.” Its chain is *sahih*.**

‘Abd al-Razzaq also narrated on the authority of Safiyyah bint Abi ‘Ubayd, as stated in *al-Jami’ al-Kabirah* (3/204/1) as well as Abu ‘Ubayd in *al-Amwal* (p. 103) on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar, **and its chain is *sahih* too.**¹⁰

Interestingly, this Ruwayshid was one of the Sahabah! Al-Hafiz states:

رويشد الثقفي أبو علاج الطائفي ثم المدني له إدراك وله قصة مع عمر بسبب بيعه الشراب قال بن أبي ذئب أنا سعد بن إبراهيم بن عبد الرحمن بن عوف عن أبيه أن عمر أمر باحراق بيت رويشد وكان يبيع فيه الشراب فنهاه عمر فلم ينته

Ruwayshid al-Thaqafi, Abu ‘Alaj al-Taifi al-Madani: **He met the Prophet. He also had a story with ‘Umar due to his selling of alcoholic drinks.** Ibn Abi Dhaib said: Sa’d b. Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Awf narrated to us from his father that ‘Umar ordered that the house of Ruwayshid be burnt down. **He used to sell alcoholic drinks in it. ‘Umar had warned him to desist, but he never desisted.**¹¹

Elsewhere, he reiterates:

رويشد الثقفي وله قصة مع عمر في شربه الخمر وإنما ذكرته في الصحابة لأن من كان بتلك السن في عهد عمر يكون في زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم مميزا لا محالة ولم يبق من قريش وثقيف أحد إلا أسلم وشهد حجة الوداع مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

Ruwayshid ... al-Thaqafi.... He had a story with ‘Umar concerning his consumption of alcohol.... **I have**

mentioned him among the Sahabah only because whosoever was of that age (as Ruwayshid) during the time of ‘Umar must certainly have been matured during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Also, there was no one from the tribes of Quraysh and Thaqif except that he had accepted Islam and had witnessed the Farewell *Hajj* with the Prophet, peace be upon him. 12

To summarize:

Ruwayshid was one of the Sahabah of the Prophet, from the tribe of Thaqif.

He accepted Islam during the Prophet’s lifetime, met the latter, and did the Farewell *Hajj* with him.

During the rule of ‘Umar, Ruwayshid was convicted for alcohol consumption and punished.

However, after his conviction and punishment, Ruwayshid went ahead to sell alcohol in his house.

‘Umar warned him to desist from selling alcohol, but he refused to stop.

So, ‘Umar burnt his house where he was selling the alcohol.

The story of Ruwayshid flies in the face of repeated Sunni claims about the piety and righteousness of all the Sahabah!

It is a bit unclear on what ground ‘Umar burned Ruwayshid’s home. Was it to punish him for selling alcohol? Or, was it only an effort to disable him from further trading in alcohol?

One scenario is that the house–burning was inflicted as a judicial punishment. In other words, Ruwayshid was summarily tried, convicted and penalized for trading in alcohol. ‘Umar’ judicial sentence was that his house should be burnt to ashes. However, where did ‘Umar get that idea from? Was it from the Qur’an? Was it from the Sunnah? Imam Muslim records the standard procedure in a case like this:

حدثنا أحمد بن عيسى حدثنا ابن وهب أخبرني عمرو عن بكير بن الأشج قال
بينما نحن عند سليمان بن يسار إذ جاءه عبدالرحمن بن جابر حدثه فأقبل علينا
سليمان فقال حدثني عبدالرحمن ابن جابر عن أبيه عن أبي بردة الأنصاري: أنه
سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول لا يجلد أحد فوق عشرة أسواط إلا
في حد من حدود الله

Ahmad b. ‘Isa – Ibn Wahb – ‘Amr – Bukayr b. al-Ashja’ Sulayman b. Yasar – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Jabir – his father – Abu Bardah al-Ansari:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: “None is to be given more than ten strokes

of the cane (in punishment) except in the case of punishments immutably fixed by Allah.”¹³

So, the question is whether Allah has immutably fixed the punishment for alcohol sales business or not. Without an iota of doubt, there is no such fixed penalty for it. Therefore, the maximum sentence that can be inflicted upon an alcohol seller is ten lashes. Apparently, ‘Umar did not follow the instructions of Allah in this regard. This brought him face-to-face against this verse:

ومن لم يحكم بما أنزل الله فأولئك هم الكافرون

Whosoever does NOT give rulings, verdicts, judgments, or commands based upon what Allah has revealed, **such people are the infidels.**¹⁴

Another scenario is that ‘Umar actually burnt the house down only to forcefully put Ruwayshid out of business, without any intention to touch the latter himself personally for breaking the law. This theory is further strengthened by the fact that ‘Umar had earlier warned Ruwayshid to desist (thereby confirming his full knowledge of the alcohol trade). However, he made no effort whatsoever to arrest or prosecute him. When the latter would not listen to him, he burnt down his house – which also served as his brewery and alcohol store – solely to shut down his business. Normally, a caring government closes or destroys illegal ventures within its control. This is usually to protect the public. In addition to that, the same government proceeds to prosecute the owner of the illegal business for his crime. In the case of Ruwayshid, ‘Umar merely burnt his alcohol store, but allowed him to go scotfree!

A baffling twist to this whole saga is that when another Sahabi was discovered, also engaging in alcohol business, ‘Umar simply let him be! He did not arrest him. He did not prosecute him. He did not burn his house! Imam Muslim records:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وزهير بن حرب وإسحاق بن إبراهيم (واللفظ لأبي بكر) قالوا حدثنا سفیان بن عيينة عن عمرو عن طاوس عن ابن عباس قال: بلغ عمر أن سمرة باع خمرا فقال قاتل الله سمرة ألم يعلم أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لعن الله اليهود حرمت عليهم الشحوم فجملوا فباعوها

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah, Zuhayr b. Harb and Ishaq b. Ibrahim – Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah – ‘Amr – Tawus – Ibn ‘Abbas:

‘Umar was informed that **Samrah sold alcohol**. So, he said, “May Allah curse Samrah! Does he not know that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘May Allah curse the Jews. The fat of

animals was made *haram* for them. But they melt it and sold it.”¹⁵

Imam Abu Ya’la (d. 307 H) also documents:

حدثنا أبو خيثمة و أبو سعيد قالا : حدثنا سفيان بن عيينة عن عمرو عن
طاووس عن ابن عباس قال : باع سمرة خمرا فقال عمر : قاتل الله سمرة ألم
يعلم أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال : لعن الله اليهود حرمت عليهم
الشحوم فباعوها وأكلوا أثمانها ؟

Abu Khaythamah and Abu Sa’id – Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah – ‘Amr – Tawus – Ibn ‘Abbas:

Samrah sold alcohol. So, ‘Umar said, “May Allah curse Samrah! Does he not know that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, ‘May Allah curse the Jews. The fat of animals was made *haram* for them. So, they sold it and ate its price.”¹⁶

Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*¹⁷

Samrah was a prominent Sahabi. He too traded in alcohol. But, what was ‘Umar’s response? He merely cursed him *by name*, and that was it! There was no arrest, and no prosecution! Samrah’s house was equally left intact.

1. Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-ḥafṣī, al-Musannaf [annotator: Habib al-Rahman al-A’zami], vol. 6, p. 77, # 10051

2. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 599, # 4078

3. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 637, # 4340

4. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 202, # 6833

5. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 239, # 7111

6. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 647, # 8669

7. See for instance Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Ṣahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 1126, # 1490 (63–64)

8. Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-ḥafṣī, al-Musannaf [annotator: Habib al-Rahman al-A’zami], vol. 9, p. 230, # 17036

9. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 116, # 606

10. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Tahzir al-Sajid min Itikhaz al-Qubur Masajid (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 4th edition). p. 49, footnote # 47
11. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Ta'jil Munfa'at bi Zawaid Rijal al-Aimah al-Arba'at (Beirut: Dar al-Bashair; 1st edition, 1996 CE) [annotator: Dr. Ikram Allah Imdad al-Haqq], vol. 1, p. 539, # 328
12. Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-'Ahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad Bajawi], vol. 2, p. 500, # 2699
13. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1332, #1708 (40)
14. Qur'an 5:44
15. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1207, #1582 (72)
16. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 1, p. 178, # 200
17. Ibid

9. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice VI

Injustice begins the moment a judge begins to show bias towards or against any of the parties before him in any judicial proceedings. He *must* be completely impartial throughout, and this *must* be evident in his ruling. The Qur'an commands:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كونوا قوامين بالقسط شهداء لله ولو على أنفسكم أو الوالدين والأقربين إن يكن غنيا أو فقيرا فالله أولى بهما فلا تتبعوا الهوى أن تعدلوا وإن تلووا أو تعرضوا فإن الله كان بما تعملون خبيرا

O you who believe! **Stand up firmly for justice**, as witnesses to Allah, **even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor**, Allah is more entitled to both (than you). **So follow not whims, lest you may avoid justice**. And if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do. 1

During the rule of 'Umar, a terribly messy case was brought before him involving one of his close friends. Let us see how he handled it. Imam al-Tahawi (d. 321 H) records:

حدثنا علي بن عبد الرحمن قال ثنا عفان بن مسلم وسعيد بن أبي مریم قال
حدثنا السري بن يحيى قال ثنا عبد الكريم بن رشيد عن أبي عثمان النهدي قال:

جاء رجل إلى عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه فشهد على المغيرة بن شعبة
فتغير لون عمر ثم جاء آخر فشهد فتغير لون عمر ثم جاء آخر فشهد فتغير لون
عمر حتى عرفنا ذلك فيه وأنكر لذلك وجاء آخر يحرك بيديه فقال ما عندك يا
سلخ العقاب وصاح أبو عثمان صيحة تشبه بها صيحة عمر حتى كربت أن
يغشى علي قال رأيت أمرا قبيحا قال الحمد لله الذي لم يشمت الشيطان بأمة
محمد فأمر بأولئك النفر فجلدوا

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – ‘Affan b. Muslim and Sa’id b. Abi Maryam – al-Sari b. Yahya – ‘Abd al-Karim
b. Rashid – Abu ‘Uthman al-Hindi:

A man went to ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, and testified against al-Mughirah
b. Shu’bah. So the colour of ‘Umar changed. Then, another man came and testified. Therefore, the
colour of ‘Umar changed (further). Then, another man came and testified. **As a result the colour of
‘Umar changed (even further) such that we recognized that in him, and he denied (the charge
without investigation) due to that.** Lastly, another man came, demonstrating with his hands. So, he
(‘Umar) said, “What do you have (to say), O remover of the punishment!” Abu ‘Uthman (the sub-
narrator) then shouted to imitate the shout of ‘Umar, such that I (‘Abd al-Karim) was agonized to the
point of fainting. He (the fourth man) said, “**I saw a disgusting affair.**” He (‘Umar) said, “All praise be to
Allah Who did not allow Shayṭān to rejoice at the misfortune of the *Ummah* of Muhammad.” So, he
(‘Umar) ordered that those men be whipped (for allegedly lying against al-Mughirah).²

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) has copied it into his *al-Irwa*, and states about it:

قلت: وإسناد صحيح

I say: Its chain is *sahih*.³

Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) records further:

وعن أبي عثمان النهدي قال : شهد أبو بكره ونافع وشبل بن معبد على المغيرة
بن شعبة أنهم نظروا إليه كما نظروا إلى المروود في المكحلة فجاء زياد فقال
عمر : جاء رجل لا يشهد إلا بحق فقال : رأيت منظرا قبيحا وابتهارا قال :
فجلدهم عمر الحد

Narrated Abu 'Uthman al-Hindi:

Abu Bakrah, Nafi' and Shibl b. Ma'bad testified against al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah, that they saw it (i.e. the adultery), **as they saw the kohl stick (i.e. the male private organ of al-Mughirah) inside the kohl container (i.e. the female private organ of the woman)**. But Ziyad came, and 'Umar said, "Here comes a man who will not testify except with the truth." So, he (Ziyad) said, "**I saw a disgusting scene, and a spectacle.**" So, 'Umar punished them with lashing.⁴

Al-Haythami declares:

رواه الطبراني ورجاله رجال الصحيح

Al-Tabarani records it, **and its narrators are narrators of the *Sahih***.⁵

Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) also records:

حدثنا أبو بكر قال حدثنا أبو أسامة عن عوف عن قسامة بن زهير قال: لما كان من شأن أبي بكر والمغيرة بن شعبة الذي كان، قال أبو بكر: اجتنب أو تنح عن صلاتنا، فإننا لا نصلي خلفك، قال: فكتب إلى عمر في شأنه، قال: فكتب عمر إلى المغيرة: أما بعد، فإنه قد رقي إلي من حديثك حديثا، فإن يكن مصدوقا عليك فلان يكون مت قبل اليوم خير لك، قال: فكتب إليه وإلى الشهود أن يقبلوا إليه، فلما انتهوا إليه دعا الشهود، فشهدوا، فشهد أبو بكر وشبل بن معبد وأبو عبد الله نافع، فقال عمر حين شهد هؤلاء الثلاثة: أود المغيرة أربعة، وشق على عمر شأنه جدا، فلما قام زياد قال: إن تشهد إن شاء الله إلا بحق، ثم شهد قال: أما الزنا فلا أشهد به، ولكني رأيت أمرا قبيحا، فقال عمر: الله أكبر، حدوهم، فجلدوهم، فلما فرغ من جلد أبي بكر قام أبو بكر فقال: أشهد أنه زان، فهم عمر أن يعيد عليه الحد، فقال علي: إن جلده فارجم صاحبك، فتركه فلم يجلد، فما قذف مرتين بعد.

Abu Bakr – Abu Usamah – 'Awf – Qasamah b. Zuhayr:

When the issue between Abu Bakrah and al-Mughirah b. Shu'bah occurred, Abu Bakrah said, "Desist from or give up concerning our *Salat*, because we will not pray behind you." So, he (al-Mughirah) wrote to 'Umar about his affair. Therefore, 'Umar (too) wrote back to al-Mughirah thus: "To begin, an act of

yours has been reported to me. If such-and-such (i.e. Abu Bakrah) is corroborated against you, it would have been better for you to have died before this day.” So, he (‘Umar) wrote to him and the witnesses to come to him. When they got to him, they testified, and Abu Bakrah, Shibl b. Ma’bad, and Abu ‘Abd Allah Nafi’ testified. As such, ‘Umar said when these three people testified, “Four (people) oppressed al-Mughirah.” **His matter was very unbearable for ‘Umar.** So, when Ziyad stood to testify, he (‘Umar) said, “You will testify with the truth, Allah willing.” Then he (Ziyad) testified, saying, “As for adultery, I do not testify in favour of it. **However, I saw a disgusting affair.**” As a result, ‘Umar said, “*Allah Akbar!* Punish them!” So, they (the first three witnesses) were lashed. After Abu Bakrah had been beaten, he stood up and said, “I testify that he (al-Mughirah) committed adultery”. So, ‘Umar was about to repeat the punishment upon him. But, ‘Ali said, “If you lash him (again), then you must stone your companion (i.e. al-Mughirah).” Due to this, he (‘Umar) left him, and did not beat him. Thus, he (Abu Bakrah) did not falsely accuse anyone of adultery again after that.⁶

‘Allamah al-Albani has this comment about this exact report:

أخرجه ابن أبي شيبة وعنه البيهقي (8/334 - 335). قلت: وإسناده صحيح.

It is documented by Ibn Abi Shaybah, and from him by al-Bayhaqi (8/334–335). I say: **Its chain is sahih.**⁷

Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah again documents:

حدثنا أبو بكر قال حدثنا ابن علي عن التيمي عن أبي عثمان قال: لما قدم أبو بكره وصاحبه على المغيرة جاء زياد فقال له عمر: رجل لن يشهد إن شاء الله إلا بحق، قال: رأيت انبهارا ومجلسا سيئا فقال عمر: هل رأيت المرود دخل المكحلة، قال: لا، قال: فأمر بهم فجلدوا.

Abu Bakr – Ibn ‘Ilyah – al-Tamimi – Abu ‘Uthman:

After Abu Bakrah and his two companions had testified against al-Mughirah, Ziyad came. So, ‘Umar said, “He is a man who will never testify, Allah willing, except with the truth.” **He (Ziyad) said, “I saw a spectacle and an evil assembly”.** So, ‘Umar said, “**Did you see the kohl stick (i.e. the male private organ of al-Mughirah) enter the kohl container (i.e. the female private organ of the woman)?**” He (Ziyad) replied, “**No.**” Therefore, he (‘Umar) ordered that they (Abu Bakr and his two companions) be whipped.⁸

‘Allamah al–Albani again copies the above and says:

قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين.

I say: **This chain is *sahih*** upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁹

So, this is the full picture, as gleaned from the reports:

- Abu Bakrah and some other people filed a criminal complaint of adultery against al–Mughirah b. Shu’bah with ‘Umar.
- Al–Mughirah was a close friend of ‘Umar.
- ‘Umar summoned the accused – who was his friend – and the Abu Bakrah team to his court for the trial.
- As Abu Bakrah and two other people testified, ‘Umar – the judge – increasingly blushed. Convicting and sentencing al–Mughirah was *very* unbearable for him. So, he dismissively denied the reports of Abu Bakrah and his team.
- It was a case of adultery, and four witnesses were required. Ziyad was the fourth to testify. Like others, he came all the way from Basra (where al–Mughirah was governor for ‘Umar prior to the trial) to Madinah to testify *against* al–Mughirah in a case of adultery. But, before he began his testimony, ‘Umar made some direct moves to entice him and to intimidate him.
- First, ‘Umar called him “the remover of the punishment”. This was an obvious suggestion to Ziyad that he *must* contradict his colleagues. He simply had no other choice but to remove the sentence of death still hanging over the neck of al–Mughirah.
- ‘Umar also described him as the one who would testify with the “truth”. This was another clear signal to him to contradict his colleagues. It showed that the *khalifah* had blacklisted Ziyad’s colleagues for testifying against al–Mughirah. If Ziyad wanted to get into the good books of the powerful *khalifah*, he *must* tell only what ‘Umar would accept as the “truth”.
- Finally, ‘Umar shouted at him, with such distressing force that it could cause some people to pass out! The intention, obviously, was to unsettle and intimidate him. Going against the *khalifah* could have highly devastating consequences. The message was unmistakable.
- So, Ziyad got the signal, and went against his colleagues. He denied having seen a sexual penetration. One wonders why then he had taken all the pain to come to Madinah from Iraq! Was it not to testify against al–Mughirah *for adultery*? Something clearly was not right here. Ziyad was altering his

testimony in the light of the new circumstances. In any case, he admitted to seeing “a disgusting affair” and “a disgusting scene”, apparently involving al-Mughirah and the accused woman, which involved “an evil assembly” of both accused persons.

- ‘Umar – the judge – became joyous, thanking Allah, and ordered Abu Bakrah and his colleagues to be flogged for allegedly lying against al-Mughirah!
- After the lashing, Abu Bakrah stood up, and re-testified to al-Mughirah’s adultery – despite the clear dangers.
- ‘Umar intended to re-lash him but ‘Ali, as usual, saved Abu Bakrah with his knowledge.

To ‘Umar, this was fair, impartial hearing!

An interesting side to this discussion is that ‘Umar actually did not ordinarily seem to place much value on the Qur’anic requirement for four witnesses in the case of adultery. For instance, he convicted a woman simply for having only a six-month pregnancy! He never asked for *any* four witnesses. Rather, he did not even request for *any* testimony from anyone! However, when his close friend was involved, he became extraordinarily strict with the requirement, and displayed brutal bias in favour of the accused throughout the proceedings.

The testimony of Ziyad itself embarrassingly reveals the direct influence of ‘Umar’s intimidation and enticement over the former. Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani explains the circumstances of al-Mughirah’s alleged adultery:

وساق قصة المغيرة هذه من طرق كثيرة حصلها أن المغيرة بن شعبة كان أمير البصرة لعمر فأتهمه أبو بكر وهو نفيع الثقفي الصحابي المشهور وكان أبو بكر ونافع بن الحرث بن كلدة الثقفي وهو معدود في الصحابة وشبل بكسر المعجمة وسكون الموحدة ابن معبد بن عتيبة بن الحرث البجلي وهو معدود في المخضرمين وزياد بن عبيد الذي كان بعد ذلك يقال له زياد بن أبي سفيان أخوه من أم أمهم سمية مولاة الحرث بن كلدة فاجتمعوا جميعا فرأوا المغيرة متبطن المرأة وكان يقال لها الرقطاء أم جميل بنت عمرو بن الأفقم الهلالية وزوجها الحجاج بن عتيك بن الحرث بن عوف الجشمي

The story of al-Mughirah has been transmitted THROUGH SEVERAL CHAINS. Its summary is that al-Mughirah b. Shu’bah was the governor of Basra for ‘Umar. Abu Bakrah, whose real name was Nafi’ al-Thaqafi, accused him (of adultery). He (Abu Bakrah) is a well-known Sahabi. There was Abu Bakrah.

There was (also) Nafi' b. al-Harith b. Kildah al-Thaqafi, who is counted among the Sahabah.

There was Shibl b. Ma'bad b. 'Utaybah b. al-Harith al-Bajali (as well), and he was considered to be among those (Sahabah) who witnessed both the Jahiliyyah and the Prophetic era. (Finally), there was Ziyad b. 'Ubayd – who was later called Ziyad b. Abi Sufyan – (and he was) his (Abu Bakrah's) brother from their grandmother, Sumayyah freed maid of al-Harith b. Kildah.

THEY ALL HAD GATHERED TOGETHER and had seen al-Mughirah in a secret affair with the woman called al-Riq'ah Umm Jamil bint 'Amr al-Afqam al-Hilaliyyah, **and her husband was al-Hajjaj b. 'Utaybah b. al-Harith b. 'Awf al-Jashmi.**¹⁰

There were four of them together, including Ziyad. They all together saw al-Mughirah having a secret affair with Umm Jamil, whose husband was al-Hajjaj. The other three witnesses saw al-Mughirah's male organ entering Umm Jamil's female organ, and all of these three were totally trustworthy Sahabah of the Messenger, by Sunni standards. How then on earth did Ziyad miss that?! It seems fair to conclude that he was deliberately concealing the most crucial part of his testimony. It was simply impossible for him not to have seen what the others saw, especially as he was not described as suffering from any eye problems.

Moreover, what really did Ziyad mean by having seen “a *disgusting* affair” between the couple? Was he not actually implying the adultery of al-Mughirah and Umm Jamil? From the look of things, Ziyad saw what the three Sahabah saw, but decided to be ambiguous and to double-speak after 'Umar enticed and intimidated him. If the *khalifah* had not intervened, he most probably would have only corroborated his co-witnesses.

Anyway, there are some damning consequences in this particular case for Sunni Islam. Abu Bakrah, Shibl and Nafi' b. al-Harith were Sahabah. Abu Bakrah in particular was a prominent Sahabi, whose *ahadith* are documented in the two *Sahih*s, and in all other authoritative Sunni books, *in abundance*. Of special interest is the fact that Abu Bakrah was the main complainant against al-Mughirah, and he never repented from it. After being lashed by 'Umar, he still reiterated his claim that al-Mughirah was an adulterer. 'Allamah al-Albani copies a further report in this regard:

ثم أخرج من طريق عيينة بن عبد الرحمن عن أبيه عن أبي بكر ، فذكر قصة المغيرة قال: " فقدمنا على عمر رضى الله عنه ، فشهد أبو بكر ونافع ، وشبل بن معبد ، فلما دعا زيادا قال: رأيت منكرا ، فكبر عمر رضى الله عنه ودعا بأبي بكر ، وصاحبيه ، فضربهم ، قال: فقال أبو بكر يعنى بعدما حده: والله إنى لصادق ، وهو فعل ما شهد به ، فهم بضربه ، فقال على: لئن ضربت هذا فارجم هذا "

وإسناده صحيح أيضا. وعيينة بن عبد الرحمن هو ابن جوشن الغطفاني وهو ثقة كأبيه.

Then he (al-Bayhaqi)¹¹ recorded through the route of ‘Uyaynah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman from his father from Abu Bakrah, and he mentioned the story of al-Mughirah, and (then) said:

We got to ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and Abu Bakrah testified, as well as Nafi’ and Shibl b. Ma’bad. When Ziyad was called, he said, “**I saw a disgusting act.**” Therefore, ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said *Allah Akbar*, and thereby summoned Abu Bakrah and his two companions and beat them. So, Abu Bakrah said, that is, after he had been punished, “**I SWEAR BY ALLAH, I am saying the truth. He (al-Mughirah) did what we have testified against him about.**” Therefore, he (‘Umar) intended to beat him (again). But, ‘Ali said, “If you beat this one, then you must stone that one.”

Its chain is *sahih* too. ‘Uyaynah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman is Ibn Jawshan al-Ghafani and he is *thiqah* (trustworthy), like his father.¹²

By all accounts therefore, all *ahadith* by Abu Bakrah must be thrown away by the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah as fairytales of a “liar”. It is the Order of Allah, *as long as* he is believed to have failed to prove his charge against al-Mughirah. This is where the great dilemma hides for our Sunni brothers. Allah has stated:

والذين يرمون المحصنات ثم لم يأتوا بأربعة شهداء فاجلدوهم ثمانين جلدة ولا
تقبلوا لهم شهادة أبدا وأولئك هم الفاسقون إلا الذين تابوا من بعد ذلك وأصلحوا
فإن الله غفور رحيم

Those who accuse chaste women, **and do not produce four witnesses**, flog them with eighty stripes, **and reject their testimony FOREVER. THEY INDEED ARE THE LIARS, EXCEPT THOSE WHO REPENT thereafter and make corrections.** Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.¹³

He also proclaims:

لولا جاءوا عليه بأربعة شهداء فإذ لم يأتوا بالشهداء فأولئك عند الله هم الكاذبون

Why did they not produce four witnesses? Since they have not produced the witnesses, **THEN IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH, THEY ARE THE LIARS.**¹⁴

Imam ‘Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H) reiterates the fact which connects Abu Bakrah to the above verses:

عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن الزهري عن ابن المسيب قال: شهد على المغيرة بن
شعبة ثلاثا بالزنا، ونكل زياد، فحد عمر الثلاثة، وقال لهم: توبوا تقبل شهادتكم،
فتاب رجلان ولم يتب أبو بكر، فكان لا يقبل شهادته، وأبو بكر أخو زياد لأمه،
فلما كان من أمر زياد ما كان، حلف أبو بكر أن لا يكلم زيادا أبدا، فلم يكلمه
حتى مات

‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Ibn al-Musayyab:

Three people testified against al-Mughirah b. Shu’bah for adultery. **But Ziyad recoiled.** So, ‘Umar punished the three (with lashing), and said to them, “Repent, and your (future) testimonies will be accepted.” So, two of the men repented **but Abu Bakrah did not repent. Therefore, his testimonies were no longer accepted.** Abu Bakrah was a maternal brother of Ziyad. When what happened in the case of Ziyad occurred, Abu Bakrah swore that he would never again speak to Ziyad. As such, he never again spoke to him till his death. 15

The chain is *sahih*, and has been so declared by the top *muhadithun* of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H), for instance, has relied upon this chain in his *Sahih*:

حدثنا عبد بن حميد أخبرنا عبدالرزاق أخبرنا معمر عن الزهري عن ابن
المسيب عن أبي هريرة

‘Abd b. Hamid – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Ibn al-Musayyab – Abu Hurayrah¹⁶

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) also records:

حدثنا محمود بن غيلان حدثنا عبد الرزاق أخبرنا معمر عن الزهري عن ابن
المسيب عن أبي هريرة

Mahmud b. Ghilan – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Ibn al-Musayyab – Abu Hurayrah¹⁷

Al-Tirmidhi comments:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *hadith* is *hasan sahih* 18

‘Allamah al-Albani also says:

صحيح

Sahih 19

Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H) has included the chain in his *Sahih* as well:

ثنا أحمد بن منصور الرمادي ثنا عبد الرزاق أخبرني معمر عن الزهري عن ابن
المسيب عن أبي هريرة

Ahmad b. Mansur al-Ramadi – ‘**Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Ibn al-Musayyab** – Abu
Hurayrah²⁰

Dr. Al-A’zami has this simple verdict:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*²¹

Everything therefore boils down to this insoluble Sunni maze:

Anyone who accuses another of adultery *must* present four witnesses.

If he is unable to do so, then he must be whipped by the authorities.

He must be asked to repent. If he does, his future testimonies are accepted.

If he refuses to repent, then he becomes a liar in the Sight of Allah, and his testimonies *must* be rejected till the Hour.

Abu Bakrah accused al-Mughirah, ‘Umar’s close friend and governor over Basra, of adultery, and

presented four eye-witnesses (including himself).

All four witnesses came all the way from Iraq to modern-day Saudi Arabia to testify against al-Mughirah *in a case of adultery*.

However, ‘Umar enticed and intimidated the fourth of them, just as he was about to give his testimony. He (the fourth witness) thereby “recoiled” and made ambiguous, ambivalent statements instead.

So, the case against al-Mughirah failed due to the fourth witness’s action.

Abu Bakrah and the other two witnesses therefore were whipped by ‘Umar. They were thereafter asked by him to repent *so that their future testimonies became acceptable*. The other two repented (most probably from pressure), while Abu Bakrah *swore by Allah* that he was truthful in his testimony against al-Mughirah. He preferred to be branded “a liar” by the state, and that his future testimonies be rejected, rather than to falsify what he knew to be the truth.

Abu Bakrah also believed that Ziyad (his maternal brother), who “recoiled”, had wronged him terribly. So, he stopped speaking to Ziyad from that moment till his death!

Whoever believes that Abu Bakrah was wrong in his testimony *must* also accept that he was “a liar” in the Sight of Allah, *due to his refusal to repent*. The Qur’an is very explicit in this regard, and gives no exception. As a result, such a person must reject all of Abu Bakrah’s *ahadith*.

However, the Ahl al-Sunnah consider Abu Bakrah to be perfectly trustworthy in everything he said, before and after the incident! Yet, they maintain that ‘Umar was correct to have whipped him!

But, it was either ‘Umar treated Abu Bakrah unjustly, or Abu Bakrah was truly a liar in the Sight of Allah. There is no third option to it.

Our Sunni brothers want to eat their cake and still have it. However, they can only do one of both. Their position on Abu Bakrah is a strategic do-or-die affair, which they can never let go. This, in reality, merely deepens their dilemma. If they accepted that Abu Bakrah, a prominent Sahabi, was a liar in the Sight of Allah, then they would have opened a door that could only lead to the complete collapse of their entire religion in no time! Yet, their pro-Abu Bakrah stance only fuels the theory that al-Mughirah was truly guilty of adultery, but that ‘Umar deliberately manipulated the judicial system to shield his dear friend from justice. Moreover, in the course of doing that, the *khalifah* inflicted immense injustice upon Abu Bakrah for telling the truth.

1. Qur’an 4:135

2. Abu Ja’far Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Malik b. Salamah, *Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1399 H) [annotator: Muhammad Zuhri al-Najjar], vol. 4, p. 153, # 5677

3. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd

edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 28, # 2361

4. Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawaid* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 6, p. 434, # 10687

5. Ibid

6. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 6, P. 560, # 3

7. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 29, # 2361

8. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 6, P. 560, # 1

9. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 29, # 2361

10. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-'Aba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 5, p. 187

11. See Abu Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Musa al-Bayhaqi, *Sunan al-Kubra* (Makkah: Maktabah Dar al-Baz; 1414 H) [annotator: Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 8, p. 235, # 16821

12. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 29, # 2361

13. Qur'an 24:4

14. Qur'an 24:13

15. Abu Bakr 'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-'A'nani, *al-Musannaf* [annotator: Habib al-Rahman al-A'zami], vol. 7, p. 384, # 13564

16. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1774, # 2263 (8)

17. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 4, p. 95, # 1512

18. Ibid

19. Ibid

20. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, *Sahih* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 4, p. 362, # 3078

21. Ibid

10. Hadith Al-Qadha, An Age Of Jungle Justice

VII

No one ever knew that looking handsome could become a criminal offence until the rule of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭab. The grand Sunni *muffasir*, Imam al-Alusi (d. 1270 H), proclaims:

صح أن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله تعالى عنه غرب نصر بن حجاج إلى

البصرة بسبب أنه لجماله أفتتن بعض النساء به

It is **authentically transmitted** that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah the Most High pleased be pleased him, banished Nasr b. Hajjaj to Basra because – due to his good looks, some women were obsessed with him. 1

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) also submits:

وقد أخرج بن سعد والخرائطي بسند صحيح عن عبد الله بن بريدة قال بينما عمر بن الخطاب يعس ذات ليلة في خلافته فإذا امرأة تقول هل من سبيل إلى خمر فأشربها أو من سبيل إلى نصر بن حجاج فلما أصبح سأله عن ذلك فأرسل إليه فإذا هو من أحسن الناس شعرا وأصبحهم وجها فأمره عمر أن يطم شعره ففعل فخرجت جبهته فازداد حسنا فأمره أن يعتم فازداد حسنا فقال عمر لا والذي نفسي بيده لا تجامعني ببلد فأمر له بما يصلحه وصيره إلى البصرة

Ibn Sa’d and al-Kharaiṭi have recorded **with a *sahih* chain** from ‘Abd Allah b. Buraydah who narrated:

While ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was on patrol one night during his *khilafah*, there was a woman (he overheard) saying, “Is there a way to get to alcohol to drink, or a way to get to Nasr b. Hajjaj?” In the morning, he (‘Umar) asked about him (Nasr), and summoned him. **He was one of the most beautiful of mankind in terms of the hair, and one of their most good-looking.** So, he (‘Umar) ordered him to collect his hair. He did so, and his forehead appeared. As a result, he became even more handsome. He (‘Umar) ordered him (again) to wear a turban. But, his beauty increased (nonetheless). So, ‘Umar said, **“No! I swear by the One in Whose Hand my life is, you cannot stay WITH ME in the same town”.** Therefore, he ordered what befitted him and relocated to Basra.2

Nasr b. al-Hajjaj, one of the Sahabah, committed no other “crime” than that he looked *very* handsome. For that, he was summarily tried and penalized, forcibly “relocated” to Basra. ‘Umar was the first human being to do this throughout history. However, in April 2013, the Saudi authorities followed his precedent in a very famous, severely embarrassing case3 that caused widespread worldwide mockery of Islam over the internet. Three Emirati men were deported by Riyadh to the United Arab Emirates literally for being “too handsome”!

‘Umar’s reason for banishing Nasr seems even weirder than the “punishment” itself. If we assumed that the *khilafah* expelled him because “women were obsessed with him”, were there no women in Basra? Apparently, no matter the claims, the true motive behind ‘Umar’s action had nothing to do with women.

In fact, the *khalifah* himself outlined his justification in very clear words: he could not tolerate living in the same city with Nasr. So if ‘Umar had later moved to Basra he would still have re-banished Nasr to another faraway town. From all indications, it seems that the *khalifah* was only very bitter about the latter’s good looks.

In any case, it is pretty obvious that ‘Umar would never have tolerated the presence of Prophet Yusuf, *‘alaihi al-salam*, in Madinah had the latter lived during the former’s rule. These are Allah’s Words concerning His prophet:

وقال نسوة في المدينة امرأت العزيز تراود فتاها عن نفسه قد شغفها حبا إنا
لنراها في ضلال مبين فلما سمعت بمكرهن أرسلت إليهن وأعدت لهن متكأ
وآتت كل واحدة منهن سكينا وقالت اخرج عليهن فلما رأينه أكبرنه وقطعن
أيديهن وقلن حاش لله ما هذا بشرا إن هذا إلا ملك كريم

And the women in the city said, “The Queen is seeking to seduce her young man (i.e. Yusuf, her slave then). Indeed, she loves him violently. Verily, we see her in plain error.” So when she (the queen) heard of their (the women’s) accusation, she sent for them and prepared a banquet for them; she gave each one of them a knife (to cut the foodstuff with), and she said (to Yusuf), “Come out before them.” **Then, when they saw him, they exalted him AND CUT THEIR HANDS. They said, “Allah forbid! THIS IS NOT A MAN! This is none other than a noble angel!”**⁴

These were the women of ancient Egypt. Prophet Yusuf was so handsome that they could not believe that he was even a man! So, one can safely conclude that the noble prophet had superhuman beauty. What strengthens this submission is that these women, in their trance over the sight of him, were absentmindedly cutting their hands with knives, without flinching! With these facts, Nasr b. al-Hajjaj was apparently a *very* ugly duckling compared to Yusuf b. Ya’qub, the prophet of Allah. Interestingly, the pagan king of Egypt tolerated and honoured Prophet Yusuf in his city, even in his palace! By contrast, if it had been during ‘Umar’s *khilafah*, he would have banished the prophet to a very distant land! The *khalifah* simply could not accommodate in his city any man like Nasr or Yusuf.

1. Abu al-Fadhl Mahmud al-Alusi, *Ruh al-Ma’ani fi Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim wa Sab’ al-Mathani* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi), vol. 18, p. 81

2. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-‘Ushab* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh ‘Adil Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh ‘Ali Muhammad Ma’udh], vol. 4, pp. 382–383, # 8862

3. Rob Williams, “Omar Borkan Al Gala: Is this one of the three men who are ‘too sexy’ for Saudi Arabia”, *The Independent*, Friday 26 April 2013 [<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/omar-borkan-al-gala-...>] [13]

4. Qur’an 12:30–31

11. Hadith Al-Qadha, ‘Ali Versus ‘Umar

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) launches a spirited campaign to bring down ‘Ali’s status as the best judge in the *Ummah* in order to place ‘Umar above him. He simply cannot stomach the possibility of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, surpassing the second Sunni *khalifah* in anything, especially in such highly sensitive, knowledge-based areas as justice dispensation. The reason for these panicky moves can be discerned from these words of our dear Shaykh:

و في الترمذي و غيره عنه عليه الصلاة و السلام انه قال لو لم أبعث فيكم لبعث فيكم عمر و لفظ الترمذي لو كان بعدي نبي لكان عمر قال الترمذي حديث حسن

In (*Sunan*) al-Tirmidhi and others, it is narrated from him, peace and blessings be upon him, that he said, **“If I had not been sent as a messenger among you, ‘Umar would have been sent as a messenger among you instead.”** The text of al-Tirmidhi reads, **“If there were to be a prophet after me, it would have been ‘Umar”**. Al-Tirmidhi says: *A hasan hadith*.¹

Elsewhere, he reiterates this:

وفي الترمذي لو لم أبعث فيكم لبعث فيكم عمر ولو كان بعدي نبي لكان عمر

It is recorded in (*Sunan*) al-Tirmidhi: “If I had not been sent as a messenger among you, ‘Umar would have been sent as a messenger instead and if there were to be a prophet after me, it would have been ‘Umar”.²

Those two one-sided, sectarian reports establish two realities:

1. ‘Umar and the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, had *equal* credentials and abilities to be the master of the prophets, sent to the entirety of mankind till the Hour. Therefore, ‘Umar was a perfect replacement for the Prophet.
2. Due to ‘Umar’s status as the sole match – in qualification – to the Messenger, he was the only one qualified to be the first prophet after Muhammad, had prophethood not ceased.

The bottom-line is that ‘Umar was far better than Abu Bakr in all ways and in all things! So, if ‘Ali were

superior to ‘Umar, then he was the master of both the first and the second *khalifahs*. In any case, those two *hadiths* are one-sided (and therefore of no probative value in our research), and contradict the Verse of *Istafa*, the Verse of *Ta‘hir* and several *sahih* and *mutawatir ahadith* (such as *Hadith al-Ghadir*, *Hadith al-Manzilah*, *Hadith al-Tayr*, *Hadith al-Thaqalayn*, etc). The most important part is that both reports about ‘Umar go against well-established historical facts about him, his knowledge and his abilities. From all angles, both *hadiths* were motivated by polemical motives, and manufactured to “raise the stakes” for the second *khalifah*.

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah makes an interesting strike:

وقد وجد لعمر و علي و غيرهما فتاوى كثيرة تخالف النصوص حتى جمع الشافعي مجلدا في خلاف علي و ابن مسعود و جمع محمد بن نصر المروزي كتابا كبيرا في ذلك

There were LOTS of *fatwas* from ‘Umar, ‘Ali and others that contradicted the revealed texts (i.e the Qur’an and Sunnah), such that **al-Shafi’i compiled a whole volume on the contradictions of ‘Ali and Ibn Mas’ud (to the Qur’an and Sunnah), and Muhammad b. Nasr al-Maruzi compiled a huge book on that.**³

He concedes that both ‘Umar and Ibn Mas’ud contradicted the Qur’an and Sunnah *massively* in their verdicts. We agree with him, as there exists solid evidence from both Sunni and Shi’i sources confirming that. It is a wonder then how our dear Shaykh manages to believe that ‘Umar was perfectly fit for prophethood despite this embarrassing fact! What else would he have been other than a prophet who would have opposed the Qur’an and the Sunnah on “lots” of occasions?! This reality reveals that the purely one-sided, sectarian *hadiths* could not have genuinely originated from the Messenger of Allah. He *never* uttered anything that falls out of line with simple logic.

But then, did Imam al-Shafi’i and al-Maruzi really compiled books detailing Amir al-Muminin Ali’s “contradictions” to the Qur’an and Sunnah? Well, there is no evidence of *any* such books in our times! Besides, our dear Shaykh seems confused on the exact authorship of those “books”. First, he claims that both al-Shafi’i and al-Maruzi wrote *separate* books. However, this is a contrary submission he also makes:

وقد جمع الشافعي ومحمد بن نصر المروزي كتابا كبيرا فيما لم يأخذ به المسلمون من قول علي لكون قول غيره من الصحابة أتبع للكتاب والسنة

Al-Shafi'i AND Muhammad b. Nasr al-Maruzi compiled a huge book about what the Muslims rejected from the statement of 'Ali, because the statement of others from the Sahabah were more in compliance with the Qur'an and Sunnah.⁴

So, it was after all a *joint* authorship! What exactly do we believe now? Moreover, where exactly *is* this book? Has anyone in history *ever* quoted it? Has anyone in history *ever* referenced it? The reality is that no such book *ever* existed! Imam al-Subki (d. 773 H) reveals the truth about the book of al-Maruzi:

وقال أبو ذر محمد بن محمد بن يوسف القاضي كان الصدر الأول من مشايخنا
يقولون رجال خراسان أربعة ابن المبارك ويحيى بن يحيى وإسحاق بن راهويه
ومحمد بن نصر المروزي وقال أبو بكر الصيرفي لو لم يصنف المروزي إلا
كتاب القسامة لكان من أفقه الناس فكيف وقد صنف كتباً سواها وقال الشيخ
أبو إسحاق الشيرازي صنف محمد هذا كتباً ضمنها الآثار والفقهاء وكان من أعلم
الناس باختلاف الصحابة ومن بعدهم في الأحكام وصنف كتاباً فيما خالف فيه
أبو حنيفة علياً وعبد الله رضي الله عنهما

Abu Dharr Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Qadhi said, "The pioneers among our Shaykhs used to say that the scholars of Khurasan (in Iran) were four: Ibn al-Mubarak, Yahya b. Yahya, Ishaq b. Rahwayh **and Muhammad b. Nasr al-Maruzi.**" Abu Bakr al-Sayarfi said, "If al-Maruzi had never authored any book except *Kitab al-Qasamah* alone, he would nonetheless have been among the most knowledgeable of mankind. Meanwhile, he wrote many books other than it." Shaykh Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi said, "Muhammad (b. Nasr al-Maruzi) wrote books which contained reports and Islamic jurisprudence, and was one of the most knowledgeable of mankind concerning the differences of the Sahabah and those after them on *al-ahkam* (jurisprudence). **He wrote a book concerning the contradictions of Abu Hanifah to 'Ali and 'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud)**, may Allah be pleased with them both.⁵

So, the book – in reality – was only about Abu Hanifah's contradictions to 'Ali and Ibn Mas'ud! We leave the judgment to the esteemed reader.

There are authentic Sunni reports which further expose the fallacy of the allegations of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah against Amir al-Muminin. For instance, Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي حدثني يحيى عن الأعمش عن عمرو بن مرة عن أبي
البخترى عن علي رضي الله عنه قال: بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

إلى اليمن وأنا حديث السن قال قلت تبعثني إلى قوم يكون بينهم أحداث ولا علم لي بالقضاء قال ان الله سيهدى لسانك ويثبت قلبك قال فما شككت في قضاء بين اثنين بعد

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya – al-A’mash – ‘Amr b. Marrah – Abu al-Bakhtari – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

I was sent by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, to Yemen, and I was young of age. I said, “You are sending me to a people among whom exist disputes, and I have no knowledge in justice dispensation.” He replied, “**Verily, Allah will guide your tongue and make your heart firm.**” I never have doubt while dispensing justice between *any* two people ever after.⁶

Shaykh al-Arnau⁷ says:

صحيح رجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين

Sahih, its narrators are trustworthy, narrators of the two Shaykhs⁷

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

حدثني علي بن حمشاد ثنا العباس بن الفضل الأسفاطي ثنا أحمد بن يونس ثنا أبو بكر بن عياش عن الأعمش عن عمرو بن مرة عن أبي البخري قال قال علي رضي الله عنه: بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى اليمن قال : فقلت : يا رسول الله إني رجل شاب وأنه يرد علي من القضاء ما لا علم لي به قال : فوضع يده على صدري وقال اللهم ثبت لسانه واهد قلبه فما شككت في القضاء أو في قضاء بعد

‘Ali b. Hamshad – al-‘Abbas b. al-Fadhli al-Asfa⁷i – Ahmad b. Yunus – Abu Bakr b. ‘Ayyash – al-A’mash – ‘Amr b. Marrah – Abu al-Bakhtari – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah be pleased with him, sent me to Yemen. So, I said, “O Messenger of Allah, I am a young man, and disputes will be brought to me for judgment, of which I have no knowledge.” Therefore, he placed his hand on my chest, and said, “**O Allah, make firm his tongue and guide his heart.**” I never have doubt while dispensing justice ever after.⁸

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs⁹

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim¹⁰

Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) documents a *mutaba'ah* for the report of Abu al-Bakhtari:

حدثنا عمرو بن عون قال أخبرنا شريك عن سماك عن حنش عن علي عليه السلام قال: بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إلى اليمن قاضيا فقلت يارسول الله ترسلني وأنا حديث السن ولا علم لي بالقضاء ؟ فقال " إن الله سيهدي قلبك ويثبت لسانك فإذا جلس بين يديك الخصمان فلا تقضين حتى تسمع من الآخر كما سمعت من الأول فإنه أحرى أن يتبين لك القضاء " قال فما زلت قاضيا أو ما شككت في قضاء بعد .

‘Amr b. ‘Awn – Sharik – Simak – Hanash – ‘Ali, peace be upon him (*‘alaihi salam*):

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent me to Yemen *as a judge*. So, I said, “O Messenger of Allah, you are sending me while I am young of age and have no knowledge of justice dispensation.”

Therefore, he said, “**Verily, Allah will guide your heart and will make firm your tongue.** Whenever two disputants sit in front of you, do not give judgment until you have heard both parties. This will make clear to you the (correct) judgment.” **I never cease to be a judge, or never have doubt while dispensing justice, ever since.**¹¹

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

Imam Ahmad also records this *shahid*:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن آدم ثنا إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن
حارثة بن مضرب عن علي رضي الله عنه قال: بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه
و سلم إلى اليمن فقلت إنك تبعثني إلى قوم وهم أسن مني لأقضي بينهم فقال
اذهب فإن الله سيهدي قلبك ويثبت لسانك

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Adam – Israil – Abu Ishaq – Harithah
b. Mudhrab – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sent me to Yemen. So, I said, “You are sending me to a
people who are older than me that I should judge between them.” He replied, “**Go, for Allah will guide
your heart and make firm your tongue.**”¹³

Shaykh al-Arna’u¹⁴ states:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*¹⁴

Whenever Amir al-Muminin set out to judge on any matter, Allah would always guide both his heart and
his tongue, and would also make them firm. This removes the possibility of error or misguidance in
whatsoever judgments he ever gave:

ومن يهد الله فما له من مضل

And whomsoever Allah guides, **for him there can be NO misleader.**¹⁵

With this in mind, it is apparent that whosoever attributes errors to the judgments and verdicts of ‘Ali is
actually attributing them to Allah as well! So, we ask Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers: was it
Allah Who was “guiding” his heart and his tongue to those “contradictions” to the Qur’an and Sunnah?
We seek His refuge from such blasphemy. No truth – whether in narrations or mere submissions – can
be in *anything* that denigrates the Almighty Lord.

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 508
 2. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 303
 3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 502
 4. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 281
 5. Taj al-Din b. ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-Kafi al-Subki, ʿAbaqat al-Shafiʿiyyah al-Kubra (Hajr li al-ʿAbaʿat wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawziʿ; 2nd edition, 1413 H) [annotators: Dr. Mahmud Muhammad al-ʿAnahi and Dr. ‘Abd al-Fattah Muhammad al-Halwi], vol. 2, p. 247
 6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shuʿayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 83, # 636
 7. Ibid
 8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-ʿAhihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 145, # 4658
 9. Ibid
 10. Ibid
 11. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani, Sunan Abi Dawud (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 3, p. 327, # 3584
 12. Ibid
 13. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shuʿayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 156, # 1341
 14. Ibid
 15. Qur’an 39:37

12. Hadith Al-Tafdhil, Investigating Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

لا نسلم أن علياً أفضل أهل زمانه بل خير هذه الأمة بعد نبيها أبو بكر ثم عمر
كما ثبت ذلك عن علي وغيره

We do not agree that ‘Ali was the overall best of his time. Rather, the best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, as is authentically narrated from ‘Ali and others.¹

It is true that our Sunni brothers consider Abu Bakr to be the best of our Ummah, followed only by ‘Umar. However, during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, it was a different story entirely. There is irrefutable evidence in the Sunni books establishing that the Sahabah used to

consider Amir al-Muminin, *'alaihi al-salam*, to be their best during the lifetime of the Messenger. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) presents one of such proofs:

حدثنا عبد الله قال حدثني أبي قثنا محمد بن جعفر نا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن
عبد الرحمن بن يزيد عن علقمة عن عبد الله قال : كنا نتحدث أن أفضل أهل
المدينة علي بن أبي طالب

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – Abu Ishaq – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid – 'Alqamah – 'Abd Allah (b. Mas'ud):

“We used to say that **the overall best** of the people of Madinah was 'Ali b. Abi Talib.”²

“We” (in the *hadith*)³ apparently refers to the Sahabah generally, and more specifically to the most senior of them living in Madinah. Ibn Mas'ud was obviously making a reference to a past which was then different from the present. This was why he said “we USED TO”. In other words, at that point in time when he was making his statement, things had become different. People were now giving 'Ali's place to another person. Ibn Mas'ud was, no doubt, speaking about the time of the Prophet. All the most senior Sahabah and their neighbours were living in Madinah with the Messenger of Allah. The phrase “people of Madinah” originally referred to them (excluding only the Prophet, of course).⁴ These, needless to say, included Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman.

So, is the above report authentic? Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the first narrator:

عبد الله بن أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل الشيباني أبو عبد الرحمن ولد الإمام ثقة

'Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman: son of the Imam, **thiqah** (trustworthy).⁵

What about his father? Al-Hafiz answers:

أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل بن هلال بن أسد الشيباني المروزي نزيل بغداد أبو
عبد الله أحد الأئمة ثقة حافظ فقيه حجة

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal b. Hilal b. Asad al-Shaybani al-Maruzi, a Baghdad resident, Abu 'Abd Allah: One of the Imams, **thiqah** (trustworthy), *hafiz*, jurist, *hujjah* (an authority).⁶

Al-Hafiz also has these comments about the third narrator:

محمد بن جعفر الهذلي البصري المعروف بغندر ثقة صحيح الكتاب إلا أن فيه
غفلة

Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Hazali al-Basri, better known as Ghandar: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, *sahih al-kitab* (i.e. *ahadith* from his books are *sahih*) except that there was some negligence in him.⁷

Whatever negligence he had does not affect his *ahadith* from Shu'bah at all. He used to accurately record the latter's reports. So, he narrated them from his books with perfect precision. Al-Hafiz provides further information in this respect:

وقال ابن مهدي كنا نستفيد من كتب غندر في شعبة وكان وكيع يسميه
الصحيح الكتاب. وقال أبو حاتم عن محمد بن أبان البلخي قال ابن مهدي غندر
أثبت في شعبة مني وقال ابن المبارك إذا اختلف الناس في حديث شعبة فكتاب
غندر حكم بينهم وقال ابن أبي حاتم سألت أبي عن غندر فقال كان صدوقا
وكان مؤدبا وفي حديث شعبة ثقة

Ibn Mahdi said: "We used to benefit from the books of Ghandar on Shu'bah. Waki' named him *sahih al-kitab*." Abu Hatim narrated from Muhammad b. Aban al-Balakhi that Ibn Mahdi said: "Ghandar is more accurate than me as far as Shu'bah is concerned." Ibn al-Mubarak said, "**When the people disagree about the *hadith* of Shu'bah, the book of Ghandar used to judge between them.**" Ibn Abi Hatim said: "I asked my father about Ghandar and he replied, 'He was *saduq* (very truthful), and was a teacher and **in the *hadith* of Shu'bah, he is *thiqah* (trustworthy).**"⁸

The fourth narrator, Shu'bah, is a pillar of Sunni *ahadith*. Al-Hafiz gives the catch-phrases about him:

شعبة بن الحجاج بن الورد العتكي مولاهم أبو بسطام الواسطي ثم البصري ثقة
حافظ متقن كان الثوري يقول هو أمير المؤمنين في الحديث

Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj b. al-Ward al-'Atki, their freed slave, Abu Busāam al-Wasī'i, al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, *hafiz*, **extremely precise**. Al-Thawri used to say: "**He was the *amir al-muminin* (the supreme leader) in *al-Hadith*.**"⁹

Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i is the fifth narrator, and al-Hafiz has this to say about him:

عمرو بن عبد الله بن عبيد أبو إسحاق السبيعي بفتح المهملة وكسر
الموحدة ثقة أكثر عابد من الثالثة اختلط بأخرة

‘Amr b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Ubayd Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**; narrated a lot (of *ahadith*), a great worshipper (of Allah), from the third (عابداً). He became confused (in his narrations) during the end part of his lifetime.¹⁰

Of course, Shu'bah heard from him before the memory loss. ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) explains:

وتابعهم سفيان الثوري وشعبة عن أبي إسحاق، ولكنهما لم يذكرنا النزول،

وروايتهما أصح، لأنهما سمعا منه قبل الاختلاط

Sufyan al-Thawri **and Shu'bah** also narrated from Abu Ishaq, although both did not mention the Descent. The reports of both of them (from Abu Ishaq) are more authentic, **because they both heard from him BEFORE he became confused.**¹¹

Another relevant point is that Abu Ishaq is a *mudalis* and has, on the surface, narrated the report of Ibn Mas'ud above is an *'an-'an* form from ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid. However, the *tadlis* does NOT, in reality, affect the *'an-'an* reports of Abu Ishaq – among others – as long as it is Shu'bah narrating from him. Allamah al-Albani states further:

قال الترمذي: " حديث حسن صحيح، رواه الثوري وشعبة عن أبي إسحاق "

قلت: وهو كما قال، وهما قد روي عنه قبل اختلاطه، وشعبة لا يروي عنه إلا ما صرح فيه بالتحديث كما هو مذكور في ترجمته، فبروايته عنه أمنا شبهة تدليسه.

Al-Tirmidhi said: "A *hasan sahih hadith*, al-Thawri and Shu'bah narrated it from (*'an*) Abu Ishaq."

I say: It is (truly *hasan sahih*) as he (al-Tirmidhi) has stated, and both of them (i.e. al-Thawri and Shu'bah) narrated from him (i.e. Abu Ishaq) before his confusion. **As for Shu'bah, he never narrated anything from him (i.e. Abu Ishaq) except what he (Abu Ishaq) explicitly stated to have directly heard from the person he is narrating from (i.e. *tahdith*)**, as stated in his *tarjamah* (biography). **Due to his (Shu'bah's) narration from him (i.e. Abu Ishaq), the problem of his *tadlis* is removed.**¹²

In a clearer word, whenever Shu'bah narrates from Abu Ishaq (as in this case of Ibn Mas'ud's *hadith*), all the problems associated with the latter's reports are removed. The former narrated from him before his confusion in his *ahadith*, and never transmitted any *tadlis*-infested reports from him. So, whenever Shu'bah narrates an '*an-an*' report from Abu Ishaq, there actually is *tahdith* by the latter from his Shaykh. The '*an-an*' form is only Shu'bah's convenience style. No wonder, Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) includes this *sanad* in his *Sahih*:

حدثنا سليمان بن حرب حدثنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد

Sulayman b. Harb – **Shu'bah** – **Abu Ishaq** – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid.¹³

This is an '*an-an*' report by Abu Ishaq from 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid (the same Shaykh as in the *athar* of Ibn Mas'ud). Nevertheless, Imam al-Bukhari considers the chain to be *sahih*.

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal has also documented a similar '*an-an*' chain:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي قال حدثنا يزيد قال أنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن أبي
ميسرة

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yazid – **Shu'bah** – **Abu Ishaq** – Abu Maysarah.¹⁴

Al-Arnau⁹ comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.¹⁵

'Allamah al-Albani too authenticates yet another '*an-an*' chain of Abu Ishaq:

إسناده: حدثنا حفص بن عمر: ثنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن الأسود عن عبد الله.

قلت: وهذا إسناده صحيح على شرط البخاري

Its chain: Hafs b. ‘Umar – **Shu’bah** – **Abu Ishaq** – al-Aswad – ‘Abd Allah.

I say: **This chain is *sahih*** upon the standard of al-Bukhari. 16

Imam Abu Ya’la (d. 307 H) also documents an *‘an-‘an* chain by Abu Ishaq, from ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid, like al-Bukhari:

حدثنا إسحاق حدثنا عبد الصمد حدثنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد عن الأسود

Ishaq – ‘Abd al-Samad – **Shu’bah** – **Abu Ishaq** – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid – al-Aswad¹⁷

Shaykh Dr. Asad gives this verdict:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*¹⁸

Let us now move to the sixth narrator in the *sanad* of Ibn Mas’ud’s *athar*: ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid. The status of ‘Abd al-Rahman as a *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrator of *Sahih al-Bukhari* is already well-known. Nonetheless, we are pleased to present this further confirmation by al-Hafiz:

عبد الرحمن بن يزيد بن قيس النخعي أبو بكر الكوفي ثقة

‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid b. Qays al-Nakha’i, Abu Bakr al-Kufi: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**. 19

Finally, concerning the seventh and last narrator (‘Alqamah), al-Hafiz al-‘Asqalani proclaims with full

strength:

علقمة بن قيس بن عبد الله النخعي الكوفي ثقة ثبت فقيه عابد

‘Alqamah b. Qays b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha’i al-Kufi: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, *thabt* (accurate), *faqih* (a jurist), *‘abidun* (a great worshipper of Allah).²⁰

With this, it is absolutely clear and undeniable that Ibn Mas’ud’s report that the Sahabah used to consider ‘Ali as the overall best among them has an impeccably *sahih* chain. All the narrators are *thiqah*, and the chain is fully and perfectly connected.

Even then, the same *athar* has been recorded with a second *sahih* chain in that same *Fadhail al-Sahabah*:

حدثنا عبد الله قال حدثني جدي قتنا أبو قطن قتنا شعبة عن أبي إسحاق عن
عبد الله بن يزيد عن علقمة عن عبد الله وهو بن مسعود قال : كنا نتحدث ان
أفضل أهل المدينة علي بن أبي طالب

‘Abd Allah (b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Baghwi) – **my grandfather** (Ahmad b. Muni’ al-Baghwi) – **Abu Qaṣṣan** – Shu’bah – Abu Ishaq – ‘Abd Allah b. Yazid – ‘Alqamah – ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud:

“We used to say that **the overall best** of the people of Madinah was ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.”²¹

We already know the status of Shu’bah, Abu Ishaq and Alqamah. So, let’s find out about these new names.

This is al-Hafiz’s verdict on the first narrator of this new *sanad*:

عبد الله بن محمد بن عبد العزيز أبو القاسم البغوي الحافظ الصدوق مسند
عصره.... قلت وقد وثقه الدارقطني والخطيب وغيرهما قال الخطيب كان ثقة
ثبتا كثيرا فهما عارفا.... قلت الرجل ثقة مطلقا

‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, Abu al-Qasim al-Baghwi: *Al-hafiz*, **al-saduq (the extremely truthful)**, the top scholar of his time.... I (al-‘Asqalani) say: **He has been declared thiqah (trustworthy) by al-Daraqutni, al-Khatib and others.** Al-Khatib said, “He was *thiqah* (trustworthy),

accurate, and narrated a lot (of *ahadith*)”.... I (al-‘Asqalani) say: **The man is absolutely *thiqah* (trustworthy).**²²

Concerning his grandfather, al-Hafiz further submits:

أحمد بن منيع بن عبد الرحمن أبو جعفر البغدوي... ثقة حافظ

Ahmad b. Muni’ b. ‘Abd al-Rahman, Abu Ja’far al-Baghwi.....: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy), hafiz.**²³

Abu Qaṣṣan too is *thiqah* (trustworthy), as confirmed by al-Hafiz:

عمرو بن الهيثم بن قطن ... أبو قطن البصري ثقة

‘Amr b. al-Haytham b. Qaṣṣan ... Abu Qaṣṣan al-Basri: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy).**²⁴

Of course, ‘Abd Allah b. Yazid was a junior Sahabi, and therefore needed no investigation. He is automatically *thiqah* (trustworthy). Al-Hafiz states:

عبد الله بن يزيد بن زيد بن حصين الأنصاري الخطمي بفتح المعجمة وسكون
المهملة صحابي صغير ولي الكوفة لابن الزبير.

‘Abd Allah b. Yazid b. Zayd b. Husayn al-Ansari al-Khāṣmi: **a junior Sahabi.** He was the *wali* (ruler) of Kufah for Ibn al-Zubayr.²⁵

So, we have a second impeccable *sanad* for the *hadith*.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 6, p. 475

2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Fadhail al-Ṣahabah (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1403 H) [annotator: Dr. Wasiyullah Muhammad ‘Abbas], vol. 2, p. 604, # 1033

3. We are calling it a *hadith*, rather than an *athar*, because it lays down a consensus of the Ṣahabah, which they had during the lifetime of the Prophet of Allah. It is our firm belief that they could not have formed such a consensus except on the basis of what they had learnt from the Messenger.

4. See Qur’an 9:101 and 9:120

5. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 477, # 3216

6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 44, # 96
7. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 63, # 5805
8. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 9, p. 85, # 129
9. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 418, # 2798
10. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 739, # 5081
11. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, 'Ahih Abi Dawud (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 7, p. 410, # 2387
12. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-'Ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 5, p. 481, # 2366
13. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J'ufi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1373, # 3551
14. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 6, p. 182, # 25532
15. Ibid
16. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, 'Ahih Abi Dawud (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 5, p. 150, # 1267
17. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 8, p. 35, # 4541
18. Ibid
19. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 596, # 4057
20. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 687, # 4697
21. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Fadhail al-'Ahabah (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1403 H) [annotator: Dr. Wasiyullah Muhammad 'Abbas], vol. 2, p. 646, # 1097
22. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lam li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 3, pp. 338-339, # 1339
23. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 47, # 114
24. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 748, # 5146
25. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 547, # 3715

13. Hadith Al-Tafdhil, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah Raises Objections

Our Shaykh (d. 728 H) is obviously not comfortable with the fact that the Sahabah used to consider Amir al-Muminin, *'alaihi al-salam*, to be superior to Abu Bakr during the lifetime of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*. So, he fights back:

الشيعة الأولى أصحاب علي لم يكونوا يرتابون في تقديم أبي بكر وعمر عليه كيف وقد ثبت عن علي من وجوه متواترة أنه كان يقول خير هذه الأمة بعد نبيها أبو بكر وعمر ولكن كان طائفة من شيعة علي تقدمه على عثمان وهذه المسألة أخفى من تلك ولهذا كان أئمة أهل السنة كلهم متفقين على تقديم أبي بكر وعمر من وجوه متواترة كما هو مذهب أبي حنيفة والشافعي ومالك وأحمد بن حنبل والثوري والأوزاعي والليث بن سعد وسائر أئمة المسلمين من أهل الفقه والحديث والزهد والتفسير من المتقدمين والمتأخرين

The early Shi'is, the companions of 'Ali, did not doubt the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar over him. How can they when it has been narrated in *mutawatir* reports from 'Ali that he used to say: "The best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abu Bakr and 'Umar"? However, some of the Shi'is of 'Ali used to consider him superior to 'Uthman, and this issue is more unclear than that. This is why all the Imams of the Ahl al-Sunnah were unanimous on the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar as reported in *mutawatir* reports. This was the view of Abu Hanifah, Shafi'i, Malik, Ahmad b. Hanbal, al-Thawri, al-Awza'i, al-Layth b. Sa'd and all the other Imams of the Muslims, from the jurists, the *hadith* experts, the ascetics and the exegetes, from the early and later generations.¹

Here, he is taking the battle even to the Shi'i home ground! According to him, not a single one of those that are followed by the Ahl al-Sunnah, including the Sahabah and Tabi'in, ever believed that Amir al-Muminin was superior to either Abu Bakr or 'Umar. There was absolute unanimity among them concerning the superiority of the duo over 'Ali. Moreover, even the early Shi'is – whom he identified as the companions of Amir al-Muminin – shared the same view! Rather, 'Ali b. Abi Talib himself used to teach his followers that Abu Bakr and 'Umar were the best of the Ummah after its Messenger. Therefore, all the early Sunnis and Shi'is had a full consensus that both Abu Bakr and 'Umar were better than 'Ali in the Sight of Allah.

So, did Ibn Mas'ud tell a lie? We will soon find out which party is telling the truth, and which is not. Our Shaykh proceeds:

وقد ثبت في الصحيحين عن عبد الله بن عمر قال كنا نفاضل على عهد رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أبو بكر ثم عمر ثم عثمان وفي لفظ ثم ندع أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم لا نفاضل بينهم فهذا إخبار عما كان عليه الصحابة على عهد النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم من تفضيل أبي بكر ثم عمر ثم عثمان وقد روى أن ذلك كان يبلغ النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم فلا ينكره

It has been authentically transmitted in the two *Sahihs* from ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar that he said: “We used to consider Abu Bakr to be the best during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and then ‘Umar, and then ‘Uthman” and in another version, “Then we would leave all the other Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, **and we did not consider any of them to be superior to another.**” This is information concerning what the Sahabah believed during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in that they considered Abu Bakr to be the most superior, then ‘Umar, and then ‘Uthman. It has been narrated that this reached the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he did not oppose it.²

The plot deepens considerably here. There is a direct contradiction between the reports of Ibn Mas‘ud and Ibn ‘Umar. One of them, definitely, was *incorrectly* attributing things to his colleagues. As such, we must investigate their irreconcilable claims in order to determine which of them reflects the true story.

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) has documented the submission of Ibn ‘Umar:

حدثني محمد بن حاتم بن بزيغ حدثنا شاذان حدثنا عبد العزيز ابن أبي سلمة
الماجشون عن عبيد الله عن نافع عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال : كنا في
زمن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم لا نعدل بأبي بكر أحدا ثم عمر ثم عثمان ثم
نترك أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم لا نفاضل بينهم .

Muhammad b. Hatim b. Bazig – Shadhan – ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Abi Salamah al-Majishun – ‘Ubayd Allah – Nafi’ – Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, we never considered anyone as equal to Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar, and then ‘Uthman. Then, we leave the Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, **and we did not consider any of them to be superior to another.**³

In simpler terms, the Sahabah – as alleged by Ibn ‘Umar – viewed Abu Bakr to be their best, then ‘Umar, and then ‘Uthman. Apart from the trio, those Sahabah did not consider *any* other among them to be superior to another. Without doubt, this *hadith* targets Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, as it places him on the same level with *all* other Sahabah, apart from the three *khalifahs*. Al-Bukhari has even *attributed* a similar report to him:

حدثنا محمد بن كثير أخبرنا سفيان حدثنا جامع بن أبي راشد حدثنا أبو يعلى
عن محمد ابن الحنفية قال : قلت لأبي أي الناس خير بعد رسول الله صلى الله
عليه و سلم ؟ قال أبو بكر قلت ثم من ؟ قال ثم عمر وخشيت أن يقول عثمان
قلت ثم أنت ؟ قال ما أنا إلا رجل من المسلمين

Muhammad b. Kathir – Sufyan – Jami' b. Abi Rashid – Abu Ya'la – Muhammad b. al-Hanafiyyah:

I asked my father ('Ali), "Who is the best of mankind after the Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Abu Bakr." I said, "Then who?" He replied, "Umar." I feared that he would (also) mention 'Uthman. So, I asked, "Then you?" He replied, "**I am only an ordinary Muslim.**"⁴

This report, however, makes no sense in line with 'Ali's documented opinions of Abu Bakr and 'Umar! Imam Muslim (d. 261 H), for instance, quotes the second *khalifah* saying to both Amir al-Muminin 'Ali and 'Abbas:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق
بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
وولي أبا بكر فرأيتماني كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, **Abu Bakr said: "I am the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.".... So both of you ('Ali and 'Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, treacherous and dishonest.** And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. **Abu Bakr died and I became the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the wali of Abu Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, treacherous and dishonest.**⁵

He considered both Abu Bakr and 'Umar as sinful, treacherous and dishonest liars! How then could he possibly have graded both people as the best of the Ummah? Does it make sense that Amir al-Muminin thought that sinful, treacherous and dishonest liars were better than himself and everyone else?! Besides, on what basis would he have declared himself an *ordinary* Muslim – equal with all others – despite everything that Allah and His Prophet had publicly and privately said about him? We believe that Imam 'Ali was an outstandingly intelligent, sincere believer in Allah and His Messenger, who could never have made such illogical comments. What we find, therefore, in the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah concerning his alleged admission of the superiority of Abu Bakr and 'Umar over himself are only cheap polemical stunts pulled by some enthusiastic Sunnis.

However, in the case of Ibn 'Umar, what has been transmitted from him coincides perfectly with his character and beliefs. He certainly believed in the superiority of Abu Bakr, then his father 'Umar, and then 'Uthman, above all other Sahabah. Moreover, he never recognized the *khilafah* of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, citing a self-made excuse, as al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) confirms:

وإنما لم يذكر ابن عمر خلافة علي لأنه لم يبايعه لوقوع الاختلاف عليه كما هو مشهور في صحيح الاخبار وكان رأى أنه لا يبايع لمن لم يجتمع عليه الناس ولهذا لم يبايع أيضا لابن الزبير ولا لعبد الملك في حال اختلافهما وبايع ليزيد بن معاوية ثم لعبد الملك بن مروان بعد قتل بن الزبير

Ibn ‘Umar did not mention the *khilafah* of ‘Ali only because he did not give *bay’ah* (oath of allegiance) to the latter, due to the difference of opinions concerning him as it is well-known in the *sahih* reports. His (Ibn ‘Umar’s) view was that he would not give *ba’yah* to anyone who was not universally acknowledged (as *khalifah*) by all the people. This was why he also did not give *bay’ah* to Ibn al-Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Malik during their disagreement. **And he gave *ba’yah* to Yazid b. Mu’awiyah**, and then to ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwan after the killing of Ibn al-Zubayr.⁶

His excuse, of course, was defeated by his *ba’yah* to Yazid b. Mu’awiyah, the killer of Imam al-Husayn. The *khilafah* of Yazid was never universally accepted. This was why there were repeated revolts against him anyway, resulting in infamous episodes in Islamic history – such as his massacres in Makkah and Madinah, and at Karbala. Interestingly, like his pretext for delegitimizing the *khilafah* of Amir al-Muminin, Ibn ‘Umar’s claim that the Sahabah never considered anyone among themselves as superior to another – apart from Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman – lacks truth! The reality is far different. For instance, Allah states:

لا يستوي القاعدون من المؤمنين غير أولي الضرر والمجاهدون في سبيل الله بأموالهم وأنفسهم فضل الله المجاهدين بأموالهم وأنفسهم على القاعدين درجة وكلا وعد الله الحسنى وفضل الله المجاهدين على القاعدين أجرا عظيما درجات منه

Not equal are those of the believers who sit (i.e. do not participate in *jihad*) – except those who are disabled – and those who do *jihad* in the Cause of Allah with their wealth *and* their lives. **Allah has made those who do *jihad* with their wealth *and* their lives superior in (spiritual) rank above those who sit.** Unto each, Allah has promised good. But Allah has made those who do *jihad* to be superior to those who sit with a huge reward, ranks from Him.⁷

The Sahabah were in two groups: those who participated in *jihad* with their wealth *and* lives and those who held back. Allah declared the former to be superior above the latter in ranks. Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, of course, never voluntarily missed the battlefield, and he equally *never* fled – not even once – no matter how deadly things became. Moreover, although he was poor, he still spent his little wealth in the Way of

Allah. By contrast, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman have been authentically documented to have fled the battlefield at various times! In other words, they were escaping *with their lives* from *jihad*. They might have done *jihad* with their wealth – which is debatable, anyway. However, they certainly were not doing it *with their lives*. So, why on earth would the Sahabah place Abu Bakr above ‘Ali, despite Allah’s clear verdict? Did they not believe in the Qur’an? Worse still, why would they consider Amir al-Muminin to be equal in rank with those of the Sahabah who used to flee from the battlefield, and with those who used to stay away from *jihad*?

The Qur’an adds:

وما لكم ألا تنفقوا في سبيل الله ولله ميراث السماوات والأرض لا يستوي منكم من أنفق من قبل الفتح وقاتل أولئك أعظم درجة من الذين أنفقوا من بعد وقاتلوا وكلا وعد الله الحسنى والله بما تعملون خبير

And what is the matter with you that you do not spend in the Way of Allah? And to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. Not equal among you are those who spent and fought before the Conquest (of Makkah), **these ones are higher in (spiritual) rank than those who spent and fought afterwards**. But to all, Allah has promised the best. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.⁸

Yet, the Sahabah – according to Ibn ‘Umar – did not believe this verse! Therefore, they used to consider ‘Ali, who spent and fought *before* the Conquest of Makkah, as equal with others among them who only spent and fought *after* it. It is indeed a lose-lose situation for our Sunni brothers. If they agreed that the Sahabah believed in and practised the above verses, then they must reject the report of Ibn ‘Umar as only his mere wishful thinkings and hallucinations. On the other hand, if they chose to believe Ibn ‘Umar, in such a case, they would be left with no other choice but to proclaim the *kufur* of the Sahabah!

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 2, pp. 72–73

2. Ibid, vol. 6, p. 153

3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-‘ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1352, # 3494

4. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1342, # 3468

5. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, ‘ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1376, #1757

6. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh ‘ahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah li al-‘aba’ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 5, p. 18

7. Qur’an 4:95–96

8. Qur’an 57:10

14. Hadith Al-Tafdhil, is ‘Aishah Really the best of the Ummah?

Officially, Abu Bakr is the best of this Ummah, after its Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, according to the Ahl al-Sunnah. ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) for instance submits:

قلت: وكون أبي بكر رضي الله عنه أحب الناس إليه صلى الله عليه وسلم هو الموافق لكونه أفضل الخلفاء الراشدين عند أهل السنة

I say: the fact that Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was the most beloved of **mankind** to him (i.e. the Prophet), peace be upon him, is consistent with the fact that he was the best of the rightly guided *khalifahs* in the view of the Ahl al-Sunnah.¹

However, this belief directly contradicts their “authentic” *hadith*. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن حماد قال أنا عبد العزيز بن المختار عن خالد الحذاء عن أبي عثمان قال حدثني عمرو بن العاص قال بعثني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على جيش ذات السلاسل قال فأتيته قال قلت يا رسول الله أي الناس أحب إليك قال عائشة قال قلت من الرجال قال أبوها إذا قال قلت ثم من قال عمر

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Hamad – ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. al-Mukhtar – Khalid al-Khadha’ – Abu ‘Uthman – ‘Amr b. al-‘As:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, appointed me as commander of the army of Dhat Salasil. So, I got to him, and said, “O Messenger of Allah, which of **mankind** is the most beloved to you?” He replied, “Aishah.” I said, “Who among the men?” He replied, “Her father.” I asked, “Then who?” He replied, “Umar”.²

Al-Arnau³ comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.³

In other words, Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah is the overall best of this Ummah, *above* Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman, according to the Sunni-only report. It is, however, at this point that things get really messy! Allah has stated concerning two of the wives of His Prophet:

وإذ أسر النبي إلى بعض أزواجه حديثا فلما نبأت به وأظهره الله عليه عرف بعضه وأعرض عن بعض فلما نبأها به قالت من أنبأك هذا قال نبأني العليم الخبير إن تتوبا إلى الله فقد صغت قلوبكما وإن تظاهرا عليه فإن الله هو مولاه وجبريل وصالح المؤمنين والملائكة بعد ذلك ظهير عسى ربه إن طلقكن أن يبدله أزواجا خيرا منكن مسلمات مؤمنات قانتات تائبات عابدات سائحات ثيبات وأبكارا

And when the Prophet disclosed a matter *in confidence* to one of his wives, so when she told it, and Allah made it known to him, he informed part thereof and left a part. Then when he told her thereof, she said, “Who told you this?” He said, “The All-Knower, the All-Aware has told me.” **If you two repent to Allah, for your hearts have deviated. But if you both help each other against him**, then Allah is His Helper (against you both), and Jibril, and the righteous believers, and furthermore, the angels are his helpers. It may be if he divorced you that his Lord will give him instead of you, **wives better than you:** Muslims, believers, obedient, repentant, devoted, fasting – whether previously married or virgins.⁴

Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has this exegesis:

ثم خاطب عائشة وحفصة، فقال: { إن تتوبا إلى الله {أي: من التعاون على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالإيذاء} فقد صغت قلوبكما {قال ابن عباس: زاغت، وأثمت. قال الزجاج: عدلت، وزاغت عن الحق. قال مجاهد: كنا نرى قوله عز وجل}: فقد صغت قلوبكما {شيئا هينا حتى وجدناه في قراءة ابن مسعود: فقد زاغت قلوبكما.

Then He (Allah) addresses ‘Aishah and Hafsah, saying: {If you both repent to Allah}, meaning **from helping each other against the Messenger of Allah to hurt him**. {For your hearts have deviated} Ibn ‘Abbas said: “They (the hearts) deviated (*zaghat*) and committed a sin.” Al-Zajaj said, “**They (the hearts) deviated, and deviated from the Truth.**” Mujahid said, “We used consider His Words, the Almighty {for your hearts have deviated} has something easy until we found it in the recitation of Ibn

Mas'ud as: {for your hearts have deviated (*zaghat*)}.5

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) also records:

حدثنا هارون بن سعيد الأيلي حدثنا عبدالله بن وهب أخبرني سليمان (يعني ابن بلال) أخبرني يحيى أخبرني عبيد ابن حنين أنه سمع عبدالله بن عباس يحدث قال مكثت سنة وأنا أريد أن أسأل عمر بن الخطاب عن آية فما أستطيع أن أسأله هيبة له حتى خرج حاجا فخرجت معه فلما رجع فكنا ببعض الطريق عدل إلى الأراك لحاجة له فوقف له حتى فرغ ثم سرت معه فقلت يا أمير المؤمنين من اللتان تظاهرتا على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم من أزواجه ؟ فقال تلك حفصة وعائشة

Harun b. Sa'id al-Ayli – ‘Abd Allah b. Wahb – Sulayman b. Bilal – Yahya – ‘Ubayd b. Hunayn – ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas:

I hesitated for a (whole) year, and I had intended to ask ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb concerning a verse. But I could not ask him out of fear of him, until he went out for *Hajj* and I accompanied him. During his return, while we were still on the way, he stepped aside towards an *Arak* tree to ease himself. So, I waited for him until he finished. I then walked along with him, and said, “O Amir al-Muminin! Who were the two women who helped each other *against* the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, among his wives?” He replied, “**They were Hafsah and ‘Aishah.**”⁶

There are three things here:

1. Both ‘Aishah, and especially Hafsah, *betrayed* the confidence of the Messenger of Allah.
3. Both of them literally helped each other *against* him in order to hurt him.
5. The hearts of both of them had deviated from the Truth. This is very obvious, anyway. No one with a clean heart would *ever* help another *against* the Messenger in any circumstance.

Interestingly, the above verses were the *last* updates by Allah on the hearts of both women. Nothing else was revealed thereafter by Him to discharge them, or to indicate their repentance. It is a matter of great interest then that the deviation of their hearts means they both have little or no hope of salvation in the Hereafter:

يوم لا ينفع مال ولا بنون إلا من أتى الله بقلب سليم

The Day whereon neither wealth nor sons will avail, **except him who brings to Allah a clean heart.**⁷

The perturbing question here is: how is ‘Aishah the best of this Ummah, after its Prophet, despite that she was a deviant in the Sight of Allah? Are our Sunni brothers telling us that Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman were worse than deviants? Besides, Allah mentions the existence of women who would be *better* wives to His Prophet; if case he divorced ‘Aishah and Hafsah. Does this fact alone not debunk the Sunni *ahadith* on the superiority of Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah as mere sectarian polemical artwork?

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1. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘A‘ifah wa al-Mawdu‘ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah* (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma‘arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 3, p. 255, # 1124
 2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 203, # 17844
 3. Ibid
 4. Qur’an 66:3-5
 5. Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Jawzi al-Qurshi al-Baghdadi, *Zad al-Masir fi ‘Ilm al-Tafsir* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman ‘Abd Allah], vol. 8, p. 52
 6. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *‘Ahhah Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 1105, # 1479 (31)
 7. Qur’an 26:88-89

15. Hadith Saluni, Investigating Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

أما قول علي سلوني فإنما كان يخاطب بهذا أهل الكوفة ليعلمهم العلم والدين فإن غالبهم كانوا جهالا لم يدركوا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأما أبو بكر فكان الذين حول منبره هم أكابر أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الذين تعلموا من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم العلم والدين فكانت رعية أبي بكر أعلم الأمة وأدينها وأما الذين كان علي يخاطبهم فهم من جملة عوام الناس التابعين وكان كثير منهم من شرار التابعين ولهذا كان علي رضي الله عنه يذمهم ويدعو عليهم وكان التابعون بمكة والمدينة والشام والبصرة خيرا منهم

As for the statement of ‘Ali “Ask me”, he only addressed this to the people of Kufah to teach them knowledge and the religion, because most of them were ignorant people who never met the Prophet,

peace be upon him. As for Abu Bakr, those who were around his pulpit were the most senior of the Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who learnt knowledge and the religion from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. So, the subjects of Abu Bakr were the most knowledgeable of the *Ummah* and the best in religious practice. **However, those whom 'Ali was addressing, they were commoners among the Tabi'in, and a lot of them were the evil ones among the Tabi'in.** This was why 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, criticized and cursed them, **and the Tabi'in in Makkah, Madinah, Syria and Basra were better than them.** 1

He equally adds:

فَقَوْلُ عَلِيٍّ لِمَنْ عِنْدَهُ بِالْكَوْفَةِ سَلُونِي هُوَ مِنْ هَذَا الْبَابِ لَمْ يَقُلْ هَذَا لِابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ وَمَعَاذِ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ وَأَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ وَسَلْمَانَ وَأَمْثَالِهِمْ فَضْلاً عَنْ أَنْ يَقُولَ ذَلِكَ لِعُمَرَ وَعُثْمَانَ وَلِهَذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مِمَّنْ يَسْأَلُهُ فَلَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ قَطُّ لَا مَعَاذَ وَلَا أَبِي وَلَا ابْنَ مَسْعُودٍ وَلَا مَنْ هُوَ دُونَهُمْ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ

The statement of 'Ali "Ask me" to those with him in Kufah was in this regard. **He never said this to Ibn Mas'ud, Mu'adh, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Abu Darda, Salman or others like them,** much less saying that to 'Umar and 'Uthman. This is why these people were not among those who asked him. **They never asked him (anything) – not Mu'adh, not Ubayy, not Ibn Mas'ud and not others from the Sahabah.** 2

It is obvious from the words of our dear Shaykh that he accepts the authenticity of *Hadith Saluni*. He is not calling it "a lie" or "a fabrication", or *dha'if* or similar terms. Rather, he conceded that the event did happen. However, he attempts to downplay the unmatched significance of the *hadith*. To him, there is nothing special in it. After all, Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, *'alaihi al-salam*, was – according to our Shaykh – only offering that challenge to ignorant, evil people. He never dared present it to *any* of the Sahabah! By contrast, Abu Bakr displayed his knowledge in the blessed presence of the most knowledgeable and the best of this entire *Ummah*.

In order to weigh the positives and negatives of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's submissions, we must first understand the context of *Hadith Saluni*. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) helps on this:

قال شعبة بن الحجاج ، عن سَمَاك ، عن خالد بن عَرَعْرَةَ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ عَلِيًّا وَشُعْبَةَ أَيْضًا ، عن القاسم بن أبي بَزَّة ، عن أبي الطُّفَيْل ، سمع علياً. وثبت أيضاً من غير وجه ، عن أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب : أنه صعد منبر الكوفة فقال : لا تسألوني عن آية في كتاب الله ، ولا عن سنة عن رسول الله ، إلا أنبأتكم بذلك.

Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj, from Simak, from Khalid b. 'Ar'arah that he heard 'Ali; and Shu'bah again narrated from al-Qasim b. Abi Barrah from Abu al-Tufayl that he heard 'Ali; and IT IS ALSO AUTHENTICALLY TRANSMITTED through many chains that Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib climbed the pulpit of Kufah and said, "**You will not ask me about ANY verse in the Book of Allah, or about ANY Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah, except that I will inform you of that.**"³

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

أخبرنا أبو الحسن علي بن محمد بن عقبة ثنا الحسن بن علي بن عفان ثنا محمد بن عبيد الطنافسي ثنا بسام بن عبد الرحمن الصيرفي ثنا أبو الطفيل قال رأيت أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه قال على المنبر فقال : سلوني قبل أن لا تسألوني ولن تسألوا بعدي مثلي

Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad b. 'Uqbah – al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. 'Affan – Muhammad b. 'Ubayd al-Tanafasi – Bassam b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sayarfi – Abu al-Tufayl:

I saw Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, saying on the pulpit, "Ask me before you are no longer able to ask me, **and you will NEVER be able to ask ANYONE like me after me.**"⁴

Al-Hakim says:

حديث صحيح الإسناد

A *hadith* with a *sahih* chain

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁵

Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 H) further documents:

حدثنا ابن المثنى، قال: ثنا محمد بن جعفر، قال: ثنا شعبة، عن القاسم بن أبي بزة، قال: سمعت أبا الطفيل، قال: سمعت علياً رضي الله عنه يقول: لا

تسألوني عن كتاب ناطق، ولا سنة ماضية، إلا حدثكم، فسأله ابن الكواء عن
الذاريات، فقال: هي الرياح.

Ibn al-Muthanna – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah – Abu al-Tufayl:

I heard 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, saying, “**You will not ask me about ANY articulate Book or ANY bygone Sunnah, except that I will tell you.**” So, Ibn al-Kawa asked him about *al-Zariyat*, and he replied, “It is the winds”.⁶

This same *sanad* is relied upon by Imam Muslim in his *Sahih*:

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى ومحمد بن بشار (واللفظ لابن المثنى) قالا حدثنا محمد
بن جعفر حدثنا شعبة قال سمعت القاسم بن أبي بزة يحدث عن أبي الطفيل

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna and Muhammad b. Bashar – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah – Abu al-Tufayl⁷

This should be sufficient to establish the status of the above report as *sahih*. However, the *athar* proves a very heavy fact – that 'Ali knew *everything* in all revealed scriptures as well as everything in the *Sunnah* of every single prophet and messenger till the Seal of them. This naturally includes the *Suhuf*, the *Tawrah*, the *Zabur*, the *Injil*, and the Qur'an. Amir al-Muminin had perfect knowledge of them all. He also had complete knowledge of the *Sunnah* of every single one of the 124,000 prophets sent by Allah. Due to the significance of this *athar*, we will *further* confirm its authenticity to remove any possible doubts about it.

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about its first narrator:

محمد بن المثنى بن عبيد العنزي بفتح النون والزاي أبو موسى البصري.... ثقة
ثبت

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna b. 'Ubayd al-Unaza, Abu Musa al-Basri.... **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**.⁸

Al-Hafiz also has these comments about the second narrator:

محمد بن جعفر الهذلي البصري المعروف بغندر ثقة صحيح الكتاب إلا أن فيه غفلة

Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Hazali al-Basri, better known as Ghandar: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, *sahih al-kitab* (i.e. *ahadith* from his books are *sahih*) except that there was some negligence in him.⁹

Whatever negligence he had does not affect his *ahadith* from Shu'bah, the third narrator, at all. He used to accurately record the latter's reports. So, he narrated them from his books with perfect precision. Al-Hafiz provides further information in this respect:

وقال ابن مهدي كنا نستفيد من كتب غندر في شعبة وكان وكيع يسميه الصحيح الكتاب. وقال أبو حاتم عن محمد بن ابان البلخي قال ابن مهدي غندر أثبت في شعبة مني وقال ابن المبارك إذا اختلف الناس في حديث شعبة فكتاب غندر حكم بينهم وقال ابن أبي حاتم سألت أبي عن غندر فقال كان صدوقا وكان مؤدبا وفي حديث شعبة ثقة

Ibn Mahdi said: **“We used to benefit from the books of Ghandar on Shu'bah.** Waki' named him *sahih al-kitab*.” Abu Hatim narrated from Muhammad b. Aban al-Balakhi that Ibn Mahdi said: **“Ghandar is more accurate than me as far as Shu'bah is concerned.”** Ibn al-Mubarak said, **“When the people disagree about the *hadith* of Shu'bah, the book of Ghandar used to judge between them.”** Ibn Abi Hatim said: “I asked my father about Ghandar and he replied, ‘He was *saduq* (very truthful), and was a teacher and **in the *hadith* of Shu'bah, he is *thiqah* (trustworthy).**”¹⁰

The third narrator, Shu'bah, is a pillar of Sunni *ahadith*. Al-Hafiz gives the catch-phrases about him:

شعبة بن الحجاج بن الورد العتكي مولاهم أبو بسطام الواسطي ثم البصري ثقة حافظ متقن كان الثوري يقول هو أمير المؤمنين في الحديث

Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj b. al-Ward al-'Atki, their freed slave, Abu Busāam al-Wasī'i, al-Basri: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, **hafiz (a hadith scientist)**, **extremely precise.** Al-Thawri used to say: **“He was the *amir al-muminin* (the supreme leader) in *al-Hadith*.”**¹¹

This is what al-Hafiz establishes about the fourth narrator as well:

القاسم بن أبي بزة بفتح الموحدة وتشديد الزاي المكي مولى بني مخزوم القارئ ثقة

Al-Qasim b. Abi Bazzah al-Makki, free slave of Banu Makhzum, the Qari (the Qur'an reciter): **Thiqah** (trustworthy).¹²

The last narrator, Abu al-Tufayl, was a Sahabi. So, normally, he was absolutely *thiqah* (trustworthy) by Sunni standards. Al-Hafiz affirms his status:

عامر بن واثلة بن عبد الله بن عمرو بن جحش الليثي أبو الطفيل وربما سمي
عمرا ولد عام أحد ورأى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وروى عن أبي بكر فمن
بعده وعمر إلى أن مات سنة عشر ومائة على الصحيح وهو آخر من مات من
الصحابة قاله مسلم وغيره.

'Amir b. Wathilah b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. Jahsh al-Laythi, Abu al-Tufayl. Perhaps, he was named Amr. **He was born during the year of Uhud, and he saw the Prophet, peace be upon him.** He narrated from Abu Bakr and all those after him. He lived till 110 H, based upon the correct opinion, **and was the last of the Sahabah to die, according to (Imam) Muslim and others.**¹³

This last fact reveals the fallacy of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's claim that Amir al-Muminin never presented the challenge to any of the Sahabah! Abu al-Tufayl was in the mosque when Imam 'Ali made his declaration, and none was excluded from it. We will further investigate this particular unfounded submission of our dear Shaykh, in greater detail, later.

Let us now examine the fourth *sahih* report of *Hadith Saluni* from the Sunni books. Imam 'Abd al-Razzaq records:

عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن وهب بن عبد الله عن أبي الطفيل قال شهدت عليا
وهو يخطب وهو يقول سلوني فوالله لا تسألوني عن شيء يكون إلى يوم القيامة
إلا حدثتكم به وسلوني عن كتاب الله فوالله ما من آية إلا وأنا أعلم بليل نزلت أم
بنهار أم في سهل أم في جبل

'Abd al-Razzaq – Ma'mar – Wahb b. 'Abd Allah – Abu al-Tufayl:

I witnessed ‘Ali while he was delivering a sermon and saying, “**Ask me! I swear by Allah, you will not ask me about ANYTHING that will occur up till the Day of Resurrection except that I will inform you of it.** Ask me about the Book of Allah. I swear by Allah, there is NOT a single verse except that I know whether it was revealed during the night or during the day, or on a level land or on a mountain.”¹⁴

Al-Hafiz states about the first narrator:

عبد الرزاق بن همام بن نافع الحميري مولاهم أبو بكر الصنعاني ثقة حافظ

‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam b. Nafi’ al-Humayri, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-San’ani: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **hafiz** (a **hadith** scientist).¹⁵

He also says about the second narrator:

معمر بن راشد الأزدي مولاهم أبو عروة البصري نزيل اليمن ثقة ثبت فاضل

Ma’mar b. Rashid al-Azdi, their freed slave, Abu ‘Urwah al-Basri, he lived in Yemen: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **thabt** (accurate), **fadhil** (meritorious).¹⁶

What about the third narrator? This is his verdict:

وهب بن عبد الله بن أبي دبي بموحدة مصغرا الهنائي بضم الهاء ونون ومد الكوفي وقد ينسب لجدته ثقة

Wahb b. ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Dubayy al-Hunai al-Kufi, he has been attributed to his grandfather: **Thiqah** (trustworthy).¹⁷

We already know about Abu al-Tufayl. So, this fourth *riwayah* too is *sahih*.

A simple summary of the *athar* is this:

1. ‘Ali challenged the people to ask him about *anything*. He never limited the challenge. Rather, he left it open: “Ask me!”
3. He claimed *perfect* knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah, as well as of all the revealed scriptures of the past prophets and their respective Sunnahs.

5. He also encouraged them to ask him about *anything* that would occur till the Hour. He had complete knowledge of that too.

7. He specifically warned the people after once he died, there would *never* be anyone like him again till the Day of Resurrection.

Apparently, this goes beyond merely scaring some ignorant, evil fellows with some limited knowledge. Rather, the question is: was/is anyone else *ever* capable of making similar claims?

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 5, p. 507–508
 2. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 57
 3. Abu al-Fida Isma‘il b. ‘Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim (Dar al-‘Aaybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi‘; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 7, p. 413
 4. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 506, # 3736
 5. Ibid
 6. Abu Ja‘far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-‘Imuli al-‘Abari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur’an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: ‘Adafi Jamil al-‘Attar], vol. 26, p. 240
 7. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, ‘Ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1567, #1978 (45)
 8. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 129, # 6283
 9. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 63, # 5805
 10. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 9, p. 85, # 129
 11. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 418, # 2798
 12. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 18, # 5469
 13. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 464, # 3122
 14. ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-‘Ana‘ani, Tafsir al-Qur’an (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd; 1st edition, 1410 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Muslim Muhammad], vol. 3, p. 241
 15. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 599, # 4078
 16. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 202, # 6833
 17. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 292, # 7505

16. Hadith Saluni, Implications Of The Reports

The first and only creature to have *ever* made claims and offered challenges similar to those in *Hadith Saluni* was the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa wa alihi*. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records:

وحدثني حرملة بن يحيى بن عبدالله بن حرملة بن عمران التجيبي أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب أخبرني أنس بن مالك أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خرج حين زاغت الشمس فصلى لهم صلاة الظهر فلما سلم قام على المنبر فذكر الساعة وذكر أن قبلها أمورا عظاما ثم قال من أحب أن يسألني عن شيء فليسألني عنه فوالله لا تسألوني عن شيء إلا أخبركم به ما دمت في مقامي هذا

قال أنس بن مالك فأكثر الناس البكاء حين سمعوا ذلك من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأكثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أن يقول سلوني فقام عبدالله بن حذافة فقال من أبي؟ يا رسول الله قال أبوك حذافة فلما أكثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من أن يقول سلوني برك عمر فقال رضينا بالله ربا وبالإسلام ديننا وبمحمد رسولا قال فسكت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حين قال عمر ذلك ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أولى والذي نفس محمد بيده لقد عرضت علي الجنة والنار آنفا في عرض هذا الحائط فلم أر كاليوم في الخير والشر

Harmala b. Yahya b. 'Abd Allah b. Harmala b. 'Imran al-Tajibi – Ibn Wahb – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – Anas b. Malik:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came out when the sun had passed the meridian, and led them in *Salat al-ḥuhr*. When he said the *salam*, he stood upon the pulpit, and mentioned the Hour, and mentioned great affairs that would occur before it. Then he said, “**Whosoever wishes to ask me about ANYTHING, let him ask me. I swear by Allah, you will not ask me about ANYTHING except that I will inform you of it as long as I remain in this position of mine.**” So, the people wept a lot when they heard that from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. **Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, repeatedly said “Ask me!” several times.** So, 'Abd Allah b. Hudhafah stood up and said, “Who is my father, O Messenger of Allah?” He (the Prophet) replied, “Your father is Hudhafah.” When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, continuously repeated “Ask me!” several times, 'Umar knelt down and said, “We are well-pleased with Allah as Lord, and with Islam as religion, and with Muhammad as Messenger.” So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, kept quiet so long as 'Umar was saying that. Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “It is near. I swear by the One in Whose Hand the life of Muhammad is, there was presented to me the Paradise and the Hellfire in the nook of this enclosure, and I did not see as much good and evil as I have seen today.”¹

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) also records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا بن أبي عدي عن حميد عن أنس قال قال رسول
الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ﷺ لا تسألوني عن شيء إلى يوم القيامة الا حدثتكم
قال فقال عبد الله بن حذافة يا رسول الله من أبي قال أبوك حذافة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Ibn Abi ‘Adi – Hamid – Anas:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “**You will not ask me about ANYTHING (that will occur) up till the Day of Resurrection except that I will tell you.**” So, ‘Abd Allah b. Hudhafah said, “O Messenger of Allah, who is my father?” He replied, “Your father is Hudhafah”.²

Shaykh al-Arnau³ comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.³

These were momentous words. He offered them a challenge that was clearly beyond human capability. The Sahabah were awed. They never fathomed the existence of a man who could answer *any* question about *anything* – *any* verse in *any* revealed scripture, *any* Sunnah of *any* prophet, *any* private secrets of anyone, science, medicine, technology, astronomy, and so on. Anything! Nothing whatsoever was excluded. They were challenged to ask *anything* about *anything*! ‘Abd Allah b. Hudhafah exploited the opportunity to verify his paternity – which, of course, was part of “anything”. The other Sahabah were too overwhelmed with awe to ask any question. The Prophet kept challenging them. But, all that they could do was weep. If anyone makes a similar challenge today, he would be humiliated immediately with very simple questions. The only creature that was capable of making the same challenge as the Messenger of Allah had done was none other than Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*.

This relevant *athar* is documented in *Fadhail al-Sahabah* of Imam Ahmad:

حدثنا عبد الله نا عثمان بن أبي شيبة نا سفيان عن يحيى بن سعيد قال أراه عن
سعيد : قال لم يكن أحد من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول سلوني
الا علي بن أبي طالب

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah – Sufyan – Yahya b. Sa’id – Sa’id: “There was never anyone among the Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who used to say “Ask me!” except ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.⁴

Dr. ‘Abbas comments:

إِسْنَادُهُ صَحِيحٌ

Its chain is *sahih*⁵

As for Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, both of them did not even have sufficient knowledge of either the Qur’an or Sunnah – much less anything else! For instance, ‘Umar did not know the basic Islamic ruling on *tayammum*. Imam Muslim records:

حدثني عبدالله بن هاشم العبدى حدثنا يحيى (يعني ابن سعيد القطان) عن شعبة قال حدثني الحكم عن زر عن سعيد بن عبدالرحمن بن أبزي عن أبيه أن رجلا أتى عمر فقال: إني أجنب فلم أجد ماء فقال لا تصل

‘Abd Allah b. Hisham al-‘Abdi – Yahya b. Sa’id al-Qaṣṣan – Shu’bah – al-Hakam – Dharr – Sa’id b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abza – his father:

A man came to ‘Umar and said: “I have seminal discharges and I cannot find water (to do the *ghusl*)”.
He (‘Umar) said, “Do not perform *Salat*.”⁶

Meanwhile, this is the answer to that question in the Qur’an:

وإن كنتم مرضى أو على سفر أو جاء أحد منكم من الغائط أو لامستم النساء فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا صعيدا طيبا فامسحوا بوجوهكم وأيديكم

And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or **you have had sexual intercourse with women and you cannot find water, perform *tayammum* with clean soil** and rub therewith your faces and hands.⁷

‘Umar apparently did not know the verses, or even the explicit Prophetic traditions which also explain the matter. As such, it was naturally impossible for him to have issued *any* challenge to *any* people to ask

him *anything!* He completely lacked the capability, and would have been instantly humiliated with such beginner's topics as *tayammum*. Moreover, as Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records below, 'Umar also lacked knowledge of some other topics in Islamic jurisprudence:

حدثنا أحمد بن أبي رجاء حدثنا يحيى عن أبي حيان التيمي عن الشعبي عن ابن
عمر رضي الله عنهما قال :خطب عمر على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و
سلم فقال إنه قد نزل تحريم الخمر وهي من خمسة أشياء العنب والتمر
والحنطة والشعير والعسل والخمر ما خامر العقل . وثلاث وددت أن رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم لم يفارقنا حتى يعهد إلينا عهدا الجذ والكلالة وأبواب من
أبواب الربا

Ahmad b. Abi Rajah – Yahya – Abu Hayyan al-Tamimi – Shu'bi – Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

'Umar delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, "Verily, there was revealed an order making alcohol *haram*, and it is made from five things: grape, date, wheat, barley and honey. Alcohol is whatsoever clouds the mind. **I wish the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had not left us before he could explain three matters to us: the inheritance of the grandfather, *kalalah* and various types of *riba* (usury).**"⁸

But, it was not only 'Umar. Abu Bakr too, as the *khalifah* – and therefore the chief religious authority of the Muslims, was asked a beginner's question by one of his subjects. It however turned out that the *khalifah* actually had no clue! Allah states:

فليُنظر الإنسان إلى طعامه أنا صببنا الماء صبا ثم شققنا الأرض شقا فأنبتنا
فيها حبا وعنبا وقضبا وزيتونا ونخلا وحدائق غلبا وفاكهة وأبا متاعا لكم
ولأنعامكم

That We pour forth water in abundance, and We split the earth in clefts, and We cause therein the grain to grow, and grapes and clover plants, and olives and date-palms, and gardens, dense with many trees, and fruits and **herbage**, a benefit for you and your cattle.⁹

The above verse is in plain Arabic. Allah reveals about His Book:

هذا لسان عربي مبين

This (Qur'an) is a **clear** Arabic tongue. 10

إنا أنزلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون

We have sent it down as an **Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand.** 11

إنا جعلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون

Verily, We have made it a Qur'an **in Arabic that you may be able to understand.** 12

Therefore, anyone with a proficient knowledge of the Arabic language will always understand the verses of the Qur'an – at least in their literal senses – perfectly. During the *khilafah* of Abu Bakr, a man came to him about the word “herbage” in the above passage. He did not understand what it meant. Perhaps, the man was a Persian, Roman or African. It is also possible that he was an Arab, but one without a sound knowledge of his native language. So, how did the *khalifah* explain to him?

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 H) records:

ومن وجه آخر عن إبراهيم النخعي قال قرأ أبو بكر الصديق وفاكهة وأبا فقيل ما الأب فقيلا وكذا فقال أبو بكر ان هذا له التكلف أي أرض تقلني أو أي سماء تظلني إذا قلت في كتاب الله بما لا أعلم وهذا منقطع بين النخعي والصديق وأخرج أيضا من طريق إبراهيم التيمي ان أبا بكر سئل عن الأب ما هو فقال أي سماء تظلني فذكر مثله وهو منقطع أيضا لكن أحدهما يقوي الآخر

And it is narrated from another chain on the authority of Ibrahim al-Nakha'i:

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq recited “and fruits and herbage”. So, someone asked, “What is herbage?” Another person answered, “It is so-and-so”. Therefore, Abu Bakr said, “**This one (i.e. this question) is overburdensome. Which earth will carry me and which sky will shield me if I say concerning the Book of Allah THAT WHICH I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF.**”

This is *munqati'* (disconnected) between al-Nakha'i and al-Siddiq. It is also recorded through the route of Ibrahim al-Tamimi that **Abu Bakr was asked about herbage, what it was**, and he replied, "Which sky would shield me...." and he mentioned the like of it (i.e. what Ibrahim al-Nakha'i narrated). This one too is *munqati'*. **However, each one of the two (reports) STRENGTHENS the other.** 13

So, Abu Bakr, despite being from Quraysh – who spoke the purest Arabic dialect – did not know what "herbage" meant in the Qur'an! Apparently, though an Arab, the first Sunni *khalifah* had deficient knowledge of his own native language. Considering that the Book of Allah was revealed in "clear" Arabic, that fact alone naturally made him an incompetent interpreter of the divine Scripture.

'Umar too had a similar condition. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

حدثنا أبو عبد الله بن يعقوب ثنا إبراهيم بن عبد التميمي أنبأ يزيد بن هارون أنبأ حميد عن أنس وحدثنا أبو عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا إسحاق أنبأ يعقوب بن إبراهيم بن سعد ثنا أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب أن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أخبره أنه سمع عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه يقول - { فأنبئتنا فيها حبا * وعنبا وقضباً * وزيتونا ونخلاً * وحدائق غلباً * وفاكهة وأبا } قال : فكل هذا قد عرفناه فما الأب ثم نقض عصا كانت في يده ؟ فقال : هذا لعمر الله التكلف اتبعوا ما تبين لكم من هذا الكتاب

Abu 'Abd Allah b. Ya'qub – Ibrahim al-Tamimi – Yazid b. Harun – Hamid – Anas:

And Abu 'Abd Allah – my father – Ishaq – Ya'qub b. Ibrahim b. Sa'd – my father – Salih – Ibn Shihab – Anas b. Malik, may Allah be pleased with him:

I heard 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reciting {And We cause therein the grain to grow, and grapes and clover plants, and olives and date-palms, and gardens, dense with many trees, and fruits and **herbage**}. He said, "**We have known all of this. But, what is "herbage"?**" Then, he broke a stick which was in his hand. So, he said, "**This, I swear by the Life of Allah, IS OVERBURDENSOME. Follow (only) what is clear to you from this Book.**" 14

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs. 15

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim¹⁶

For Allah's sake, was it possible for Abu Bakr or 'Umar to issue a challenge like this:

لا تسألوني عن آية في كتاب الله ، ولا عن سنة عن رسول الله ، إلا أنبأتكم بذلك

You will not ask me about *ANY* verse in the Book of Allah, or about *ANY* Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah, except that I will inform you of that.

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1. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1832, # 2359 (136)
 2. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 107, # 12063
 3. Ibid
 4. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Fadhail al-Ṣahabah* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Dr. Wasiyullah Muhammad 'Abbas], vol. 2, p. 646, # 1098
 5. Ibid
 6. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 280, #112
 7. Qur'an 4:43 and 5:6
 8. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J'ufi, al-Jami' al-Ṣahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2122, # 5266
 9. Qur'an 80:25-32
 10. Qur'an 16: 103
 11. Qur'an 12:2
 12. Qur'an 43:3
 13. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari Sharh Ṣahih al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-Ṣaba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 13, pp. 229-230
 14. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Ṣahihayn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 559, # 3897
 15. Ibid
 16. Ibid

17. Hadith Saluni, Did The Sahabah Ask 'Ali?

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) claims:

أما قول علي سلوني ... وأما الذين كان علي يخاطبهم فهم من جملة عوام
الناس التابعين وكان كثير منهم من شرار التابعين

As for the statement of 'Ali "Ask me" ... those whom 'Ali was addressing, **they were commoners among the Tabi'in**, and a lot of them were the evil ones among the Tabi'in.¹

He clarifies further:

فقول علي لمن عنده بالكوفة سلوني هو من هذا الباب لم يقل هذا لابن مسعود
ومعاذ وأبي بن كعب وأبي الدرداء وسلمان وأمثالهم فلم يسأله قط لا معاذ
ولا أبي ولا ابن مسعود ولا من هو دونهم من الصحابة

The statement of 'Ali "Ask me" TO THOSE WITH HIM IN KUFAH was in this regard. He never said this to Ibn Mas'ud, Mu'adh, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Abu Darda, Salman or others like them.... **They never asked him (anything) – not Mu'adh, not Ubayy, not Ibn Mas'ud and NOT others from the Sahabah.**²

The patent purpose of the above submissions is to downplay the importance of Amir al-Muminin's, *'alaihi al-salam*, challenge. However, what really mattered was the *quality* of the challenge, and not its audience. As we have demonstrated, neither Abu Bakr nor 'Umar was ever capable of issuing the same challenge as Amir al-Muminin did, not even to school kids. Meanwhile, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah is actually wrong in his claims concerning the people of Kufah, and the Sahabah, with regards to the challenge of 'Ali.

To get a clearer picture, let us present this narration of Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) :

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا حسين بن محمد وأبو نعيم المعنى قالنا ثنا فطر
عن أبي الطفيل قال: جمع علي رضي الله تعالى عنه الناس في الرحبة ثم قال
لهم أنشد الله كل امرئ مسلم سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول يوم
غدير خم ما سمع لما قام فقام ثلاثون من الناس وقال أبو نعيم فقام ناس كثير

فشهدوا حين أخذه بيده فقال للناس أتعلمون انى أولى بالمؤمنين من أنفسهم
قالوا نعم يا رسول الله قال من كنت مولاه فهذا مولاه اللهم وال من والاه وعاد
من عاداه قال فخرجت وكأن في نفسي شيئا فلقيت زيد بن أرقم فقلت له انى
سمعت عليا رضي الله تعالى عنه يقول كذا وكذا قال فما تنكر قد سمعت رسول
الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول ذلك له

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Husayn b. Muhammad and Abu Na’im al-
Ma’ani – Faḥr – Abu al-Tufayl:

‘Ali, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him, gathered people at Rahbah (an area in Kufah), and said to them, “I implore with Allah to testify every single Muslim who heard what the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said while standing on the Day of Ghadir Khumm. **So, thirty people stood up – Abu Na’im said: lots of people stood up – and testified** that while holding his (i.e. ‘Ali’s) hand, he (the Prophet) said to the people, “Do you know that I am more entitled to the believers than themselves?” They replied, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.” He (the Prophet) said, “Whosoever I am his *mawla*, this too is his *mawla*. O Allah, be the friend of whosoever is his friend, and be the enemy of whosoever is his enemy.”³

Shaykh al-Arnauḥ states:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*⁴

All those thirty – or actually, lots of – people who stood up to testify were Sahabah, and they were among the people of Kufah! The challenge of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali was directed towards them too, along with the other residents of the city. This reality cuts off the first leg of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s apparently fallacious submission.

At this point, it becomes imperative to ask. Did the Sahabah ever consult Amir al-Muminin to gain knowledge in their religion? Our dear Shaykh claims that they never did. But, is that the case? ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) replies:

أخرجه ابن أبي شيبه في " المصنف " (11/44/2) من طريق سعيد بن المسيب:
" أن رجلا من أهل الشام يقال له (ابن حبري) وجد مع امرأته رجلا فقتلها , أو

قتلها , فرفع إلى معاوية فأشكل عليه القضاء في ذلك , فكتب إلى أبي موسى
أن سل عليا عن ذلك , فسأل أبو موسى عليا

Ibn Abi Shaybah recorded it in *al-Musnaf* (2/44/11) from the route of Sa'id b. Jubayr:

A Syrian man called Ibn Habri caught a man with his wife, and therefore killed him or killed both of them. So, his case was brought to Mu'awiyah. However, he had problem on how to do justice in that. **As such, he wrote to Abu Musa to ask 'Ali concerning that. Therefore, Abu Musa asked 'Ali.**⁵

The 'Allamah comments:

قلت: ورجاله ثقات , لكن سعيد بن المسيب مختلف في سماعه من علي.

I say: **Its narrators are trustworthy.** However, there is disagreement over whether Sa'id b. Musayyab heard from 'Ali or not.⁶

Of course, the correct opinion is that he heard from 'Ali, as declared by al-Hafiz:

سعيد بن المسيب بن حزن بن أبي وهب بن عمرو بن عائذ بن عمران ابن
مخزوم القرشي المخزومي. روى عن أبي بكر مرسلا وعن عمر وعثمان وعلي
وسعد بن أبي وقاص....

Sa'id b. al-Musayyab b. Huzn b. Abi Wahb b. 'Amr b. 'Aiz b. 'Imran b. Makhzum al-Qurshi al-Makhzumi. He narrated from Abu Bakr in a *mursal* form, and from 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas....⁷

It was only from Abu Bakr that he did not hear directly. As for 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali and *all* the other people from whom Sa'id b. al-Musayyab heard, they are grouped together in the same unbroken, long list of names. Moreover, Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records this chain:

حدثنا أحمد بن منيع حدثنا إسماعيل بن إبراهيم حدثنا علي بن زيد عن سعيد
بن المسيب عن علي بن أبي طالب

Ahmad b. Muni' – Isma'il b. Ibrahim – 'Ali b. Yazid – **Sa'id b. al-Musayyab** – **'Ali b. Abi Talib**.8

Al-Tirmidhi notably comments:

حديث علي حسن صحيح

The *hadith* of 'Ali is *hasan sahih*.9

'Allamah al-Albani backs him:

صحيح

*Sahih*10

Simply put, the *athar* from *al-Musnaf* of Ibn Abi Shaybah has a *sahih* chain. It is a very interesting narration, indeed. Mu'awiyah – a Sahabi – was the rebel leader who was waging war against Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, the *khalifah*. Yet, despite his bloody insurgency, he turned to 'Ali for solution to his judicial problem. That was an extreme step, which revealed Mu'awiyah's unconditional acknowledgement that 'Ali's knowledge was unmatched and unique. Moreover, Abu Musa, whom Mu'awiyah sent, was another Sahabi who could have offered a solution if he had any! This incident effectively buries the remains of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's claims.

But, there is more! The second rebel leader who also waged a bloody campaign against 'Ali was Umm al-Muminin 'Aishah. Imam Ahmad records another interesting narration:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق أخبرنا سفيان عن عمرو بن قيس عن الحكم عن القاسم بن مخيمرة عن شريح بن هانئ قال: أتيت عائشة رضي الله عنها أسألها عن الخفين فقالت عليك بابن أبي طالب فأسأله فإنه كان يسافر مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فأتيته فسألته

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Abd al-Razzaq – Sufyan – 'Amr b. Qays – al-Hakam – al-Qasim b. Makhirah – Shurayh b. Hani:

I went to 'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, and asked her about the two *khuffs*. So, she said, **"You MUST go to Ibn Abi Talib and ask him**, because he used to go on journeys with the Messenger

of Allah, peace be upon him.” **So, I went to him and asked him.** 11

Al-Arnau⁹ says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of (Imam) Muslim. 12

Imam Abu Ya’la (d. 307 H) further documents:

حدثنا أبو خيثمة حدثنا أبو معاوية حدثنا الأعمش عن الحكم عن القاسم بن مخيمرة عن شريح بن هانئ قال: سألت عائشة عن المسح على الخفين فقالت: أنت عليا فسله فإنه كان أعلم بذلك مني فأتيت عليا فسألته عن المسح

Abu Khaythamah – Abu Mu’awiyah – Al-A’mash – al-Hakam – al-Qasim b. Makhirah – Shurayh b. Hani:

I asked ‘Aishah concerning wiping over the two *khuffs*. So, she said, “**Go to ‘Ali and ask him**, because he is more knowledgeable of that than me.” **So, I went to ‘Ali and asked him about the wiping.** 13

Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih* 14

One crucial point here is that Shurayh b. Hani was a Sahabi too. Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

شريح بن هانئ بن يزيد بن نهيك ويقال شريح بن هانئ بن يزيد بن الحارث بن كعب الحارثي أبو المقدام أدرك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم

Shurayh b. Hani b. Yazid b. Nuhayk, and he is called Shurayh b. Hani b. Yazid b. al-Harith b. Ka’b al-Harithi, Abu al-Miqdam: **He met the Prophet**, peace be upon him. 15

Do we really have to make any further comments at this point? Perhaps, we should just close things with these words of Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. 630 H):

وروى يزيد بن هارون عن قطر عن أبي الطفيل قال قال بعض أصحاب النبي
لقد كان لعلي من السوابق ما لو أن سابقة منها بين الخلائق لو سعتهم خيرا وله
في هذا أخبار كثيرة نقتصر على هذا منها ولو ذكرنا ما سأله الصحابة مثل عمر
وغيره رضي الله عنهم لأطلنا

Yazid b. Harun narrated from Faḥr from Abu al-Tufayl who said, “Some of the Sahabah of the Prophet said: ‘There are certain unmatched qualities and ranks of ‘Ali that if any of them had been distributed among all creation, it would bring good to all of them’. There are LOTS of reports in this regard in his favour. We are only mentioning a few. **If we had mentioned what the Sahabah, such as ‘Umar and others, may Allah be pleased with them, had asked him, we would have cited a lot!** 16

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 5, p. 507-508
 2. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 57
 3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 370, # 19321
 4. Ibid
 5. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1405 H), vol. 8, p. 28, # 2361
 - Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 7, p. 274, # 2216
 6. Ibid
 7. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 4, p. 74, # 145
 8. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-‘Ahhah Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 3, p. 452, # 1146
 9. Ibid
 10. Ibid
 11. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 146, # 1244
 12. Ibid
 13. Abu Ya’la Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 1, p. 229, # 264
 14. Ibid
 15. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-‘Ahhabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh ‘Adil Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh ‘Ali Muhammad Ma’udh], vol. 3, p. 307 -308, # 3991
 16. Ibn al-Athir, Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Karim b. ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Shaybani al-Jazari, Usd al-Ghabah (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: ‘Adil Ahmad al-Rufa’i], vol. 4, p. 110

18. Hadith Al-‘Ilm, Establishing Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) claims:

قال الرافضي الثالث انه كان اعلم الناس بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

و الجواب أن اهل السنة يمنعون ذلك و يقولون ما اتفق عليه علماءهم أن اعلم
الناس بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أبو بكر ثم عمر و قد ذكر غير واحد
الإجماع على أن أبا بكر اعلم الصحابة كلهم

The Rafidhi said: “The third (point) is that he (‘Ali) is the most knowledgeable of mankind after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.”

The answer is that the Ahl al-Sunnah reject that and say what their scholars unanimously agree upon that **the most knowledgeable of mankind after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was Abu Bakr, then ‘Umar**. Several people have mentioned the consensus upon the fact that Abu Bakr was the most knowledgeable of all the Sahabah altogether. 1

It is one thing to make a claim. It is another for it to be valid. In exactly what way was Abu Bakr, for instance, more knowledgeable than Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*? ‘Ali is the best judge of this entire *Ummah* – a far better judge than either Abu Bakr or ‘Umar. Justice dispensation, of course, requires very advanced knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah. Since Amir al-Muminin was a better judge than both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, he definitely had better knowledge of the Book of Allah and the traditions of His Messenger, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, than the duo.

Moreover, while ‘Ali had perfect knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah, as well as that of all previous Scriptures and Sunnahs, and issued public challenges to this effect, neither Abu Bakr nor ‘Umar even knew the meaning of “herbage” in the Book of Allah! ‘Umar, in particular, lacked knowledge of such topics in Islamic jurisprudence as *tayammum*, *kalalah*, *riba*, inheritance of the grandfather, and whether pregnancy could be only for six months or not! Yet, he was supposedly more knowledgeable than ‘Ali according to the weird logic of some folks.

Our dear Shaykh has cited a general Sunni clerical consensus about Abu Bakr’s scientific superiority over the Ummah. The key question, however, is whether the Messenger of Allah was part of this consensus. If he was not, then such an agreement lacks *any* merit. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records the

Prophet's opinion on the matter:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا أبو أحمد ثنا خالد يعني بن طهمان عن نافع بن أبي نافع عن معقل بن يسار قال: وضأت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ذات يوم فقال هل لك في فاطمة رضي الله عنها تعودها فقلت نعم فقام متوكئا علي فقال أما انه سيحمل ثقلها غيرك ويكون أجرها لك قال فكأنه لم يكن على شيء حتى دخلنا على فاطمة عليها السلام فقال لها كيف تجدينك قالت والله لقد اشتد حزني واشتدت فاقتي وطال سقمي قال أبو عبد الرحمن وجدت في كتاب أبي بخط يده في هذا الحديث قال أو ما ترضين أني زوجتك أقدم أمتي سلما وأكثرهم علما وأعظمهم حلما

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Abu Ahmad – Khalid b. Tahman – Nafi' b. Abi Nafi' – Ma'qil b. Yasar:

I was with the Prophet, peace be upon him, one day. Then he said, "Would you like to visit Faṭimah, may Allah be pleased with her?" I said, "Yes." So, he stood up, leaning on me, and said, "But, someone else apart from you will soon bear its weight and its reward will be for you." It was as though I was carrying nothing until we entered upon Faṭimah, peace be upon her. He (the Prophet) said to her, "How do you feel?" She answered, "By Allah, my grief has intensified, my want has worsened and my sickness has lasted long." He said, "Are you not satisfied that I have married you to the one who was the first of my Ummah to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them?"²

Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) states about this report:

رواه أحمد والطبراني برجال وثقوا

Ahmad and al-Tabarani recorded it **with narrators who have (all) been graded *thiqah* (trustworthy)**.³

At another place, al-Haythami again comments on the same *hadith* with the same chain:

رواه أحمد والطبراني وفيه خالد بن طهمان وثقه أبو حاتم وغيره وبقيه رجاله ثقات

Ahmad and al-Tabarani narrated it. **In the chain is Khalid b. Tahman. Abu Hatim and others declared him *thiqah* (trustworthy).** The remaining narrators are (all) *thiqah* (trustworthy).⁴

But Shaykh al-Arnau⁵ disagrees:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is *dha'if*.⁵

Strangely, al-Arnau⁵ gives no reason for his verdict, especially in the case of such a sensitive *hadith*! Meanwhile 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) seems to have noticed this omission. In his *al-DHa'ifah*, after quoting the exact report above, the 'Allamah states:

أخرجه أحمد (26 /5) ، ومن طريقه ابن عساكر (12 /89 /1) .

قلت: وهذا إسناده ضعيف؛ رجاله ثقات؛ غير خالد بن طهمان؛ فضعه الأكثرون. وقال ابن معين: "ضعيف خلط قبل موته بعشر سنين، وكان قبل ذلك ثقة".

Ahmad (5/26) recorded it, and from his route Ibn Asakir (12/89/1).

I say: **This chain is *dha'if*. Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), except Khalid b. Tahman for the majority declared him *dha'if*.** Ib Ma'in said, "He is *dha'if*. **He became confused ten years before his death. But, before that he was *thiqah* (trustworthy).**"⁶

So, both Imam al-Haythami and 'Allamah al-Albani agree that all the narrators except Khalid were *thiqah* (trustworthy). However, while al-Haythami maintains that even Khalid was graded unconditionally *thiqah* (trustworthy), al-Albani argues that the majority actually considered him *dha'if*. In a rather weird move, 'Allamah al-Albani makes no attempt to, at least, list out the names of some of these "majority". The best that he has offered is only one name: Yahya b. Ma'in! Interestingly, the same 'Allamah even goes ahead to refute himself elsewhere:

وأما أبو العلاء الخفاف واسمه خالد بن طهمان فهو صدوق، لكنه كان اختلط.

As for Abu al-'Ala al-Khafaf, his name is Khalid b. Tahman, **and he is *saduq* (very truthful), although he became confused.**⁷

This is the correct view, according to al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) as well:

خالد بن طهمان الكوفي وهو خالد بن أبي خالد وهو أبو العلاء الخفاف مشهور
بكنيته صدوق رمي بالتشيع ثم اختلط

Khalid b. Tahman al-Kufi, and he is Khalid b. Abi Khalid, and he is Abu al-'Ala al-Khafaf, well-known with his *kunya* (nickname): ***Saduq* (very truthful)**, accused of Shi'ism. **He later became confused.**⁸

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) has the same opinion:

خالد بن طهمان أبو العلاء الكوفي، الخفاف عن أنس، وعدة، وعنه
الفريابي، وأحمد بن يونس، صدوق شيعي، ضعفه ابن معين.

Khalid b. Tahman Abu al-'Ala al-Kufi, al-Khafaf, he narrated from Anas and a number (of others) while al-Faryabi and Ahmad b. Yunus (also) narrated from him: ***Saduq* (very truthful)**, a Shi'i. Ibn Ma'in declared him *dha'if*.⁹

Apparently, Khalid was *thiqah* (trustworthy) or at least *saduq* (very truthful). However, ten years before his death, his memory faded. In line with the Sunni *hadith* principles, when a reliable narrator with a failed memory transmits a report, we first ask if the specific report under study was narrated by him before or during his illness. If there is clear evidence that he transmitted the *hadith* during his days with a sound memory, then it is accepted from him unconditionally. However, in all other cases, a further question is asked. Was his memory failure a serious one or not? The answer to that, as we will prove shortly, determines the final step. Meanwhile, 'Allamah al-Albani here gives explanations on the case of a narrator with a *serious* memory failure:

قلت: وهو ثقة لولا اختلاطه، ومثله من المختلطين له ثلاث حالات:

1 - أن يعرف أنه حدث بالحديث قبل الاختلاط.

2 - أن يعرف أنه حدث به بعد الاختلاط.

3 - أن لا يعرف عنه لا هذا ولا هذا.

ففي الحالة الأولى فقط يحتج به؛ دون الحالتين الأخرين.

I say: He is *thiqah* (trustworthy) despite his confusion. A confused narrator like him has three statuses:

1. To know that he narrated the *hadith* before the confusion.
3. To know that he narrated the *hadith* during the confusion.
5. Not knowing whether he narrated it before or after.

It is only in the first status that his *ahadith* are accepted as *hujjah* (authority), and not in the other two statuses. 10

The first question then is: did Khalid narrate *Hadith al-'Ilm* to Abu Ahmad before his confusion or otherwise?

There is a difference of opinion on this. For instance, Imam al-Ghazali (d. 505 H) states:

ولأحمد والطبراني من حديث معقل بن يسار وضأت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم فقال هل لك في فاطمة تعودها الحديث وفيه أما ترضين أن زوجتك أقدم أمي سلما وأكثرهم علما وأعظمهم حلما وإسناده صحيح

Ahmad and al-Tabarani narrated from the *hadith* of Ma'qil b. Yasar: "I helped the Prophet, peace be upon him, to perform ablution one day. Then he said, 'Would you like to visit Faṭimah?'" Part of the *hadith* is this: "Are you not satisfied that I have married you to the one who was the first of my Ummah to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them?" **Its chain is *sahih*.** 11

He apparently believes that Abu Ahmad heard the *hadith* from Khalid before the latter's confusion. Meanwhile, 'Allamah al-Albani and Shaykh al-Arnauḥ disagree. To them, he transmitted the report

during the last ten years of his life. For the purpose of our research, we stick with the duo. Therefore, we will proceed in our investigation on the basis of an unproved assumption that Khalid narrated *Hadith al-‘Ilm* with a failed memory.

The next question then is: did Khalid have a serious memory problem? Imam Ibn Hibban says “no”:

خالد بن طهمان يخطئ ويهم

Khalid b. Tahman.... **He made mistakes and hallucinated.**¹²

That expression is used only in mild cases. Where the memory failure is serious, the *muhadithun* of the Ahl al-Sunnah employ terms like “he made mistakes *a lot*”¹³ and “he hallucinated *a lot*”¹⁴. Khalid did NOT make mistakes *a lot*, and never hallucinated *a lot*. Truly, his memory failure caused him to make mistakes, and to hallucinate. But, things were never serious. His mistakes and hallucinations were only occasional. Therefore, he still transmitted completely authentic *ahadith* during those last ten years of his lifetime. So, ‘Allamah al-Albani tells us about another narrator who was exactly like Khalid:

والجريري- واسمه سعيد بن إياس- محتج به في "الصحيحين"؛ وإن كان اختلط قبل موته بثلاث سنين، ولكن لم يفحش اختلاطه، وكأنه لهذا احتج به ابن حبان في "صحيحه" تبعاً لـ "الصحيحين"، وأكثر هو عنه، فمثله ينبغي أن يحتج به ما لم يظهر خطؤه، فإذا توبع أو كان له شواهد- كما هو الشأن في حديثه هذا-؛ فلا يضر غرابته فيه إن شاء الله تعالى.

Al-Jurayri – and his name is Sa’id b. Iyas – IS RELIED UPON AS A HUUJAH IN THE TWO SAHIHS, despite he became confused three years before his death. HOWEVER, HIS CONFUSION WAS NOT SERIOUS. Perhaps, it was for this reason that Ibn Hibban has (also) relied upon him as a *hujjah* in his *Sahih*, copying the two *Sahihs*, and has narrated a lot from him. **In the case of a narrator like him, it is appropriate to take him as a *hujjah* where his mistake is not evident.** So, where he is supported by another narrator in narrating the same report from the same person, or there are corroborating reports – as in the case of this *hadith* – then his oddness does no harm to it *insha Allah Ta’la*.¹⁵

Armed with this information, one can confidently say that *Hadith al-‘Ilm*, as narrated by Khalid – even without support or corroboration – is at least *hasan* in itself. Imam al-Tirmidhi¹⁶ and Shaykh Dr. Asad¹⁷ also grade the chain of Khalid b. Tahman as *hasan*, while Imam al-Hakim maintains that his *sanad* is actually solidly *sahih*¹⁸. As such, the verdicts of both ‘Allamah al-Albani and Shaykh al-Arnau¹⁹ concerning *Hadith al-‘Ilm* are hasty and contrary to evidence. What is more? There also are a lot of

corroborating reports testifying for the *hadith*!

‘Allamah al-Hindi (d. 975 H) records one of such corroborating *ahadith*:

عن علي قال : خطب أبو بكر وعمر فاطمة إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فأبى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم عليهما فقال عمر : أنت لها يا علي قال : مالي من شيء إلا درعي وجملي وسيفي فتعرض علي ذات يوم لرسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال : يا علي هل لك من شيء ؟ قال : جملي ودرعي أرهنهما فزوجني رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فاطمة فلما بلغ فاطمة ذلك بكت فدخل عليها رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال : ما لك تبكين يا فاطمة والله أنكحتك أكثرهم علما وأفضلهم حلما وأقدمهم سلما وفي لفظ :
أولهم سلما

Narrated ‘Ali:

Abu Bakr and ‘Umar sought the hand of Faṭimah in marriage from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. But, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, refused their proposals. So, ‘Umar said, “You are for her, O ‘Ali.” He (‘Ali) said, “What do I have apart from my armour, my camel and my sword?” So, ‘Ali approached the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, one day and he (the Prophet) said, “O ‘Ali! Do you have anything?” He replied, “My camel and my armour.” I mortgaged both of them. So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, married Faṭimah to me. When the news got to Faṭimah, she wept. As a result, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, went to her and said, “Why are you weeping, O Faṭimah? I swear by Allah, I have married you to **the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them, and the first of them to accept Islam.”¹⁹

Al-Hindi comments:

ابن جرير وصححه والدولابي في الذرية الطاهرة

Ibn Jarir (al-Tabari) recorded it **AND DECLARED IT SAHIH**. Al-Dawlabi also recorded it in *al-Dhurriyah al-Tahirah*.²⁰

Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H) records another:

حدثنا إسحاق بن إبراهيم الدبري عن عبد الرزاق عن وكيع بن الجراح قال
أخبرني شريك عن أبي إسحاق: أن عليا رضي الله عنه لما تزوج فاطمة رضي
الله عنها قالت للنبي صلى الله عليه و سلم : زوجتني أعيمش عظيم البطن
فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم : لقد زوجتكه وإنه لأول وإنه لأول أصحابي
سلما وأكثرهم علما وأعظمهم حلما

Ishaq b. Ibrahim al-Dabri – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Waki’ b. Al-Jarrah – Sharik – Abu Ishaq:

Verily, ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, when he married Faṭimah, may Allah be pleased with her, she said to the Prophet, peace be upon him, “You married me to a bleary-eyed man with a big belly.” So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “I have married you to him because he was the first of my Sahabah to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them.”²¹

Commenting on this report, Imam al-Haythami states:

رواه الطبراني وهو مرسل صحيح الإسناد

Al-Tabarani records it, and it is *mursal* **WITH A SAHIH CHAIN**.²²

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 500
 2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 26, # 20322
 3. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, pp. 147–148, # 14669
 4. Ibid, vol. 9, p. 123, # 14595
 5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 26, # 20322
 6. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-ḥa’ifah wa al-Mawdu’ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 535, # 4898
 7. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ḥadam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-ḥa’ifah wa Shayhun min Fiqhiyah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, p. 630, # 1979
 8. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 259, # 1649
 9. Shams al-Din Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Dhahabi al-Dimashqi, al-Kashif fi Ma’rifat Man Lahu Riwayat fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (Jeddah: Dar al-Qiblah li al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1413 H), vol. 1, p. 365, # 1330
 10. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-ḥa’ifah wa al-Mawdu’ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 12, p. 991, # 5995
 11. Abu Hamid Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghazali, Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’arif), vol. 3, p. 273

12. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1393 H), vol. 6, p. 257
13. See for instance the case of al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Al-Aswad al-'Ijli, Abu 'Abd Allah al-Kufi in Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 216, # 1336
14. See the case of 'Ata b. Abi Muslim, Abu 'Uthman al-Khurasani in Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 676, # 4616
15. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-'Ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 7, p. 239, # 3089
16. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 4, p. 651, # 2484
17. Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi, Sunan (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 2, p. 550, # 3425
18. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-'Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 217, # 7422
19. 'Ali b. Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa Af'al (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 1989 H), vol. 13, p. 98, # 36370
20. Ibid
21. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-'Abarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hukm; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. 'Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 1, p. 94, # 156
22. Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma' al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 124, # 14596

19. Hadith Al-'Ilm, Proving Its Tawattur

This *hadith* has been narrated by a large number of the Sahabah. We will be presenting some of them, within the limits of the length of our book. To save space, we will be quoting only the chains and the words of the Prophet as reported by each Sahabi, except where doing this is unnecessary. Imam Ibn Asakir (d. 571 H) records the first *riwayah*:

أخبرنا أبو القاسم بن السمرقندي أنا عاصم بن الحسن بن محمد بن عاصم أنا أبو عمر بن مهدي أنا أبو العباس بن عقدة نا الفضل بن يوسف الجعفي نا محمد بن عكاشة نا أبو المغراء وهو حميد بن المثنى عن يحيى بن طلحة النهدي عن أيوب بن الحز عن أبي إسحاق السبيعي عن الحارث عن علي قال:

إن فاطمة شكت إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال " ألا ترضين أني

زوجتك أقدم أمتي سلما وأحلمهم حلما وأكثرهم علما

Abu al-Qasim b. Al-Samarqandi – ‘Asim b. Al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. ‘Asim – Abu ‘Umar b. Mahdi – Abu al-‘Abbas b. ‘Uqdah – al-Fadhli b. Yusuf al-Ju’fi – Muhammad b. ‘Ukashah – Abu al-Maghra Hamid b. Al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Talhah al-Hindi – Ayub b. Al-Hizz – Abu Ishaq al-Shabi’i – al-Harith – ‘Ali:

Verily, Faṭimah complained to the Messenger of Allah. So he said, “Are you not pleased that your husband was the first of my Ummah to accept Islam, and the most clement of them, **and the most knowledgeable of them**”?¹

He records also:

أخبرنا أبو القاسم عبد الصمد بن محمد بن عبد الله أنا أبو الحسن علي بن محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن موسى قال نا أحمد بن محمد بن سعيد بن عقدة نا أحمد بن يحيى وأحمد بن موسى بن إسحاق قالانا ضرار بن سرد نا عبد الكريم بن يعفور عن جابر عن أبي الضحى عن مسروق عن عائشة قالت حدثتني فاطمة ابنة محمد أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لها زوجتك أعلم المؤمنين علما وأقدمهم سلما وأفضلهم حلما

Abu al-Qasim ‘Abd al-Samad b. Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah – Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Musa – Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Sa’id b. ‘Uqdah – Ahmad b. Yahya and Ahmad b. Musa b. Ishaq – DHarar b. Sird – ‘Abd al-Karim b. Ya’fur – Jabir – Abu al-Duha – Masruq – ‘Aishah:

Faṭimah, the daughter of Muhammad, told me that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to her, “Your husband is **the most knowledgeable of the believers**, and the first of them to accept Islam, and the most clement of them.”²

Ibn Asakir proceeds to cite a further *sanad* for the report of ‘Aishah from Faṭimah.³ Then he records:

أخبرنا أبو غالب بن البنا أنا أبو محمد الجوهري أنا أبو محمد عبد العزيز بن الحسن بن علي بن أبي صابر نا أبو حبيب العباس بن أحمد بن محمد البرتي نا إسماعيل يعني ابن موسى نا تليد بن سليمان أبو إدريس عن أبي الجحاف عن رجل عن أسماء بنت عميس قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لفاطمة

زوجتك أقدمهم سلما وأعظمهم حلما وأكثرهم علما

Abu Ghalib b. Al-Bana – Abu Muhammad al-Jawhari – Abu Muhammad ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Abi Sabir – Abu Habib al-‘Abbas b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Barti – Isma’il b. Musa – Tulayd b. Sulayman Abu Idris – Abu al-Jihaf – a man – **Asma b. ‘Umays:**

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to Faṭimah: “Your husband was the first of them to accept Islam, and the most clement of them, **and the most knowledgeable of them.**”⁴

Of course, Imam Ahmad documents his own report with a *hasan* chain:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا أبو أحمد ثنا خالد يعني بن طهمان عن نافع بن أبي نافع عن معقل بن يسار قال قال أو ما ترضين أني زوجتك أقدم أمتي سلما وأكثرهم علما وأعظمهم حلما

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Abu Ahmad – Khalid b. Tahman – Nafi’ b. Abi Nafi’ – **Ma’qil b. Yasar:**

... He (the Prophet) said (to Faatimah), “Are you not satisfied that I have married you to the one who was the first of my Ummah to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them?”⁵

Imam Ibn Asakir again records:

أخبرنا أبو نصر بن رضوان وأبو غالب بن البنا وأبو محمد عبد الله بن محمد بن نجا قالوا أنا أبو محمد الجوهري أنا أبو بكر بن مالك نا العباس بن إبراهيم القراطيسي نا محمد بن إسماعيل الأحمسي نا مفضل بن صالح نا جابر الجعفي عن سليمان بن بريدة عن أبيه قال ... رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ... يا فاطمة أما ترضين أني زوجتك أقدمهم سلما وأكثرهم علما وأفضلهم حلما

Abu Nasr b. Ridwan, Abu Ghalib b. Al-Bana and Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Naja – Abu Muhammad al-Jawhari – Abu Bakr b. Malik – al-‘Abbas b. Ibrahim al-Qaraṣisi – Muhammad b. Isma’il al-Ahmasi – Mufadhhal b. Salih – Jabir al-Ju’fi – Sulayman b. Buraydah – **his father (Buraydah):**

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said... “O Faḥimah! Are you not pleased that your husband was the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them?”⁶

Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H) has a relevant report too:

حدثنا محمد بن عثمان بن أبي شيبة ثنا محمد بن عبيد المحاربي ثنا عبد الكريم بن يعقوب عن جابر عن أبي الطفيل قال : قالت عائشة : اشتكى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في بيتي فأتته فاطمة تمشي والذي نفس عائشة بيده كأن مشيتها مشية رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فسارها رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فبكت ثم سارها فضحكت فقلت : ما رأيت كالليوم ضحكا أقرب من بكاء فقلت : يا فاطمة أخبريني ما قال لك ؟ قالت : ما كنت أفعل وقد رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم مكانك فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم سألتها فقالت : أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال : إن جبريل كان يعارضني بالقرآن في كل سنة مرة وقد عارضني به العام مرتين ولا أراني إلا مدعوا به فأجيب فاتقي الله قالت : فجزعت ثم سارني فقال : أما ترضين أن زوجك أول المسلمين إسلاما وأعلمهم علما فإنك سيدة نساء أمتي كما سادت مريم نساء قومها

Muhammad b. ‘Uthman b. Abi Shaybah – Muhammad b. ‘Ubayd al-Muharibi – ‘Abd al-Karim b. Ya’qub – Jabir – Abu al-Tufayl – **Aishah**:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, complained in my room. So, Faḥimah came to him, walking. I swear by the One in Whose Hand is ‘Aishah’s life, her style of walking was the same as that of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, told her something privately. She therefore wept. Then he told her another thing privately, and she laughed. So, I said, “I do not think it is appropriate to laugh on a day like this, which is more deserving of weeping.”

I said, “O Faḥimah, tell me what he told you.” She replied, “I will not as long as the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, sees your place (i.e. is alive).” Therefore, when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, passed away, I asked her, and she said, “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ‘Verily, Jibril used to present the Qur’an to me once every year, but has presented it twice to me this year. I do not see except that I have been called (into the Presence of Allah) and I will answer (i.e. die soon). Therefore, fear Allah.’ So, I became sad. Then he told me privately and said, ‘Are you not

pleased that your husband was the first of all Muslims to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**? For verily you are the mistress of the women of my Ummah, as Maryam was the mistress of the women of her people?”⁷

Imam al-Daraqūni (d. 385 H) is not left out either:

وسئل عن حديث أبي إسحاق، عن البراء، عن فاطمة بنت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، لما زوجها عليا قالت: زوجتني أحمش الساقين، عظيم البطن فقال: إنه لأولهم إسلاما، وأكثرهم علما، وأعظمهم حلما.

فقال: يرويه أبو إسحاق السبيعي، واختلف عنه؛ فرواه عمر بن المثنى، سئل الشيخ عنه، فقال: لا أعرفه إلا في هذا عن أبي إسحاق، عن البراء. وخالفه إسحاق بن إبراهيم الأزدي، شيخ كوفي من الشيعة؛ فرواه عن أبي إسحاق، عن زيد بن أرقم.

He was asked about the *hadith* of Abu Ishaq, from al-Bara, from **Faṭimah**, daughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him:

When ‘Ali married her, she said (to her father), “You have married me to someone with excited legs, and a big belly.” So, he (the Prophet) replied, “Verily, he was the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them.”

He (al-Daraqūni) said: “Abu Ishaq al-Sabi’i narrated it, and it is differently narrated from him. So, ‘Umar b. Al-Muthanna narrated it.” The Shaykh (al-Daraqūni) was asked about him, and he replied, “I do not know him except in this (*hadith*) from Abu Ishaq, from al-Bara. But Ishaq b. Ibrahim al-Azdi, a Kufan Shi’i Shaykh, narrated differently from him and narrated it from Abu Ishaq from **Zayd b. Arqam**.⁸

Let’s see what ‘Allamah al-Khawarazmi (d. 568 H) has on the matter as well:

وأخبرني شهردار هذا إجازة، أخبرنا عبدوس هذا كتابة، حدثنا أبو طالب، حدثنا ابن مردويه، حدثنا أحمد بن محمد بن عاصم، حدثنا عمران بن عبد الرحيم، حدثنا أبو الصلت الهروي، حدثنا حسين بن حسن الأشقر، حدثنا قيس، عن الأعمش، عن عباية بن ربيعي، عن أبي أيوب: ان النبي صلى الله عليه وآله

مرض مرضة فأتته فاطمة تعودة فلما رأأت ما برسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله من الجهد والضعف استعبرت فبكت حتى سالت الدموع على خديها، فقال لها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: يا فاطمة ان لكرامة الله عز وجل إياك زوجك من أقدمهم سلما " وأكثرهم علما " وأعظمهم حلما "

Shahrdar – ‘Abdaws – Abu Talib – Ibn Mardawayh – Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ‘Asim – ‘Imran b. ‘Abd al-Rahim – Abu al-Salt al-Harwi – Husayn b. Hasan al-Ashqari – Qays – al-A’mash – ‘Ibayah b, Rab’i –

Abu Ayub:

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was sick. So, Faṭimah visited him. When she saw how the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, was, in terms of struggle and weakness, she shed tears and wept till there were tears on her cheeks. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, said, “O Faṭimah! It is through Allah’s Honour of you that your husband was the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them.”⁹

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) says about al-Khawarazmi:

الموفق بن أحمد بن محمد أبو المؤيد المكي، العلامة، خطيب خوارزم.

Al-Muwaffaq b. Ahmad b. Muhammad, Abu Muayyad al-Makki: The *‘allamah* (great scholar), the preacher of Khawarazm. 10

So, let us return to ‘Allamah al-Khawarazmi:

وأنبأني مهذب الأئمة أبو المظفر عبد الملك بن علي بن محمد الهمداني – نزيل بغداد – أخبرنا محمد بن عبد الباقي بن محمد الأنصاري وأبو القاسم هبة الله بن عبد الواحد بن الحصين، قالوا: أخبرنا أبو القاسم علي بن المحسن التنوخي اذنا، أخبرنا أبو بكر أحمد بن إبراهيم بن عبد الصمد بن الحسن بن محمد بن شاذان البزاز، حدثنا أبو بكر محمد بن الحسن بن الحسين بن الخطاب بن فرات بن حيان العجلي – قراءة علينا من لفظه ومن كتابه – حدثنا الحسن بن محمد الصفار الضريير، حدثنا عبد الوهاب بن جابر، حدثنا محمد بن عمير، عن أيوب، عن عاصم الأحول، عن ابن سيرين، عن أم سلمة وسلمان الفارسي

وعلي بن أبي طالب عليه السلام قال: لما أدركت فاطمة بنت رسول الله مدرك النساء فقال لها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله ... : ان زوجتك أقدمهم سلما وأكثرهم علما وأعظمهم حلما

Abu al-Muzaffar ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Hamdani – Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Baqi b. Muhammad al-Ansari and Abu al-Qasim Habat Allah b. ‘Abd al-Wahid b. al-Husayn – Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali b. al-Husayn al-Tanukhi – Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ibrahim b. ‘Abd al-Samad b. al-Hasan b. Muhammad b. Shadhan al-Bazaz – Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. al-Husayn b. al-Khaṣṣab b. Furat b. Hayyan al-‘Ijli – al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-Saffar al-DHarir – ‘Abd al-Wahhab b. Jabir – Muhammad b. ‘Umayr – Ayub – ‘Asim al-Ahwal – Ibn Sirin – **Umm Salamah, Salman al-Farisi** and **‘Ali b. Abi Talib**, peace be upon him:

When Faṭimah, daughter of the Messenger of Allah, attained womanhood So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, said to her: “... Verily, your husband was the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them.” 11

Imam al-Jahiz (d. 255 H) even has some further crucial information:

وروى عبيد الله بن موسى والفضل بن دكين والحسن بن عطية قالوا: حدثنا خالد بن طهمان عن نافع بن أبي نافع عن معقل بن يسار قال فقال لها: أما ترضين أنى زوجتك أقدم أمتي سلما، وأكثرهم علما، وأفضلهم حلما؟ قالت: بلى، رضيت يا رسول الله.

وقد روى هذا الخبر يحيى بن عبد الحميد، وعبد السلام بن صالح، عن قيس بن الربيع عن أبي أيوب الأنصاري بألفاظه أو نحوها

وروى عبد السلام بن صالح عن إسحاق الأزرق عن جعفر بن محمد عن آبائه أن

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لما زوج فاطمة ... فقال: يا فاطمة، إن الله

أمرني فأنكحتك أقدمهم سلما، وأكثرهم علما، وأعظمهم حلما....

قال: وقد روى هذا الخبر جماعة من الصحابة منهم أسماء بنت عميس، وأم
أيمن

وإبن عباس، وجابر بن عبد الله.

'Ubayd Allah b. Musa, al-Fadhli b. Dukayn and al-Hasan b. 'Aḥiyyah – Khalid b. Tahman – Nafi' b. Abi Nafi' – **Ma'qil b. Yasar**: ... He (the Prophet) said to her (Faḥimah): "Are you not satisfied that I have married you to the one who was the first of my Ummah to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them?" She replied, "I am pleased, O Messenger of Allah."

This report has been narrated by Yahya b. 'Abd al-Hamid and 'Abd al-Salam b. Salih from Qays b. al-Rabi' from **Abu Ayub al-Ansari** with its text or a similar one.

'Abd al-Salam b. Salih further narrated from Ishaq al-Azraq from Ja'far b. Muhammad (al-Sadiq) from his ancestors (Muhammad b. 'Ali – 'Ali b. Husayn – Husayn b. 'Ali – **Ali b. Abi Talib**):

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him ... said, "O Faḥimah! Verily, Allah has commanded me to marry you to the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them**, and the most clement of them....

He (al-Jahiz) said: This report was narrated by a group of the Sahabah. Among them were **Asma b. 'Umays, Umm Ayman, Ibn 'Abbas**, and **Jabir b. 'Abd Allah**.¹²

Imam Ibn Asakir has the closing report:

أخبرنا جدي أبو المفضل يحيى بن علي أنا أبو القاسم علي بن محمد أنا أبو الحسن علي بن محمد أنا أبو الحسن علي بن أحمد بن محمد بن داود الرزاز نا أبو عمرو عثمان بن أحمد بن السماك نا عبد الله بن روح المدائني نا سلام بن سليمان المدائني نا عمر بن المثني عن أبي إسحاق عن أنس بن مالك قال قالت فاطمة زوجتي عليا حمش الساقين عظيم البط قليل المشي فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم زوجتك يا بنية أعظمهم حلما وأقدمهم سلما وأكثرهم علما

My grandfather Abu al-Fadhli Yahya b. 'Ali – Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. Muhammad – Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Muhammad – Abu al-Hasan 'Ali b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Dawud al-Razaz – Abu 'Amr 'Uthman b. Ahmad b. al-Simak – 'Abd Allah b. Ruh al-Madaini – Salam b. Sulayman al-Madaini – 'Umar b. al-Muthanna – Abu Ishaq – **Anas b. Malik:**

Faṭimah said, “You have married me to 'Ali with excited legs, and a big belly, and who hardly walks.” So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, replied, “I have married you, my daughter, to the most clement of them, and the first of them to accept Islam, **and the most knowledgeable of them.**”¹³

The following are therefore the Sahabah who have narrated *Hadith al-'Ilm*:

1. 'Aishah bint Abi Bakr
3. 'Ali b. Abi Talib
5. Abu Ayub al-Ansari
7. Anas b. Malik
9. Asma bint 'Umays
11. Buraydah
13. Fatimah b. Muhammad
15. Ibn 'Abbas
17. Jabir b. 'Abd Allah al-Ansari
19. Ma'qil b. Yasar
21. Salman al-Farisi
23. Umm Ayman
25. Umm Salamah
27. Zayd b. Arqam

This fact makes the *hadith mutawatir*, and therefore absolutely true, far above even the level of *sahih ahadith*!

1. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, *Tarikh Madinah Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 80, p. 113

2. Ibid, vol. 42, p. 132
3. Ibid
4. Ibid, vol. 42, pp. 132–133
5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 26, # 20322
6. Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. ‘Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi‘i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 42, pp. 131–132
7. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-‘Abbarani, Mu‘jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-‘Ulum wa al-Hukm; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. ‘Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 22, p. 417, # 1030
8. Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. ‘Umar b. Ahmad b. Mahdi b. Mas‘ud b. al-Nu‘man b. Dinar al-Baghdadi al-Daraqutni, al-‘Ilal al-Waridah fi Ahadith al-Nabawiyah (Damam: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi; 1st edition, 1427 H) [annotators: Muhammad b. ‘Alih b. Muhammad al-Dabasi and Mahmud Khalil], vol. 15, p. 172, # 3930
9. Al-Muwaffaq b. Ahmad al-Bakri al-Makki al-Hanafi al-Khawarazmi, al-Manaqib (Qum: Muassasat al-Nashr al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Shaykh Malik al-Mahmudi], p. 112, #122
10. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A‘lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salam Tadmuri], vol. 39, pp. 326–327
11. Al-Muwaffaq b. Ahmad al-Bakri al-Makki al-Hanafi al-Khawarazmi, al-Manaqib (Qum: Muassasat al-Nashr al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Shaykh Malik al-Mahmudi], pp. 342–353, # 364
12. Abu ‘Uthman ‘Amr b. Bahr al-Jahiz, al-‘Uthmaniyyah (Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 1374 H) [annotator: ‘Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun], pp. 289–290
13. Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. ‘Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi‘i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 42, p. 132

20. Hadith Al-‘Ilm, Some Further Shawahid

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

فحدثنا بشرح هذا الحديث الشيخ أبو بكر بن إسحاق أنا الحسن بن علي بن زياد السري ثنا حامد بن يحيى البلخي بمكة ثنا سفيان عن إسماعيل بن أبي خالد عن قيس بن أبي حازم قال كنت بالمدينة فبينما أنا أطوف في السوق إذ بلغت أحجار الزيت فرأيت قوما مجتمعين على فارس قد ركب دابة وهو يشتم علي بن أبي طالب والناس وقوف حواليه إذ أقبل سعد بن أبي وقاص فوقف عليهم فقال : ما هذا ؟ فقالوا : رجل يشتم علي بن أبي طالب فتقدم سعد فأفرجوا له حتى وقف عليه فقال : يا هذا على ما تشتم علي بن أبي طالب ألم يكن أول من أسلم ألم يكن أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ألم يكن أزهدهم الناس ألم يكن أعلم الناس ؟ وذكر حتى قال : ألم يكن ختن رسول الله صلى الله عليه

وسلم على ابنته ألم يكن صاحب راية رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في
غزواته ؟ ثم استقبل القبلة ورفع يديه وقال : اللهم إن هذا يشتم وليا من أوليائك
فلا تفرق هذا الجمع حتى تريهم قدرتك قال قيس : فوالله ما تفرقنا حتى
ساخت به دابته فرمته على هامته في تلك الأحجار فانفلق دماغه ومات

Abu Bakr b. Ishaq – al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Ziyad al-Sirri – Hamid b. Yahya al-Balakhi –Sufyan – Isma’il b.
Abi Khalid – Qays b. Abi Hazim:

I was in Madinah. While I was moving around in the market, oil stones arrived. So, I saw some people crowding around a Persian man who was riding an animal and cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. People stood round him when Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas turned and stood in front of them and he asked, “What is this?” They replied, “A man cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.” So, Sa’d moved forward and they made way for him until he stood before him and said, “O you! On what basis do you curse ‘Ali b. Abi Talib? Is he not the first to accept Islam? Is he not the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him? Is he not the most ascetic of mankind? **Is he not the most knowledgeable of mankind?**” He mentioned (the merits of ‘Ali) until he said, “Is he not the son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who married his daughter? Is he not the flagbearer of the Messenger of Allah in his battles?” Then he faced the Qiblah and raised his hand and said, “O Allah! This one curses one of your beloved friends. Therefore, do not let this crowd disperse before you show them Your Power.”

Qays said: “By Allah, we had not dispersed when the animal capsized him and threw him on his head into those stones. So, his brain broke open and he died.”¹

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.²

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) confirms:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim³

Of course, the context of Sa’d’s words is clear. After the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*,

Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, *‘alaihi al-salam*, is the most knowledgeable of all mankind, from the beginning of existence till the Hour. That naturally includes both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. This is a very powerful testimony from one of the most senior Sahabah, and one of the earliest Muslims. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) claims the *ijma’* of Sunni *‘ulama* that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were more knowledgeable than ‘Ali. Apparently, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*, was not part of that consensus, nor was the Messenger of Allah!

Imam Hasan b. ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, is the best of the Ahl al-Bayt, *‘alaihim al-salam*, after the Prophet and Amir al-Muminin. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) records his opinion too:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا وكيع عن إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن عمرو بن
حبشي قال خطبنا الحسن بن علي بعد قتل علي رضي الله عنهما فقال: لقد
فارقكم رجل بالأمس ما سبقه الأولون بعلم ولا أدركه الآخرون

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Waki’ – Israil – Abu Ishaq – ‘Amr b. Habashi:

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali delivered a sermon to us after the killing of ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and said: “Verily, a man has left you yesterday. The *awwalun* (people of old)⁴ never surpassed him in knowledge, **and the *akhirun* (later ones)⁵ never reach his level (in knowledge).**⁶

Shaykh al-Arnau⁷ says:

حسن

*Hasan*⁷

This confirms the words of Sa’d. None among those who had died among the Sahabah – including Abu Bakr and ‘Umar – *ever* reached the level of Amir al-Muminin in knowledge. In fact, none among all past human generations from Adam was ever more knowledgeable than ‘Ali. Moreover, apart from Muhammad himself⁸, no other human being in our Ummah has ever attained, and none will ever reach, ‘Ali’s level in knowledge till the Day of Resurrection. Apparently, al-Hasan too was not part of the so-called consensus of Sunni *‘ulama*!

Let us seal this with the words of a top-ranking Sunni scholar. His name was ‘A⁹. Imam al-Dhahabi proclaims about him:

عطاء بن أبي رباح، سيد التابعين علما وعملا وإتقانا في زمانه بمكة روى عن عائشة، وأبي هريرة، والكبار. وعاش تسعين سنة أو أزيد. وكان حجة إماما كبير الشأن، أخذ عنه أبو حنيفة وقال: ما رأيت مثله.

‘Aḡa b. Abi Rabah, **the master of the Tabi’in in knowledge, piety, and generosity during his era in Makkah**. He narrated from ‘Aishah, Abu Hurayrah and the senior (Sahabah). He lived 90 years or a little over. **He was an *hujjah* (authority), an Imam of great significance**. Abu Hanifah learned from him, and said, “I have never seen anyone like him”.⁹

Al-Hafiz also submits:

عطاء بن أبي رباح نزيل مكة واحد الفقهاء والأئمة

‘Aḡa b. Abi Rabah.... He lived in Makkah. **He was one of the jurists and Imams**.¹⁰

So, was this great Imam part of the alleged “consensus”? Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) records:

حدثنا عبدة بن سليمان عن عبد الملك بن أبي سليمان قال: قلت لعطاء: كان في أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أحد أعلم من علي؟ قال: لا، والله أعلمه!

‘Abdah b. Sulayman – ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi Sulayman:

I said to ‘Aḡa: “Was there ANYONE among the Sahabah of the Messenger of Allah who was more knowledgeable than ‘Ali?” He replied, “**I swear by Allah, I do NOT know any such person!**”¹¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about the first narrator:

عبدة بن سليمان الكلابي أبو محمد الكوفي يقال اسمه عبد الرحمن ثقة ثبت

‘Abdah b. Sulayman al-Kalabi, Abu Muhammad al-Kufi, it is said that his name was ‘Abd al-Rahman: **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**.¹²

Concerning the second narrator, he says:

عبد الملك بن أبي سليمان ميسرة العرزمي بفتح المهملة وسكون الراء وبالزاي المفتوحة صدوق له أوهام

‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi Sulayman Maysarah al-‘Arzami: **Saduq (very truthful)**, he had hallucinations. 13

The chain is therefore *hasan* due to ‘Abd al-Malik.

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1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 571, # 6121
 2. Ibid
 3. Ibid
 4. This word normally refers to all the human generations since ‘Adam up till the beginning of the prophetic mission of the Messenger of Allah in Arabia. See, for instance, Qur’an 17:59, 23:81, 43:6 and 56:13.
 5. The term is a reference to all human generations since the start of our Ummah till the Qiyamah. See, among others, Qur’an 56:14. This is especially the case since it is used in contrast to *awwalun*. It therefore refers to all humans who are later in time than the *awwalun*, and that only refers to humanity since Muhammad.
 6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 199, # 1720
 7. Ibid
 8. Generalized statements like that of Imam al-Hasan were always made against the backdrop of an implied understanding that the Messenger of Allah was excluded. We already quoted in this book a *sahih* hadith with this wording: “We used to say that the best judge among the people of Madinah was ‘Ali b. Abi ‘Alib, may Allah be pleased”. Of course, Prophet Muhammad too was living in Madinah at those same times! However, this speaker intended to say “the people of Madinah apart from the Messenger of Allah” but dropped the last part because it was patently unnecessary.
 9. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-‘Itdal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah; 1st edition, 1382 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, p. 70, # 5640
 10. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muassasat al-‘A‘lami li al-Matbu‘at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 7, p. 305, # 4038
 11. ‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. ‘Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-‘Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa‘id al-Laham], vol. 7, p. 502, # 46
 12. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 628, # 4283
 13. Ibid, vol. 1, pp. 615–616, # 4198

21. Hadith Al-Istislam, Investigating Its

Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) admits that Amir al-Muminin, *'alaihi al-salam*, was the first human being ever to accept Islam from the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*:

ثم فيه قول علي صليت ستة أشهر قبل الناس فهذا مما يعلم بطلانه بالضرورة
فإن بين إسلامه وإسلام زيد وأبي بكر وخديجة يوماً أو نحوه فكيف يصلي قبل
الناس بستة أشهر

Then, in it (i.e. the report) is the statement “Ali performed *Salat* six months before anyone else”, this (statement) is one which is known to be necessarily fallacious, because **between his ('Ali's) acceptance of Islam and the acceptance of Islam by Zayd, Abu Bakr and Khadijah was only a distance of one day or a period like that.** So, how did he perform *Salat* six months before anyone else?¹

So, 'Ali accepted Islam one whole day before Khadijah, Zayd and Abu Bakr. But then, our dear Shaykh has a surprise package for us:

قول القائل علي أول من صلى مع النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ممنوع بل أكثر
الناس على خلاف ذلك وإن أبا بكر صلى قبله

The claim that 'Ali was the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is impossible. **Rather, the majority** of the people hold a contrary view, and **believe that Abu Bakr perform *Salat* before him (i.e. 'Ali).**²

One wonders. Since Amir al-Muminin accepted Islam before Abu Bakr, how come the latter offered *Salat* before him? Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah attempts to solve the puzzle:

فإن الناس متنازعون في أول من أسلم فقليل أبو بكر أول من أسلم فهو أسبق
إسلاماً من علي وقيل أن علياً أسلم قبله لكن علي كان صغيراً وإسلام الصبي
فيه نزاع بين العلماء ولا نزاع في أن إسلام أبي بكر أكمل وانفع

The people disagreed about who accepted Islam first. It is said that Abu Bakr was the first to accept Islam, and therefore accepted Islam before 'Ali. **It is (also) said that 'Ali accepted Islam before him. However, 'Ali was a child, and the acceptance of Islam by a child, there is disagreement over it (i.e. its validity) among the 'ulama.** Meanwhile, there is no disagreement about the fact that **the acceptance of Islam by Abu Bakr was more perfect** and more beneficial (than that of 'Ali).³

He adds:

والصبي المولود بين أبوين كافرين يجري عليه حكم الكفر في الدنيا باتفاق المسلمين وإذا أسلم قبل البلوغ فهل يجري عليه حكم الإسلام قبل البلوغ على قولين للعلماء بخلاف البالغ فإنه يصير مسلماً باتفاق المسلمين فكان إسلام الثلاثة مخرجاً لهم من الكفر باتفاق المسلمين وأما إسلام علي فهل يكون مخرجاً له من الكفر على قولين مشهورين ومذهب الشافعي أن إسلام الصبي غير مخرج له من الكفر

A child born to two pagan parents is considered a pagan in this world by the consensus of Muslims. If he accepts Islam before maturity, is he considered a Muslim before he reaches maturity? There are two opinions among the *'ulama*, as opposed to the situation of a matured person (who accepts Islam) because he (the matured person) is considered a Muslim by the consensus of Muslims. So, the acceptance of Islam by the three (i.e. Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman) took them out of paganism by the consensus of Muslims. **However, the acceptance of Islam by 'Ali, did it take him out of paganism?** There are two well-known opinions. **The opinion of (Imam) al-Shafi'i was that the acceptance of Islam by a child does not take him out of paganism.**⁴

Our Shaykh has not explicitly endorsed either of the two opinions. Nonetheless, we will proceed with the assumption that Imam al-Shafi'i was correct.

The first question here is: was 'Ali really a "child" when he accepted Islam? Imam Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H) answers:

قال أبو عمر قيل أسلم على وهو ابن ثلاث عشرة سنة وقيل ابن اثنتي عشرة سنة وقيل ابن خمس عشرة وقيل ابن ست عشرة وقيل ابن عشر وقيل ابن ثمان

وذكر أبو زيد عمر بن شبة قال حدثنا سريج بن النعمان قال حدثنا الفرات بن

السائب عن ميمون بن مهران عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال أسلم علي بن
أبي طالب وهو ابن ثلاث عشرة سنة وتوفى وهو ابن ثلاث وستين سنة قال أبو
عمر رحمه الله هذا أصح ما قيل في ذلك

Abu ‘Umar said, “It is said that ‘Ali accepted Islam when he was thirteen years old. It is said that he was twelve years old. It is said that he was fifteen years old. It is said that he was sixteen years old. It is said that he was ten years old. It is said that he was eight years old....

Abu Zayd ‘Umar b. Shaybah mentioned that – Surayj b. al-Nu‘man – al-Furat b. al-Saib – Maymun b. Mahran – Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both: “**Ali b. Abi Talib accepted Islam while he was THIRTEEN YEARS OLD and died when he was sixty-three years old**”. Abu ‘Umar, may Allah be merciful to him, said: “**This is the most correct opinion on the matter**”.⁵

Therefore, ‘Ali was thirteen years old when he accepted Islam at the hands of the Messenger of Allah. But, was he a matured person then, or was he still a child? Let us get the testimony of an eye-witness. Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) records:

عن أبي رافع قال : أول من أسلم من الرجال علي وأول من أسلم من النساء
خديجة

Narrated Abu Rafi’:

The first to accept Islam **among the male adults** was ‘Ali and the first to accept Islam from the female adults was Khadijah.⁶

Al-Haythami comments:

رواه البزار ورجاله رجال الصحيح

Al-Bazzar recorded it and its narrators are narrators of the *Sahih*⁷

So, Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali was an “adult” when he accepted Islam. Therefore, his Islam was – in terms of quality – as “perfect” as that of Abu Bakr and the other *khalifahs*. Moreover, ‘Ali accepted Islam about twenty hours or more before Zayd, Abu Bakr and Khadijah, according to the admission of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah. Therefore, he enjoyed precedence in his “perfect” Islam over all others. This is further confirmed by this *hadith* documented by Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H):

حدثنا الحسن بن عبد الأعلى النرسي الصنعاني، حدثنا عبد الرزاق، حدثنا
سفيان الثوري، عن سلمة بن كهيل، عن أبي صادق، عن عليم الكندي، عن
سلمان الفارسي رضي الله عنه قال: أول هذه الأمة ورودا على نبيها، أولها
إسلاما، علي بن أبي طالب

Al-Hasan b. ‘Abd al-A’la al-Narsi al-Sana’ani – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Sufyan al-Thawri – Salamah b.
Kuhayl – Abu Sadiq – ‘Alim al-Kindi – Salman al-Farisi, may Allah be pleased with him:

“The first of this Ummah to meet its Prophet (on the Day of Resurrection) will be **the first of them to accept Islam, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.**”⁸

Shaykh al-Haji comments:

الإسناد: قال الهيثمي: رجاله ثقات. وقال حمدي السلفي:

قلت: إن إبراهيم والحسن من الرواة عن عبد الرزاق بعد اختلاطه.

The chain: Al-Haythami said, “**Its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy)**”. Hamadi al-Salafi also said: “I say: ‘Ibrahim and al-Hasan are among those narrators who transmitted from ‘Abd al-Razzaq during his confusion.”⁹

In simple words, the narrators are all trustworthy indeed. However, al-Hasan narrated from ‘Abd al-Razzaq after the latter’s memory failure and during the consequent confusion. However, the report of ‘Abd al-Razzaq is corroborated by this report, recorded by Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H):

حدثنا معاوية بن هشام حدثنا قيس عن سلمة بن كهيل عن أبي صادق عن عليم
عن سلمان قال: أول هذه الأمة ورودا على نبيها أولها إسلاما علي بن أبي
طالب.

Mu’awiyah b. Hisham – Qays – Salamah b. Kuhayl – Abu Sadiq – ‘Alim – Salman:

“The first of this Ummah to meet its Prophet (on the Day of Resurrection) will be **the first of them to accept Islam, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.**”¹⁰

We already know about the trustworthiness of Salamah, Abu Sadiq and ‘Alim al-Kindi. What about Mu’awiyah and Qays? Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about Mu’awiyah:

معاوية بن هشام القصار أبو الحسن الكوفي مولى بني أسد ويقال له معاوية بن
أبي العباس صدوق له أوهام

Mu’awiyah b. Hisham al-Qasar, Abu al-Hasan al-Kufi, freed slave of Banu Asad, he is also Mu’awiyah b. Abi al-‘Abbas: **Saduq (very truthful)**, he had hallucinations.¹¹

Qays is almost like that too, according to al-Hafiz:

قيس بن الربيع الأسدي أبو محمد الكوفي صدوق تغير لما كبر وأدخل عليه ابنه
ما ليس من حديثه فحدث به

Qays b. al-Rabi’ al-Asadi, Abu Muhamamd al-Kufi: **Saduq (very truthful)**. His memory deteriorated when he became old, and his son told him things that were not part of his (original) *ahadith*, and he (Qays) narrated them as *ahadith*.¹²

Both were very truthful, but with varying memory problems. Nonetheless, their report is a very good *shahid* for the *riwayah* of ‘Abd al-Razzaq. As a result, one can safely conclude that the *athar* of Salman al-Farisi above, narrated by ‘Abd al-Razzaq, is *sahih bi shawahidih*. Therefore, Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib was the first human being, and the first male *adult*, to accept Islam.

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records a *hadith* that further corroborates this submission:

حدثنا محمد بن بشار و محمد بن المثنى قالا حدثنا محمد بن جعفر حدثنا
شعبة بن عمرو بن مرة عن أبي حمزة رجل من الأنصار قال سمعت زيد بن
أرقم يقول أول من أسلم علي

Muhammad b. Bashar and Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Muhammad b. Ja’far – Shu’bah b. ‘Amr b. Marrah – Abu Hamza, who was a man from the Ansar – Zayd b. Arqam:

“The first to accept Islam was ‘Ali.”¹³

Al-Tirmidhi states:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *hadith* is *hasan sahih* 14

‘Allamah al–Albani (d. 1420 H) agrees:

صحيح الإسناد

It has a *sahih* chain 15

Imam al–Tabarani (d. 360 H) also documents:

حدثنا إسحاق بن إبراهيم، عن عبد الرزاق، عن معمر، عن عثمان الجزري، عن
مقسم، عن عبد الله بن عباس قال: أول من أسلم علي رضي الله

Ishaq b. Ibrahim – ‘Abd al–Razzaq – Ma’mar – ‘Uthman al–Jazari – Miqsam – ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas:

“The first one to accept Islam was ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him.” 16

Shaykh al–Haji comments:

حديث صحيح رجاله ثقات

A *sahih hadith*. Its narrators are trustworthy. 17

Imam Ibn ‘Abd al–Barr caps the references:

وروى عن سلمان وأبي ذر والمقداد وخباب وجابر وأبي سعيد الخدري وزيد
بن الأرقم أن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه أول من أسلم وفضله هؤلاء على
غيره

Salman, Abu Dharr, al–Miqdad, Khabab, Jabir, Abu Sa’id al–Khudri and Zayd b. Arqam narrated that ‘Ali

b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, was the first to accept Islam, and these people placed him in rank above everyone else.18

Notably, along with Ibn ‘Abbas and Abu Rafi’, those were nine Sahabah. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records about the tenth Sahabi –Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas:

عن قيس بن أبي حازم قال كنت بالمدينة فبينما أنا أطوف في السوق إذ بلغت أحجار الزيت فرأيت قوما مجتمعين على فارس قد ركب دابة وهو يشتم علي بن أبي طالب والناس وقوف حواليه إذ أقبل سعد بن أبي وقاص فوقف عليهم فقال : ما هذا ؟ فقالوا : رجل يشتم علي بن أبي طالب فتقدم سعد فأفرجوا له حتى وقف عليه فقال : يا هذا على ما تشتم علي بن أبي طالب ألم يكن أول من أسلم ألم يكن أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

Narrated Qays b. Abi Hazim:

I was in Madinah. While I was moving around in the market, oil stones arrived. So, I saw some people crowding around a Persian man who was riding an animal and cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. People stood round him when Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas turned and stood in front of them and he asked, “What is this?” They replied, “A man cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.” So, Sa’d moved forward and they made way for him until he stood before him and said, “O you! On what basis do you curse ‘Ali b. Abi Talib? **Is he not the first to accept Islam? Is he not the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah**, peace be upon him?....”19

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.20

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) confirms:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim21

With the above, it can be confidently declared that the reports stating that ‘Ali was the first ever to accept Islam are *mutawatir*, and therefore *absolutely* true and undisputable. Moreover, that fact is further corroborated by another *mutawatir* tradition of the Prophet – *Hadith al-‘Ilm* – narrated by fourteen of the Sahabah!

Additional evidence that Amir al-Muminin had become an “adult” before he recited the *shahadah* of Islam lies in the fact that the Prophet performed the congregational prayers with him. He would not do that with a child! The report of Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas is already cited above. Meanwhile, there is corroboration in this *hadith* documented by Imam al-Tirmidhi:

حدثنا محمد بن حميد حدثنا إبراهيم بن المختار عن شعبة عن أبي بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون عن ابن عباس قال: أول من صلى علي

Muhammad b. Hamid – Ibrahim b. al-Mukhtar – Shu’bah – Abu Balj – ‘Amr b. Maymun – Ibn ‘Abbas:

“The first to perform *Salat* was ‘Ali.”²²

‘Allamah al-Albani says:

صحيح

*Sahih*²³

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) records a *shahid* for the above report:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يزيد بن هارون أنا شعبة عن عمرو بن مرة قال سمعت أبا حمزة يحدث عن زيد بن أرقم قال أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم علي رضي الله تعالى عنه

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yazid b. Harun – Shu’bah – ‘Amr b. Marrah – Abu Hamzah – Zayd b Arqam:

“The first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was ‘Ali, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him.”²⁴

Quite surprisingly, Shaykh al-Arnau²⁵ states about it:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is *dha'if*²⁵

As usual, he has given no reason for the weird verdict. So, let us independently verify the strength of that *sanad*. Is the above report authentic? Or, is it really weak?

Al-Hafiz says about the first narrator:

عبد الله بن أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل الشيباني أبو عبد الرحمن ولد الإمام ثقة

‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman: son of the Imam, **thiqah (trustworthy)**.²⁶

He further states about the second narrator:

أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل بن هلال بن أسد الشيباني المروزي نزيل بغداد أبو
عبد الله أحد الأئمة ثقة حافظ فقيه حجة

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal b. Hilal b. Asad al-Shaybani al-Maruzi, a Baghdad resident, Abu ‘Abd Allah: **One of the Imams, thiqah (trustworthy), hafiz (a hadith scientist)**, jurist, **hujjah (an authority)**.²⁷

Concerning the third narrator, the verdict is the same, according to al-Hafiz:

يزيد بن هارون بن زاذان السلمي مولاهم أبو خالد الواسطي ثقة متقن عابد

Yazid b. Harun b. Zazan al-Sulami, their freed slave, Abu Khalid al-Wasi²⁸: **Thiqah (trustworthy), extremely precise**, a great worshipper of Allah.²⁸

The fourth narrator, Shu’bah, needs no introduction. Al-Hafiz makes some ground-breaking pronouncements about him nonetheless:

شعبة بن الحجاج بن الورد العتكي مولاهم أبو بسطام الواسطي ثم البصري ثقة
حافظ متقن كان الثوري يقول هو أمير المؤمنين في الحديث

Shu'bah b. al-Hajjaj b. al-Ward al-'Atki, their freed slave, Abu Busṭam al-Wasī'i, al-Basri: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), **hafiz (a hadith scientist)**, **extremely precise**. Al-Thawri used to say: "He was the amir al-muminin (the supreme leader) in *al-Hadith*."29

He has a very simple verdict about the fifth narrator as well:

عمرو بن مرة بن عبد الله بن طارق الجملي بفتح الجيم والميم المرادي أبو عبد
الله الكوفي الأعمى ثقة عابد كان لا يدلس

'Amr b. Marrah b. 'Abd Allah b. Tariq al-Jamali al-Muradi, Abu 'Abd Allah al-Kufi, the blind person: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), a great worshipper of Allah. He did NOT do *tadlis*.30

The last narrator is like that too, as pronounced by al-Hafiz:

طلحة بن يزيد الأيلي بفتح الهمزة وسكون الياء أبو حمزة مولى الأنصار نزل
الكوفة وثقه النسائي

Talhah b. Yazid al-Ayli, the freed slave of the Ansar, he lived in Kufah: **Al-Nasai declared him thiqah** (trustworthy).31

So, all the narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), and there is no evidence of disconnection in the chain. As such, the *isnad* is *sahih* without a doubt! 'Allamah al-Albani also states about another *hadith* with a very similar *sanad*:

أخرجه أبو داود ... من طريق شعبة عن عمرو بن مرة قال: سمعت أبا حمزة
أنه سمع زيد بن أرقم قالقلت: وهذا سند صحيح رجاله رجال الشيخين
غير أبي حمزة واسمه طلحة بن يزيد الأنصاري فمن رجال البخاري، ووثقه ابن
حبان والنسائي.

Abu Dawud recorded it ... through the route of **Shu'bah – 'Amr b. Marrah – Abu Hamzah – Zayd b. Arqam....** I (al-Albani) say: **This chain is *sahih***. Its narrators are narrators of the two Shaykhs apart from **Abu Hamzah, and his name is Talhah b. Yazid al-Ansari and he is from the narrators of al-Bukhari. Ibn Hibban and al-Nasai declared him *thiqah* (trustworthy).**³²

In conclusion, the chain of Zayd b. Arqam's report that 'Ali was the first human being to perform *Salat* with the Prophet, recorded in *Musnad Ahmad*, is impeccably *sahih*. All the narrators are trustworthy, and there is no disconnection in the chain whatsoever. As such, Shaykh al-Arnaut's *tadh'if* of the *sanad* has no academic basis.

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1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 5, p. 19
 2. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 273
 3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 155
 4. Ibid, vol. 8, pp. 285–286
 5. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Isim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, pp. 1093–1095, # 1855
 6. Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma' al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 353, # 15258
 7. Ibid
 8. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad al-'Abbarani, Kitab al-Awail (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 3rd edition, 1408 H) [annotator: Muhammad Shakur b. Mahmud al-Haji], p. 78, # 51
 9. Ibid
 10. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 8, p. 350, # 222
 11. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 197, # 6795
 12. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 33, # 5590
 13. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 642, # 3735
 14. Ibid
 15. Ibid
 16. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad al-'Abbarani, Kitab al-Awail (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 3rd edition, 1408 H) [annotator: Muhammad Shakur b. Mahmud al-Haji], p. 78, # 52
 17. Ibid
 18. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Isim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, pp. 1090, # 1855
 19. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-'Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 571, # 6121
 20. Ibid
 21. Ibid
 22. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 642, # 3734
 23. Ibid
 24. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut],

vol. 4, p. 368, # 19303

25. Ibid

26. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 477, # 3216

27. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 44, # 96

28. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 333, # 7817

29. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 418, # 2798

30. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 745, # 5128

31. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 452, # 3049

32. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Shahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 1, p. 242, # 123

22. Hadith Al-Zuhd, Correcting An Exaggeration

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states about both Abu Bakr and 'Umar:

أهل العلم بحالهما يقولون ازهد الناس بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
الزهد الشرعي أبو بكر و عمر و ذلك أن أبا بكر كان له مال يكتسبه فأنفقه كله
في سبيل الله

The People of Knowledge, concerning both of them, say that the most ascetic of mankind after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him – in terms of legitimate ascetism – are Abu Bakr and 'Umar. This is because Abu Bakr earned some wealth and spent all of it in the Path of Allah.¹

He adds:

و قال ابن حزم و قال قائلون علي كان أزهدهم قال و كذب هذا الجاهل

Ibn Hazm said: “Some people say that 'Ali was the most ascetic of them”. He (Ibn Hazm) replied, “**This ignorant one has lied.**”²

So, let us see the faces of some of these “ignorant liars”. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

فحدثنا بشرح هذا الحديث الشيخ أبو بكر بن إسحاق أنا الحسن بن علي بن زياد السري ثنا حامد بن يحيى البلخي بمكة ثنا سفيان عن إسماعيل بن أبي خالد عن قيس بن أبي حازم قال كنت بالمدينة فبينما أنا أطوف في السوق إذ بلغت أحجار الزيت فرأيت قوما مجتمعين على فارس قد ركب دابة وهو يشتم علي بن أبي طالب والناس وقوف حواليه إذ أقبل سعد بن أبي وقاص فوقف عليهم فقال : ما هذا ؟ فقالوا : رجل يشتم علي بن أبي طالب فتقدم سعد فأفرجوا له حتى وقف عليه فقال : يا هذا على ما تشتم علي بن أبي طالب ألم يكن أول من أسلم ألم يكن أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ألم يكن ازهد الناس؟

Abu Bakr b. Ishaq – al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Ziyad al-Sirri – Hamid b. Yahya al-Balakhi –Sufyan – Isma’il b. Abi Khalid – Qays b. Abi Hazim:

I was in Madinah. While I was moving around in the market, oil stones arrived. So, I saw some people crowding around a Persian man who was riding an animal and cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. People stood round him when Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas turned and stood in front of them and he asked, “What is this?” They replied, “A man cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.” So, Sa’d moved forward and they made way for him until he stood before him and said, “O you! On what basis do you curse ‘Ali b. Abi Talib? Is he not the first to accept Islam? Is he not the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him? **Is he not the most ascetic of mankind?**”³

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.⁴

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) confirms:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim⁵

One would never have guessed correctly that the Ahl al-Sunnah consider Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas,

radhiyallahu ‘anhu – one of the most senior Sahabah and one of the earliest converts to Islam – to be an ignorant liar! Wait a minute! How come the testimony of Sa’d – an eye-witness – was ignorant fallacy while that of Sunni scholars, born centuries after him, is sound knowledge? Has the world really turned upside down?

Interestingly, another big Sunni name features prominently on the list of “ignorant liars”. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) copies this report:

وقال يحيى بن معين: عن علي بن الجعد عن الحسن بن صالح قال: تذاكروا الزهاد عند عمر بن عبد العزيز فقال قائلون: فلان، وقال قائلون: فلان، فقال عمر بن عبد العزيز: أزهد الناس في الدنيا علي بن أبي طالب.

Yahya b. Ma’in – ‘Ali b. al-Ja’d – al-Hasan b. Salih:

They mentioned ascetism in the presence of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. Some people said, “So-and-so (is the most ascetic)”. Others said, “So-and-so (is the most ascetic)”. So, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz said, “**The most ascetic of mankind – as far as this world (i.e. material possessions, power, and worldly pleasures) is concerned – is ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.**”⁶

Al-Hafiz says about the first narrator:

يحيى بن معين بن عون الغطفاني مولاهم أبو زكريا البغدادي ثقة حافظ مشهور
إمام الجرح والتعديل

Yahya b. Ma’in b. ‘Awn al-Ghafani, their freed slave, Abu Zakariyah al-Baghdadi: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), a well-known *hafiz* (*hadith* scientist), Imam of *al-jarh wa al-ta’dil*.⁷

Concerning the second narrator, he also states:

علي بن الجعد بن عبيد أبو الحسن الجوهري البغدادي ثقة ثبت رمي بالتشيع

‘Ali b. al-Ja’d b. ‘Ubayd, Abu al-Hasan al-Jawhari al-Baghdadi: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), *thabt* (accurate), he was accused of Shi’ism.⁸

Lastly, he has this verdict on the third narrator:

الحسن بن صالح بن صالح بن حي وهو حيان بن شفي بضم بالمعجمة والفاء
مصغر الهمداني بسكون الميم الثوري ثقة فقيه عابد رمي بالتشيع

Al-Hasan b. Salih b. Salih b. Hayy, and he was Hayyan b. Shufay al-Hamdani al-Thawri: **Thiqah** (trustworthy), a jurist, a great worshipper of Allah, he was accused of Shi'ism.⁹

The *sanad*, therefore, is *sahih*. All the narrators are trustworthy, and there is no disconnection among the narrators. So, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz – the righteous *khalifah* in the sight of most of the Ahl al-Sunnah – was actually an “ignorant liar” according to the view of Imam Ibn Hazm, endorsed by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah!

It is fair, at this point, to compare the asceticism of either Abu Bakr or 'Umar with that of 'Ali, *'alaihi al-salam*, for further verification. We prefer 'Umar for the research, since more materials are available on his lifetime and death than on his predecessor. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah claims that 'Umar was more ascetic than 'Ali. Let us test the submission against reality. We open the investigation with this *athar* from *Sahih al-Bukhari*:

حدثنا محمد بن سلام أخبرنا مخلد بن يزيد أخبرنا ابن جريج قال أخبرني عطاء
عن عبيد الله بن عمير: أن أبا موسى الأشعري استأذن على عمر بن الخطاب
رضي الله عنه فلم يؤذن له وكأنه كان مشغولاً فرجع أبو موسى ففرغ عمر فقال
ألم أسمع صوت عبد الله بن قيس ائذنوا له . قيل قد رجع فدعاه فقال كنا نؤمر
بذلك . فقال تأتيني على ذلك بالبينة فانطلق إلى مجلس الأنصار فسألهم فقالوا لا
يشهد على هذا إلا أصغرنا أبو سعيد الخدري فذهب بأبي سعيد الخدري فقال
عمر أخفي هذا علي من أمر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ؟ ألهاني الصفاق
بالأسواق . يعني الخروج إلى تجارة

Muhammad b. Salam – Mukhlid b. Yazid – Ibn Jurayh – 'Aṣa – 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Umayr:

Abu Musa al-Ash'ari sought permission of 'Umar b. al-Khattaab, may Allah be pleased with him, to enter his house. But, he ('Umar) did not give him permission. It was as though he ('Umar) was busy. So Abu Musa went back. When 'Umar finished his job, he asked, “**Didn't I hear the voice of 'Abd Allah b. Qays (i.e. the real name of Abu Musa)**? Allow him to come in.” It was said, “He (Abu Musa) has returned.” So, he ('Umar) sent for him and (on his arrival), he (Abu Musa) said, “We were ordered to do so”. 'Umar told him, “Bring witness in proof of that.” Abu Musa went to the assembly of the Ansar and asked them. They said, “None amongst us will testify to that except the youngest of us, Abu Sa'id Al-

Khudri.” Abu Musa then took Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri (to ‘Umar) and ‘Umar said “Has this order of the Messenger of Allah been hidden from me? **I used to be busy trading in markets.**”¹⁰

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records another report with some more details:

حدثني عمرو بن محمد بن بكير الناقد حدثنا سفیان بن عيينة حدثنا والله يزيد بن حصيفة عن بسر بن سعيد قال سمعت أبا سعيد الخدري يقول كنت جالسا بالمدينة في مجلس الأنصار فأتانا أبو موسى فزعا أو مذعورا قلنا ما شأنك ؟ قال إن عمر أرسل إلي أن آتية فأتيت بابه فسلمت ثلاثا فلم يرد علي فرجعت فقال ما منعك أن تأتينا ؟ فقلت إني أتيت فسلمت على بابك ثلاثا فلم يردوا علي فرجعت وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إذا استأذن أحدكم ثلاثا فلم يؤذن له فليرجع فقال عمر أقم عليه البينة وإلا أوجعتك فقال أبي بن كعب لا يقوم معه إلا أصغر القوم قال أبو سعيد قلت أنا أصغر القوم قال فإذهب به

‘Amr b. Muhammad b. Bukayr al-Naqid – Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah –Yazid b. Husayfah – Busr b. Sa’id – Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

I was sitting in Madinah in the assembly of the Ansar when Abu Musa came to us trembling with fear. We said, “What is the problem with you?” He replied, “**Umar sent for me. So, I went to his door, and said as-salam ‘alaikum three times and he did not reply me.** Therefore, I returned. On that, he said, “**Why did you not come to us?**” I said, “I came to you and said *as-salam ‘alaikum* three times at your door but I was not given any response. So, I returned. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had said, “When any of you seeks permission to enter three times, and he is not permitted, he must turn back”. So, ‘Umar said, “Bring evidence to support it. Otherwise, I will take you to task.” Ubayy b. Ka’b said, “None shall stand with him (to testify) but the youngest of the people.” Abu Sa’id said, “I am the youngest”. He (Ubayy) said, “Then go with him.”¹¹

‘Umar literally heard him saying *as-salamu ‘alaikum* three times, but did not respond. In line with the Sunnah, Abu Musa returned. Strangely, ‘Umar proceeded to accuse him of NOT having come to his door at all despite his message! That certainly was a deliberately false accusation from the *khalifah* of the believers! In any case, Abu Musa explained himself, and excused his action through the Sunnah of the Messenger, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*.

Quite weirdly, ‘Umar had absolutely no clue about this Sunnah! From the narrations, it is clear that all the Ansar knew of the Prophetic order. In what looks like a humiliation of the *khalifah*, they randomly picked the youngest of them, to narrate it to him. But, what was ‘Umar’s excuse? He used “to be busy trading in markets”. ‘Umar was moving from market to market doing business in order to make money. Therefore,

he did not have time to learn the Sunnah from the Messenger! As such, he was clueless about even some of the most basic Sunnahs.

Apparently, money had more priority over the Sunnah in the sight of ‘Umar. What about ‘Ali? Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir states:

قال شعبة بن الحجاج ، عن سِمَاك ، عن خالد بن عَرَعْرَةَ أنه سمع عليا وشعبة
أيضاً ، عن القاسم بن أبي بَزَّة ، عن أبي الطُّفَيْل ، سمع علياً. وثبت أيضاً من
غير وجه ، عن أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب : أنه صعد منبر الكوفة فقال :
لا تسألوني عن آية في كتاب الله ، ولا عن سنة عن رسول الله ، إلا أنبأتكم بذلك.

Shu’bah b. al-Hajjaj, from Simak, from Khalid b. ‘Ar’arah that he heard ‘Ali; and Shu’bah again narrated from al-Qasim b. Abi Barrah from Abu al-Tufayl that he heard ‘Ali; and IT IS ALSO AUTHENTICALLY TRANSMITTED through many chains that Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib climbed the pulpit of Kufah and said, “**You will not ask me about ANY verse in the Book of Allah, or about ANY Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah, except that I will inform you about that.**”¹²

‘Ali knew *all* the Sunnahs, without absolutely *any* exception. The only way he was able to achieve this was that he placed the supreme priority upon learning the Qur’an and Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah. In all honesty, it is extremely difficult, if not entirely impossible, to rationalize how our Ahl al-Sunnah brothers reach their conclusion that ‘Umar was more ascetic or more knowledgeable than ‘Ali!

As a final point, let us compare both ‘Umar and ‘Ali from another angle. Imam Ibn Shabah (d. 262 H) records:

حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل قال حدثنا سلام بن أبي مطيع عن أيوب قال قلت
لنافع هل كان على عمر رضي الله عنه دين فقال ومن أين يدع عمر ديناً وقد باع
رجل من ورثته ميراثه بمائة ألف .

Musa b. Isma’il – Salam b. Abi Mu‘i’ – Ayub:

I said to Nafi’, “Did ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, have any debt?” So, he replied, “From where can ‘Umar claim to have any debt when a man from his inheritors sold his inheritance for 100,000 (dinars)?”¹³

Al-Hafiz has this to say about the report:

فروى عمر بن شبة في كتاب المدينة بإسناد صحيح ان نافعا قال من أين يكون على عمر دين وقد باع رجل من ورثته ميراثه بمائة الف انتهى وهذا لا ينفي ان يكون عند موته عليه دين فقد يكون الشخص كثير المال ولا يستلزم نفي الدين عنه فلعل نافعا أنكر ان يكون دينه لم يقض

‘Umar b. Shabah recorded in *Kitab al-Madinah with a sahih chain* that Nafi’ said, “From where can ‘Umar claim to have any debt when a man from his inheritors sold his inheritance for 100,000 (dinars)?”. This does not negate the possibility that when he died he had a debt. The person can be very rich person. But, that does not necessarily mean that he does not have any debt. Perhaps, Nafi’ was denying the existence of any unpaid debt for him. 14

The dinar was the default Arabian currency at that time. It was a gold coin. In modern terms, each classical dinar equals approximately US \$193.0015 (one hundred and ninety-three US dollars). So, each male son of ‘Umar inherited from him net wealth worth at least US \$19, 300000 (nineteen million and three hundred thousand US dollars). If he had any daughters, her inheritance would be half of that, which is US \$9, 650000 (nine million and six hundred and fifty thousand US dollars). So, how many were ‘Umar’s children who survived him? Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir states about ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb:

قلت: فجملة أولاده رضي الله عنه وأرضاه ثلاثة عشر ولدا، وهم زيد الأكبر، وزيد الأصغر، وعاصم، وعبد الله، وعبد الرحمن الأكبر، وعبد الرحمن الأوسط، قال الزبير بن بكار وهو أبو شحمة، وعبد الرحمن الأصغر وعبيد الله، وعياض، وحفصة، ورقية، وزينب، وفاطمة، رضي الله عنهم.

I (Ibn Kathir) say: In summary, **his (i.e. ‘Umar’s) children, may Allah be pleased with him, were thirteen**, and they were Zayd al-Akbar, Zayd al-Asghar, ‘Asim, ‘Abd Allah, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Akbar, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Awsaḥ – al-Zubayr b. Bakar said he was Abu Shahmah, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Asghar, ‘Ubayd Allah, ‘Iyad, Hafsah, Ruqayyah, Zaynab and Faṭimah, may Allah be pleased with them. 16

The second *khalifah* had thirteen children. Only four of them were females. So, there were nine males. Of his children generally, one of them – Abu Shahmah – died during his lifetime. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H) explains the circumstances of his death:

وعبد الرحمن بن عمر الأوسط هو أبو شحمة هو الذي ضربه عمرو بن العاص

بمصر في الخمر ثم حمله إلى المدينة فضربه أبوه أدب الوالد ثم مرض ومات بعد شهر

‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Umar al-Awsa[ؓ] was Abu Shahmah. He was the one who was beaten in Egypt by ‘Amr b. al-As for alcohol drinking. Then, he took him to Madinah, and his father (i.e. ‘Umar) beat him as a parental correctional measure. Then he became sick and died after a month.¹⁷

It looks like unintentional manslaughter by the angry *khalifah*. Whatever the case, eight males and four females inherited ‘Umar among his children alone. We will completely ignore what his wives and some other people might also have inherited from the second *khalifah*. We will also not take into account any gifts from his vast wealth which he might have given to some people. We will equally take our eyes away from any debts he had, which was re-paid from his estate, before the remainder was distributed among his inheritors. Our focus, strictly, is upon what passed to his sons and daughters from him.

The monetary value of the inheritance of a male inheritor was US \$19, 300000 (nineteen million and three hundred thousand US dollars). For all eight sons, the total would be US \$ 154, 400000 (one hundred and fifty four million and four hundred thousand dollars). The share of each daughter was US \$9, 650000 (nine million and six hundred and fifty thousand US dollars). For the four daughters, their total inheritance was worth US \$38, 600000 (thirty-eight million and six hundred thousand US dollars). Adding US \$ 154, 400000 to \$38, 600000, we get US \$193, 000000 (one hundred and ninety-three million US dollars). This was the wealth that the children of ‘Umar b. al-Kha[ؓ]ab alone inherited from him.

How ‘Umar acquired such vast wealth is unclear. Before he became the *khalifah*, he was only an average businessman, with no record of any spectacular success. Moreover, he was not an oil tycoon or weapons merchant, nor was he a Silicon Valley entrepreneur. Even his entire business empire, in modern terms, would be only a small-scale rural enterprise. Considering the extreme poverty levels back then, ‘Umar’s fortune of at least US \$193, 000000 (one hundred and ninety-three million US dollars) placed him in the position of multibillionaires in our times. He was most likely the richest man on earth during his *khilafah*.

So, what about Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali? Was he really worldlier than ‘Umar, as claimed by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah? Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا وكيع عن إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن عمرو بن
حبشي قال خطبنا الحسن بن علي بعد قتل علي رضي الله عنهما فقال: لقد
فارقكم رجل بالأمس ما سبقه الأولون بعلم ولا أدركه الآخرون ان كان رسول

الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ليعبثه ويعطيه الراية فلا ينصرف حتى يفتح له وما
ترك من صفراء ولا بيضاء الا سبعمائة درهم من عطائه كان يرصدها لخدام
لأهله

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Waki’ – Israil – Abu Ishaq – ‘Amr b. Habashi:

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali delivered a sermon to us after the killing of ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and said: “Verily, a man has left you yesterday. The *awwalun* (people of old) never surpassed him in knowledge, and the *akhirun* (later ones) never reach his level (in knowledge). Whoever the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, appointed him and gave him the flag, he never returned until he is granted victory (by Allah). **He left behind no gold coin and no silver coin except 700 (seven hundred) dirhams from his salary.** He set it aside to procure with it a servant for his family.”¹⁸

Shaykh al-Arnau¹⁹ says:

حسن

*Hasan*¹⁹

A dirham which was a silver coin, in modern terms, equals approximately US \$3 (three US dollars)²⁰. So, ‘Ali’s monetary wealth when he died was only US \$2100 (two thousand and one hundred US dollars). Apart from his living quarters and his battle equipment (and possibly a few other minor items), there is no reliable record of him possessing and leaving behind anything else. Rather, the fact that he had to set aside seven hundred dirhams from his salary in order to purchase a servant shows that he had no other means. Perhaps, his entire estate was only US \$5,000 (five thousand US dollars) at the most. To our dear Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, a *khalifah* with a total estate of less than US \$5,000 (five thousand US dollars) was more worldly and materialistic than another *khalifah* who left behind more than US \$193, 000000 (one hundred and ninety-three million US dollars). Isn’t that very weird?

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 479

2. *Ibid*, vol. 7, p. 481–482

3. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Ahihayn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 571, # 6121

4. *Ibid*

5. *Ibid*

6. Abu al-Fida Isma‘il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H)

[annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 8, p. 6

7. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H)

[annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 316, # 7679

8. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 689, # 4714

9. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 205, #1254

10. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J'ufi, al-Jami' al-'Ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 2, p. 727, # 1956

11. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, 'Ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1694, # 2153 (33)

12. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-'Ayybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 7, p. 413

13. Abu Zayd 'Umar b. Shabah al-Numayri al-Basri, Tarikh al-Madinah al-Munawwarah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1417 H) [annotators: 'Ali Muhammad Dandal and Yasin Sa'd al-Din Bayan], vol. 2, p. 88, # 1603

14. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh 'Ahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-'Aba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 7, p. 53

15. See this Sunni calculating website <http://www.e-nisab.com/calculator> [14]

16. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 7, p. 157

17. Abu 'Umar Yusuf b. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Barr b. 'Isim al-Nimri al-Qurtubi, al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab (Beirut: Dar al-Jil; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: 'Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 2, p. 842, # 1443

18. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 199, # 1720

19. Ibid

20. See <http://www.e-nisab.com/calculator> [14]

23. Verse Of Al-Najwa, A Real Eye-Opener

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

و الجواب أن يقال أما الذي ثبت فهو أن عليا رضي الله عنه تصدق و ناجى ثم
نسخت الآية قبل أن يعمل بها غيره لكن الآية لم توجب الصدقة عليهم لكن
أمرهم إذا ناجوا أن يتصدقوا فمن لم يناج لم يكن عليه أن يتصدق و إذا لم تكن
المناجاة واجبة لم يكن أحد ملوما إذا ترك ما ليس بواجب

The reply is to say that what is **authentically transmitted** is that 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, gave charity and had a private conversation (with the Prophet). **Then the verse was abrogated before anyone else could act upon it.**

However, the verse did not make the giving of charity compulsory upon them (i.e. the Sahabah). Rather, it ordered them to give charity whenever they had private conversation (with the Messenger). Therefore, whosoever did not have a private conversation (with the Prophet) did not have to give charity. Since having a private conversation (with the Messenger) was not compulsory, none could be criticized for abandoning what was not obligatory.¹

He adds elsewhere:

وهكذا آية النجوى فإنه لم يناج الرسول قبل نسخها إلا علي ولم يكن علي من ترك النجوى حرج فمثل هذا العمل ليس من خصائص الأئمة ولا من خصائص علي رضي الله عنه ولا يقال إن غير علي ترك النجوى بخلا بالصدقة لأن هذا غير معلوم فإن المدة لم تطل وفي تلك المدة القصيرة قد لا يحتاج الواحد إلى النجوى وإن قدر أن هذا كان يخص بعض الناس لم يلزم أن يكون أبو بكر وعمر رضي الله عنهما من هؤلاء كيف وأبو بكر رضي الله عنه قد أنفق ماله كله يوم رغب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في الصدقة وعمر رضي الله عنه جاء بنصف ماله بلا حاجة إلى النجوى فكيف يبخل أحدهما بدرهمين أو ثلاثة يقدمها بين يدي نجواه

The Verse of *al-Najwa* is like that too. This is because **none had a private conversation with the Messenger before its abrogation except 'Ali**, and there was no blame on anyone who abandoned having a private conversation (with the Prophet). The like of this act (of 'Ali) is not part of the exclusive merits of the Imams, and was not from the exclusive merits of 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him. **It is also not said that others apart from 'Ali abandoned the private conversation out of miserliness to avoid giving charity. This is because such (a reason) is not known, for the time was short.**

During that short period, it was possible that one did not need to have the private conversation (with the Messenger). If some people were able to do this, it was not necessary that Abu Bakr and 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, were among such people. How can that be when it was Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who had spent all his wealth on the day that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, encouraged the giving of charity.

'Umar too, may Allah be pleased with him, gave half of his wealth (in charity), without the need for a private conversation. How could either of them have been miserly about spending two or three dirhams before his private conversation (with the Prophet)?²

Our dear Shaykh confirms the authenticity of the narration stating that Amir al-Muminin, *'alaihi al-salam*,

was the only one who ever complied with the Verse of *al-Najwa* before its abrogation. However, he has made excuses for the failures of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman to fulfill the instruction in the verse, despite Sunni claims about their unmatched generosity and selflessness. According to the Shaykh, the verse was shortlived. When it was revealed, Amir al-Muminin enforced it. But, before anyone else could have a reason or chance to do likewise, it was cancelled. So, others did not have the opportunity. Besides, it was not obligatory upon Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman to comply with the verse anyway unless they intended to have private discussions with the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. Since they *might* not have intended to privately talk with the Prophet, none can blame them for not having complied with the verse before its abrogation.

In order to understand what happened with the Verse of *al-Najwa*, it is important to understand a background fact about the Sahabah, as stated by Allah:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا أطيعوا الله وأطيعوا الرسول ولا تبطلوا أعمالكم إن الذين كفروا وصدوا عن سبيل الله ثم ماتوا وهم كفار فلن يغفر الله لهم فلا تهنوا وتدعوا إلى السلم وأنتم الأعلون والله معكم ولن يتركم أعمالكم إنما الحياة الدنيا لعب ولهو وإن تؤمنوا وتتقوا يؤتكم أجوركم ولا يسألكم أموالكم إن يسألكموها فيحفكم تبخلوا ويخرج أضغانكم ها أنتم هؤلاء تدعون لتنفقوا في سبيل الله فمنكم من يبخل ومن يبخل فإنما يبخل عن نفسه

O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and render not vain your deeds. Verily, those who disbelieve, and hinder from the Path of Allah, then die while they are disbelievers, Allah will not forgive them. So be not weak and ask not for peace while you are having the upper hand. Allah is with you, and will never decrease the reward of your good deeds. The life of this world is but play and pastime, but if you believe, and fear Allah, and avoid evil, He will grant you your wages, and will not ask you your wealth.

If He were to ask you of it (i.e. your wealth), and press you, YOU WOULD BE MISERLY, and He will bring out all your ill-wills. Behold! You are those who are called upon to spend in the Path of Allah, YET AMONG YOU ARE SOME WHO ARE MISERS. And whoever is miserly, he is only miserly to himself.³

A lot of the wealthy Sahabah were misers and ill-willing. This was why Allah generalized about them in the first statement. Even if we were to reject the sweeping declaration of our Creator, we must still, at the least, accept that among the wealthy Sahabah were many who were misers. It was against this background that Allah sent down the Verse of *al-Najwa*:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا ناجيتم الرسول فقدموا بين يدي نجواكم صدقة ذلك خير لكم وأطهر فإن لم تجدوا فإن الله غفور رحيم

O you who believe! When you consult with the Messenger in private, **spend something in charity before your private consultation.** That will be better and purer for you. But, if you find not (the means for it), then verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.⁴

There are two factors for consideration in the blessed verse. Firstly, it covered only those of the Sahabah who used to have private consultations with the Messenger of Allah. Without any doubt, those were primarily the people of Madinah and Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman were chiefs among them. Secondly, the command, apparently, was directed to those of the Sahabah in Madinah who had the means to spend in charity. Some of them were so destitute that they could not afford to give out anything. Allah exempted such extremely poor Sahabah. There is again absolutely no doubt that Abu Bakr 'Umar and 'Uthman were able to afford *sadaqah* from their wealth.

Interestingly, once the Verse of *al-Najwa* was revealed, the wealthy and middle-income Sahabah displayed disturbing levels of miserliness. They were required to give only 1 dirham – approximately US \$3 (three US dollars) – or above in charity. But, they all – with only one exception – refrained from giving anything! They instead withheld *entirely* from privately consulting with the Prophet in order to escape spending anything in *sadaqah*!

This was why it was only Amir al-Muminin who enforced the verse. Others *deliberately* declined. They had reasons and needs, as well as very ample opportunities, to privately speak with the Messenger. However, they chose to forgo doing so, just to keep their little dirhams and dinars in their pockets. The wealthy and middle-income Sahabah had great chances to fulfil the commandment in the verse. But, all of them recoiled, except Amir al-Muminin 'Ali!

Due to the unbecoming attitude of the Sahabah to the command in the Verse of *al-Najwa*, Allah cancelled it:

أشفقتم أن تقدموا بين يدي نجواكم صدقات فإذ لم تفعلوا وتاب الله عليكم فأقيموا الصلاة وآتوا الزكاة وأطيعوا الله ورسوله والله خبير بما تعملون

Are you AFRAID of spending in charity before your private consultation? If then, do not do it, and Allah has FORGIVEN you. So, perform *Salat* and give *Zakat* and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.⁵

They were literally “afraid” to spend just 1 dirham (US \$3) from their wealth, while many of them had

several thousands! Looking at the text of the verse, it is general. Therefore, it applied universally to all the wealthy and middle-income Sahabah living in Madinah, except whosoever was exonerated by strong evidence. All of them had needs to privately consult with the Messenger of Allah. But, they stayed back, “afraid” of giving *sadaqah*! The only one exempted from the criticism, of course, was ‘Ali b. Abi Talib – due to the existence of authentic reports clearing him of any guilt. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records one of them:

أخبرني عبد الله بن محمد الصيدلاني ثنا محمد بن أيوب أنبا يحيى بن المغيرة
السعدي ثنا جرير عن منصور عن مجاهد عن عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال :
قال علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه: إن في كتاب الله لآية ما عمل بها أحد
ولا يعمل بها بعدي أحد آية النجوى {يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا ناجيتم الرسول
فقدموا بين يدي نجواكم صدقة}

‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad al-Sayadlani – Muhammad b. Ayub – Yahya b. al-Mughirah al-Sa’di – Jarir – Mansur – Mujahid – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli – ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him:

“Verily, in the Book of Allah, there is a verse that none complied with, and none will ever comply with, apart from me. It is the Verse of *al-Najwa* {O you who believe! When you consult with the Messenger in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation}6

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.7

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim8

There is no evidence whatsoever removing the names of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman from the black list. As such, none can take them out of it. In other words, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman too were

among the miserly ones! Allah also considered their omission to have been a sin, but had “forgiven” them on His Own Accord. Apparently, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s re-invention of the incident does not tally at all with the reality.

One then wonders. Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman were literally “afraid” to spend a single dirham of their wealth in *sadaqah*. That was their attitude to money and charity. This fact, which has Qur’anic backing, nullifies and throws out all Sunni claims and *riwayat* about the trio’s legendary financial sacrifices in the Path of Allah. If the tales were true, the story of the Verse of *al-Najwa* would have been far different. Wait a minute! ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb stashed up for himself wealth worth more than US \$193, 000000 (one hundred and ninety-three million US dollars) during his *khilafah*. That was about 1400 years ago when poverty levels, across the world, were beyond extreme. If he had wanted to be miserly, what else would he have done?

It would not be out of place to end this chapter with these golden Words of Allah:

والذين يكنزون الذهب والفضة ولا ينفقونها في سبيل الله فبشرهم بعباب ألِيم
يوم يحمى عليها في نار جهنم فتكوى بها جباههم وجنوبهم وظهورهم هذا ما
كنزتم لأنفسكم فذوقوا ما كنتم تكنزون

And those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment. On the Day when it will be heated in the Fire of *Jahannam* and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs: “This is what you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard.”⁹

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 160

2. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 17

3. Qur’an 47:33–38

4. Qur’an 58:12

5. Qur’an 58:13

6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 524, # 3794

7. Ibid

8. Ibid

9. Qur’an 9:34–35

24. Hadith Al-Rayah, A Truly Messy One

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

قال الرافضي والرابع أنه كان أشجع الناس....

والجواب أنه لا ريب أن عليا رضي الله عنه كان من شجعان الصحابة ... أما قوله إنه كان أشجع الناس فهذا كذب بل كان أشجع الناس رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

The Rafidhi said: “The fourth (point) is that he (‘Ali) was the bravest of mankind....

The reply is that there is no doubt that ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of the brave ones among the Sahabah ... As for his statement that he (‘Ali) was the bravest of mankind, that is a lie.

Rather, the bravest of mankind was the Messenger of Allah. 1

Our dear Shaykh has removed the words of the Shi’i scholar from its proper context. The style of expression adopted by the latter was very common in Arabic texts, and the word “mankind” in it *always* excluded the Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi!* In other words, when the Shi’i scholar mentioned “the bravest of mankind”, the phrase “*after* the Messenger of Allah” is automatically implied. Similar expressions can be found in these words of Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, a very senior Sahabi, as documented by Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H):

يا هذا على ما تشتم علي بن أبي طالب ألم يكن أول من أسلم ألم يكن أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ألم يكن أزهد الناس ألم يكن أعلم الناس؟

“O you! On what basis do you curse ‘Ali b. Abi Talib? Is he not the first to accept Islam? Is he not the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him? **Is he not the most ascetic of mankind? Is he not the most knowledgeable of mankind?**”²

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.3

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) confirms:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim4

Will our dear Shaykh accuse this noble Sahabi of telling lies? Anyway, the Shaykh himself makes absolutely no attempt to claim Abu Bakr or ‘Umar was braver than Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*, in physical battle. Rather, he re-defines the word “bravery”, and then plays a new card:

والشجاعة تفسر بشيئين أحدهما قوة القلب وثباته عند المخاوف والثاني شدة القتال بالبدن بأن يقتل كثيرا ويقتل قتلا عظيما والأول هو الشجاعة وأما الثاني فيدل على قوة البدن وعمله وليس كل من كان قوي البدن كان قوي القلب ولا بالعكس

And “bravery” is explained with two things. **One of them is strength of the heart, and its firmness in the face of fear.** The second is great strength in physical fighting, to kill a lot of people. **Only the first is bravery.** As for the second, it (only) proves physical strength. And, not everyone who is physically strong has a strong heart, and not vice versa.5

So, “bravery” is only to have a fearless heart. Whether this translates into action on the battlefield or not is irrelevant. Rather, the warrior who firmly faces multiple enemy fighters in battle, and kills them is not brave at all. He is only “physically strong”. Our Shaykh justifies his new definition in this manner:

والنبي صلى الله عليه و سلم كان أكمل الناس في هذه الشجاعة التي هي المقصودة في أئمة الحرب ولم يقتل بيده إلا أبي بن خلف قتله يوم أحد ولم يقتل بيده أحدا لا قبلها ولا بعدها وكان أشجع من جميع الصحابة

The Prophet, peace be upon him, was the most perfect of mankind in this type of bravery (i.e. of the

heart) which was what was expected in the war commanders. He never killed anyone with his hand except Ubayy b. Khalaf. He killed him on the Day of Uhud, and never killed anyone else before or after them. Yet, he was braver than all the Sahabah.⁶

This analogy does not work in the cases of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman though. The Messenger of Allah was the ruler of Arabia at that time. Heads of state are not expected *anywhere* to participate in battle like foot soldiers. Rather, they are to be shielded from the enemy as much as possible. As for Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman, they were ordinary soldiers. Therefore, they had every obligation and chance to participate in multiple combats with enemy fighters. But what happened?

Obviously, since Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s new definition is hinged upon the roles of the Prophet in battle, it is inapplicable in the cases of anyone who was not the head of state at the times of the battles. Moreover, one honestly wonders about the logic of the Shaykh’s separation of fearlessness of the heart from battle valour. Can a person with a timid heart willfully confront fully armed, firmly determined, well-trained and highly experienced enemy fighters, in *mortal* combats, in battle?

But then, what exactly does Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah want us to pick from his incongruous definition? He minces no words about it:

وإذا كانت الشجاعة المطلوبة من الأئمة بشجاعة القلب فلا ريب أن أبا بكر كان أشجع من عمر وعمر أشجع من عثمان وعلي

Since the type of bravery that is required from the rulers is the bravery of the heart, then there is no doubt that Abu Bakr was braver than ‘Umar, and ‘Umar was braver than ‘Uthman and ‘Ali.⁷

Strange indeed! Were Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman rulers during the lifetime of the Prophet?! In any case, there is an implicit admission in these wild gymnastics of our dear Shaykh that the trio were no match at all for Amir al-Muminin in terms of physical strength and battle successes. However, he *must* nonetheless place them above him at any cost. Therefore, he lumps things up and tables patently desperate excuses. He also apparently assumes – contrary to logic – that the heroic achievements of ‘Ali in battle required less courage than the trio’s relative battle redundancy!

Then comes the big question, and Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah makes another attempt:

وأما قوله ما انهزم قط فهو في ذلك كأبي بكر وعمر وطلحة والزبير وغيرهم من الصحابة رضي الله عنهم فالقول في أنه ما انهزم كالقول في أن هؤلاء ما انهزموا قط ولم يعرف لأحد من هؤلاء هزيمة وإن كان قد وقع شيء في الباطن ولم ينقل

فيمكن أن عليا وقع منه مالم ينقل والمسلمون كانت لهم هزيمتان يوم أحد
ويوم حنين ولم ينقل أن أحدا من هؤلاء انهزم بل المذكور في السير والمغازي
أن أبا بكر وعمر ثبتا مع النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يوم أحد ويوم حنين ولم
ينهزما مع من انهزم ومن نقل أنهما انهزما يوم حنين فكذبه معلوم وإنما الذي
انهزم يوم أحد عثمان وقد عفا الله عنه وما نقل من انهزام أبي بكر وعمر بالراية
يوم حنين فمن الأكاذيب المختلفة التي افتراها المفترون

As for his (i.e. the Shi'i scholar's) statement that he ('Ali) NEVER fled (the battlefield), then he was, in this (merit), like Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Talhah, al-Zubayr and others among the Sahabah, may Allah be pleased with them. The statement that he ('Ali) never fled away is like the statement that these people too never fled away. It is not known that any of them ever fled away. And if something had happened (from them) in secret which has not been reported, it is possible that something happened from 'Ali too which has not been reported.

The Muslims fled away the battlefield twice – on the Day of Uhud and on the Day of Hunayn and it is not reported that anyone of these people fled away. What is mentioned in the *Sirah* (i.e. biography of the Prophet) and *al-Maghazi* (i.e. reports of battles) books is that Abu Bakr and 'Umar stood firmly with the Prophet, peace be upon him, on the Day of Uhud and on the Day of Hunayn and did not flee away with those who fled away.

Whoever reported that they both fled away on the Day of Hunayn, his lie is obvious. **The only one (of them) who fled away on the Day of Uhud was 'Uthman**, and Allah has forgiven him. As for what is reported concerning the flight of Abu Bakr and 'Umar with the flag on the Day of Hunayn, it is one of the fabrications which the forgers forged.⁸

The Shaykh agrees that Amir al-Muminin never fled the battlefield, no matter how hopeless things became. This is very crucial in determining who was brave and who was cowardly. There is no doubt that anyone who flees the battlefield is a coward. Interestingly, our Shaykh confesses that 'Uthman was a coward who fled away on the Day of Uhud. No wonder, he never attempts anywhere to claim that 'Uthman was braver than 'Ali. But then, he argues that Abu Bakr and 'Umar too, like 'Ali, never fled away. Apparently, if he ever admits that either of the duo was a coward who fled away, his entire argument crashes. One fact, however, remains undeniable. There are reports indicating that both Abu Bakr and 'Umar fled the battlefields. Our Shaykh instinctively throws them out as fabrications. He also seeks to counter such reports with what is "mentioned" – with no proof of authenticity – in the history books. A fair researcher, of course, would like to examine these "forged" reports alleging Abu Bakr's and 'Umar's cowardice, to determine the truth of the matter by himself.

Well, according to an authentic report, Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman fled the battlefields repeatedly on

different occasions. It did not happen once, twice or thrice. Rather, on several occasions of battle, the trio fled away, as documented by Imam Muslim (d. 261 H):

حدثنا محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي وحامد بن عمر البكراوي ومحمد بن
عبد الأعلى قالوا حدثنا المعتمر (وهو ابن سليمان) قال سمعت أبي عن أبي
عثمان قال لم يبق مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في بعض تلك الأيام التي
قاتل فيهن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم غير طلحة وسعد عن حديثهما

Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Muqaddami, Hamid b. 'Umar al-Bakrawi and Muhammad b. 'Abd al-'Ala – al-Mu'tamar (and he is Ibn Sulayman) – father – Abu 'Uthman:

“**None remained** with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, **on some of the DAYS** in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was fighting **apart from Talhah and Sa'd**. They both (i.e. Talhah and Sa'd) narrated that to me.”⁹

On the days of the successive battles, everyone else used to flee – apparently including Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman – except Talhah and Sa'd.

Among such days, the Day of Uhud (3 AH) readily comes to mind. The most notorious runner on that day was 'Uthman. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah himself admits this. Nonetheless, this is an explicit *hadith* from *Sahih al-Bukhari* confirming his flight:

حدثنا موسى بن إسماعيل حدثنا أبو عوانة حدثنا عثمان هو ابن موهب قال:
جاء رجل من أهل مصر وحج البيت فرأى قوما جلوسا فقال من هؤلاء القوم ؟
فقالوا هؤلاء قريش قال فمن الشيخ فيهم؟ قالوا عبد الله بن عمر قال يا ابن عمر
إني سألك عن شيء فحدثني هل تعلم أن عثمان فر يوم أحد ؟ قال نعم .

Musa b. Isma'il – Abu 'Awanah – 'Uthman b. Muhib:

An Egyptian man came and performed the *Hajj* to the House. So, he saw some people sitting, and asked, “Who are these people?” They said, “They are the tribe of Quraysh.” He said, “Who is the old man amongst them?” They replied, “He is 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar.” He said, “O Ibn Umar! I want to ask you about something; please tell me about it. **Do you know that 'Uthman fled away on the Day of Uhud?**” Ibn 'Umar said, “**Yes.**”¹⁰

Referring to this ugly incident, Allah states:

إذ تصعدون ولا تلوون على أحد والرسول يدعوكم في أخراكم فأثابكم غما بغم
لكيلا تحزنوا على ما فاتكم ولا ما أصابكم والله خبير بما تعملون

(And remember) when you ran away (dreadfully) without even casting a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger was in your rear calling you back. 11

The Prophet was calling ‘Uthman while he was fleeing away. He heard him, but did not even cast a side glance at anyone, not even at Muhammad! He was completely frightened, and sought to run away from the Messenger of Allah as quickly as they could, in order to save his own life. It was indeed a great flight, and a great tragedy!

On the Day of Hunayn (8 AH) too, the Sahabah fled away again! This is referred to by Allah in His Book:

لقد نصركم الله في مواطن كثيرة ويوم حنين إذ أعجبتكم كثرتكم فلم تغن عنكم
شيئا وضاقت عليكم الأرض بما رحبت ثم وليتم مدبرين

Truly, Allah has helped you on many battlefields, **and on the Day of Hunayn** when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you naught and the earth, as vast as it is, was straitened for you. **Then you fled away.** 12

The statement is general. Therefore, everyone fled except whoever there is concrete evidence clearing him. ‘Umar, in particular, was one of the runners on that day. Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records:

وقال الليث حدثني يحيى بن سعيد عن عمر بن كثير بن أفلح عن أبي محمد
مولى أبي قتادة أن أبا قتادة قال لما كان حنين نظرت إلى رجل من المسلمين
يقاتل رجلا من المشركين وآخر من المشركين يختله من ورائه ليقتله فأسرعت
إلى الذي يختله فرفع يده ليضربني وأضرب يده فقطعتها ثم أخذني فضمني
ضما شديدا حتى تخوفت ثم ترك فتحل ودفعته ثم قتلته وانهزم المسلمون
وانهزمت معهم فإذا بعمر بن الخطاب في الناس فقلت له ما شأن الناس؟ قال
أمر الله ثم تراجع الناس إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

Al-Layth – Yahya b. Sa’id – ‘Umar b. Kathir b. Aflah – Abu Muhammad, freed slave of Abu Qatadah –
Abu Qatadah:

On the Day of Hunayn, I saw a Muslim fighting with one of the pagans and another pagan was hiding himself behind the Muslim in order to kill him. So I hurried towards the pagan who was hiding behind the Muslim to kill him, and he raised his hand to hit me but I hit his hand and cut it off.

That man got hold of me and pressed me so hard that I was afraid, then I knelt down and his grip became loose and I pushed him and killed him. **The Muslims fled, and I too fled WITH THEM.**

Suddenly, I met ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb AMONGST THE PEOPLE and I asked him, “What is wrong with THE PEOPLE?” He said, “It is the Command of Allah.” Then THE PEOPLE returned to the Messenger of Allah. 13

Abu Qatadah referred to those Sahabah who fled away as “the people”. They fled but later returned to the Messenger at the battlefield. The interesting part is that while Abu Qatadah himself was fleeing away “with them”, he met ‘Umar “amongst the people”! In other words, ‘Umar too was fleeing away with the people! He was “amongst” the people speeding off the battle ground. If the second *khalifah* had stayed with the Messenger of Allah, Abu Qatadah – who had run away from the Prophet – would never had met ‘Umar “amongst the people”!

A rather unfortunate turn was ‘Umar’s attempted justification of the Sahabah’s run from the battlefield. He claimed that those Sahabah – including himself – were obeying “the command” of Allah. We searched the Qur’an and *ahadith* to locate this “command”. But, we came up with nothing like it. Rather, this is what we read:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا إذا لقيتم الذين كفروا زحفا فلا تولوهم الأدبار ومن يولهم
يومئذ دبره إلا متحرفا لقتال أو متحيزا إلى فئة فقد باء بغضب من الله ومأواه
جهنم وبئس المصير

O you who believe! When you meet those who disbelieve, in a battlefield, **never flee from them**. And whoever flees away on such a day – unless it be a stratagem of war, or to retreat to a troop, – he indeed has drawn upon himself Wrath from Allah. **And his abode is Hellfire**, and worse indeed is that destination! 14

Does it really look like the Sahabah were obeying Allah with their great flight? We do not think so.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 75–76

2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Ṣaḥihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 571, # 6121

3. Ibid

4. Ibid
5. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 77
6. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 78
7. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 79
8. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 91
9. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Ṣahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1879, # 2414 (47)
10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-Ṣahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1352, # 3495
11. Qur’an 3:153
12. Qur’an 9:25
13. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-Ṣahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 4, p. 1570, # 4067
14. Qur’an 8:15–16

25. Hadith Al-Rayah, Investigating Its Authenticity

Before Hunayn (8 AH), ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ran away from the battlefield at least twice – during Khandaq (5 AH) and at Khaybar (7 AH). It was at Khaybar that *Hadith al-Rayah* was declared by the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. We will therefore briefly examine what the second *khalifah* did during the Khandaq battle before moving on to Khaybar. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يزيد قال انا محمد بن عمرو عن أبيه عن جده
 علقمة بن وقاص قال أخبرني عائشة قالت خرجت يوم الخندق أقفوا آثار
 الناس قالت فسمعت وئيد الأرض ورأيي يعني حس الأرض قالت فالتفت فإذا
 أنا بسعد بن معاذ ومعه بن أخيه الحارث بن أوس يحمل مجنة قالت فجلست
 إلى الأرض فمر سعد وعليه درع من حديد قد خرجت منها أطرافه فأنا أتخوف
 على أطراف سعد قالت وكان سعد من أعظم الناس وأطولهم قالت فمر وهو
 يرتجز ويقول (ليت قليلا يدرك الهيجا جمل ... ما أحسن الموت إذا حان
 الأجل) قالت فقامت فاقتمت حديقة فإذا فيها نفر من المسلمين وإذا فيهم عمر
 بن الخطاب وفيهم رجل عليه سبغة له يعني مغفرا فقال عمر ما جاء بك لعمرى
 والله إنك لجريئة وما يؤمنك أن يكون بلاء أو يكون تحوز قالت فما زال يلومني

حتى تمنيت أن الأرض انشقت لي ساعتئذ فدخلت فيها قالت فرجع الرجل
السبغة عن وجهه فإذا طلحة بن عبيد الله فقال يا عمر ويحك انك قد أكثرت منذ
اليوم وأين التحوز أو الفرار إلا إلى الله عز و جل

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yazid – Muhammad b. ‘Amr – his father – his
grandfather ‘Alqamah b. Waqqas – ‘Aishah:

I went out on the Day of al-Khandaq **and I stood behind the people**. So, I heard footsteps coming from behind me. I turned around and saw Sa’d b. Mu’adh, and his nephew al-Harith b. Aws was carrying his armour. Therefore, I sat down on the ground and Sa’d passed by, wearing an iron armour from which his limbs had come out. I was afraid of Sa’d’s limbs. Sa’d was one of the most huge and tallest people. Sa’d passed by, singing a battle song, saying: “Very soon the battle will meet a camel ... What a good death it is when the time has come.”

Then I stood up and entered a garden. There was a small group of Muslims there, and ‘Umar b. al-Khaṣṣab was amongst them and there was another man who was wearing a mask. ‘Umar said: “What brought you here? I swear by my life and I swear by Allah, you are a reckless woman! What assures you against the occurrence of a disaster or capture?” He kept blaming me so much until I wished that the earth would split open for me so that I could enter into it. Then the (masked) man removed the mask from his face, and he was Talhah b. ‘Ubayd Allah. So he said, “Woe to you, O Umar! You have said too much today! And where is the writhing movement or the flight except to Allah the Almighty?”¹

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) has copied the exact same narration in his *Sahihah*, and states:

أخرجه الإمام أحمد (6 / 141 - 142) عن محمد بن عمرو عن أبيه عن علقمة
ابن وقاص، قال: أخبرني عائشة قالت....

قلت: وهذا إسناد حسن. وقال الهيثمي في " مجمع الزوائد " (6 / 128): " رواه
أحمد وفيه محمد بن عمرو بن علقمة وهو حسن الحديث، وبقيه رجاله ثقات."
وقال الحافظ في " الفتح " (11 / 43): " وسنده حسن."

Imam Ahmad (6/141-142) recorded it from Muhammad b. ‘Amr – his father – ‘Alqamah b. Waqqas –
‘Aishah....

I (Al-Albani) say: **This chain is *hasan***. Al-Haythami said in *Majma' al-Zawaid* (6/128): "Ahmad recorded it and in the chain is Muhammad b. 'Amr b. 'Alqamah, and his *hadith* is *hasan*, and the other narrators in the chain are trustworthy". Al-Hafiz also said in *al-Fath* (11/43): "**And its chain is *hasan***".²

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) too has documented the report in his *Sahih*³. 'Allamah al-Albani says:

حسن

*Hasan*⁴

Shaykh al-Arnau⁵ confirms this:

حديث حسن

*A hasan hadith*⁵

The question is: what was 'Umar and his few colleagues doing in a garden, hidden from view, while the Messenger of Allah and the other Sahabah were actively in battle against the allied forces of the pagans? The people, as testified by Umm al-Muminin 'Aishah, were at the warfront. She was standing *behind* the fighting soldiers. So, 'Umar and his small band were completely away from the front, *at the back* of everyone else. Was it a tactical *land* ambush by them?

But, that was not possible! Firstly, it was a *trench* war. If anything, 'Umar and his colleagues should be standing with the Prophet *at the front* – by the trench – preventing the enemies of Allah from successfully crossing over. Secondly, the Messenger did not permit any Sahabi to leave his presence, as reported by the Qur'an about the Battle of Khandaq:

وَإِذْ قَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَا أَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مَقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّ بُيُوتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنْ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا وَلَوْ دَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سَأَلُوا الْفِتْنَةَ لَآتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلِ لَا يُؤَلُّونَ الْأَدْبَارَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا قَل لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تَمْتَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

And when a party of them said, "O people of Yathrib! You do not stand any chance. Therefore, return".

And a band of them asked for permission of the Prophet, saying: “Truly, our homes are vulnerable!” But they (i.e. their houses) were not vulnerable. **They (i.e. those soldiers) only wished to flee!** And if the enemy had entered upon them from its (i.e. Madinah’s) borders, and they had been asked to commit sedition (against Islam), they would surely have committed it and would have only hesitated a little.

And indeed they had already made a covenant with Allah not to flee, and a covenant with Allah must be answered for. **Say: Running away will not benefit you** if you flee from death or killing, and then you will enjoy no more than a little while!”⁶

The verses confirm that the enemy never breached the borders of Madinah. They further establish that the homes of the people of the city were safe. Of course, it was the Battle of Khandaq (i.e. the Battle of the Trench). Therefore, all the fighting was supposed to be done *at the trench*, not within the boundaries of Madinah. Lastly, there is zero evidence of any deployment of anyone by the Prophet, during the battle, to mount any ambush in any garden in the city!

As such, the presence of ‘Umar and his colleagues in a safe garden had absolutely no military value or legitimacy. Moreover, one of them was masking his face to conceal his identity. Meanwhile, he too had no tactical or strategic reason to use a mask. It is obvious, from the circumstances and his conduct, that he felt shame for what they were doing in the garden, and would not like anyone to identify him with it, if they were detected. But, Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah knew his voice very well, being his relative. So, it was pointless for him to conceal his identity before her while criticizing ‘Umar.

‘Umar and his colleagues were, without doubt, hiding from battle. They had fled! While the other Muslims were busy preventing the collapse of Madinah by blocking any crossover of the trench by the enemy, he and his colleagues were breathing safely in their hideout. Judging from the panic and instinctive outbursts of ‘Umar, one could also say that he was not aware of the real situation of things in the city. He apparently thought that the enemy had entered it, and that it was extremely risky to move around. That explains why he moved into, and remained in, the garden in the first place.

At Khaybar, our second *khalifah* repeated his old feat. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

أخبرنا أبو العباس محمد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرو ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا عبيد
الله بن موسى ثنا نعيم بن حكيم عن أبي موسى الحنفي عن علي رضي الله عنه
قال : سار النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى خيبر فلما أتاها بعث عمر رضي الله
تعالى عنه وبعث معه الناس إلى مدينتهم أو قصرهم فقاتلوه فلم يلبثوا أن
هزموا عمر وأصحابه فجاءوا يجبنونه ويجبنهم فسار

Abu al-‘Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi – Sa’id b. Mas’ud – ‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa – Na’im b.

Hakim – Abu Musa al-Hanafi – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, journeyed to Khaybar. When he arrived there, he appointed ‘Umar (as commander) and appointed some people with him (as his troops) to conquer their city or castle. So, they (‘Umar and his troops) fought them (i.e. the people of Khaybar). **But ‘Umar and his troops did not hesitate before fleeing.** So, they came back **and they (the troops) accused him (‘Umar) of COWARDICE** while he too accused them of cowardice.⁷

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain⁸

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) HHconfirms:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁹

Imam al-Hindi (d. 975 H) copies a fuller version:

عن علي قال : سار رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إلى خيبر فلما أتاه رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بعث عمر ومعه الناس إلى مدينتهم وإلى قصرهم فقاتلوهم فلم يلبثوا أن هزموا عمر وأصحابه فجاء يجبنهم ويجبنونه فساء ذلك رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال : لأبعثن عليهم رجلا يحب الله ورسوله ويحبه الله ورسوله يقاتلهم حتى يفتح الله له ليس بفرار فتطاول الناس لها ومدوا أعناقهم يرونه أنفسهم رجاء ما قال فمكث رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ساعة فقال : أين علي ؟ فقالوا : هو أرمد قال : ادعوه لي فلما أتته فتح عيني ثم تفل فيها ثم أعطاني اللواء فانطلقت به سعيًا خشية أن يحدث رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فيها حدثًا أو في حتى أتيتهم فقاتلتهم فبرز مرحب يرتجز وبرزت له أرتجز كما يرتجز حتى التقينا فقتله الله بيدي وأنهزم أصحابه فتحصنوا وأغلقوا الباب فأتينا الباب فلم أزل أعالجه حتى فتحه الله

Narrated 'Ali:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, journeyed to Khaybar. When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, arrived there, he appointed 'Umar (as commander) and with him some people (as his troops) to conquer their city or castle. So, they ('Umar and his troops) fought them (i.e. the people of Khaybar). **But 'Umar and his troops did not hesitate before fleeing.** So, they came back and he accused them of cowardice **while they too (the troops) accused him ('Umar) of COWARDICE.** The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, roundly condemned that and said, "I will certainly appoint over you a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger too love him. He will fight them until Allah grants him victory. **He is not someone who flees.**"

So, the people longed for it (i.e. the expedition) and extended their necks, each of them wishing that he be the chosen one. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, remained silent for a while and then said: "**Where is Ali?**" They said: "He is sore-eyed." He said: "Summon him for me." When I came to him, he opened my eyes and put his saliva on them. Then, he gave the flag to me and so I proceeded fast, fearing that the Messenger of Allah might make a new decision concerning it (i.e. the expedition), or me, until I reached them (i.e. the people of Khaybar). So, I fought them. Then Marhab (the warrior of Khaybar) offered a duel challenge, reciting war poetry and I accepted his duel challenge, reciting war poetry like people do, until we clashed and Allah killed him through my hand. As a result, his companions fled away into their castle, and locked the door. We went to the door and I did not stop trying to break it until Allah opened it. 10

Al-Hindi comments:

والبزار وسنده حسن

Recorded by al-Bazzar **and its chain is *hasan*.** 11

'Ali's encounter with Marhab is documented by Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) as well:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا هاشم بن القاسم ح وحدثنا إسحاق بن إبراهيم
أخبرنا أبو عامر العقدي كلاهما عن عكرمة ابن عمار ح وحدثنا عبدالله بن
عبدالرحمن الدارمي وهذا حديثه أخبرنا أبو علي الحنفي عبيدالله بن عبدالمجيد
حدثنا عكرمة (وهو ابن عمار) حدثني إياس بن سلمة حدثني أبي قال:

....ثم أرسلني إلى علي وهو أرمد فقال لأعطين الراية رجلا يحب الله ورسوله أو يحبه الله ورسوله قال فأتيت عليا فجئت به أقوده وهو أرمد حتى أتيت به رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فبسق في عينيه فبرأ وأعطاه الراية وخرج مرحب فقال قد علمت خيبر أني مرحب ... شاكي السلاح بطل مجرب إذا الحروب أقبلت تلهب فقال علي أنا الذي سمتني أمي حيدرته ... كليث الغابات كرية المنظره أوفيهم بالصاع كيل السندره قال فضرب رأس مرحب فقتله ثم كان الفتح على يديه

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Hashim b. al-Qasim – Ishaq b. Ibrahim – Abu ‘Amir al-‘Aqdi – ‘Ikrimah b. ‘Amir AND ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi – Abu ‘Ali al-Hanafi ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd al-Majid – ‘Ikrimah b. ‘Amir – Iyas b. Salamah – my father (Salamah):

.... Then he (the Messenger) sent me to ‘Ali, and he (‘Ali) was sore-eyed. So, he (the Prophet) said, “I verily will give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger or whom Allah and His Messenger love.” So, I went to ‘Ali and brought him, and he was sore-eyed , until I brought him to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who applied his saliva to his eyes and he got well.

So, he (the Prophet) gave him the flag and Marhab (at the Khaybar battle ground) came out and said (during the duel), “Khaybar has already known that I am Marhab, a fully-armed and well-tried valorous warrior whenever war comes, spreading its flames.” ‘Ali replied, “I am the one whose mother named him Haydar, like a lion of the forest with a terror-striking countenance. I give them (i.e. my opponents) the measure of *sandara* (i.e. a heavy blow) in exchange for *sa’* (i.e. a small punch).” **‘Ali struck the head of Marhab and killed him. So, the victory was through his hands.** 12

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) has recorded the same report¹³, and Shaykh al-Arnau¹⁴ says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of Muslim. 14

The Prophet of Allah testified that Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, was NOT a person who fled in any circumstance, however difficult. He too demonstrated that by accepting the challenge of Marhab in a mortal combat. As such, while all the other Sahabah – including Abu Bakr and ‘Umar – were repeatedly fleeing the battlefields, ‘Ali always stayed till the end. The matter, apparently, was very well-known among the Sahabah, which was why some of them did not bother mentioning his name while listing the firm ones at each battle. He made every list by default, and it might be pointless repeating his blessed

name while everyone was already aware of this unique status of his.

Imam Ahmad further records another report, with an interesting additional detail:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا زيد بن الحباب حدثني الحسين بن واقد حدثني
عبد الله بن بريدة حدثني أبي بريدة قال حاصرنا خيبر فأخذ اللواء أبو بكر
فانصرف ولم يفتح له ثم أخذه من الغد عمر فخرج فرجع ولم يفتح له وأصاب
الناس يومئذ شدة وجهد فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم انى دافع اللواء
غدا إلى رجل يحبه الله ورسوله ويحب الله ورسوله لا يرجع حتى يفتح له فبتنا
طيبة أنفسنا ان الفتح غدا فلما ان أصبح رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
صلى الغداة ثم قام قائما فدعا باللواء والناس على مصافهم فدعا عليا وهو أرمد
فتفل في عينيه ودفن إليه اللواء وفتح له قال بريدة وأنا فيمن تناول لها

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Zayd b. al-Habab – al-Husayn b. Waqid – ‘Abd Allah b. Buraydah – Abu Buraydah:

We besieged Khaybar. **So, Abu Bakr took the flag and went. But, he did not achieve victory.** Then, the next day, ‘Umar took it (i.e. the flag), and went and returned without achieving victory. On that day, the people encountered hardship and fatigue. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “I will tomorrow give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger love him too. **He will not return unless he has achieved victory.**” So, we became absolutely certain that victory would be achieved the next day.

When it was morning, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, performed the morning *Salat*. Then he stood and asked that the flag be brought to him. The people were on their lines. So, he summoned ‘Ali and he (‘Ali) was sore-eyed. Then he spit into his eyes and gave him the flag, **and he (‘Ali) achieved victory.** I was one of those longing for it (i.e. the flag).¹⁵

Shaykh al-Arnau[®] states:

حديث صحيح وهذا إسناد قوي من أجل حسين بن واقد المروزي

It is a *sahih hadith*, and this chain is strong (*qawi*) due to Husayn b. Waqid al-Maruzi.¹⁶

Apparently, Abu Bakr was the first to flee the battlefield at Khaybar, and then ‘Umar. Marhab must have

offered both of them duel challenges – as he did to Amir al–Muminin – which they obviously declined and then sped away. The only way to conquer Khaybar was to kill Marhab, who was their legendary warrior, as ‘Ali demonstrated. The fact that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar returned without victory is evidence that both of them, as army commanders, feared Marhab and therefore avoided him.

Imam al–Hindi copies a related report:

عن عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال : كان علي يخرج في الشتاء في إزار ورداء
ثوبين خفيفين و.... قال : أو ما كنت معنا يا أبا ليلى بخيبر ؟ قلت : بلى والله
قد كنت معكم قال : فإن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بعث أبا بكر فصار
بالناس فانهزم حتى رجع إليه وبعث عمر فانهزم بالناس حتى انتهى إليه فقال
رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : لأعطين الراية رجلا يحب الله ورسوله ويحبه
الله ورسوله يفتح الله له ليس بفرار فأرسل إلي فدعاني فأتيته وأنا أرمد لا أبصر
شيئا فتفل في عيني

‘Abd al–Rahman b. Abi Layli:

‘Ali used to come out in winter wearing light clothes and ... he (‘Ali) said (to me), “Were you not with us, O Abu Layli, at Khaybar?” I said, “Yes, by Allah, I was with you.” He said, “Verily, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, appointed Abu Bakr as commander and he despatched with (some) people. **BUT HE (ABU BAKR) FLED** until he returned to him (i.e. the Prophet).

And he appointed ‘Umar too as army commander, and HE (‘UMAR) TOO FLED with the people (i.e. his troops) until he got back to him (i.e. the Messenger). So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, ‘I certainly will give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger love him too. Allah will grant him victory. **He is not someone who flees.**’ Therefore, he sent for me, and I got to him. I was sore–eyed, and could not see anything. So, he spit into my eye.”¹⁷

Al–Hindi comments:

والبزار وابن جرير وصححه

Al–Bazzar recorded it, as well as **Ibn Jarir (al–Tabari) WHO DECLARED IT SAHIH**¹⁸

At this point, let us do some mathematics:

1. Abu Bakr and 'Umar used to flee from battlefields. Ali never fled, not even once.
3. 'Ali accepted and won at least the duel challenge at Khaybar. Abu Bakr and 'Umar ran away from the same duel challenge.
5. Ali was never accused of cowardice by anyone. Rather, the Prophet testified in favour of his absolute bravery and military doggedness. By contrast, 'Umar was charged with cowardice by his own troops!
7. Abu Bakr and 'Umar returned from the battlefield, defeated and humiliated. Meanwhile, 'Ali never left the battlefield until he had achieved victory.
9. The Messenger of Allah had absolute confidence in 'Ali's military prowess, and was completely certain that the latter would never fail in his expeditions. On the other hand, both Abu Bakr and 'Umar disappointed him in their military assignments, and he apparently did not have full confidence in their military abilities.

The question is: who was braver? Was it Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib? Or, were Abu Bakr and 'Umar braver than him, as claimed by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah? Even if we accepted our Shaykh's re-definition of "bravery" as fearlessness of the heart, how can anyone still claim that Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman were "brave" *at all* despite that they used to flee the battlefield? Can a person who runs away from battle be said to have a fearless heart? Moreover, what made Amir al-Muminin so firm on the battlefield? Was it not his fearless heart? From whatever angle we look at it, Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman were timid cowards, while 'Ali was a true warrior, with a completely fearless heart.

Our Shaykh is well aware that with the above facts, his theory can never stand. So, he goes on a voyage of historical revisionism:

فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قبل قدومه لأعطين الراية رجلا يحب الله و
رسوله و يحبه الله و رسوله يفتح الله علي يديه و لم تكن الراية قبل ذلك لأبى بكر
و لا لعمر و لا قريبا واحد منهما بل هذا من الأكاذيب

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said before his ('Ali's) arrival, "I verily will give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger too love him. Allah will grant victory through his hands." **The flag was never given before that to Abu Bakr or 'Umar**, and neither of them even moved near it. **Rather, this (i.e. the claim that Abu Bakr and 'Umar were given the flag before 'Ali) is one of the lies.**¹⁹

But, does that *really* help him or his two *khalifahs*?

1. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 6, p. 141, # 25140
2. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-'Ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 1, pp. 143-145, # 67
3. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu'adh b. Ma'bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, 'Ahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 15, pp. 498-501, # 7028
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Qur'an 33:13-16
7. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-'Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 40, # 4340
8. Ibid
9. Ibid
10. 'Ali b. Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa Af'al (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1989 H), vol. 10, p. 743, # 30119
11. Ibid
12. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, 'Ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1433, # 1807 (132)
13. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 51, # 16586
14. Ibid
15. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 353, # 23043
16. Ibid
17. 'Ali b. Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa Af'al (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1989 H), vol. 13, p. 104, # 36388
18. Ibid
19. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 366

26. Hadith Al-Tair, Investigating Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

حديث الطائر من المكذوبات الموضوعات عند أهل العلم

Hadith al-Tair is one of the fabricated lies in the opinion of the people of knowledge.¹

Meanwhile, Imam Ibn Asakir (d. 571 H) records:

أخبرنا أبو غالب بن البنا أنا أبو الحسين بن الأبنوسي أنا أبو الحسن الدارقطني
نا محمد بن مخلد بن حفص نا حاتم بن الليث نا عبيد الله بن موسى عن عيسى
بن عمر القارئ عن السدي نا أنس بن مالك قال أهدى إلى رسول الله صلى الله
عليه وسلم أطيّار فقسّمها وترك طيرا فقال اللهم ائتني بأحب خلقك إليك يأكل
معي من هذا الطير فجاء علي بن أبي طالب فدخل يأكل معه من ذلك الطير

Abu Ghalib b. al-Bana – Abu al-Husayn b. al-Abnusi – Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqūni – Muhammad b.
Mukhlid b. Hafs – Hatim b. al-Layth – ‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa – ‘Isa b. ‘Umar al-Qari – al-Suddi – Anas b.
Malik:

Birds were given as gifts to the Messenger of Allah. So, he distributed them and left a bird. Then he
said, “O Allah, bring to me **the most beloved to You of Your creation** to eat with me from this bird. **So,**
‘Ali b. Abi Talib came and entered and ate with him from that bird.²

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) states about the first narrator:

أبو غالب ابن البناء الشيخ الصالح الثقة، مسند بغداد، أبو غالب أحمد بن الإمام
أبي علي الحسن بن أحمد بن عبد الله بن البناء البغدادي الحنبلي.

Abu Ghalib b. al-Bana: The righteous Shaykh, **the *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrator, the *hadith*
transmitter of Baghdad**, Abu Ghalib Ahmad b. Imam Abu ‘Ali al-Hasan b. Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-
Bana al-Baghdadi al-Hanbali.³

Concerning the second narrator, he further says:

ابن الأبنوسي الشيخ الثقة، أبو الحسين، محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن علي، ابن
الأبنوسي البغدادي.

Ibn al-Abnusi: **The *thiqah* (trustworthy) Shaykh**, Abu al-Husayn, Muhamamd b. Ahmad b.
Muhammad b. ‘Ali, Ibn al-Abnusi al-Baghdadi.⁴

The third narrator, Imam al-Daraqūni, needs no introduction. Nonetheless, let us get al-Dhahabi’s
words about him anyway:

الدارقطني: الامام الحافظ المجود، شيخ الاسلام، علم الجهابذة، أبو الحسن،
علي بن عمر بن أحمد بن مهدي بن مسعود بن النعمان بن دينار بن عبد الله
البغدادي المقرئ المحدث

Al-Daraqūṭni: **The Imam, the excellent hafiz (hadith scientist), Shaykh al-Islam**, the signpost of the
pundits, Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali b. ‘Umar b. Ahmad b. Mahdi b. Mas’ud b. al-Nu’man b. Dinar b. ‘Abd Allah
al-Baghdadi al-Maqri, **the hadith expert**.5

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the fourth narrator:

محمد بن مخلد بن حفص ... وهو ثقة ثقة مشهور

Muhammad b. Muhklid b. Hafs ... **He is thiqah (trustworthy), thiqah (trustworthy), thiqah**
(trustworthy), well-known.6

Imam al-Dhahabi tells us about the fifth narrator as well:

حاتم بن الليث الحافظ المكثر الثقة، أبو الفضل، البغدادي الجوهري.

Hatim b. al-Layth: The *hadith* scientist, the prolific *hadith* narrator, **the thiqah (trustworthy) narrator**,
Abu al-Fadhl, al-Baghdadi, al-Jawhari.7

Al-Hafiz returns to inform us about the sixth narrator:

عبيد الله بن موسى بن أبي المختار بازام العبسي الكوفي أبو محمد ثقة كان
يتشيع

‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa b. Abi al-Mukhtar al-‘Ubsi al-Kufi, Abu Muhammad: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, he
was a Shi’i.8

Al-Hafiz proceeds about the seventh narrator too:

عيسى بن عمر الأسدي الهمداني بسكون الميم أبو عمر الكوفي القارئ ثقة

‘Isa b. ‘Umar al-Asadi al-Hamdani, Abu ‘Umar al-Kufi al-Qari: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**⁹

Finally, ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) grades the last narrator, al-Suddi:

وهذا سند حسن، رجاله ثقات غير السدي وهو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن وهو صدوق يهم. كما في "التقريب".

This chain is *hasan*. Its narrators are trustworthy apart from **al-Suddi**, and he is Isma’il b. ‘Abd al-Rahman. **He was *saduq* (very truthful)**, and he hallucinated, as stated in *al-Taqrīb*.¹⁰

He adds about him:

وهو ثقة أحتج به مسلم واسمه إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن.

He is *thiqah* (trustworthy). (Imam) Muslim has relied upon him as a *hujjah* (in his *Sahih*), and his name is Isma’il b. ‘Abd al-Rahman.¹¹

Shaykh al-Arnau¹² also states:

إسناده حسن لأجل السدي – وهو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن أبي كريمة –
وباقى رجاله ثقات

Its chain is *hasan* due to al-Suddi – and he is Isma’il b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Karimah – and the other narrators are trustworthy.¹²

Shaykh Dr. Asad has the same grading for him:

حدثنا أبو همام حدثنا أبي عن زياد بن خيثمة عن إسماعيل السدي عن عكرمة
عن ابن عباس ... إسناده حسن

Abu Hammam – my father – Ziyad b. Khaythamah – **Isma’il al-Suddi** – Ikrimah – Ibn ‘Abbas **Its chain is *hasan*.**¹³

Shaykh Dr. Al-A'zami is not left out either:

حدثنا علي بن شعيب حدثنا أبو النضر حدثنا الأشجعي عن سفيان عن السدي
عن البهي عن عائشة.... إسناده حسن

'Ali b. Shu'ayb – Abu al-Nadhar – al-Ashja' – Sufyan – **al-Suddi** – al-Bahi – 'Aishah **Its chain is hasan.** 14

Interestingly, Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has documented a similar report of *Hadith al-Tair* as Imam Ibn Asakir:

قال المؤلف وقد أنبأنا أبو القاسم الحريري قال أنبأنا أبو طالب العشري قال أنا
الدارقطني قالنا أنا محمد بن مخلد قال أنا حاتم بن الليث قال أنا عبيد الله بن
موسى عن عيسى بن عمر القاري عن السدي قال انس اهدي رسول الله صلى
الله عليه و سلم أطياف فقسمن فقال اللهم ائتني بأحب خلقك إليك يأكل معي
من هذا الطير فجاء علي بن أبي طالب فدخل فأكل معه من ذلك الطير

Abu al-Qasim al-Hariri – Abu Talib al-'Ashri – al-Daraqūni – Muhammad b. Mukhlid – Hatim b. al-Layth – 'Ubayd Allah b. Musa – 'Isa b. 'Umar al-Qari – al-Suddi – Anas:

Birds were given as gifts to the Messenger of Allah. So, he distributed them. Then he said, "O Allah, bring to me **the most beloved to You of Your creation** to eat with me from this bird. **So, 'Ali b. Abi Talib came** and entered and ate with him from that bird. 15

This chain is basically the same as that which we have verified above in this chapter. 'Allamah al-Albani also has this comment about this report:

فقد رواه ابن الجوزي (363) بإسناده من طريق الدارقطني: نا محمد بن مخلد:
نا حاتم بن الليث قال: نا عبيد الله بن موسى به.

وهذا إسناده رجاله كلهم ثقات، إلا ما في (السدي) من الخلاف – وهو (السدي
الكبير) ، واسمه: إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن

Ibn al-Jawzi (363) has recorded it with his chain from the route of al-Daraqūni – Muhammad b. Mukhlid – Hatim b. al-Layth – ‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa with it (i.e. the full chain with the *hadith*).

All the narrators of this chain are trustworthy, except for the difference of opinions concerning al-Suddi, and he is al-Suddi al-Kabir, and his name is Isma’il b. ‘Abd al-Rahman.¹⁶

Since al-Suddi too is *thiqah* (trustworthy), or at least *saduq* (very truthful) due to the disputes about him, the *sanad* is therefore either *sahih* or *hasan*. We go with the stricter ruling. As such, we declare that chain of the *hadith* is *hasan* due to al-Suddi. All its narrators are reliable, and there is no disconnection whatsoever in the *sanad*.

Meanwhile, the *hadith* itself is absolutely *sahih* due to the existence of massive, overwhelming corroboration (*mutaba’at*) for al-Suddi. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H), for instance, declares about *Hadith al-Tair*:

وقد رواه عن أنس جماعة من أصحابه زيادة على ثلاثين نفسا

It has been narrated from Anas by a group of his companions, numbering **more than thirty** individuals.¹⁷

This establishes the *tawatur* of the *hadith* from Anas, and shoots the report of al-Suddi from the level of *hasan* to the highest *sahih* grade.

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 371
 2. Abu al-Qasim ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. ‘Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi’i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 42, p. 254
 3. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 19, p. 603, # 352
 4. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotators of the eighteenth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and Muhammad Na’im al-Arqisusi], vol. 18, p. 85, # 38
 5. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotators of the sixteenth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and Akram al-Bushi], vol. 16, p. 449, # 332
 6. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A’lami li al-Matbu’at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 5, p. 374, # 1218
 7. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 4th edition, 1406 H) [annotators of the twelfth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and ‘Ali al-Samar], vol. 12, p. 519, # 195
 8. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 640, # 4361
 9. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 773, # 5330
 10. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-

- Ahadith al-*Wahidah* wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 1, p. 802, # 440
11. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 622, # 311
12. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 217, # 13301
13. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 4, p. 396, # 2518
14. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, *Wahid* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 3, p. 270, # 2049
15. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali b. al-Jawzi, al-'Ilal al-Mutanahiyah fi al-Ahadith al-Wahidyyah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Khalil al-Mays], vol. 1, p. 230, # 363
16. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. 'Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-*Wahidah* wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 14, p. 174, # 6575
17. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-*Wahid* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 141, # 4650

27. Hadith Al-Tair, Examining Some Shawahid

The *hadith* proves that Amir al-Muminin, '*alaihi al-salam*', is the most beloved of all creatures to Allah after His Messenger, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*. This goes directly counter to the claims of the majority of the Ahl al-Sunnah that Abu Bakr, after the Prophet, is the most beloved to Allah in this Ummah.

Therefore, a lot of their '*ulama* struggle hard to bring down *Hadith al-Tair* in order to salvage their sect from collapse or confusion. So, they bring up a lot of "ifs" and "maybes" without ever presenting any explicit, *positive* evidence for their claims. Meanwhile, apart from the *hadith*, there are numerous other proofs which nullify the Sunni position. Let us have a look at some of them.

We start with the Verse of *al-Mubahala*:

فمن حاك فيك فيه من بعد ما جاءك من العلم فقل تعالوا ندع أبناءنا وأبنائكم
ونسائنا ونسائكم وأنفسنا وأنفسكم ثم نبهل فنجعل لعنت الله على الكاذبين

And whoever disputes with you concerning him after what has come to you of knowledge, then say: "Come, let us call *our* sons and your sons, *our* women and your women, *ourselves* and yourselves, then we place the Curse of Allah upon the liars."¹

It is clear from the verse that some people were debating with the Prophet, opposing what had been revealed to him from his Lord. The Qur'an is explicit: the debate was with the Messenger of Allah *alone*.

It was not with the Ummah. The “yous” in the verse, as well as the phrase “say”, are all singular. Therefore, all the “ours” in it are exclusive to the Prophet. “Our sons”, for instance, do not mean the “sons of the Ummah”.

Rather, they were *his* sons. His opponents were refusing to accept the Truth which he had brought from his Lord. So, he was commanded to challenge them to a *mubahala*, where each side would invoke the Curse of Allah upon “whoever” was lying in his claims between the two sides. A condition of the *mubahala* was that each party must participate in it with his sons and women. As such, the effect of the curse would affect the wrong disputant along with his sons and women.

The question is – why did the Qur’an name the “sons” and “women” as compulsory participants? The reason is apparent. A man usually cares most for himself, his sons, his daughters and his wives. He would not want any harm to come their way. Therefore, if he must involve himself *and* them together in a *mubahala*, he is most likely to think twice, and to withdraw from it if he has the slightest doubt in his claims. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) agrees:

والنفوس تحنوا على أقاربها ما لا تحنوا على غيرهم وكانوا يعلمون أنه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ويعلمون أنهم أن باهلوه نزلت البهلة عليهم وعلى أقاربهم واجتمع خوفهم على أنفسهم وعلى أقاربهم فكان ذلك أبلغ في امتناعهم وإلا فالإنسان قد يختار أن يهلك ويحيا ابنه والشيخ الكبير قد يختار الموت إذا بقي أقاربه في نعمة ومال وهذا موجود كثير

The hearts (lit: the souls) care for their closest people what they do not care for others. They (the non-Muslim disputants) knew that he was the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and they knew that if they did *mubahala* with him, curse would descend upon them and upon their closest people. So, their fear over themselves became combined with their fear over their closest people.

This caused their withdrawal (from the *mubahala*). Otherwise, the human being prefers to lose his life in order to save his son from death (if the need arises). Moreover, the old man prefers death if his closest people will be in comfort and wealth. And this is very common.²

In simple words, each party in the *mubahala* was to involve in it the people *closest* to his heart, those people whom he cared most for. So, who were the *closest* persons to the heart of the Messenger of Allah during his lifetime? This is where trouble sets in for our dear Shaykh:

فعلم انه أراد الأقربين إلينا من الذكور والإناث من الأولاد والعصبة

ولهذا دعا الحسن والحسين من الأبناء ودعا فاطمة من النساء ودعا عليا من رجاله ولم يكن عنده أحد أقرب إليه نسبا من هؤلاء وهم الذين أدار عليهم الكساء والمباهلة إنما تحصل بالأقربين إليه وإلا فلو بأهلهم بالبعدين في النسب وإن كانوا أفضل عند الله لم يحصل المقصود فإن المراد أنهم يدعون الأقربين كما يدعوا هو الأقرب إليه

Know that He (Allah in the Verse of *al-Mubahala*) intended the closest people to us – males and females – from the children and the blood relatives. **This was why he called al-Hasan and al-Husayn from the sons and called Faṭimah from the women and called ‘Ali from his men. There was no one else who was closer to him, in terms of blood relationship, than these people.**

They were those over whom he spread the *kisa* (cloak), **AND THE MUBAHALA WOULD ONLY SUCCEED THROUGH THE CLOSEST OF PEOPLE TO HIM.** Otherwise, if they (both parties) had done it with their distant blood relatives, even if such had been superior in the Sight of Allah, its purpose would have been defeated. **This was because the intention was that they (the non-Muslim party) should call their closest people, as he (Muhammad) should also call the closest people to him.**³

So, ‘Ali, Fatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, *‘alaihim al-salam*, were the closest people to the Prophet’s heart. He cared for them more than he did for anyone else on the face of the earth. At the practical level, the Messenger of Allah, for instance, cared more for ‘Ali than he did for Abu Bakr and ‘Umar! He equally cared more for *Umm Abiha* Faṭimah than he did for Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah. If this had not been the case, then the *mubahala* challenge would have been worthless, as the non-Muslim opponents were directed to summon people closest to their hearts. For a proper *mubahala*, things had to be equal on both sides.

Our Shaykh asserts that the Messenger’s care for ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn was based upon their blood relationship to him. He however misses the fact that al-‘Abbas was legally a *closer* blood relative to the Prophet than ‘Ali! This is why the right of the uncle to inherit overrules that of the cousin, as Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) states:

ولا خلاف بين أهل العلم إن ابن العم لا يرث مع العم

There is no difference of opinion among the scholars that the cousin cannot inherit with the presence of the uncle.⁴

Therefore, if the Prophet was choosing people on the basis of their blood closeness to him, he would have picked al-‘Abbas – who was already a practising Muslim then – and not ‘Ali. Alternatively, he could

have selected both al-‘Abbas and ‘Ali, and possibly some other cousins like Ibn ‘Abbas. Sensing the frailty of his own submission, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah attempts to apply some cosmetics to it:

وآية المباهلة نزلت سنة عشر لما قدم وفد نجران ولم يكن النبي صلى الله عليه
و سلم قد بقي من أعمامه إلا العباس والعباس لم يكن من السابقين الأولين ولا
كان له به اختصاص كعلي و أما بنو عمه فلم يكن فيهم مثل علي وكان جعفر
قد قتل قبل ذلك

The Verse of *al-Mubahala* was revealed in 10 AH when the delegation of Najran arrived. The Prophet, peace be upon him, had no other uncle other than al-‘Abbas then, and al-‘Abbas was not among the early converts to Islam, and did not have the exclusive qualities of ‘Ali. As for his (i.e. the Prophet’s) cousins, none of them was like ‘Ali, and Ja’far had been killed before then.⁵

Here, our Shaykh contradicts his other position. Was the choice of the Prophet for the participants in the *mubahala* from his side based solely upon their blood relationship to him or upon their individual merits? A question also arises as to why ‘Aishah and all other wives of the Prophet were excluded. After all, the word used in the Verse of *al-Mubahala* is *nisa*, which literally means “women”.

As such, it covered *both* wives and daughters. In fact, everywhere else in the Qur’an, the phrase “women (*nisa*) of the Prophet” *always* referred to his wives⁶! In addition, in over 90% of cases, the word “women (*nisa*)” in the Book of Allah means “wives”⁷. So, it is safe to conclude that the phrase “our women” in the Verse of *al-Mubahala* is addressed *first* to the wives, and *then* to the daughters. Our Sunni brothers have never been able to explain why the wives were not called to join in the *mubahala*.

In any case, none of the wives of the Prophet – and they were also his primary “women” – was from his closest blood relatives. That would have been incest anyway, and therefore impossible. The fact that the word “women” has been used in the verse, and not “daughters”, strengthens the theory that the selection process was NOT based upon blood relationship. Allah Himself selected the people whom He knew to be the closest to the heart of His Messenger to participate with him in the *mubahala*. He mentioned the categories to which they belonged, deliberately leaving them open *for a clear point*. Then the Prophet filled in the names. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) declares:

وقد تواترت الاخبار في التفاسير عن عبد الله بن عباس وغيره أن رسول الله
صلى الله عليه وسلم أخذ يوم المباهلة بيد علي وحسن وحسين وجعلوا فاطمة
وراءهم ثم قال هؤلاء أبناءنا وأنفسنا نساؤنا فهلّموا أنفسكم وأبناءكم ونساءكم ثم
نبتهل فنجعل لعنة الله على الكاذبين

There have been *mutawatir* reports in the *tafsir* books from ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abbas and others that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, on the Day of *al-Mubahala*, held the hands of ‘Ali, Hasan and Husayn, and they positioned Faḩimah behind them. Then he said, “**These are our sons, ourselves and our women.** So, bring yourselves, your sons and your women. Then we do *mubahala* and place the Curse of Allah upon the liars (among us).”⁸

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah corroborates him:

وأما آية الابتهاال ففي الصحيح أنها لما نزلت أخذ النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بيد علي وفاطمة وحسن وحسين ليباهل بهم لكن خصهم بذلك لأنهم كانوا أقرب إليه من غيرهم فإنه لم يكن ولد ذكر إذ ذاك يمشي معه ولكن كان يقول عن الحسن إن ابني هذا سيد فهما ابناه ونسأؤه إذ لم يكن قد بقى له بنت إلا فاطمة رضي الله عنها

As for the Verse of *al-Ibtihal* (another word for *al-Mubahala*), what is narrated in the *sahih (hadith)* is that when it was revealed, the Prophet, peace be upon him, held the hand of ‘Ali, Faḩimah, Hasan and Husayn to do *mubahala* with them (against the Najranis). **However, he limited that to them because they were the closest of all people to him.**

This was because he did not have a son who would have walked with him. However, he used to say about al-Hasan, “This son of mine is a master”. Therefore, both of them (i.e. al-Hasan and al-Husayn) were his sons. As for his women, he had no other surviving daughter except Faḩimah, may Allah be pleased with her.⁹

Well, the Prophet had other “women”, such as ‘Aishah, Hafsa, Umm Salamah, and several others. Why did he not call them?

No doubt, the people that the Messenger of Allah cared most for were ‘Ali, Faḩimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. Luckily, by Allah’s Mercy, these people – who were the closest to his heart – fell into the same categories as what obtains in most similar cases. Therefore, it was possible to organize a *mubahala* with the Najrani delegation on the same terms. There is a particular point on the word “ourselves”.

It is represented by two people, namely the Prophet and Amir al-Muminin, in the *mubahala*. The obvious implication of this is that the Messenger of Allah cared of ‘Ali at the same level as he cared for himself. In other words, Imam ‘Ali was as close to the heart of the Prophet as the latter himself was to his own heart. This was why it was possible for Amir al-Muminin to fit into the same category as the Messenger in the *mubahala*.

Of course, when someone is close to your heart and you care for them, that is love! So, the most beloved of mankind to the Prophet of Allah were ‘Ali, Faṭimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and this is confirmed by the Qur’an. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah would have us believe that this love was based only upon blood relationship. However, Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا إسماعيل ثنا ليث عن عمرو بن مرة عن معاوية بن سويد بن مقرن عن البراء بن عازب قال كنا جلوسا عند النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال ... ان أوسط عرى الإيمان ان تحب في الله وتبغض في الله

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Isma’il – Layth – ‘Amr b. Marrah – Mu’awiyah b. Suwayd b. Muqarran – al-Bara b. ‘Azim:

We were sitting with the Prophet, peace be upon him, and he said ... “Verily, **the central handhold of faith (*iman*) is that you love for the sake of Allah** and that you hate for the sake of Allah.”¹⁰

Shaykh al-Arnauṣ says:

حديث حسن بشواهده

It is a *hadith* that is *hasan* through its witnesses.¹¹

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also records this *hadith*:

إن أوثق عرى الإسلام: أن تحب في الله و تبغض في الله

Verily, **the strongest handhold of Islam is that you love for the sake of Allah** and hate for the sake of Allah.¹²

The ‘Allamah states:

حسن

Is there anyone with a better faith (*iman*), or who is a better Muslim, than the Messenger of Allah? Of course, there is none! Therefore, his love for ‘Ali, Fa‘imah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn was purely *for the sake of Allah*. They were the most beloved creatures to Allah after His Messenger. So, he loved them too more than everyone else. Our Lord also loves Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib more than Fa‘imah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn. As such, His Prophet loved ‘Ali as he loved himself. These facts were *very* widely known throughout the Islamic world during the Messenger’s lifetime.

Even non-Muslims were aware of the names of the most beloved human beings to Muhammad. This was why the Najrani delegation raised no objection whatsoever to anyone in the Prophet’s team for the *mubahala*. They knew that those were the closest people to his heart, whom he cared for most, above everyone else. As such, they were the perfect and the only valid selection for the *mubahala* from his side.

The Messenger was absolutely trustworthy. He never would have cheated. Since he expected the other side to involve their most beloved people in the *mubahala* – in line with the rules of the game, he too would certainly have done like that. Moreover, if it had been known that there had been other people more beloved to him than his team, his own followers would have suspected the truth of his prophethood and his personal honesty. Otherwise, why would he need to cheat if he was correct in his claims? What would he have been afraid of?

Besides, the Najrani delegation too would have objected to his selection. They would have firmly demanded for an equal playing field. Since all parties were required to bring the most beloved of people to them into the *mubahala*, why should the Prophet do otherwise? In fact, it was most probably what convinced them to opt out of the *mubahala*. Muhammad would *never* have involved his team in it – knowing the implications – unless he was absolutely truthful in his claims. The Najrani delegation, on their part, never dared involve their own teams, since they had doubts about their submissions!

As expected, Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah was not happy about the state of things, and did challenge the Messenger of Allah on it. Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

وأخرج أحمد وأبو داود والنسائي بسند صحيح عن النعمان بن بشير قال
استأذن أبو بكر على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فسمع صوت عائشة عاليا وهي
تقول والله لقد علمت أن عليا أحب إليك من أبي

Ahmad, Abu Dawud and al-Nasai have recorded **with a *sahih* chain** from al-Nu‘man b. Bashir:

Abu Bakr sought permission to enter the house of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and heard the voice of ‘Aishah, very loud, and she was saying (to the Prophet), “**I have known that ‘Ali is more beloved to you than my father.**”¹⁴

Imam Ahmad also has this:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا أبو نعيم ثنا يونس ثنا العيزار بن حريث قال قال
النعمان بن بشير قال استأذن أبو بكر على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
فسمع صوت عائشة عاليا وهي تقول والله لقد عرفت أن عليا أحب إليك من
أبي ومنى مرتين أو ثلاثا فاستأذن أبو بكر فدخل فأهوى إليها فقال يا بنت فلانة
الا أسمعك ترفعين صوتك على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Abu Na’im – Yunus – al-‘Ayzar b. Hurayth – al-
Nu’man b. Bashir:

Abu Bakr sought the permission of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, to enter his house, and heard the voice of ‘Aishah, very loud. She was saying, **“I swear by Allah, I have discovered that ‘Ali is more beloved to you than my father and me.”** She said it twice or thrice. So, Abu Bakr sought permission (again) and entered, and reached for her, and said, “O daughter of such-and-such woman! Did I hear you raising your voice upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him?”¹⁵

Shaykh al-Arnau[®] says:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is *hasan*.¹⁶

Apparently, the Prophet had tried to conceal the matter from her due to her notorious jealousy. But, it was too obvious, especially after the Incident of *al-Mubahala*. So, she went on the offensive, and never relented thereafter. Eventually, she commanded a very bloody armed insurrection against Amir al-Muminin during his *khilafah*, and thousands of Muslims died tragically as a result. It is very significant that the Messenger of Allah did not deny her claim. If she was wrong, he would have told her.

Yet, despite that, Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah continued to re-write history after the death of the Messenger. ‘Allamah al-Albani reports her:

فقال الإمام أحمد (6/241) : حدثنا عبد الواحد الحداد عن كهمس عن عبد الله
بن شقيق، قال: قلت لعائشة: أي الناس كان أحب إلى رسول الله صلى الله

عليه وسلم؟ قالت: عائشة، قلت: فمن الرجال؟ قالت: أبوها."

Imam Ahmad (6/241) records: ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Hadad – Kahmas – ‘Abd Allah b. Shaqiq:

I said to ‘Aishah, “**Which of mankind was the most beloved to the Messenger of Allah**, peace be upon him?” ‘Aishah said, “**Aishah**”. I said, “What about among the men?” She replied, “Her father.”¹⁷

The ‘Allamah states:

قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح رجاله كلهم ثقات رجال الصحيح.

I say: **This chain is *sahih***. Its narrators are trustworthy, narrators of the *Sahih*.¹⁸

Is that not strange? Despite “knowing” and “discovering” what she did, she still went ahead to claim this! Meanwhile, was she really the best of *mankind* after the Messenger of Allah as she was telling people? Besides, why did the Prophet exclude her from the *mubahala* despite that she was one of his “women”? Was ‘Aishah telling the people that the Messenger cheated?!!

1. Qur’an 3:61

2. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 126

3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 125

4. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 136, # 4634

5. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 126

6. See for instance, Qur’an 33:30, 33:32

7. The word nisa (women) has been used in the following verses: 2:49, 2:187, 2:222–223, 2:226, 2:231–232, 2:235–236, 3:14, 3:42, 3:61, 4:1, 4:3–4, 4:7, 4:11, 4:15, 4:19, 4:22–24, 4:32, 4:34, 4:43, 4:75, 4:98, 4:127, 4:129, 4:176, 5:6, 7:81, 7:127, 7:141, 12:30, 12:50, 14:6, 24:31, 24:60, 27:55, 28:4, 33:30, 33:32, 33:52, 33:55, 33:59, 40:25, 48:25, 49:11, 58:2–3, 65:1 and 65:4.

8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hafiz al-Naysaburi, Kitab Ma’rifah ‘Ulum al-Hadith (Beirut: Manshurah Dar al-‘Ifaq al-Hadith; 4th edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Sayyid Mu’zam Husayn], p. 50

9. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, p. 27

10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 286, # 18547

11. Ibid

12. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, ‘Ahih al-Jami’ al-‘Aghir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, p. 342, # 883 (2009)

13. Ibid

14. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Ṣaḥih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṣaba‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 7, p. 19
15. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 275, # 18444
16. Ibid
17. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Aḥadith al-Ṣa‘īfah wa al-Mawdu‘ah wa Athariḥah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma‘arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 3, p. 254, # 1124
18. Ibid

28. Hadith Al-Ta’rif, Understanding Its Background

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

الحديث الذي روى عن ابن عمر ما كنا نعرف المنافقين على عهد النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم إلا ببغضهم عليا فإن هذا مما يعلم كل عالم أنه كذب لأن النفاق له علامات كثيرة وأسباب متعددة غير بغض علي فكيف لا يكون على النفاق علامة إلا بغض علي

The *hadith* which is narrated from Ibn ‘Umar, “We were not able to recognize the hypocrites during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him, except through their hatred of ‘Ali”, **verily this is known to all scholars that it is a lie**. This is because hypocrisy has several signs and causes apart from hatred of ‘Ali. So, how could the hatred of ‘Ali have been the *only* sign of hypocrisy?¹

Our Shaykh then proceeds:

لو قال كنا نعرف المنافقين ببغض علي لكان متوجها كما أنهم أيضا يعرفون ببغض الأنصار بل وببغض أبي بكر وعمر وببغض هؤلاء فإن كل من أبغض من يعلم أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يحبه ويواليه وأنه كان يحب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ويواليه كان بغضه شعبة من شعب النفاق

If he had said “We used to recognize the hypocrites through their hatred of ‘Ali” then he would have

been correct. They (the hypocrites) were also recognized through their hatred of the Ansar, rather through the hatred of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and through the hatred of these people. This is because everyone who hates anyone who is known to have been loved by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and who also loved the Prophet, peace be upon him, such hatred is a sign of hypocrisy.²

This was during the lifetime of the Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. Our Shaykh accepts that hatred of ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, was truly then a sign of hypocrisy. What he rejects is the possibility that hatred of Amir al-Muminin was the *only* sign to recognize hypocrisy – something that is NOT claimed in the *hadith* anyway! To him, the determining question is: did the Prophet love the person being hated? If the answer were positive, then such hatred was unmistakable evidence of hypocrisy.

Under this principle, anyone who hated Amir al-Muminin *during the lifetime of the Messenger* was certainly a hypocrite. Our Shaykh has no problem with that. But then, he further insists that the same rule applied in favour of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar too. It is his belief that the Prophet loved both of them more than Amir al-Muminin. Therefore, hatred of either Abu Bakr or ‘Umar would be an even bigger form of hypocrisy.

What about events after the death of the Messenger? Was love or hatred of someone, by the Prophet *during his lifetime*, evidence of their permanent, *immutable* status? In simpler words, once an individual was able to earn the love of Allah and His Messenger, was it *ever* possible for him to forfeit it? This question stands at the centre of our research in this chapter. The Qur’an states categorically several times that *any* individual who has become Allah’s beloved can also turn into His enemy *anytime*! For instance, Allah says to all His prophets:

ولقد أوحى إليك وإلى الذين من قبلك لئن أشركت ليحبطن عملك ولتكونن من
الخاسرين

And indeed it has been revealed to you (O Muhammad), as it was revealed to those before you: **if you commit idolatry, then surely all your deeds will be in vain**, and you will certainly be among the losers.³

The Qur’an also states:

قل إني أخاف إن عصيت ربي عذاب يوم عظيم

Say: “I fear, **if I disobey my Lord**, the torment of a Mighty Day.”⁴

Therefore, the love of Allah for Muhammad and all His promises of Paradise to him were conditioned upon his continued obedience and servitude to his Lord Alone. Should he have become otherwise during his lifetime, Allah would have hated him and thrown him into Hellfire. As such, Muhammad remained in constant fear of disobeying his Lord till his death. This was the case with the most beloved of all creation to Allah. Apparently, the same condition applied indiscriminately to all the Sahabah, and to all beings till the Hour. So, even if any of them had earned the love of Allah and His Prophet, the story did not end there. If he *ever* did certain acts, before or after the Messenger's death, he would forfeit such love.

Before proceeding further, we must ask whether the Messenger of Allah, during his lifetime, loved 'Ali or not. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) answers with this *hadith*:

حدثنا قتيبة بن سعيد ومحمد بن عباد (وتقاربا في اللفظ) قالا حدثنا حاتم (وهو ابن إسماعيل) عن بكير بن مسمار عن عامر بن سعد بن أبي وقاص عن أبيه قال أمر معاوية بن أبي سفيان سعدا فقال ما منعك أن تسب أبا التراب؟ فقال أما ذكرت ثلاثا قالهن له رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فلن أسبه لأن تكون لي واحدة منهن أحب إلي من حمر النعم سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول له خلفه في بعض مغازيه فقال له علي يا رسول الله خلفتني مع النساء والصبيان؟ فقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أما ترضى أن تكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه لا نبوة بعدي وسمعتة يقول يوم خيبر لأعطين الراية رجلا يحب الله ورسوله ويحبه الله ورسوله قال فتناولنا لها فقال ادعوا لي عليا فأتى به أرمم فبصق في عينه ودفع الراية إليه ففتح الله عليه ولما نزلت هذه الآية فقل تعالوا ندع أبناءنا وأبنائكم [3/آل عمران/61] دعا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم عليا وفاطمة وحسنا وحسينا فقال اللهم هؤلاء أهلي

Qutaybah b. Sa'id and Muhammad b. 'Ibad – Hatim b. Isma'il – Bukayr b. Musmar – 'Amir b. Sa'id b. Abi Waqqas – his father (Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas):

Mu'awiyah commanded Sa'd, and therefore said, "What prevented you from cursing Abu al-Turab (i.e. 'Ali)?" So, he (Sa'd) replied, "As long as I remember three things which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said about him, I will never curse him. **If just one of them had been for me, it would have been dearer to me than a red camel.** I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying to him. He made him his *khalifah* during one of his military expeditions. So, 'Ali said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, are you leaving me behind with women and children?"

So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to him, "Are you not pleased that you are to me of

the status of Harun to Musa except that there is no prophethood after me?” And I heard him saying on the Day of Khaybar, “**I will give the flag to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger, and Allah and His Messenger too love him.**” So, we longed for it (i.e. the flag).

Then he said, “Call ‘Ali for me”, and he was brought to him. He was sore-eyed. He applied saliva to his eye and gave the flag to him, and Allah granted him victory. And when this verse was revealed {Say: Come, let us call *our* sons and your sons....} [3/61], the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, called ‘Ali, Faṭimah, Hasan and Husayn, and said, “O Allah! These are my family.”⁵

There are three quick points from this *hadith*, with specific reference to this chapter:

1. Mu’awiyah commanded Sa’d to do something, *before* asking him why he (Sa’d) refused to curse ‘Ali.
3. Sa’d did not have *any* of those three merits mentioned for ‘Ali, and very strongly wished he did any of them.
5. Allah and His Messenger loved ‘Ali, and he loved them too.

So, what did Mu’awiyah command Sa’d to do? In order to uncover what that was, we must pay attention to the former’s question:

ما منعك أن تسب أبا التراب؟

What prevented you from cursing Abu al-Turab (i.e. ‘Ali)?

In classical Arabic, this sentence structure was used to ask why a direct order had been disobeyed, *by the commandant himself*. In other words, if A ordered B to, say, hit C, and B refused to do so, then A would say to B, “What prevented you from hitting C?” The other manner in which it was applied was where A did not command B to do something, but was nonetheless unpleasantly surprised or shocked that B had not done it. So A would ask, “What prevented you from doing such-and-such?”

An example is in this verse:

قال يا إبليس ما منعك أن تسجد لما خلقت بيدي أستكبرت أم كنت من العالين

He (Allah) said, “**O Iblis! What prevented you** from prostrating yourself to one whom I have created with Both My Hands?!⁶

Another is here:

قال ما منعك ألا تسجد إذ أمرتك

He (Allah) said, “**What prevented you (O Iblis)** that you did not prostrate **when I commanded you personally?**”⁷

An example of the other use of that expression can be found here:

قال يا هارون ما منعك إذ رأيتهم ضلوا

He (Musa) said, “O Harun! **What prevented you** when you saw them going astray?”⁸

We know that the situation of Sa’d fell into the first category. There was an explicit order to do something. As such, from Mu’awiyah’s question, we realize that he had ordered Sa’d to curse ‘Ali. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah agrees:

وأما حديث سعد لما أمره معاوية بالسب فأبى فقال ما منعك أن تسب علي بن أبي طالب فقال ثلاث قالهن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فلن أسبه لأن يكون لي واحدة منهن أحب إلي من حمر النعم الحديث فهذا حديث صحيح رواه مسلم في صحيحه

As for the *hadith* of Sa’d, **when Mu’awiyah commanded him to curse, and he refused, and he (Mu’awiyah) therefore said, “What prevented you from cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib?”**, and he replied, “There are three things that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said. So, I will never curse him. If just one of them had been for me, it would have been dearer to me than a red camel”, **this *hadith* is *sahih*. Muslim has narrated it.**⁹

In simpler words, Mu’awiyah ordered Sa’d to curse someone who was loved by the Messenger during his lifetime. So, one asks: did ‘Ali forfeit this love after the Prophet’s death, *before* Mu’awiyah’s command to Sa’d? Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah even has some more news for us:

و معلوم أن الله قد جعل للصحابة مودة في قلب كل مسلم لا سيما الخلفاء رضي الله عنهم لا سيما أبو بكر و عمر فان عامة الصحابة و التابعين كانوا يودونهما و كانوا خير القرون و لم يكن كذلك علي فان كثيرا من الصحابة و

التابعين كانوا يبغضونه و يسبونهم و يقاتلونه

What is known is that Allah has certainly put the love of the Sahabah in the hearts of every Muslim, especially love of the *khalifahs*, may Allah be pleased with them, especially love of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. This is because the generality of the Sahabah and Tabi’in loved them both, and **they (i.e. Sahabah and Tabi’in) were the best of generations. But, the matter was not the same for ‘Ali, for A LOT of the Sahabah and Tabi’in used to hate, curse and fight him.**¹⁰

The question is: why? Had ‘Ali had forfeited the love of Allah and His Messenger for him? Had he become worthy of hatred, curses and armed hostility? This is the big test for our Sunni brothers. If ‘Ali had not forfeited the love of Allah and His Messenger for himself, then those Sahabah and Tabi’in who hated, cursed or fought him had forfeited their own, if any! Allah has said:

والله لا يحب الظالمين

And Allah does NOT love the unjust people.¹¹

It all boils down to whether those Sahabah and Tabi’in treated ‘Ali justly by hating, cursing and fighting him. If they had NOT done so, then they all forfeited Allah’s prior love for them with those unjust actions. In line with our Shaykh’s words, they also turned hypocrites:

فإن كل من أبغض من يعلم أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يحبه ويواليه وأنه
كان يحب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ويواليه كان بغضه شعبة من شعب
النفاق

This is because *everyone* who hates *anyone* who is known to have been loved by the Prophet, peace be upon him, and who also loved the Prophet, peace be upon him, such hatred is a sign of hypocrisy.¹²

The Sunni dilemma explodes here. Their theology is based on a rigid theory that all the Sahabah earned Allah’s love and *never* forfeited it. How do they treat the case of those of them who hated, cursed and fought ‘Ali – like Mu’awiyah and Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah? Our Sunni brothers want to eat the cake, and still have it! To them, those Sahabah were not unjust people, and therefore never forfeited Allah’s love for them. Does this mean that ‘Ali truly deserved their hatred, curses and armed hostility? Sunni Islam says “no” again. ‘Ali remained a loyal, beloved friend of Allah throughout his lifetime, and never deserved anyone’s hatred, curse or hostility!

The matter takes a new dimension with this *hadith* of the Prophet, copied by ‘Allamah al–Albani (d. 1420 H):

من أحب عليا فقد أحبني ومن أحبني فقد أحب الله عز وجل ومن أبغض عليا
فقد أبغضني ومن أبغضني فقد أبغض الله عز وجل.

Whosoever loves ‘Ali has loved me. And whosoever loves me has loved Allah the Almighty. **Moreover, whosoever hates ‘Ali has hated me. And whosoever hates me has hated Allah the Almighty.** 13

The ‘Allamah comments:

رواه المخلص في " الفوائد المنتقاة " (10 / 5 / 1) بسند صحيح عن أم سلمة
قالت: أشهد أني سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: فذكره.

Al–Mukhlis recorded it in *al–Fawaid al–Muntaqat* (10/5/1) **with a *sahih* chain** from Umm Salamah, she said: “I testify that I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying:” and he (al–Mukhlis) mentioned it (i.e. the *hadith*). 14

Imam al–Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

أخبرني أحمد بن عثمان بن يحيى المقرئ ببغداد ثنا أبو بكر بن أبي العوام
الرياحي ثنا أبو زيد سعيد بن أوس الأنصاري ثنا عوف بن أبي عثمان النهدي
قال قال رجل لسلمان ما أشد حبك لعلي قال : سمعت رسول الله صلى الله
عليه وسلم يقول : من أحب عليا فقد أحبني ومن أبغض عليا فقد أبغضني

Ahmad b. ‘Uthman b. Yahya al–Maqri – Abu Bakr b. Abi al–‘Awwam al–Rayahi – Abu Zayd Sa’id b. Aws al–Ansari – ‘Awf b. Abi ‘Uthman al–Hindi:

A man said to Salman (al–Farisi), “What do you love ‘Ali severely like that?” He replied, “I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: ‘Whosoever loves ‘Ali has loved me **and whosoever hates ‘Ali has hated me.**”¹⁵

Al–Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.16

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.17

The game changes here completely. Allah made the love of ‘Ali an umbilical part of His Own love. He equally made the hatred of ‘Ali like that. This grand merit was exclusive to ‘Ali alone among all the Sahabah. A few points can be gleaned from it:

1. Allah would *never* hate ‘Ali, because doing so would mean hating Himself and His Messenger.
3. Therefore, Allah – in His infinite wisdom, justice and mercy – would always protect ‘Ali from doing anything that could harm His love for him, just as He did with His Prophet.
5. There can be no excuse or justification *ever* for hating ‘Ali – not even ignorance or mistake – just as there can be none for hating Allah or His Messenger. The love of Allah, His Messenger and ‘Ali is one, and so is their hatred.
7. Whosoever hates ‘Ali – whether by the heart, or by words, or by deeds – is guilty of hating Allah and His Messenger. As such, all the Sahabah who hated, cursed or fought ‘Ali hated Allah and His Messenger – no matter what the Sunnis believe or say.

This is the point. The Sahabah, like the rest of the Ummah, earned, lost, re-gained, re-lost, etc Allah’s love as well, depending on their current actions. This was the case even during the Prophet’s lifetime. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records about the case of Buraydah, a prominent Sahabi:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن سعيد ثنا عبد الجليل قال انتهيت إلى حلقة فيها أبو مجلز وابن بريدة فقال عبد الله بن بريدة حدثني أبي بريدة قال: أبغضت عليا بغضا لم يبغضه أحد قط.... وقال أتبغض عليا قال قلت نعم قال فلا تبغضه وإن كنت تحبه فازدد له حبا.... فما كان من الناس أحد بعد قول رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أحب إلى من علي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Sa’id – ‘Abd al-Jalil – Abd Allah b. Buraydah – my father, Buraydah:

I hated ‘Ali with a hatred that I never hated anyone else.... And he (the Prophet) said (to me), “Do you hate ‘Ali?” I said, “Yes”. He said, “Do not hate him, and if you love him, then increase your love for him”.... Therefore, **after the statement of the Messenger of Allah**, peace be upon him, **there was no person among all mankind who was more beloved to me than ‘Ali.** 18

Shaykh al-Arnau¹ says:

حديث صحيح وهذا إسناده حسن من أجل عبد الجليل

It is a *sahih hadith*, and this chain is *hasan* due to ‘Abd al-Jalil. 19

Buraydah was an extreme hater of Allah and His Messenger. At that point, he certainly had lost Allah’s love for him. However, when the Prophet advised him, and he obeyed, he re-earned Allah’s love once more. During his anti-‘Ali days, whoever hated him was NOT a hypocrite. In fact, it could be praiseworthy to hate him then. Meanwhile, the moment he loved ‘Ali above everyone else except the Messenger of Allah, it became *haram* to hate him.

The bottomline is: the Sahabah – like everyone else – fluctuated between love and hatred of Allah and His Messenger, depending upon their current actions. So, it may be compulsory to love them at one point, and *haram* to do so at another. As such, love or hatred of any of them was not (and is not) a failproof measure to determine anyone’s hypocrisy.

The only exception among them was ‘Ali. He stayed *permanently* within Allah’s love, and was protected by Him from *ever* losing it, till his death. Therefore, hatred of him – like that of the Prophet – *always* produces the same result anytime anywhere. It was, and still is – after that of the Messenger – the best bet to unearth the hypocrites.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, pp. 298–299

2. Ibid, vol. 4, pp. 299–300

3. Qur’an 39:65

4. Qur’an 6:15

5. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Shahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1870, # 2404 (32)

6. Qur’an 38:75

7. Qur’an 7:12

8. Qur’an 20:92

9. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 5, p. 42
10. Ibid, vol. 7, pp. 137–138
11. Qur’an 3: 57
12. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 4, p. 300
13. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘Ahiyah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, pp. 287–288, # 1299
14. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 288, # 1299
15. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Ahiyah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 141, # 4648
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 350, # 23017
19. Ibid

29. Hadith Al-Ta’rif, Proving Its Authenticity

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله قال حدثني أبي قثنا أسود بن عامر قثنا إسرائيل عن الأعمش عن
أبي صالح عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال : إنما كنا نعرف منافقي الأنصار ببغضهم
علياً

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Aswad b. ‘Amir – Israil – al-A’mash – Abu Salih
– Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

We were able to recognize the hypocrites among the Ansar only through their hatred of ‘Ali.¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the first narrator:

عبد الله بن أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل الشيباني أبو عبد الرحمن ولد الإمام ثقة

‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman: son of the Imam,

thiqah (trustworthy).2

Of course, Imam Ahmad needs no introduction. But, let's get the verdict of al-Hafiz anyway:

أحمد بن محمد بن حنبل بن هلال بن أسد الشيباني المروزي نزيل بغداد أبو
عبد الله أحد الأئمة ثقة حافظ فقيه حجة

Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal b. Hilal b. Asad al-Shaybani al-Maruzi, a Baghdad resident, Abu 'Abd Allah: One of the Imams, **thiqah (trustworthy)**, *hafiz*, jurist, *hujjah* (an authority).3

Concerning the third narrator, al-Hafiz says:

الأسود بن عامر الشامي نزيل بغداد يكنى أبا عبد الرحمن ويلقب شاذان ثقة

Al-Aswad b. 'Amir al-Shami, he lived in Baghdad, and was nicknamed Abu 'Abd al-Rahman and given the *laqab* Shadhan: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.4

The fourth narrator is like that as well, as stated by al-Hafiz:

إسرائيل بن يونس بن أبي إسحاق السبيعي الهمداني أبو يوسف الكوفي ثقة تكلم
فيه بلا حجة

Israil b. Yunus b. Abi Ishaq al-Sabi'i al-Hamdani, Abu Yusuf al-Kufi: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**. He is criticized *without* evidence.5

Al-A'mash, the fifth narrator, is *thiqah* (trustworthy) too, according to al-Hafiz:

سليمان بن مهران الأسدي الكاهلي أبو محمد الكوفي الأعمش ثقة حافظ عارف
بالقراءات ورع لكنه يدلّس

Sulayman b. Mahran al-Asadi al-Kahili, Abu Muhammad al-Kufi al-A'mash: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, **hafiz (a hadith scientist)**, a scholar of *al-qiraat* (Qur'anic recitation modes), pious. **However, he used to do *tadlis*.**6

About the last narrator, al-Hafiz has these words:

ذكوان أبو صالح السمان الزيات المدني ثقة ثبت

Dhakwan Abu Salih al-Saman al-Zayat al-Madani: **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**.⁷

All the narrators are therefore trustworthy, and the chain is well-connected. The only issue is that al-A'mash was a *mudalis*, and has narrated in an 'an-'an manner. So, does this affect the *hadith*? The answer is a negative. Al-A'mash's 'an-'an reports from Abu Salih are accepted by scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah. They apparently reject any notion that al-A'mash did *tadlis* in his reports from Abu Salih, even in his 'an-'an reports. For instance, Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records this 'an-'an chain in his *Sahih*:

وحدثني زهير بن حرب حدثنا جرير عن الأعمش عن أبي صالح عن أبي هريرة

Zuhayr b. Harb – Jarir – **al-A'mash** – **Abu Salih** – Abu Hurayrah⁸

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H)⁹, Shaykh Shu'ayb al-Arnau¹⁰, Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H)¹¹, Shaykh Dr. Asad¹², and Shaykh Dr. Al-A'zami¹³ have all also declared chains containing 'an-'an transmission by al-A'mash from Abu Salih to be *sahih*. With this, it is obvious that the *hadith* of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri above, recorded by Imam Ahmad, has a perfectly *sahih* chain.

The *hadith* establishes some very crucial points. The first is that there were hypocrites among the Ansar. Of course, the Ansar were Sahabah. Therefore, there were hypocrites among the Sahabah. Interestingly, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah agrees on this point too:

ولهذا قال أحمد بن حنبل وغيره من العلماء أنه لم يكن من المهاجرين من نفاق
وإنما كان النفاق في قبائل الأنصار....

ولهذا إنما ذكر النفاق في السور المدنية وإما السور المكية فلا ذكر فيها
للمنافقين

This is why Ahmad b. Hanbal and other scholars said that there was no hypocrite among the Muhajirun

and that hypocrisy existed only within the tribes of the Ansar....

And this is why hypocrisy is mentioned only in the Madinan *suwar* (chapters of the Qur'an). As for the Makkan *suwar*, there is no mention in them of hypocrites. 14

Well, in one of the earliest Makkan surah, Allah does mention the existence of Muslims "in whose hearts is a disease" during the Makkan era¹⁵. Apparently, our Shaykh and the classical Sunni scholars missed that crucial fact!

Whatever the case, the fact that hypocrites existed among the Ansar – at the least – fatally undermines the Sunni doctrine that all the Sahabah earned Allah's love, and that none of them ever forfeited it. Allah does not love hypocrites. By contrast, He has cursed them:

وعد الله المنافقين والمنافقات والكفار نار جهنم خالدين فيها هي حسبهم
ولعنهم الله ولهم عذاب مقيم

Allah has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the disbelievers, the Fire of *Jahannam*. They shall remain therein forever. It will be sufficient for them. **Allah has also cursed them**, and for them is the lasting torment. 16

So, there were people cursed by Allah, and who shall reside forever in *Jahannam*, among the Sahabah.

The second point in the *hadith* is that the righteous Sahabah were unable to recognize the hypocritical Sahabah except through the latter's hatred of 'Ali. It is noteworthy that there is no claim whatsoever that hatred of Amir al-Muminin was the *only* sign of hypocrisy. Rather, it was the most effective, the only failproof tool. All the other signs – such as lying, failure to fulfil promises, laziness during *Salat*, and so on – could be found in some people who were not hypocrites too, albeit in smaller quantities. However, as for hatred of 'Ali, it is an *absolute* proof of hypocrisy. It is wholly impossible for a true believer to hate him in *any* circumstance, in line with the testimony of the Messenger of Allah.

Imam Muslim records:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا وكيع وأبو معاوية عن الأعمش ح وحدثنا
يحيى بن يحيى (واللفظ له) أخبرنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن عدي بن ثابت
عن زر قال قال علي والذي فلق الحبة وبرأ النسمة إنه لعهد النبي الأمي صلى
الله عليه و سلم إلى أن لا يحبني إلا مؤمن ولا يبغضني إلا منافق

Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Waki’ and Abu Mu’awiyah – al-A’mash, AND Yahya b. Yahya – Abu Mu’awiyah – al-A’mash – Adi b. Thabit – Zirr:

‘Ali said: “I swear by the One Who split up the seed and created something living, the *Ummi* Prophet verily informed me that none loves me except a believer **and that none hates me except a hypocrite.**”¹⁷

Imam Ahmad also records his *mutaba’ah* for Ibn Abi Shaybah:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا وكيع ثنا الأعمش عن عدي بن ثابت عن زر بن حبيش عن علي رضي الله عنه قال عهد إلى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم أنه لا يحبك إلا مؤمن ولا يبغضك إلا منافق

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Waki’ – al-A’mash – ‘Adi b. Thabit – Zirr b. Hubaysh – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, informed me saying, “None loves you except a believer, **and none hates you except a hypocrite.**”¹⁸

Shaykh al-Arnau¹⁹ comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs¹⁹

Imam al-Tirmidhi has also a third *mutaba’ah* for Waki’:

حدثنا عيسى بن عثمان ابن أخي يحيى بن عيسى حدثنا أبو عيسى الرملي عن الأعمش عن عدي بن ثابت عن زر بن حبيش عن علي قال لقد عهد إلى النبي الأمي صلى الله عليه و سلم أنه لا يحبك إلا مؤمن ولا يبغضك إلا منافق

‘Isa b. ‘Uthman, son of the brother of Yahya b. ‘Isa – Abu ‘Isa al-Ramli – al-Am’ash – ‘Adi b. Thabit – Zirr b. Hubaysh – ‘Ali:

The Ummi Prophet, peace be upon him, had informed me saying, “None loves you except a believer

and none hates you except a hypocrite.”²⁰

Al-Tirmidhi states:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *hadith* is *hasan sahih*.²¹

‘Allamah al-Albani confirms:

صحيح

*Sahih*²²

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1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Fadhail al-‘ahabah* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Dr. Wasiyullah Muhammad ‘Abbas], vol. 2, p. 579, # 979
 2. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 477, # 3216
 3. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 44, # 96
 4. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 102, # 504
 5. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 88, # 402
 6. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 392, # 2623
 7. *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 287, # 1846
 8. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *‘ahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1764, # 2249 (14)
 9. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah* (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 2, p. 39, # 512
 10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 2, p. 461, # 9943
 11. Abu ‘isa Muhammad b. ‘isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami’ al-‘ahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 205, # 369
 12. Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Darimi, *Sunan* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 2, p. 40, # 1771
 13. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, *‘ahih* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A’zami], vol. 1, p. 358, # 725
 14. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 476
 15. See Qur’an 74:31
 16. Qur’an 9:68

17. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, *Ṣaḥih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 86, # 131 (78)
18. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 128, # 1062
19. Ibid
20. Abu ‘Ṣa Muhammad b. ‘Ṣa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-Ṣaḥih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 643, # 3736
21. Ibid
22. Ibid

30. Hadith Al-Tashbih, Establishing Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

بل حملة على ذلك ممتنع لان أحدا لا يساوي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
لا عليا ولا غيره

Rather, interpreting it like that is impossible, because there is none who is equal to the Messenger of Allah, neither ‘Ali nor any other person.¹

We agree with our Shaykh that neither Abu Bakr nor ‘Umar was like, similar or equal to, the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, in absolutely *any* way or form. However, it seems that the Shaykh has not properly understood the Shi’i position. We never claim *total* equality between the Prophet and the Amir.

What we profess, instead, is that ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, reached the level of the Messenger in *many* of his merits. In other words, in a lot of qualities, ranks and statuses, both the Prophet and the Amir were, and are, *equal*. However, in all others, the Messenger of Allah was, and is, infinitely superior to ‘Ali. Overall, the Prophet was, and is, the master, teacher and saviour of ‘Ali in both this world and the next.

Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) records an authentic *hadith* that confirms just that:

أخبرنا العباس بن محمد قال حدثنا الأحوص بن جواب قال حدثنا يونس بن

أبي إسحاق عن أبي إسحاق عن زيد بن يثيع عن أبي ذر قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لينتهين بنو وليعة أو لأبعثن إليهم رجلا كنفسي ينفذ فيهم أمري فيقتل المقاتلة ويسبي الذرية فما راعني إلا وكف عمر في حجزتي من خلفي من يعني فقلت ما إياك يعني ولا صاحبك قال فمن يعني قلت خاصف النعل قال وعلي يخصف نعلا

Al-‘Abbas b. Muhammad – al-Ahwas b. Jawab – Yunus b. Abi Ishaq – Abu Ishaq – Zayd b. Yathi’ – Abu Dharr:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “If the Banu Wali’ah do not desist, I will appoint over them **a man who is exactly like myself** to implement my command among them. So, he will execute the combatants and take the offspring as war captives.”

I had not even moved when ‘Umar held my cloth and asked, “Who is he referring to?” I replied, “He is not referring to you or your companion (i.e. Abu Bakr).” He said, “In that case, who is he referring to?” So, I said, “(He is) referring to the one repairing the shoe.” And ‘Ali was repairing a shoe.²

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says about this report:

قلت: وهذا إسناده رجاله ثقات؛ لكن أبا إسحاق – وهو السبيعي – مدلس، وكان اختلط، وأبوه يونس روى عنه بعد اختلاطه.

I say: **This chain, all its narrators are trustworthy.** However, Abu Ishaq – and he is al-Sabi’i – was a *mudalis*, and he became confused, and his son Yunus narrated from him after he had become confused.³

So, all the narrators are trustworthy. However, Abu Ishaq was a *mudalis*, and has narrated in an ‘*an-an*’ manner. Moreover, his son, Yunus, allegedly narrated from him only after he (Abu Ishaq) had become confused. These are ‘Allamah al-Albani’s only objections to the authenticity of the *hadith*.

The arguments of our ‘Allamah are a bit disappointing. While it is true that Abu Ishaq was a *mudalis*, his *tadlis* was largely of the harmless grade. Therefore, his ‘*an-an*’ reports are accepted without objection. Let us briefly examine how the *muhadithun* of the Ahl al-Sunnah have treated a well-known, strictly ‘*an-an*’ narration of Abu Ishaq. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records:

حدثنا عبدالله بن مسلمة بن قعنب حدثنا معتمر بن سليمان عن أبيه عن ربيعة

بن مسقلة عن أبي إسحاق عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس عن أبي بن كعب
قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إن الغلام الذي قتله الخضر طبع
كافرا ولو عاش لأرهب أبويه طغيانا وكفرا

‘Abd Allah b. Musalamah b. Qa’nab – Mu’tamir b. Sulayman – his father – Raqabah b. Masqalah – **Abu Ishaq** – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas – Ubayy b. Ka’b:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “Verily, the boy killed by al-Khidhr was created an unbeliever. If he had lived, he would have grieved his parents with his obstinate rebellion (against Allah) and disbelief (in Allah)”.⁴

Abu Ishaq has narrated it *‘an-‘an*, and Imam Muslim has nonetheless accepted the *hadith* as *sahih*. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) has also included the same *riwayah* with the same *‘an-‘an* chain in his *Musnad*⁵. Shaykh al-Arna’ut⁶ comments about it this way:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁶

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) has equally documented it with Abu Ishaq’s *‘an-‘an* narration⁷. Al-Tirmidhi says:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب

This *hadith* is *hasan sahih gharib*.⁸

Interestingly, even ‘Allamah al-Albani accepts its authenticity:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁹

Elsewhere, the ‘Allamah explains his decision:

ثنا محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي ثنا معتمر بن سليمان عن أبيه عن رقبة بن مسقلة
عن أبي إسحاق عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس عن أبي بن كعب عن النبي
صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: الغلام الذي قتله الخضر طبع كافرا.

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين مع ما في النفس من عننة أبي إسحاق وهو
عمرو ابن عبد الله السبيعي فإني لم أجد تصريحه بالتحديث في شيء من
الروايات عنه مع أنه كان اختلط لكن لعل رقبة بن مسقلة سمعه منه قبل
الاختلاط فإنه قديم الوفاة فقد مات سنة 129 وهي السنة التي مات فيها أبو
إسحاق نفسه فهو من أقرانه.

Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Muqaddami – Mu'tamir b. Sulayman – his father – Raqabah b. Masqalah –
Abu Ishaq – Sa'id b. Jubayr – Ibn 'Abbas – Ubayy b. Ka'b – the Prophet, peace be upon him:

“The boy killed by al-Khidhr was created an unbeliever.”

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs, despite what is in the heart concerning its
'*an-'an* narration by Abu Ishaq, and his real name was 'Amr b. 'Abd Allah al-Sabi'i. **I have NOT found
any explicit *tahdith* (i.e. non-'*an-'an* transmission) of it by him in the reports**, despite that he also
became confused. However, maybe Raqabah b. Masqalah heard it from him before he became
confused because he (Raqabah) died early (in history). His (i.e. Raqabah's) death was in 129 H, and it
was the year of Abu Ishaq's death too. Therefore, they both were contemporaries. 10

So, the '*an-'an* report of Abu Ishaq is accepted as *sahih* upon the standard of both al-Bukhari and
Muslim by the leading *muhadithun* of the Ahl al-Sunnah, including 'Allamah al-Albani himself. But then,
al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) documents a rather interesting dissenting viewpoint concerning Abu Ishaq's '*an-'an*
reports:

قال شعبة وكان أبو إسحاق إذا أخبرني عن رجل قلت له هذا أكبر منك فإن قال
نعم علمت أنه لقي وإن قال أنا أكبر منه تركته.

Shu'bah said: “Whenever Abu Ishaq narrated to me in an '*an-'an* form from any person, I used to say to
him, ‘Is he older than you?’ If he answered, ‘Yes’, then I would know that he met (the narrator) [i.e. there
was no *tadlis* in the report]. But, if he said, ‘I am older than him’, I would abandon him.” 11

In other words, Shu'bah assured us that *whenever* Abu Ishaq transmitted from people older than him, he never did *tadlis*, even if he narrated in an '*an-'an* manner from them. This is *very* crucial. Shu'bah was of an ultra-strict attitude towards Abu Ishaq's *tadlis*. So, he would not accept even the above *hadith* of the boy, since Sa'id b. Jubayr was far younger than Abu Ishaq¹². Yet, despite this, *Hadith al-Tashbih* passes his ultra-strict standards and is covered by his expert assurance. Zayd b. Yathi' was much older than Abu Ishaq. Al-Hafiz states:

زيد بن يثيع ... الهمداني الكوفي ثقة مخضرم

Zayd b. Yathi'.... al-Hamadani al-Kufi: *Thiqah* (trustworthy). **He witnessed both the *Jahiliyyah* and the Islamic era.** 13

Therefore, Zayd b. Yathi' was born even before any verse of the Qur'an was revealed! This means that he was even older than a lot of the Sahabah. Meanwhile, al-Hafiz further records this about Abu Ishaq:

وعن أبي بكر بن عياش قال مات أبو إسحاق وهو ابن مائة سنة أو نحوها

Abu Bakr b. 'Ayyash said: Abu Ishaq died while he was 100 years old or thereabout. 14

Since he died in 129 AH, that means he was born in 29 AH. As such, Zayd b. Yathi' was decades older than him. Based upon the testimony of Shu'bah, the '*an-'an* reports of Abu Ishaq from him were, without doubt, free from *tadlis*. But, even if we ignored Shu'bah's assurance, *Hadith al-Tashbih* would still pass through, considering the lenient attitude of Sunni *muhadithun* to Abu Ishaq's patently '*an-'an* reports generally. With these facts, the first leg of 'Allamah al-Albani's criticism against *Hadith al-Tashbih* is cut off from its root completely.

The 'Allamah further asserts that Yunus heard from his father, Abu Ishaq, only after the latter had become confused due to memory loss. The question is: where is the evidence? There is none! In fact, this submission of our 'Allamah is more farfetched statement than the other. Yunus was largely contemporaneous with his father. He even met Anas, one of the senior Sahabah! Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) states about him:

يونس بن أبي إسحاق عمرو بن عبد الله الهمداني السبيعي الكوفي. عن أنس ... قلت: مات يونس سنة تسع وخمسين ومائة، وهو في عشر التسعين، إن لم يكن تجاوزها.

Yunus b. Abi Ishaq ‘Amr b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hamdani al-Sabi’i al-Kufi: **He narrated from Anas ...** I say: Yunus died in 159 AH, and he was close to 90, if not older. 15

So, when Abu Ishaq died in 129 AH, Yunus was already about 60 years old. Does it make sense to claim that such a person narrated from Abu Ishaq only during the latter’s last days when his memory deteriorated? 16 He even narrated from Anas who apparently died decades before his father! 17 Al-Hafiz tells us more why ‘Allamah al-Albani’s submission was completely out-of-touch with reality, while writing about Abu Ishaq:

وعنه ابنه يونس وابن ابنه إسرائيل بن يونس وابن ابنه الآخر يوسف بن إسحاق

His son (Yunus) narrated from him, **as well as his grandson** Israil b. Yunus and his other grandson Yusuf b. Ishaq. 18

If Yunus could not hear any *ahadith* from his father until the latter’s last period on earth, when exactly did the grandsons take from Abu Ishaq? Obviously, Yunus heard *ahadith* from Abu Ishaq long before the latter lost his memory. No wonder, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah has included a chain in which Yunus has narrated ‘*an-‘an* from Abu Ishaq, who in turn has also transmitted ‘*an-‘an* from the Sahabi, in his *Sahih* 19 while Shaykh Dr. al-A’zami further declares that *sanad* to be *sahih*. 20

Shaykh Dr. Asad has equally graded an exactly similar chain as *sahih*. 21 Meanwhile, Shaykh al-Arnau 22 prefers to class an identical *sanad* only as *hasan*. 22 Basically, ‘Allamah al-Albani has no valid objection to *Hadith al-Tashbih*. It has a *sahih* chain. The narration (including ‘*an-‘an*) of Yunus from his father, Abu Ishaq, is *sahih*. Furthermore, the ‘*an-‘an* transmission of Abu Ishaq from Zayd b. Yathi’ is equally of the perfectly *sahih* grade, in any circumstance.

Hadith al-Tashbih, as narrated by Abu Dharr, is supported by this *shahid* documented by Imam ‘Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H):

أخبرنا عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن ابن طاووس عن أبيه عن المطلب بن عبد الله بن حنطب قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لوفد ثقيف حين جاءوا: لتسلمن أو لنبعثن رجلا مني - أو قال: مثل نفسي فليضربن أعناقكم، وليس بين ذراريكم، وليأخذن أموالكم، فقال عمر: فوالله ما تمنيت الإمارة إلا يومئذ، جعلت أنصب صدري رجاء أن يقول: هو هذا، قال: فالتفت إلي علي، فأخذ بيده ثم قال: هو هذا، هو هذا.

‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – Ibn Tawus – his father – al-Mu‘alib b. ‘Abd Allah b. Han‘ab:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, when the delegation of (Banu) Thaqif came (to him), said (to them), “You either submit or **I appoint a man from me or who is my similarity**, and he will hit your necks and take your offspring as war prisoners, and will confiscate your properties.” So, ‘Umar said, “I swear by Allah, I never wished for power except on that day. I volunteered for it, wishing that he would say, “This is the one”. But, he instead looked towards ‘Ali, and held his hand and said, “This is the one. This is the one.”²³

‘Allamah al-Albani comments about this report:

قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح؛ ولكنه مرسل.

I say: **This chain is *sahih***. However, it is *mursal*.²⁴

There is no doubt that this is an effective strengthening *shahid* for the report of Abu Dharr. So, even if, for the sake of argument, the invalid submissions of ‘Allamah al-Albani concerning Abu Dharr’s *hadith* are accepted, the above narration of al-Mu‘alib nonetheless raises its grade to at least *hasan*.

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1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 123
 2. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Nasai, Sunan al-Kubra (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Dr. ‘Abd al-Ghaffar Sulayman al-Bandari and Sayyid Kasrawi Hasan], vol. 5, p. 127, # 8457
 3. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘a‘ifah wa al-Mawdu‘ah wa Atharilah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma‘arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 678, # 4960
 4. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 2050, # 2661 (29)
 5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 118, # 21156
 6. Ibid
 7. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-‘ahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 312, # 3150
 8. Ibid
 9. Ibid
 10. Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Isim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-‘ahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 1, p. 86, # 194
 11. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 8, p. 59, # 100
 12. Sa‘id b. Jubayr was 49 years old when he was murdered by al-Hajjaj in 95 AH. See Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 4, p. 12, # 14. As such, Sa‘id was born in 46 AH, decades after Abu Ishaq.
 13. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H)

[annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 332, # 2166

14. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 8, p. 58, # 100

15. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I’tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah; 1st edition, 1382 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 4, pp. 482–483, # 9914

16. Abu Ishaq’s memory weakened only during the tail-end of his lifetime. See Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 739, # 5081

17. Abu al-‘Ufayl was the last of the ‘Ahabah to die, and he died in 110 AH. See Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 464, # 3122

18. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 8, p. 57, # 100

19. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, ‘Ahih (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A‘zami], vol. 1, p. 326, # 647

20. Ibid

21. Abu Ya‘la Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 12, p. 97, # 6731

22. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 375, # 19367

23. Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-‘A‘nani, al-Musannaf [annotator: Habib al-Rahman al-A‘zami], vol. 11, p. 226, # 20389

24. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘A‘ifah wa al-Mawdu‘ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma‘arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 677, # 4960

31. Hadith Al-Tashbih, Instances Of Equality

When the Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, described Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*, as being “exactly like” himself, or his own “similarity”, what was he saying? Was he talking about physical identicalness? Or, was it about tribal affiliations? What was it exactly?

Basically, those statements have deliberately been made general and left open by the Messenger of Allah. As such, everything is the same between them both except whatever has been excluded as exceptions. In other words, the only differences between the Nabi and the Amir are those that have been proved through the Qur’an or authentic *ahadith*. In everything else, they were, and are, the same.

Meanwhile, it would not be inappropriate to cite a few examples of equality between the Messenger of Allah and Imam ‘Ali. ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H), for instance, records that the Prophet said:

من أحب علياً فقد أحبني ومن أبغض علياً فقد أبغضني

Whosoever loves 'Ali has loved me, and whosoever hates 'Ali has hated me.1

The 'Allamah says:

صحيح

Sahih2

In simple terms, the obligations to love the Messenger, and to love Amir al-Muminin, are the same. Love or hatred of either of them attracts the *same* recognition, reward or punishment from Allah the Almighty. Interestingly, Imam 'Ali was not the only one with this status. Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H) further records:

حدثنا أبو هشام الرفاعي حدثنا ابن فضيل حدثنا سالم بن أبي حفصة عن أبي حازم عن أبي هريرة قال : قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه و سلم : من أحب الحسن والحسين فقد أحبني ومن أبغضهما فقد أبغضني

Abu Hisham al-Rufa'i – Ibn Fudhayl – Salim b. Abi Hafsah – Abu Hazim – Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Whosoever loves al-Hasan and al-Husayn has loved me, and whosoever hates them has hated me.”³

Shaykh Dr. Asad says:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is *hasan*.⁴

Imam Ibn Majah (d. 273 H) has also recorded the *hadith* through a different *ṣariq* (route):

حدثنا علي بن محمد حدثنا وكيع عن سفيان عن داود بن أبي عوف أبي الجحاف وكان مرضيا عن أبي حازم عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من أحب الحسن والحسين فقد أحبني ومن أبغضهما فقد أبغضني

‘Ali b. Muhammad – Waki’ – Sufyan – Dawud b. Abi ‘Awf Abi al-Jihaf – Abu Hazim – Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “Whosoever loves al-Hasan and al-Husayn has loved me, and whosoever hates them has hated me.”⁵

‘Abd al-Baqi states:

إسناده صحيح، رجاله ثقات.

Its chain is *sahih*. Its narrators are trustworthy.⁶

‘Allamah al-Albani also comments:

حسن

*Hasan*⁷

So, the Prophet, Amir al-Muminin, Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn, *‘alaihim al-salam*, were, and are, all *equal* in terms of love and hatred from *any* others among the creation. Moreover, their love has been umbilically fused by Allah. Therefore, just as there can *never* be an excuse – including even ignorance or mistake – for hating the Prophet, there can be none either with regards to *any* other among them. Their love is one indivisible entity, and so is their hatred.

The significance of the above reports is better reflected in this *hadith*, copied by ‘Allamah al-Albani:

من أحب عليا فقد أحبني ومن أحبني فقد أحب الله عز وجل ومن أبغض عليا
فقد أبغضني ومن أبغضني فقد أبغض الله عز وجل.

Whosoever loves ‘Ali has loved me. And whosoever loves me has loved Allah the Almighty. Moreover, whosoever hates ‘Ali has hated me. **And whosoever hates me has hated Allah the Almighty.**⁸

The ‘Allamah comments:

رواه المخلص في " الفوائد المنتقاة " (1 / 5 / 10) بسند صحيح

Al-Mukhlis recorded it in *al-Fawa'id al-Muntaqat* (10/5/1) **with a *sahih* chain** from Umm Salamah.⁹

In other words:

1. Love of Muhammad is love of Allah, and hatred of Muhammad is hatred of Allah.
3. Love of 'Ali is love of Allah, and hatred of 'Ali is hatred of Allah.
5. Love of al-Hasan is love of Allah, and hatred of al-Hasan is hatred of Allah.
7. Love of al-Husayn is love of Allah, and hatred of al-Husayn is hatred of Allah.

So, Amir al-Muminin, Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn are *equal* with the Messenger of Allah in terms of the love or hatred of any of them. Our focus at this point, of course, is only Amir al-Muminin.

Another area of equality between the Prophet of Allah and Imam 'Ali is indicated in this *hadith* documented by Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H):

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن أبي بكير قال ثنا إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق
عن أبي عبد الله الجدلي قال دخلت على أم سلمة فقالت لي أيسب رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم فيكم قلت معاذ الله أو سبحان الله أو كلمة نحوها قالت
سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول من سب عليا فقد سبني

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Abi Bukayr – Israil – Abu Ishaq – Abu
'Abd Allah al-Jadali:

I entered upon Umm Salamah and she said to me, “Is the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, being cursed among you?” I said, “Allah forbid!” or “Glory to Allah!” or a similar statement. She said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah saying: **'Whosoever curses 'Ali has cursed me.'**”¹⁰

Shaykh al-Arnau[®] comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*.¹¹

Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) also states:

رواه أحمد ورجاله رجال الصحيح غير أبي عبد الله الجدلي وهو ثقة

Ahmad recorded it, and its narrators are narrators of the *Sahih*, apart from Abu ‘Abd Allah al–Jadali and he was trustworthy.12

Imam al–Hakim (d. 403 H) too has this verdict upon the exact same *hadith*:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain13

And Imam al–Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees with him:

صحيح

*Sahih*14

It is natural logic, anyway. Cursing is an act of hatred. So, whosoever curses ‘Ali apparently hates him. By that very token, such a person is guilty of hating Allah. Looking further, there is yet another point of equality between the Nabi and the Amir. ‘Allamah al–Albani documents this *hadith*:

من آذى عليا فقد آذاني

Whosoever hurts ‘Ali has hurt me.15

The ‘Allamah states:

صحيح

*Sahih*16

Imam al–Hakim also comments:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain. 17

Imam al-Dhahabi affirms the verdict:

صحيح

Sahih 18

Imam al-Haythami also declares about this *hadith*:

رواه أحمد ... ورجال أحمد ثقات

Ahmad recorded ... and the narrators of Ahmad are trustworthy. 19

In Islam, to hurt someone means to do anything that causes physical or emotional discomfort to them. For example, notice what Allah has said here:

واللذان يأتيانها منكم فآذوهما

And the two persons among you who commit it (i.e. fornication), hurt them both. 20

This is clearly about physical hurt. Let us compare that with this noble verse:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تكونوا كالذين آذوا موسى فبرأه الله مما قالوا وكان عند
الله وحيها

O you who believe! Do not be like those who hurt Musa, but Allah cleared him of that which they said, and he was honourable before Allah. 21

They made incorrect statements about Musa, *'alaihi al-salam*. Such statements apparently hurt the feelings and image of this noble prophet. Therefore, to Allah, they had thereby hurt him. Another

example is given in this *hadith* documented by Imam al-Hakim:

أخبرني محمد بن أحمد بن تميم القنطري ثنا أبو قلابة الرقاشي ثنا أبو عاصم
عن عبد الله بن المؤمل حدثني أبو بكر بن عبيد الله بن أبي ملكية عن أبيه قال
جاء رجل من أهل الشام فسب عليا عند ابن عباس فحصبه ابن عباس فقال : يا
عدو الله أذيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الذين يؤذون الله ورسوله
لعنهم الله في الدنيا والآخرة وأعد لهم عذابا مهينا لو كان رسول الله صلى الله
عليه وسلم حيا لآذيته

Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Tamim al-Qanṭari – Abu Qilabah al-Raqashi – Abu ‘Asim – ‘Abd Allah b. al-
Mu-mal – Abu Bakr b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. Abi Malikah – his father:

A Syrian man came and cursed ‘Ali in the presence of Ibn ‘Abbas. So, Ibn ‘Abbas threw pebbles at him and said, “O enemy of Allah! You have hurt the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Verily, those who hurt Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world, and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating torment. If the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had been alive, you would have hurt him.”²²

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.²³

Imam al-Dhahabi also states:

صحيح

*Sahih*²⁴

There is a lot of *fawaid* in this *hadith*. Some of them are listed below:

1. Cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib falls under the act of hurting him.
3. Whoever hurts ‘Ali is an enemy of Allah.

5. Whoever hurts 'Ali falls under Qur'an 33:57

7. 'Ali b. Abi Talib does not need to be physically present before the hurt is done. As long as the act would have hurt him had he been present or would have hurt his name, the crime is completed.

9. Whatsoever hurts 'Ali also hurts the Messenger of Allah, and by extension Allah.

11. Therefore, whoever hurts 'Ali has hurt Allah and His Messenger.

There is no doubt that if Amir al-Muminin had been physically present when the Syrian man was cursing him, his feelings would have been hurt. Since whatsoever hurts 'Ali also hurts the Prophet, it is then the case that the feelings of the latter too would have been hurt. This is what matters in the Sight of Allah. Would the feelings of 'Ali have been hurt if he were present? If the answer were positive, then indeed the treason is committed.

Ibn 'Abbas, *radhiyallahu 'anhu*, quoted this verse as applying to all cases where 'Ali has been hurt:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا

Verily, those who hurt Allah and His Messenger, Allah has cursed them in this world, and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them a humiliating torment.²⁵

This is the case with 'Ali. Whoever hurts the Prophet has hurt Allah. Therefore, Allah will curse such a person in both this world and the next, and will throw him into Hellfire. The same is exactly the case with 'Ali. Whosoever hurts Amir al-Muminin has hurt Allah too. As such, the same punishments that apply in the case of the Messenger also apply in the case of the Amir.

By contrast, if any believer – other than 'Ali – had been hurt, the applicable laws are different! Our Creator states:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ بَغَيْرِ مَا كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ فَعَدَا غَنَابًا وَمِثْلَ مَا كَتَبْنَا لَهُمْ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَتًى بَشِيرًا
مَبِينًا

And those who hurt the believing men and women undeservedly bear on themselves the crime of slander and plain sin.²⁶

This verse proves the absolute superiority of Amir al-Muminin over the entire Ummah. If any Muslim is hurt – whether physically or emotionally – the first question to ask is: did he deserve the hurt? In other

words, there are cases when the body or feelings of a believer can be deservedly hurt. In such cases, there is no retribution against the person causing the hurt. Even then, where the hurt was undeserved, the offender is only guilty of slander and sin. Therefore, the punishment is different from what is applicable in the cases of the Messenger of Allah and Amir al-Muminin. Allah has conjoined hurt of Himself with hurt of His Messenger with *waw al-musharika* – the conjunction of partnership. In other words, whatsoever applies for Allah, in any case that He is hurt, also applies for His Messenger in any similar circumstance. So, since Allah never deserves to be hurt, then His Messenger too is of the same status. By extension, Amir al-Muminin as well can *never* be justifiably hurt. Allah has protected both the Nabi and the Amir from ever deserving to be hurt, either physically or emotionally.

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1. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Iḍam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, ‘Iḥāḥ al-Jamī’ al-‘Iḡhir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 2, p. 1034, # 5963
 2. Ibid
 3. Abu Ya’la Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 11, p. 78, # 6215
 4. Ibid
 5. Ibn Majah Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Yazid al-Qazwini, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 51, # 143
 6. Ibid
 7. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Iḍam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, ‘Iḥāḥ al-Jamī’ al-‘Iḡhir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 2, p. 1033, # 5954
 8. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Iḍam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-‘Iḥāḥ wa Shayhun min Fiqhiḥ wa Fawaidihā (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, pp. 287–288, # 1299
 9. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 288, # 1299
 10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 6, p. 323, # 26791
 11. Ibid
 12. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 175, # 14740
 13. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Iḥāḥayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 130, # 4615
 14. Ibid
 15. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. ‘Iḍam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, ‘Iḥāḥ al-Jamī’ al-‘Iḡhir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 2, p. 1029, # 5924
 16. Ibid
 17. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Iḥāḥayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 131, # 4619
 18. Ibid
 19. Nur al-Din ‘Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma’ al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 174, # 14736
 20. Qur’an 4:16
 21. Qur’an 33:69
 22. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-‘Iḥāḥayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 131, # 4618
 23. Ibid
 24. Ibid

32. Hadith Al-Ikhtiyar, Examining The Verse Of The Cave

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

يقول الله إلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن أن الله معنا

و مثل هذه الفضيلة لم تحصل لغير أبي بكر قطعا ... و الأفضلية إنما تثبت بالخصائص لا بالمشاركات ... و قد قال العلماء ما صح لعلي من الفضائل فهي مشتركة شاركه فيها غيره بخلاف الصديق فان كثيرا من فضائله و أكثرها خصائص له لا يشركه فيها غيره

Allah says: {If you help him not, for Allah did indeed help him when the disbelievers drove him out, the second of two, when they both were in the cave, when he was saying to his companion: “Do not fear, surely Allah is with us.”} (9:40)

This merit never reached absolutely anyone other than Abu Bakr ... **And superiority is established only through *exclusive* merits, and not through shared qualities** ... The scholars have said: “What has been authentically transmitted among the merits of ‘Ali are only shared qualities, which others too share with him, as opposed to al-Siddiq, for lots of his merits and most of them are exclusive to him, and not shared with him by anyone.”¹

In other words, the above verse establishes the superiority of Abu Bakr over all the Sahabah. It contains his *exclusive* merit. Our Shaykh says further:

فيقال لا ريب أن الفضيلة التي حصلت لأبي بكر قي الهجرة لم تحصل لغيره من

الصحابة بالكتاب و السنة و الإجماع فتكون هذه الأفضلية ثابتة له دون عمر و عثمان و علي و غيرهم من الصحابة فيكون هو الإمام

So, it is said that there is no doubt that the merit achieved by Abu Bakr during the *Hijrah*, **none other of the Sahabah achieved it**, in accordance with the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus (of the Sunni scholars). Therefore, this superiority becomes established for him, and not for ‘Umar, ‘Uthman, ‘Ali or other Sahabah. As such, he was the Imam.²

Our Shaykh’s line of argument goes like this:

1. Whichever of the Sahabah had a merit which none other possessed was the best of them.
3. Such a Sahabi was also the true Imam among them.

In line with this reasoning, he argues – citing unnamed Sunni scholars as support – that most of Abu Bakr’s “merits” were exclusive to him, and none of Amir al-Muminin’s merits was exclusive to him! This is very strange though. Throughout this book of ours, we have investigated only authentic *ahadith* on *exclusive* merits of ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, in the most authoritative Sunni sources! Our esteemed readers can themselves verify this. Moreover, Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) authored a well-known book – *Khasais Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali* (The *Exclusive* Merits of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali) – in which he compiled only Sunni *ahadith* on the *exclusive* merits of Imam ‘Ali! No similar book has ever been written for Abu Bakr, ‘Umar or ‘Uthman.

Anyway, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah thinks that the Verse of the Cave above contains an exclusive merit of Abu Bakr, which establishes his overall superiority and *Imamah* over the Sahabah. In our view – as we will prove – the verse actually does the direct opposite! It basically exposes Abu Bakr and all the Sunni-only “ahadith” about him in very uncomfortable lights. It also totally brings down the Sunni creed, leaving it no chance of revival!

We will begin our analysis by looking first at the full text of the verse:

إِلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن إن الله معنا فأنزل الله سكينته عليه وأيده بجنود لم تروها وجعل كلمة الذين كفروا السفلى وكلمة الله هي العليا والله عزيز حكيم

If you help **him** not, for Allah did indeed help **him** when the disbelievers drove **him** out – the second of two *when* they both were in the cave – when **he** was saying to **his** companion: “Do not fear, surely Allah is with us.” So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon **him**, and helped **him** with forces which you saw not,

and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowermost, while it was the Word of Allah that became the uppermost, and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.³

The verse is primarily about the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*. The following points can be deduced from it:

1. The disbelievers drove him out of Makkah. So, he was ordered to migrate to Madinah by Allah.
3. He was the *second* of two people, *when* they both were together in the cave.
5. Abu Bakr was the *first* of the two, as he was the only one present with him in the cave. He has also been called the Prophet's companion.
7. Abu Bakr exhibited fear. So, the Messenger ordered him not to fear. The meaning of the phrase "Allah is with us" will be discussed in detail soon.
9. Allah ignored Abu Bakr, and sent down His *sakinah* upon His Prophet *alone*, and further helped him *alone* with unseen forces.
11. Through these actions, Allah made the plan of the disbelievers to fail, and His Own Plan to succeed.

Particular attention must be paid to this part:

إِلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار إذ
يقول لصاحبه

If you help **him** not, for Allah did indeed help **him** when the disbelievers drove **him** out – the second of two when they both were in the cave – and **he** was saying to **his** companion

The expression "the *second* of two" is a description of the one who was driven out by the disbelievers and helped by Allah. He was the *second* of two people in the cave, and it was he who said what he said to his companion. This is so obvious from the text of the verse. Meanwhile, Prof. Ibn Yasin, a contemporary Sunni *mufassir*, also states in support of our proposition under the verse:

أخرج الطبري بسنده الصحيح عن مجاهد: (إِلا تنصروه) ذكر ما كان في أول
شأنه حين بعثه يقول الله: فأنا فاعل ذلك به وناصره، كما نصرته إذ ذاك وهو
ثاني اثنين.

Al-Tabari records **with his *sahih* chain** from Mujahid that he said: “(If you help him not) He mentioned what was his affair since He appointed him (on a prophetic mission). Allah says: I do that with Him and I am his Helper, and I helped him when he was like that, **and he was the *second* of two.**”⁴

In very simple terms, the Messenger of Allah was the *second* of two as we have stated. Abu Bakr was the *first*. Getting this part of the verse straight is extremely crucial to our discussion. This is because the alleged “exclusive merit” of Abu Bakr in it is only a widespread Sunni misconception that he was the one referred to as “the second of two”! For instance, Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى أخبرنا هشام عن معمر عن الزهري

أخبرني أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أنه سمع خطبة عمر الآخرة حين جلس على المنبر وذلك الغد من يوم توفي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فتشهد وأبو بكر صامت لا يتكلم قال كنت أرجو أن يعيش رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى يدبرنا يريد بذلك أن يكون آخرهم فإن يك محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم قد مات فإن الله تعالى قد جعل بين أظهركم نورا تهتدون به بما هدى الله محمدا صلى الله عليه وسلم وإن أبا بكر صاحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثاني اثنين فإنه أولى المسلمين بأموركم فقوموا فبايعوه وكانت طائفة منهم قد بايعوه قبل ذلك في سقيفة بني ساعدة وكانتبيعة العامة على المنبر

Ibrahim b. Musa – Hisham – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Anas b. Malik, may Allah be pleased with him:

I heard ‘Umar’s second sermon which he delivered while he was sitting on the pulpit on the day following the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. He testified while Abu Bakr was silent and did not say anything. He (‘Umar) said, “I wish that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had outlived all of us. But if Muhammad is dead, Allah nonetheless has kept a light amongst you from which you can receive the same guidance as Allah guided Muhammad, peace be upon him, with that. **And Abu Bakr is the companion of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. He is (also) the *second* of two.** He is the most entitled person among the Muslims to manage your affairs. Therefore get up and swear allegiance to him.”⁵

Imam ‘Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H) has recorded the same report with the same chain:

أخبرنا عبد الرزاق قال: أخبرنا معمر عن الزهري قال: أخبرني أنس بن مالك ... ثم قال عمر: أما بعد ... فإن يك محمد قد مات فإن الله قد جعل بين أظهركم نورا تهتدون به، هذا كتاب الله فاعتصموا به، تهتدون لما هدى الله به محمداً صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم إن أبا بكر رحمه الله – صاحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وثاني اثنين، وإنه أولى الناس بأموركم، فقوموا، فبايعوه

‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – Anas b. Malik:

... Then ‘Umar said: “... But if Muhammad is dead, Allah nonetheless has kept a light amongst you from which you can receive guidance. This is the Book of Allah. So, hold fast to it. You will receive the same guidance as Allah guided Muhammad, peace be upon him, with that. **Then, Abu Bakr, may Allah be merciful to him, is the companion of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, AND the second of two.** He is the most entitled person among mankind to manage your affairs. Therefore get up and swear allegiance to him.”⁶

Commenting on these reports, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

قوله) وان أبا بكر صاحب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الخ (قال ابن التين قدم الصحبة لشرفها ولما كان غيره قد يشاركه فيها عطف عليها ما انفرد به أبو بكر وهو كونه ثاني اثنين وهي أعظم فضائله التي استحق بها ان يكون الخليفة من بعد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ولذلك قال وانه أولى الناس بأموركم

His statement (Abu Bakr is the companion of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, etc): Ibn al-Tin said: “He mentioned the companionship first due to its honour. However, since others shared it with him (i.e. Abu Bakr), he (‘Umar) conjoined it with **what was exclusive to Abu Bakr, and that was his being the second of two, and it is the greatest of his merits which entitled him to be the *khaliifah*** after the Prophet, peace be upon him. This was why he (‘Umar) said: “He is the most entitled person among mankind to manage your affairs”.⁷

It is apparent that the Ahl al-Sunnah, based upon the submissions of ‘Umar and others, consider Abu Bakr to have been the one referred to by Allah as “the *second* of two” in this verse:

إِلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن إن الله معنا فأنزل الله سكينته عليه وأيده بجنود لم

تروها

If you help **him** not, for Allah did indeed help **him** when the disbelievers drove **him** out – the second of two *when* they both were in the cave – when **he** was saying to **his** companion: “Do not fear, surely Allah is with us.” So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon **him**, and helped **him** with forces which you saw not.

If the Sunni theory were correct, then the following would be true:

1. Allah helped Abu Bakr when the disbelievers drove him out. Allah did *not* help His Messenger.
3. It was Abu Bakr who said to the Prophet “Do not fear, surely Allah is with us”. The Messenger was the “companion” of Abu Bakr.
5. Allah sent down *sakinah* upon Abu Bakr and helped him with unseen forces. He did *not* send *sakinah* upon His Prophet and did *not* strengthen him with any forces.

Would a believer ever make any of the above submissions? This is the grand Sunni dilemma!

The patent Sunni logic is this:

1. Abu Bakr was the *second* of two in the cave with the Messenger.
3. Therefore, he was *second* in rank only to the Prophet.

The truth, however, is that Abu Bakr was actually the *first* of two, while the Messenger of Allah was the *second*! By the Sunni logic, the Prophet was in reality second in rank to Abu Bakr!

Well, let us agree, for the sake of argument, that Abu Bakr was the one referred to as “the *second* of two” in the Verse of the Cave. In that case, the Messenger was the *first* of two. By Sunni logic, Abu Bakr then is the second highest ranking Muslim in this Ummah, after the Prophet, due to his status in that verse. In other words, the first of two is the first in the Ummah; and the *second* of two is the *second* in the Ummah. But, does this arrangement really help the Ahl al-Sunnah? The best way to find out is through this *hadith* recorded by Imam al-Bukhari:

حدثنا محمد بن سنان حدثنا همام عن ثابت عن أنس عن أبي بكر رضي الله عنه قال: قلت للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنا في الغار لو أن أحدهم نظر تحت قدميه لأبصرنا فقال ما ظنك يا أبا بكر باثنين الله ثالثهما

Muhammad b. Sinan – Hamam – Thabit – Anas – Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him:

I said to the Prophet, peace be upon him, while I was in the cave, “If any of them should look under his feet, he would see us.” He said, "O Abu Bakr! **What do you think of two, the *third* of whom is Allah?**"⁸

So, the Messenger is *first* of three, Abu Bakr the *second*, and Allah the *third*. By Sunni logic therefore, Abu Bakr is superior to Allah?! May Allah forgive us and save us from such blasphemies. The above question of the Prophet was picked from this verse:

ألم تر أن الله يعلم ما في السماوات وما في الأرض ما يكون من نجوى ثلاثة إلا هو رابعهم ولا خمسة إلا هو سادسهم ولا أدنى من ذلك ولا أكثر إلا هو معهم أين ما كانوا

Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? **There is no private conversation of three, except He is *their fourth*, nor five except He is *their sixth*, nor of less than that or more, except He is with them wherever they may be.**⁹

Let us connect everything now. First, we have the verse:

إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن إن الله معنا

When he was saying to his companion: “Do not fear, **surely Allah is WITH US.**”

Then the *hadith*:

فقال ما ظنك يا أبا بكر باثنين الله ثالثهما

He said, “O Abu Bakr! **What do you think of two, the *third* of whom is Allah?**”

Both sentences are then connected by Allah Himself:

ما يكون من نجوى ثلاثة إلا هو رابعهم ولا خمسة إلا هو سادسهم ولا أدنى من ذلك ولا أكثر إلا هو معهم أين ما كانوا

There is no private conversation of three, except He is *their fourth*, nor five except He is *their sixth*, nor of less than that or more, except He is WITH THEM wherever they may be. 10

It is obvious. Allah was with His Prophet and Abu Bakr, only in the sense that He was present with them both in the cave. He was *with them* solely on account of His being their third. However, this was no merit at all, much less an exclusive achievement! Allah is similarly present with every single individual, or any number of individuals, staying secretly anywhere. As such, He is present with even pagans and criminals whenever they plot their disbelief and evil deeds!

Here, we get to the most serious aspect of the Verse of the Cave. The first undeniable fact, at this stage, is that Allah ignored Abu Bakr and did not help him, even though there were two of them together in the cave:

إِلا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِي اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ

If you help him not, for Allah did indeed help **him** when the disbelievers drove him out – the second of two when they both were in the cave.

We ask: why? Allah has made a promise in His Book:

O you who believe! If you help Allah, He will help you. 11

So, was Abu Bakr a believer? Was he helping the Cause of Allah with his *Hijrah*? If the answers to both questions were “yes”, then why did Allah refuse to help him? Or, is it that Abu Bakr actually needed no help? In that case, why was he hiding with the Prophet in the cave? The fact that Allah ignored Abu Bakr and did not help him raises red flags concerning his *iman* and his real intentions with his migration.

Allah provided two kinds of help in the cave:

فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا

So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon **him**, and helped **him** with forces which you saw not.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) comments:

{فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ} أَي : تَأْيِيدَهُ وَنَصَرَهُ عَلَيْهِ ، أَي : عَلَى الرَّسُولِ فِي أَشْهَرِ الْقَوْلِينَ ... وَلِهَذَا قَالَ : {وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا} أَي : الْمَلَائِكَةُ ،

{So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon him}: meaning, (He sent down) His assistance and help upon him, that his, upon the Messenger according to the more popular of two views ... This is why He said: {and helped him with forces which you saw not}, that is, the angels. 12

When this verse was revealed – about ten years after the incident – some (if not all) of the disbelievers who wanted to kill the Prophet that day had become Muslims. So, the phrase “which you saw not” was apparently directed at them. Allah sent His *sakinah* upon His Messenger, and further helped him with unseen forces, namely the angels. Abu Bakr was ignored. The foundational fact to note about *sakinah* is that it is revealed into the heart:

هو الذي أنزل السكينة في قلوب المؤمنين ليزدادوا إيماناً مع إيمانهم

He it is **Who sent down *sakinah* into the hearts of the believers, that they may grow more in faith (*iman*)** along with their (present) faith (*iman*). 13

The following points are clear from the verse:

1. *Sakinah* is revealed into the heart.
3. It only strengthens the already existing *iman* (faith) in the heart.
5. As such, it never enters a heart with no *iman* (faith), since there would be nothing for it to strengthen.

In particular, before Allah sends down *sakinah* to any heart, He first looks at what is inside it to find *iman*:

لقد رضي الله عن المؤمنين إذ يبايعونك تحت الشجرة فعلم ما في قلوبهم فأنزل
السكينة عليهم

Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their *ba'yah* to you (O Muhammad) under the tree. **He knew what was in their hearts. Therefore, He sent down *sakinah* upon them.** 14

The question is: why did Allah send down *sakinah* into the heart of His Prophet alone, despite the presence of Abu Bakr with him? In similar cases, He had equally revealed it to whichever believer was with him:

فأنزل الله سكينته على رسوله وعلى المؤمنين

So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger **and upon the believers**. 15

And:

ثم أنزل الله سكينة على رسوله وعلى المؤمنين وأنزل جنودا لم تروها

Then Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger **and upon the believers**, and sent down forces which you saw not. 16

So, why did He exclude Abu Bakr in the cave? It is obvious that He checked the latter's heart, alongside that of His Prophet. Then, He decided to send His *sakinah* to His Messenger only. We again ask our Sunni brothers: why? According to the Ahl al-Sunnah, Abu Bakr was the *sayyid* of believers. If that were true, then his *iman* would be the greatest among the Sahabah. In that case, Allah would certainly have blessed him with His *sakinah* as He did with His Messenger. But, He did not! We ask once more: why would Allah refuse to send *sakinah* into a heart filled with strong, undiluted *iman*? Looking at everything, the only logical explanation is that Allah looked at the heart of Abu Bakr and found no *iman* there. Therefore, He decided to send down His *sakinah* upon His Prophet alone.

Expectedly, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah feels severely troubled by this conclusion:

وأما قول الرافضي إن القرآن حيث ذكر إنزال السكينة على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم شرك معه المؤمنين إلا هذا الموضع ولا نقص أعظم منه

فالجواب أولاً أن هذا يوهم أنه ذكر ذلك في مواضع متعددة وليس كذلك بل لم يذكر ذلك إلا في قصة حنين ... وقد ذكر إنزال السكينة على المؤمنين وليس معهم الرسول في قوله إنا فتحنا لك فتحا مبينا سورة الفتح 1 إلى قوله هو الذي أنزل السكينة في قلوب المؤمنين سورة الفتح 4 الآية وقوله لقد رضي الله عن المؤمنين إذ يبايعونك تحت الشجرة فعلم ما في قلوبهم فأنزل السكينة عليهم سورة الفتح 18

As for the statement of the Rafidhi that “the Qur’an, whenever it mentions the descent of *sakinah* upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, always conjoined the believers with him, except in this one place (i.e. in the cave), and there is no disgrace worse than it.”

The first answer is that this one (i.e. the Rafidhi) hallucinates that it (i.e. the Qur'an) mentions that (i.e. the descent of *sakinah* upon the Prophet and the believers together) as having occurred at several places. But this is not so. Rather, it has not mentioned that except in the story of Hunayn... It has (also) mentioned the descent of *sakinah* upon the believers and the Messenger was not included with them in His Statement {Verily, We have given you [O Muhammad] a manifest victory} (48:1) until His Statement {He it is Who sent down *sakinah* into the hearts of the believers} (48:4) and His Statement {Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their *ba'yah* to you [O Muhammad] under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down *sakinah* upon them} (48:18) 17

First and foremost, the Rafidhi did not claim that *sakinah* was revealed upon the Prophet and the believers together at several places. His statement is very clear:

وأما قول الرافضي إن القرآن حيث ذكر إنزال السكينة على رسول الله صلى
الله عليه و سلم شرك معه المؤمنين إلا هذا الموضع ولا نقص أعظم منه

As for the statement of the Rafidhi that “the Qur'an, **whenever it mentions the descent of *sakinah* upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, always conjoined the believers with him**, except in this one place (i.e. in the cave), and there is no disgrace worse than it.

To refute him, our Shaykh only has to show us a single place in the Qur'an where Allah has revealed His *sakinah* upon His Prophet alone, without joining the believers with him. The truth is: the Rafidhi was correct! The only instance where *sakinah* descended upon the Messenger alone was during his stay in the cave with Abu Bakr. That indeed is a severe slur on the latter.

Secondly, our Shaykh's claim that *sakinah* descended upon the Prophet and the believers together only at Hunayn (8 H), and at no other place, is equally untrue! The same thing occurred at al-Hudaybiyyah (6 H) too:

إذ جعل الذين كفروا في قلوبهم الحمية حمية الجاهلية فأنزل الله سكينته على
رسوله وعلى المؤمنين وألزمهم كلمة التقوى وكانوا أحق بها وأهلها وكان الله
بكل شيء عليما لقد صدق الله رسوله الرؤيا بالحق لتدخلن المسجد الحرام إن
شاء الله آمنين محلقين رءوسكم ومقصرين لا تخافون فعلم ما لم تعلموا فجعل
من دون ذلك فتحا قريبا

When those who disbelieve had put in their hearts pride and haughtiness, the pride and haughtiness of

Jahiliyyah, then Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger and upon the believers, and made them stick to the Word of Piety, and they were well entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah is the All-Knower of everything. Indeed Allah shall fulfil the true vision which He showed to His Messenger. Certainly you shall enter the *Masjid al-Haram* (in Makkah), *insha Allah*, secure, (some) having your heads shaved, and (some) having your hair cut short, having no fear. He knew what you knew not, and He granted besides that a near victory. 18

This was two years before Hunayn, when the unbelievers – who were still in control of Makkah – arrogantly prevented the Messenger and the believers from performing *Hajj* there. Instead, the Muslims, headed by the Prophet, entered into a peace agreement with the pagan Makkans, granting the latter lots of concessions. Allah then promised the believers of a near conquest of Makkah. It happened soon thereafter, in a bloodless manner.

In the light of the above fact, the fallacy of this submission of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah also comes to the fore:

وقد ذكر إنزال السكينة على المؤمنين وليس معهم الرسول في قوله إنا فتحنا لك
فتحا مبينا سورة الفتح 1 إلى قوله هو الذي أنزل السكينة في قلوب المؤمنين
سورة الفتح 4 الآية وقوله لقد رضي الله عن المؤمنين إذ يبايعونك تحت الشجرة
فعلم ما في قلوبهم فأنزل السكينة عليهم سورة الفتح 18

It has (also) mentioned the descent of *sakinah* upon the believers and the Messenger was not included with them in His Statement {Verily, We have given you [O Muhammad] a manifest victory} (48:1) until His Statement {He it is Who sent down *sakinah* into the hearts of the believers} (48:4) and His Statement {Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their *ba'yah* to you [O Muhammad] under the tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down *sakinah* upon them} (48:18)

All of those verses were revealed about al-Hudaybiyyah! Allah mentions His revelation of *sakinah*, on that occasion, upon His Prophet only once, and mentions its descent upon the believers on the same occasion thrice – all of them in the same *Surah* which was specifically sent down about that *singular* event. Yet, the bottomline remains that the *sakinah* came upon the Messenger *and* the believers *together* at Hudaybiyyah!

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's lowly attempt to wreck the verses out of context and to impose a misleading tag upon them does not augur well for his image as a scholar. The truth remains: whenever *sakinah* descended upon the Prophet, it always also descended upon all believers with him, excluding only the hypocrites and the pagans. Moreover, Allah never excluded His Messenger from His *sakinah* while

sending it upon the believers present with him.

This takes us back to the beginning. Why did Allah exclude Abu Bakr from His *sakinah*, even though he was with His Prophet?

Having failed woefully in his “first answer”, our Shaykh attempts a second:

ويقال ثانيا الناس قد تنازعوا في عود الضمير في قوله تعالى فأُنزل الله سكينته عليه سورة التوبة 40 فمنهم من قال إنه عائد إلى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ومنهم من قال إنه عائد إلى أبي بكر لأنه أقرب المذكورين ولأنه كان محتاجا إلى إنزال السكينة فأُنزل السكينة عليه كما أنزلها على المؤمنين الذين بايعوه تحت الشجرة والنبي صلى الله عليه و سلم كان مستغنيا عنها في هذه الحال لكمال طمأنينته بخلاف إنزالها يوم حنين فإنه كان محتاجا إليها لانهازم جمهور أصحابه وإقبال العدو نحوه وسوقه ببغلتته إلى العدو

It is said, secondly: people disagree on exactly who was intended with His statement {So Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon him) in *Surah al-Tawbah* (9), verse 40 [i.e. the Verse of the Cave]. Some of them say that it refers to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and some of them say it refers to Abu Bakr, because he was the last mentioned character before the statement, and because he needed the descent of *sakinah*. Therefore, He sent down *sakinah* upon him as He sent it down upon the believers who gave the *ba'yah* under the tree. And the Prophet, peace be upon him, did not need it in this condition, due to his perfect calm, as opposed to its descent on the Day of Hunayn, for he was then (i.e. at Hunayn) in need of it due to the flight of the majority of his Sahabah (from the battlefield), and the approach of the enemy troops, and his drive with his female mule towards the enemy troops. 19

This one is even far worse! To begin with, suggesting that the *sakinah* descended upon Abu Bakr in the Verse of the Cave, and not the Prophet, is high blasphemy. Let us have a renewed look at the verse:

إِلا تنصروه فقد نصره الله إذ أخرجه الذين كفروا ثاني اثنين إذ هما في الغار إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن إن الله معنا فأُنزل الله سكينته عليه وأيده بجنود لم تروها

If you help him not, **for Allah did indeed help him** when the disbelievers drove him out – the second of two *when* they both were in the cave – when he was saying to his companion: “Do not fear, surely Allah

is with us.” So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon him, **and helped him with forces which you saw not.**

For Allah’s sake, why would He help Abu Bakr with angels, at the expense of His Messenger?! Besides, is the verse not clear enough about who was helped? The world is strange, indeed. The context of the verse has perfectly removed any need for any grammatical acrobatics in understanding its meaning. What our Shaykh suggests only applies where there is ambiguity in the statement. There is none here. Anyway, as stated by al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir, the majority of Sunni scholars agree with the apparent teaching of the verse:

{فأنزل الله سكينته عليه} أي : تأييده ونصره عليه ، أي : على الرسول في أشهر القولين

{So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon him}: meaning, (He sent down) His assistance and help upon him, that his, **upon the Messenger according to the more popular of two views.**²⁰

Our Shaykh also suggests that *sakinah* is revealed to remove fear and restore calm, a submission completely contradictory to the Qur’an:

هو الذي أنزل السكينة في قلوب المؤمنين ليزدادوا إيماناً مع إيمانهم

He it is **Who sent down *sakinah* into the hearts of the believers, THAT THEY MAY GROW MORE IN FAITH (*IMAN*)** along with their (present) faith (*iman*).²¹

It is not about fear. It is about *iman*. Since growth in *iman* is needed in both periods of calm and unrest, then the foundation of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s second “answer” collapses at this point. Besides, the Messenger of Allah was perfectly calm at al-Hudaybiyyah, as our Shaykh himself confesses. Yet, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon him. Interestingly, the believers were also calm then, and He still sent down His *sakinah* upon them! Where has our Shaykh got his idea that the Prophet did not need *sakinah* at al-Hudaybiyyah or in the cave? Is he accusing Allah of doing needless things, by sending down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger when the latter did not need it? This reveals the extent to which some people can go to blaspheme Allah and His Prophet just to uplift Abu Bakr!

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah now moves to his final “answer”:

يقال على هذا لما قال لصاحبه إن الله معنا والنبى صلى الله عليه و سلم هو

المتبوع المطاع وأبو بكر تابع مطيع وهو صاحبه والله معهما فإذا حصل للمتبوع في هذه الحال سكينه وتأييد كان ذلك للتابع أيضا بحكم الحال فإنه صاحب تابع لازم ولم يحتج أن يذكر هنا أبو بكر لكمال الملازمة والمصاحبة التي توجب مشاركة النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم في التأيد

It is said upon this: when he said to his companion, “Allah is with us”, the Prophet, peace be upon him, was the leader while Abu Bakr was the follower and was his companion, and Allah was with them both. So when *sakinah* and help got to the leader in this circumstance, it also got to the follower in the same circumstance. This is because he was a companion and a sticking follower, and there was no need here to mention Abu Bakr here, due to the perfect connection and companionship, which necessitated his benefitting in the help along with the Prophet, peace be upon him.²²

Put in clearer words, Abu Bakr was a necessary beneficiary of Allah’s Help to His Messenger. So, the Qur’an sees no need to mention the former’s name again. Well, it might truly be said that Abu Bakr also benefitted from Allah’s provision of security to His Prophet. However, the same cannot be said about His *sakinah*, which has to do only with the growth of *iman* in the heart:

هو الذي أنزل السكينة في قلوب المؤمنين ليزدادوا إيمانا مع إيمانهم

He it is **Who sent down *sakinah* into the hearts of the believers, THAT THEY MAY GROW MORE IN FAITH (*IMAN*)** along with their (present) faith (*iman*).²³

It would be *very* illogical to claim that a growth in *iman* by the Messenger of Allah somehow also means a similar situation for Abu Bakr. This is why, at al-Hudaybiyyah, despite that the believers among the Sahabah present there were also “companions” and “sticking followers” of the Prophet, Allah still saw the need to separately send down *sakinah* upon them:

فأنزل الله سكينته على رسوله وعلى المؤمنين

So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger **and upon the believers**.²⁴

Interestingly, the believing Sahabah at al-Hudaybiyyah – along with the Prophet – were in perfect calm, and not in fear. Nonetheless, Allah revealed His *sakinah* upon them. This further debunks the notion of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah that *sakinah* is sent down only to remove fears in precarious situations. How would he explain what Allah did at al-Hudaybiyyah? On the other hand, Abu Bakr displayed demeaning

levels of fear in the cave:

إذ يقول لصاحبه لا تحزن إن الله معنا

When **he was saying** to his companion: “**Do not fear**, surely Allah is with us.”

He did not say it once! He was *repeatedly* saying it to him. The meaning would have been different if Allah had said “while he was saying....” or “when he said....”. Abu Bakr, apparently, did not have sufficient belief in the words of the Messenger of Allah. This was why he did not calm down even though the Prophet had assured him of Allah’s Presence. Allah was certainly aware of their situation, and would surely help them both if He found *iman* and sincerity in their hearts. But, even after repeated assurances by the Messenger of Allah, Abu Bakr was still in fear.

What exactly did he doubt? The presence of Allah with them? The existence of Allah? The *nubuwwah* of Muhammad? His own *iman* and sincerity? Is there really any justification for Abu Bakr’s failure to believe the Prophet? That was thirteen years after he supposedly accepted Islam! Since he was like that after so many years, what guarantees were there that he became better during the ten, more prosperous and more politicized years of the Madinan era? How could he even have doubted at all a single letter uttered by the Messenger if he really was a believer? No wonder, when Allah looked into Abu Bakr’s heart during his stay in the cave, He refused to send down His *sakinah* upon him.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 121

2. Ibid

3. Qur’an 9:40

4. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu’at al-‘Ahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’ wa al-‘Aba’at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 2, p. 452

5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-‘Ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 6, p. 2639, # 6793

6. Abu Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hamam al-‘A’nani, al-Musannaf [annotator: Habib al-Rahman al-A’zami], vol. 5, pp. 437–438, # 9756

7. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh ‘Ahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah li al-‘Aba’ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 13, pp. 179–180

8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J’ufi, al-Jami’ al-‘Ahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1337, # 3453

9. Qur’an 58:7

10. Qur’an 58:7

11. Qur’an 47:7

12. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. ‘Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim (Dar al-‘Aybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 4, p. 155

13. Qur’an 48:4

14. Qur'an 48: 18
15. Qur'an 48:26
16. Qur'an 9:26
17. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 488-489
18. Qur'an 48:26-27
19. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 489-490
20. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-Ṭaybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 4, p. 155
21. Qur'an 48:4
22. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 490
23. Qur'an 48:4
24. Qur'an 48:26

33. Hadith Al-Ikhtiyar, 'Ali: The True Second Of Two

In the cave, the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*, repeatedly assured Abu Bakr of Allah's Presence. But it did not work:

إِذ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا

When **he was saying** to his companion: “**Do not fear**, surely Allah is with us.”

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) comments about this verse:

عام الهجرة ، لما هم المشركون بقتله أو حبسه أو نفيه ، فخرج منهم هارباً صحبة صديقه وصاحبه أبي بكر بن أبي قحافة ، فلجأ إلى غار ثور ثلاثة أيام ليرجع الطَّلبُ الذين خرجوا في آثارهم ، ثم يسيرا نحو المدينة ، فجعل أبو بكر ، رضي الله عنه ، يجزع أن يَطَّلِعَ عليهم أحد ، فيخلص إلى الرسول ، عليه السلام منهم أذى ، فجعل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يُسَكِّنُهُ وَيَثْبِتُهُ ويقول : " يا أبا بكر ، ما ظنك باثنين الله ثالثهما "

During the year of the *Hijrah*, the pagans tried to kill, imprison or expel him (i.e the Prophet). So, he escaped with his friend and companion, Abu Bakr b. Abi Quhafah, to the *Thawr* Cave. They remained in there for three days. So the scouts who were sent in their pursuit returned, and they proceeded to Madinah. (While in the cave), Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was afraid that they might be discovered by someone, that some harm might come to the Messenger, peace be upon him, from them.

Therefore, the Prophet, peace be upon him, kept reassuring him and strengthening his resolve, saying, “O Abu Bakr! What do you think of two, the *third* of whom is Allah?”¹

Apparently, one word was *not* enough for Abu Bakr. When the Prophet mentioned the presence of Allah the first time, he obviously noticed that his companion was not convinced. So, he kept repeating it, telling him not to fear. The Sunni argument is that Abu Bakr only had great, uncontrollable fears for the life and safety of the Messenger of Allah. Well, there is nothing in the verse or *hadith* remotely suggesting that.

By contrast, the words of the Prophet, “Allah is with *us*”, suggest that Abu Bakr’s fears were about both of them together in the cave. Otherwise, he would have said, “Allah is with *me*”, placing the emphasis upon himself. Abu Bakr’s fears about the Prophet could also have actually been self-serving! Their fates were interconnected in that dire situation. If the Messenger fell into any danger, Abu Bakr was sure to have a good taste of it too. So, he wanted the Prophet safe, so that he too could be safe.

What support our contention – that Abu Bakr did not really care about the Prophet’s life – are his latter actions on the battlefields. For instance, he abandoned the Messenger of Allah to the mercy of the pagans on different days of battle, and fled away, again and again, with his life from *jihad*. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records:

حدثنا محمد بن أبي بكر المقدمي وحامد بن عمر البكراوي ومحمد بن
عبد الأعلى قالوا حدثنا المعتمر (وهو ابن سليمان) قال سمعت أبي عن أبي
عثمان قال لم يبق مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في بعض تلك الأيام التي
قاتل فيهن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم غير طلحة وسعد عن حديثهما

Muhammad b. Abi Bakr al-Muqaddami, Hamid b. ‘Umar al-Bakrawi and Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-A’la – al-Mu’tamar (and he is Ibn Sulayman) – father – Abu ‘Uthman:

“**None remained** with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, **on some of the days** in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, was fighting **apart from Talhah and Sa’d**. They both (i.e. Talhah and Sa’d) narrated that to me.”²

On several expeditions of the Prophet, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman fled and escaped from battle! They ran away, and did not look back, knowing fully well that their actions could get the Prophet killed, injured

or imprisoned.

In any case, what matters to our discussion in this chapter is that Abu Bakr *doubted* the assurances of the Messenger of Allah while they both were in danger, in the cave. He was unconvinced by them. Therefore, when Allah sent down His *sakinah*, He excluded him. The same thing happened with ‘Umar later on the Day of al-Hudaybiyyah. Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) records his own words concerning what he did on that day:

فقال عمر بن الخطاب رضوان الله عليه والله ما شككت منذ أسلمت إلا يومئذ
فاتيت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت ألسنت رسول الله حق

So, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, may Allah be pleased with him, said (about the Day of al-Hudaybiyyah): “By Allah! **I never doubted since I accepted Islam EXCEPT on that day.** So, I went to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and said, ‘**Are you not truly the Messenger of Allah?**’”³

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) comments:

صحيح

*Sahih*⁴

Moreover, Shaykh al-Arnauṭ agrees:

حديث صحيح

It is a *sahih hadith*⁵

He doubted the *nubuwwah* of Muhammad on that day! This removed him from the ranks of believers. So, when Allah sent down His *sakinah*, He excluded ‘Umar, and whoever was like him:

فأنزل الله سكينته على رسوله وعلى المؤمنين

So, Allah sent down His *sakinah* upon His Messenger **and upon the believers.**⁶

And:

لقد رضي الله عن المؤمنين إذ يبايعونك تحت الشجرة فعلم ما في قلوبهم فأنزل
السكينة عليهم

He knew what was in their hearts. Therefore, He sent down *sakinah* upon them.⁷

At this point, it is apposite to quote this verse:

إنما المؤمنون الذين آمنوا بالله ورسوله ثم لم يرتابوا وجاهدوا بأموالهم وأنفسهم
في سبيل الله أولئك هم الصادقون

The believers are only those who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, **and do not doubt afterwards**, and they do *jihad* with their wealth *and with their lives*, for the Cause of Allah. They are the truthful ones.⁸

Did Abu Bakr and ‘Umar ever doubt Allah or His Messenger after they had accepted Islam? Did Abu Bakr and ‘Umar ever shield their lives from *jihad* by running away? Were they true believers then? Can people like them really be the best ones in this Ummah after our Prophet? What about those of the Sahabah, like Imam ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, and perhaps others, who never doubted after their acceptance of Islam, and who never fled the battlefield? How could they have been inferior?

How can a doubter be superior to a firm, unshakable believer? How can someone who escapes with his life from *jihad* be better than someone who completely sold his life to Allah? How can someone who abandoned the Messenger of Allah in fatal danger and ran to save his own life be more valuable than another who placed his life in the midst of pagan swords so that the Prophet could live?

Most importantly, the Messenger also specifically named the second best of the entirety of this Ummah – during his lifetime – after himself. It is in *Hadith al-Ikhtiyar*, recorded by Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H):

حدثنا محمد بن جابات الجند نيسابوري و الحسن بن علي المعمرى قالاً : ثنا
عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد عن ابن عباس قال لما زوج
النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم فاطمة عليا قالت فاطمة : يا رسول الله زوجتني
من رجل فقير ليس له شيء فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : أما ترضين

يا يا فاطمة أن الله عز و جل اختار من أهل الأرض رجلين أحدهما أبوك والآخر زوجك

Muhammad b. Jabat al-Jund Naysaburi AND al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Ma'mari – 'Abd al-Razzaq – Ma'mar – Ibn Abi Najih – Mujahid – Ibn 'Abbas:

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, married Faḩimah to 'Ali, Faḩimah said, "O Messenger of Allah! You are marrying me to a poor man who has nothing." So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "Are you not pleased, O Faḩimah, that **Allah the Almighty the Most Glorious chose, from the people of the earth, two men**: one of them is your father and the other is your husband?"⁹

Concerning the *First Narrator B*, 'Allamah al-Albani states:

الحسن بن علي المعمرى ... هو صدوق حافظ

Al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Ma'mari ... **He is *saduq* (very truthful), a *hafiz* (hadith scientist)**.¹⁰

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says something similar:

الحسن بن علي بن شبيب المعمرى الحافظ واسع العلم والرحلة

Al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Shabib al-Ma'mari: **the *hafiz* (hadith scientist), very knowledgeable** and widely travelled (in search of knowledge).¹¹

And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) corroborates them:

المعمرى: الامام، الحافظ، المجود، البارع، محدث العراق، أبو علي، الحسن بن علي بن شبيب البغدادي المعمرى.

Al-Ma'mari: **the Imam, the *hafiz* (hadith scientist)**, the generous, the pious, **the *hadith* master of 'Iraq**, Abu 'Ali al-Hasan b. 'Ali b. Shabib al-Baghdadi al-Ma'mari.¹²

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) has equally documented his chain in his *Mustadrak*:

حدثنا أبو سعيد أحمد بن يعقوب الثقفي ثنا الحسن بن علي المعمرى ثنا أبو
مصعب الزهري ثنا هشام بن عمار السلمي

Abu Sa'id Ahmad b. Ya'qub al-Thaqafi – **al-Hasan b. 'Ali al-Ma'mari** – Abu Mus'ab al-Zuhri – Hisham
b. 'Ammar al-Sulami.... 13

Al-Hakim says about the chain:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain. 14

And al-Dhahabi corroborates him:

صحيح

Sahih 15

This proves that al-Ma'mari was *thiqah* (trustworthy).

Al-Hafiz also states about the second narrator:

عبد الرزاق بن همام بن نافع الحميري مولاهم أبو بكر الصنعاني ثقة حافظ

'Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam b. Nafi' al-Humayri, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-San'ani: **Thiqah**
(trustworthy), **hafiz** (a *hadith* scientist). 16

He further says about the third narrator:

معمر بن راشد الأزدي مولاهم أبو عروة البصري نزيل اليمن ثقة ثبت فاضل

Ma'mar b. Rashid al-Azdi, their freed slave, Abu 'Urwah al-Basri, he lived in Yemen: **Thiqah**
(trustworthy), **thabt** (accurate), **fadhil** (meritorious). 17

The fourth narrator is like him, as confirmed by Imam al-Dhahabi:

عبد الله بن أبي نجيح المكي، صاحب التفسير. أخذ عن مجاهد، وعطاء، وهو
من الأئمة الثقات.

‘Abd Allah b. Abi Najih al-Makki: the scholar of *tafsir*. He learnt from Mujahid and ‘Aṭa and was one of the *thiqah* (trustworthy) Imams. 18

Al-Hafiz adds:

عبد الله بن أبي نجيح يسار المكي أبو يسار الثقفي مولاهم ثقة رمي بالقدر وربما
دلس

‘Abd Allah b. Abi Najih Yasar al-Makki, Abu Yasar al-Thaqafi, their freed slave: *Thiqah* (trustworthy), accused of believing in fatalism, and *maybe he practised tadlis*. 19

There is a *probability* that he practised *tadlis*. It is not definite. In any case, his ‘an-‘an reports from Mujahid are accepted as *sahih*. For instance, Imam Muslim records this chain in his *Sahih*:

وحدثني حسن بن علي الحلواني حدثنا زيد بن الحباب حدثني إبراهيم بن نافع
حدثني عبدالله بن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد عن عائشة رضي الله عنها

Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Halwani – Zayd b. al-Habab – Ibrahim b. Nafi’ – ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Najih – Mujahid – ‘Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her. 20

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) also records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق ثنا معمر عن بن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد
عن عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى عن كعب بن عجرة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – Ibn Abi Najih – Mujahid – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli – Ka’b b. ‘Ujrah. 21

And Shaykh al-Arnanu comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.²²

Imam al-Hakim is not left out:

أخبرني عبد الرحمن بن الحسن القاضي بهمدان ثنا إبراهيم بن الحسين ثنا آدم
بن أبي إياس ثنا ورقاء عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد عن ابن عباس رضي الله
عنهما

‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Hasan al-Qadi – Ibrahim b. al-Husayn – Adam b. Abi Iyas – Waraqa – **Ibn Abi Najih – Mujahid** – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both.²³

Al-Hakim states:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This *hadith* is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.²⁴

Imam al-Dhahabi concurs:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.²⁵

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) has documented a similar chain:

حدثنا ابن أبي عمر حدثنا سفيان عن ابن أبي نجيح عن مجاهد عن أبي معمر
عن ابن مسعود

Ibn Abi 'Umar – Sufyan – **Ibn Abi Najih – Mujahid** – Abi Ma'mar – Ibn Mas'ud²⁶

Al-Tirmidhi says:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *hadith* is *hasan sahih*.²⁷

'Allamah al-Albani agrees too:

صحيح

*Sahih*²⁸

Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H) records as well:

حدثنا زهير أخبرنا يزيد بن هارون أخبرنا محمد بن إسحاق عن عبد الله بن أبي
نجيح عن مجاهد عن ابن عباس

Zuhayr – Yazid b. Harun – Muhammad b. Ishaq – **'Abd Allah b. Abi Najih – Mujahid – Ibn 'Abbas**.²⁹

Shaykh Dr. Asad comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*³⁰

And finally, Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H) has documented this chain in his *Sahih* too:

ثنا الفضل بن يعقوب الجرزي ثنا عبد الأعلى عن محمد عن عبد الله بن أبي
نجيح عن مجاهد عن ابن عباس

Al-Fadhli b. Ya'qub al-Hirzi – ‘Abd al-A’la – Muhammad – ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Najih – Mujahid – Ibn ‘Abbas.31

Shaykh Dr. al-A’zami states:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*.32

At this point, it is needless to prove that Mujahid, the last narrator of *Hadith al-Ikhtiyar* – was also *thiqah* (trustworthy). However, we shall still do so, in case there is someone who prefers that. Al-Hafiz says about him:

مجاهد بن جبر بفتح الجيم وسكون الموحدة أبو الحجاج المخزومي مولاهم
المكي ثقة إمام في التفسير وفي العلم

Mujahid b. Jabr, Abu al-Hajjaj al-Makhzumi, their freed slave, al-Makki: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, an Imam in *tafsir* and in (religious) knowledge.33

With this, it becomes absolutely proven that *Hadith al-Ikhtiyar* is *sahih*. All its narrators are *thiqah* (trustworthy), and there is no disconnection whatsoever in the chain. The *hadith* establishes that Allah chose only Muhammad and ‘Ali – in a special selection – out of all the people of the earth. It is clear from the text that Allah had not chosen anyone else among them before He chose the two. As such, whatever other selections were made by Him, apparently, came *after* this first, unique selection.

The Qur’an makes it absolutely clear that creation and choosing are *exclusive* divine functions:

وربك يخلق ما يشاء ويختار ما كان لهم الخيرة

And your Lord creates whatever He wills, **and He chooses**. They have no right to choose.34

Among those He chose was His Messenger, Musa:

وأنا اخترتك فاستمع لما يوحى

And I have chosen you. So listen to that which is inspired to you.³⁵

He equally chose the Israelites:

ولقد اخترناهم على علم على العالمين

And We had knowingly **chosen them above the worlds.**³⁶

The chosen ones, of course, are also the best:

وإنهم عندنا لمن المصطفين الأخيار

And with Us, they are verily from **the chosen ones, the best.**³⁷

So, when Allah chose His Messenger and Amir al-Muminin out of all the people of the earth, He was basically declaring them both as the best of all. Since Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman were alive at that time, it is obvious that both Muhammad and 'Ali were better than them, by Allah's Own Decree. These facts are *very* uncomfortable to mainstream Sunni teachings, and pose an existential threat to Sunni Islam as a whole.

If the *khilafah* of Abu Bakr collapses, nothing else can survive from the Sunni *madhhab*. This is why Sunnis generally feel very uneasy about *Hadith al-Ikhtiyar*. Perhaps, it is also why 'Allamah al-Albani grades the authentic *hadith* in this manner:

موضوع

Mawdu' (fabricated)³⁸

Fabricated?! By who? By the *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators?! Then, our 'Allamah states:

روي من حديث أبي هريرة، وعبد الله بن عباس، وأبي أيوب الأنصاري، وعلي الهلالي، ومعقل بن يسار.

It is narrated by Abu Hurayrah, 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, Abu Ayub al-Ansari, 'Ali al-Hilali and Ma'qil b.

Five Sahabah! That is enough to make it *mutawatir* by the standards of some Sunni *muhadithun*! What exactly is the problem with our dear ‘Allamah al–Albani? The worst part of it all is that the ‘Allamah – whether deliberately or by mistake – omits the *sanad* of al–Ma’mari above in his extensive discussion against the authenticity of the *hadith*!

This, of course, makes it possible for him to reject it! However, if he had included that *sahih* chain in his analysis, the story would have been far different. It is unclear how the ‘Allamah misses that *sanad* of al–Ma’mari, despite that he has quoted other chains of the same *hadith* from the same *Mu’jam al–Kabir* of al–Tabarani! In any case, ‘Allamah al–Albani’s verdict upon the *hadith* is based upon incomplete research. As such, it is void.

Sadly, our ‘Allamah takes things even more disturbing levels – to an all–time low – with this comment of his over a chain that has some common names with that of al–Ma’mari:

ولو أنه ثبت عنه؛ لبقى فيه علة أخرى تقدر في صحته، وهي احتمال أن يكون هذا الحديث أيضاً مما أدخله ابن أخي معمر في كتب معمر؛ فإنه كان رافضياً

Even if it is established from him (i.e. ‘Abd al–Razzaq), there is still another defect in it which discredits its authenticity. It is the *possibility* that this *hadith* too is one of those things which the nephew of Ma’mar inserted into the books of Ma’mar, for he (that nephew) was a Rafidhi.⁴⁰

Possibility?! Mere conjecture? So, there is no concrete evidence? But even then, no such possibility *ever* exists, to begin with! We will simply round off this chapter with this angry reply of the Sunni *hadith* master, ‘Allamah al–Maghribi:

قلت : هذا كلام باطل جدا ، وبيان ذلك : أن ابن أخي معمر، شخص وهمي لا وجود له ، ولا يعرف أخ لمعمر . وكيف يوجد ابن بدون أب غير عيسى عليه السلام ؟

I say: This is complete nonsense! The reason for this is: **That nephew of Ma’mar was only an imaginary figure. He never existed!** Ma’mar was not known to have any brother. How could a son exist without a father, apart from ‘Isa, peace be upon him?⁴¹

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