

SHATTERING THE MIRAGE

A Response to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn
Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī's

Al-Murāja‘āt

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Transliteration key

أ- 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ḏ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

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Introduction

The art of fictional narration can be traced back to the earliest civilisations, and has assumed various different appearances over the centuries. The fact that it is *fictitious* was never really used to discredit literary fiction, since the lessons the author of *Aesop's Fables*, for example, wished to impart, did not depend upon whether his animal characters could or did really speak. Similarly, Shakespeare, in his quasi-historical works, does not attempt to convey to the reader the notion that the words or actions he ascribes to his characters were really said or done by them. It is only when the author of the fictional narrative tries to overstep the bounds of fiction and confer upon his work the appearance of historical authenticity, that his work loses the respectable designation “literary fiction”, and earns for itself the ignominious epithet “literary hoax”.

The book *Al-Murāja'āt* by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī was first published in Sidon, Lebanon in the year 1355/1936. Since its first impression it is claimed to have gone through more than a hundred editions in Arabic.¹ It is further claimed to have been translated into nothing less than twenty languages.² In the English translation of Yasin T. al-Jibouri it carries the title *The Right Path*, and is published by a number of publishing houses. The most common edition of this translation is the one published by Imam Ḥusayn Islamic Foundation of Beirut, Lebanon. For the benefit of those who are as yet unacquainted with the *Murāja'āt* and its author, we devote the first few pages to an introduction to both.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī³

He was born in Kāzimiyyah, a city situated to the north-east of Baghdād in ‘Irāq, in 1290/1872. His father, Yūsuf, is not known for any sort of academic pursuit, but

1 Aḥmad Mughniyah: *al-Khumaynī Aqwāluḥū wa-Afāluḥū* p. 45

2 *The Right Path* p.xxiv (Ansariyan Publications, Qum)

3 The material for this biographical note is taken from his life-sketch given in the beginning of the 1989 edition of *Al-Murāja'āt* published by Dār al-Bayān al-‘Arabī, Beirut, pp. 51-71, and the biography given on pp. xxiii-xxvi of the Ansariyan Publications edition of *The Straight Path*.

his fourth ancestor Sharaf al-Dīn, to whom the family owes its name, was reputed as a man of learning. The eponym ‘al-Mūsawī’ denotes him to be of the progeny of Mūsā al-Kāzim, the seventh Imām in the line recognised by the Twelver Shī‘ah.

For his education he attended the seminaries in Kāzimiyyah and Najaf, where he studied under scholars like Shaykh Muḥammad Kāzim al-Khurāsānī, Shaykh Ḥasan al-Karbalā‘ī, and Shaykh Faṭḥullāh al-Iṣfahānī. At the age of 32 he moved to Jabal ‘Āmil in the south of Lebanon, from where his family hailed originally. He is reported to have become involved in the struggle for independence against France, for which he was forced into temporary exile from his home, which was later burnt down by the French occupation forces. The hardship of an unsettled existence between Damascus and Palestine later forced him to leave his family scattered over different locations in the region and depart for Egypt in 1337/1919.

This visit, it is said, was not his first visit to Egypt. Eight years earlier, in 1329/1911 he is supposed to have come to Egypt on a visit that he later claimed brought him into contact with Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī, the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar.

A quarter of a century later he publishes the book *Al-Murāja‘āt*, the subject matter of which is a series of 112 correspondences between al-Bishrī and himself, in which an attempt is made “to explain, justify, and uphold the *raison d’être* of Shī‘ism”. The book concludes with the Shaykh al-Azhar’s admitting the correctness of the Shī‘ī faith, saying:

I bear witness that you, in the roots and branches of the faith, are followers of the Imams from the Messenger’s progeny. You have clarified this matter and rendered it obvious, unveiled whatever was obscure thereof; so, to doubt you is madness, and to mistrust you is misguidance. I have scrutinized your letter and found it very pleasing. I verified it and was able to inhale its divine fragrance which nourished me with its sweet scent. Before knowing you, I used to be confused about your beliefs due to what I hear of allegations from scandal-mongers; now I have found it

to be a lantern that dispels the darkness, and I am leaving you victorious, successful; so, how great is the blessing which Allah has bestowed upon me, and how great your benefit unto me!¹

This, in effect, is nothing less than clear acceptance of Shī'ism by Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī.

How much historicity the book contains is a subject for later discussion. At the moment we continue with our biographical sketch of its author.

The city of Tyre in southern Lebanon had for centuries been a stronghold of the Shī'ah. Yet when 'Abd al-Ḥusayn settled there, there was no masjid in the area. He bought a house and donated it to be used as a masjid. Later he built a spacious masjid. He also established a school that carried Islamic subjects in its curriculum.

Certain events in his life give the impression that he was dedicated to Sunnī-Shī'ī unity. It was his habit to celebrate *Mawlid al-Nabī* on the 12th of Rabī al-Awwal, and not the 17th, as the Shī'ah do. This was because Sunnīs who observe this celebration do so on that date. Moreover, he delivered many lectures on this issue, some of which was published by Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā in the journal *al-Manār*. His book *al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah* was written specifically to bridge the gap between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah. Yet when seen in a broader context, this devotion to Sunnī-Shī'ī unity seems to spring not so much from an inherent belief in the necessity of such unity, as from the realisation that the Shī'ah are but a minuscule part of the Ummah. As an activist against French colonialization he must have realised the hopelessness of the Shī'ah tackling colonial powers on their own. Furthermore, by creating—or endeavouring to create—platforms for such unity the way would be prepared for another long term objective of the Shī'ah that would in itself be a solution to the problem of being an almost insignificant minority in the Muslim world: propagation of the Shī'ī faith, for which purpose he wrote the book *Al-Murāja'āt*.

1 *Al-Murāja'āt: A Shī'ī-Sunnī dialogue*, translated by Yasin T. al-Jibouri, Letter no. 111, p. 295

His work *al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah*, in which he attempts to give a blueprint of how to achieve unity between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah, reveals no readiness to distance himself from heterodoxical elements within Shī'ism. It is nothing but an attempt to convince the Ahl al-Sunnah to accept that the Shī'ah also believe in the essential tenets of faith, and for that reason they too, must be accepted as Muslims. Yet in this book too, his beliefs as a Shī'ī prevent him from giving the Ahl al-Sunnah the assurance that they will share salvation in the hereafter with the Shī'ah. In the fifth chapter he quotes a number of aḥādīth from Sunnī sources to the effect that all believers in the essential beliefs of *Tawḥīd* and *Risālah* will attain salvation in the hereafter. In the last paragraph of the chapter he turns around to say:

We (the Shī'ah) too, have in our possession authentic narrations which we received from our Twelve Imāms, whose words constitute the Sunnah that follows the Book, and the shield that protects from punishment. I present them to you in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* and other sources, where they announce glad tidings for those who believe in Allah, His Messenger, and the Last Day. But they render the general purport of the (Sunnī) narrations that you have heard, specific with the belief in the *Wilāyah* of the Family of the Messenger, whom the Messenger joined to the Book, whom he made the leaders of intelligent men, about whom he categorically stated that they are the ships of salvation amidst raging turmoil, the security of the Ummah in times of calamities, the stars of guidance in the darkness of error, the door of *Ḥiṭṭah*, where none but those who enter it will be forgiven, and the firm handhold that never breaks.¹

In other words, while Sunnīs are compelled to accept the Shī'ah as Muslims by aḥādīth in their reliable collections that speak of salvation for all who believe in the oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muḥammad ﷺ, the Shī'ah will vouch for the salvation of only those who believe in their Twelve Imāms. Thus the essence of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn's idea of unity between the Ahl al-Sunnah

1 *Al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah* p. 32 (Dār az-Zahrā', Beirut, 7th ed. 1977)

and the Shī'ah is a unity that is limited to the achievement of objectives of this world. In the Hereafter, as a dutiful Shī'ī he believes, by virtue of narrations from the Twelve Imāms documented in *al-Kāfi* and other Shī'ī sources, that salvation is exclusively for the Shī'ah.

Something else which throws light upon his attitude towards Sunnī-Shī'ī unity is his authorship of a book entitled *Abū Hurayrah*—a book which amounts to nothing less than a character assassination of that venerable Companion of Rasūl Allāh صلى الله عليه وسلم. Dr. Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, leader of *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn* in Syria in the fifties and the sixties, and one of those 'ulamā' who personally took up weapons against the French as well as against the Zionists in Palestine, relates about himself that he was at one stage very enthusiastic about bringing the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah closer to one another. The idea occurred to him that it would be very helpful if Sunnī and Shī'ī 'ulamā' started visiting one another. He visited the residence of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, whom he found as enthusiastic and responsive as himself towards the idea of bringing Sunnīs and Shī'īs closer to one another. They mutually agreed to hold a conference between 'ulamā' of the two groups for this purpose. Sometime later he was awkwardly surprised by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's publication of his book *Abū Hurayrah*, in which he casts various aspersions against the character of that Ṣaḥābī, and eventually arrives at the conclusion that he was a *kāfir* (unbeliever) and a *munāfiq* (hypocrite) about whom the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم had foretold that he will be of the inmates of Hell. Expressing his astonishment at such a turnabout from 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, al-Sibā'ī says, "I was dumbfounded at this position of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, in both his words and his book, a position which reveals a complete lack of sincerity for forging closer ties and forgetting the past."¹

'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn died on the 30th of December 1957, and was buried at his own request in one of the rooms surrounding the grave claimed to be that of Sayyidunā 'Alī عليه السلام at Najaf in 'Irāq.

1 *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fī al-Tashrī al-Islāmī* pp. 8-9 (al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Beirut, 2nd ed. 1396)

The authenticity of *Al-Murāja'āt*

In the Arabic editions of *Al-Murāja'āt* the actual contents of the book is preceded by an author's preface, in which he mentions the following:

These pages have not been written today, and these thoughts have not been born recently: they have been organized for over quarter of a century; they could have appeared in print sooner barring hostile circumstances and calamities that put strong obstacles in their way. They had, therefore, to remain waiting for a chance to gather whatever limbs they squandered and parts they lost, for the events that delayed their publication did, at the same time, alter their organization.¹

After this introduction he goes on to fill two pages with an account of how perturbed he was at the disunity amongst Muslims. These sentiments took him to Egypt at the end of 1329 A.H, where he claims that his “good fortune brought him into contact with one of the learned men [of Egypt], distinguished by his broad mind, pleasant character, animated heart, vast knowledge, and high position; who quite deservedly occupied the office of its religious leadership”. Strangely, he does not give the name of this person, neither in this introduction nor at any other place in the book. Anyway, he goes on to describe how the two of them started exchanging the correspondences that he would later publish as *Al-Murāja'āt*. Describing its development, he makes the following interesting, and indeed revealing, remark:

I do not claim that these pages are confined to the texts composed then by us, or that any of the forthcoming statements is not written by my own pen.²

In *The Right Path*, which is the English translation of *Al-Murāja'āt* by Muḥammad Amir Haider Khan, this entire introduction has been completely omitted, for

1 *Al-Murāja'āt*: A Shīṭī-Sunnī dialogue, translated by Yasin T. al-Jibouri, Introduction, p. 22

2 *Al-Murāja'āt*: A Shīṭī-Sunnī dialogue, p. 24

very obvious reasons. The passages quoted above contain the secret of the origin of *Al-Murāja'āt*. This book is not the record of correspondence between 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn and Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī. It is the sole enterprise of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, and Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī's involvement in the evolution of *Al-Murāja'āt* is pure fiction, as will be conclusively proven here. The discussion will centre around the following axes:

1. The lapse of time between the supposed exchange of correspondence, and the publication of *Al-Murāja'āt*.
2. The reluctance of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn to give the name of his correspondent.
3. Elements within the structure of *Al-Murāja'āt* that constitute grounds for impugning its authenticity.

The time lapse

'Abd al-Ḥusayn states the time of the exchange of correspondence to have been in 1329/1911. Yet it is published for the first time in 1355/1936, a quarter of a century later—and, which is even more significant, twenty years after the death of his supposed correspondent Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī, who died in 1335/1916! Which “events and calamities” could have been so disastrous as to delay the publication of a book as epoch-making as this one? There is this vague suggestion in 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's words,¹ which appears more palpably in the writings of his biographers,² that it was his involvement in the resistance against French rule—that resulted in the burning of his library in Tyre, together with nineteen unpublished manuscripts—that prevented immediate publication. However, this reason is not supported by a precise chronology of events. Colonialist supremacy in the Levant (the geographical region comprising Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine) started only in 1918, when the British and the French assisted the Arabs to wrest Damascus from Ottoman control. When the British withdrew in 1919 the French

1 *ibid.* p. 75 and p. 77 (author's introduction)

2 *ibid.* p. 58 (author's biography by Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Yāsīn)

were left in control, and it was only in the following year, 1920, that the League of Nations granted France a mandate over Syria and Lebanon.¹ If the exchange of correspondence between ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn and al-Bishrī did in fact take place in 1911, he had almost an entire decade—from 1911 to 1919—to publish his book. Why would he have to wait twenty five years?

His other work *al-Fusūl al-Muhimmah*, was published for the first time in 1327/1909, two years prior to his alleged trip to Egypt. A second edition was published in 1347/1928 with additions by the author. This shows that the author was not so preoccupied by his resistance activities that he was unable to write or prepare works for publication. Furthermore, if circumstances in Lebanon did not allow him to publish *Al-Murāja‘āt* there, he could have had it published in Egypt, which he visited again in 1337/1919. The author of his biography published in the *The Right Path*, the English translation of *Al-Murāja‘āt*, writes:

In Egypt his speeches were extremely influential in turning public sentiment against the British colonialists there. At that time Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā published in the journal *al-Manār* most of his speeches that dealt with the Lebanese people facing French colonialism.²

It is well known that Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā was at that time an arch-proponent of Sunnī-Shī‘ī unity, and devoted pages from his journal *al-Manār* to it. If the transcripts of *Al-Murāja‘āt* were at that time in existence, why did ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn not publish it in *al-Manār*? Even a mere mention of the exchange of correspondence between ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn and al-Bishrī would have meant a lot. Yet, despite ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s obvious access to publication in a journal as devoted to Muslim unity against the colonial powers as Sayyid Rashīd Riḍā’s *al-Manār*, we are at a loss to find a single mention, even in passing, of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s alleged correspondence with Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī.

1 Syria (the French Mandate): entry in Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia

2 *The Right Path* p. xxvi (Ansariyan Publications, Qum)

Suddenly, twenty five years later, when al-Bishrī has been dead for two decades, when most of those who may have remembered the events of a quarter of a century ago have already died, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn surprises the Muslim world with a book comprising the records of correspondence he claims to have been exchanged with al-Bishrī; correspondence at the end of which the Shaykh al-Azhar admits the correctness of the faith of the Shī‘ah, and in fact accepts Shī‘ism, as shown earlier.

The publishers of the English translation of *Al-Murāja‘āt*, entitled *The Right Path*, were alert enough to note the indictment of the book’s authenticity contained in the opening remarks of the author’s introduction. Accordingly, they took the “prudent” step of completely omitting it, and in their own foreword they gloss over the lapse of a quarter century between the completion of the correspondence and the publication of the book in the following words:

After the correspondence had been completed, the Sayyid [‘Abd al-Ḥusayn]
... eventually published it under the title *Al-Murāja‘āt* in 1355AH/1936AD.¹

The identity of the correspondent

What seems very unusual is that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn does not reveal the identity of his correspondent, neither in the introduction nor in the course of the book. It is true that the letters of this mysterious correspondent are all signed with the letter *sīn*, in the Arabic, which appears as an “S” in the English translation. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn comments upon this cryptic device in a footnote, saying:

The subtlety and appropriateness of this signature is not unclear.

We can see that here too, like earlier in his introduction, he does not state the name of his correspondent. The English translator, however, allowed himself the liberty of translating the above footnote as follows:

1 *ibid.* p. xxii

It may also be noted that the letter “S” denotes both his name (which is Salim) and faith, which is Sunni.¹

Where on the one hand ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn consistently maintains this secrecy about the identity of his correspondent, he gives enough cryptic clues that point towards Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī. Besides the signature, there is also the year he mentions as the year of his visit to Egypt: 1329/1911. This coincides with al-Bishrī’s second tenure as Shaykh al-Azhar, which lasted from 1327 up to his death in 1335. A person described as having “occupied the position of religious leadership of Egypt”—as ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn describes his correspondent—in the year 1329 can be none other than Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī. With such clues to the identity of his correspondent, why does he still refrain from explicitly stating his name?

It seems that when ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn first published *Al-Murāja‘āt* in 1355/1936 he was still somewhat apprehensive that despite the passing of twenty five years, there might still be people living who were close enough to Shaykh al-Bishrī to know that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s claim to have exchanged correspondence with the Shaykh is an infamous lie.² He preferred therefore to leave his correspondent unnamed, thereby keeping an avenue of escape open in the event he was accused of dishonesty. At the same time he gives cryptic clues to the identity of the correspondent, so that if his forgery remains undetected, and people come to accept Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī’s involvement in the evolution of *Al-Murāja‘āt* as a fact, future publishers would need to have no qualms in associating the Shaykh’s name with *Al-Murāja‘āt*. This is exactly what happened. Today every edition of the book carries a foreword in which the story of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s meeting with Shaykh al-Bishrī is recounted as the origin of *Al-Murāja‘āt*. Some editions even carry a picture and a short biographical of the Shaykh, alongside with a picture and biographical sketch of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

1 *The Right Path*, p. 2

2 Once, after the publication of *Al-Murāja‘āt*, the Shaykh’s son, a medical doctor, was asked if he knew anything about his father’s alleged correspondence with ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. He denied any knowledge of it.

Structural elements

There are three elements in the structure of *Al-Murāja'āt* which throw light upon its true origin.

These are:

1. The lack of documentary evidence about Shaykh al-Bishrī's involvement.
2. The similarity between the linguistic styles of the letters ascribed to Shaykh al-Bishrī and those ascribed to 'Abd al-Ḥusayn.
3. The picture of the Shaykh al-Azhar as lacking in knowledge of basic precepts, and of being unacquainted with fundamental Sunnī sources of reference, suggested by a number of the letters ascribed to him.

1. Documentary evidence

In a work like *Al-Murāja'āt* one would expect to find some type of corporeal evidence of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī's involvement. There would at least have to be something like a reproduction of one of his original letters to 'Abd al-Ḥusayn. Yet, no edition of *Al-Murāja'āt* has ever carried anything that provides tangible proof of his involvement. The only available evidence seems rather to suggest his complete non-involvement. In the foreword to the English translation by Muḥammad Amir Haider Khan published by Ansariyan Publications, Qum, it is stated that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn published the book "with the permission of the Shaykh". This is blatantly untrue. When was this "permission" given? Twenty years after the Shaykh's death? The Arabic editions of *Al-Murāja'āt* published during the life of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn and thereafter are completely silent about this "permission". The publisher of the English translation too, is incapable of producing documentary evidence of the supposed permission. Just like in the case of the omission of the author's own introduction, the myth of Shaykh al-Bishrī's permission had to be invented to deceive the unwary Sunnī reader.

2. Linguistic style

Readers of the original Arabic text of *Al-Murāja'āt* will be struck by the resemblance between the literary styles of two supposedly different persons. A cursory glance at any of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's other works—like *al-Fusūl al-Muhimmah*, *al-Nass wa l-Ijtihād* and *Ajwibat Mūsā Jārullāh*—will convince anyone who possesses a literary appreciation of the Arabic language that the style of “both correspondents” in *Al-Murāja'āt* belongs to none other but 'Abd al-Ḥusayn himself. As for Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī's literary style, if his extant writings—like *Wadh al-Nahj*, his commentary on Aḥmad Shawqī's *Nahj al-Burdah*—are anything to go by, it is a far cry indeed from the flamboyance and verbosity of expression ascribed to him by the author of *Al-Murāja'āt*.

3. Ignorance of the Shaykh Al-Azhar

Al-Murāja'āt is set at a time when the post of Shaykh al-Azhar was occupied not by governmental appointment, but by virtue of knowledge and erudition. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn himself bears testimony (unwittingly, perhaps) to this fact where he describes his correspondent as a man “distinguished by his vast knowledge”. However, in more than one of his letters the picture the reader gets of his learning is quite disparaging. Here follow a few examples:

Letters 12, 13 and 14:

In Letter 12, “Shaykh al-Bishrī” requests 'Abd al-Ḥusayn to present proof of the status of the Ahl al-Bayt from the Qur'ān. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn proceeds to enumerate over fifty verses from the Qur'ān that, he claims, refer to the Ahl al-Bayt. The majority of these verses are bent out of context by purely esoteric (*bāṭini*) interpretation, and those that can acceptably be said to refer to the Ahl al-Bayt have been the subject of much debate in Sunnī works on *tafsīr*. The “Shaykh”, seemingly ignorant thereof, praises 'Abd al-Ḥusayn profusely, and says, “You have produced clear and powerful verses of the Qur'ān, and cited everlasting proofs. Therefore, you have accomplished the task which you undertook to perform. It would be a folly to contradict you because you have exposed the folly of the ignorant.”

Letters 13 and 14:

In Letter 13 the “Shaykh” brings up the issue of accepting the traditions of narrators with known Shīʿī proclivities, whereupon ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn practically teaches him the methodology of the *muḥaddithūn* of the Ahl al-Sunnah on this point, producing a list of 100 such narrators whose traditions appear in major Sunnī works. The “Shaykh” is pictured ignorant of a simple point of ḥadīth methodology, which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has to teach him.

Letters 21, 22 and 23:

In Letter 21 the “Shaykh” disputes the authenticity of a ḥadīth on grounds of the fact that it is not in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Any scholar worth his salt knows that the *Saḥīḥayn* are not the exclusive repositories of authentic aḥādīth, and therefore this argument from the “Shaykh” is puerile. In *Al-Murājaʿāt* ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has to prove the authenticity of the ḥadīth to the Shaykh al-Azhar, and refers him to *Musnad Ahmad*. In Letter 23 the “Shaykh” comes back in amazement to confirm that he actually found the ḥadīth in *Musnad Ahmad*, and that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s authentication of the ḥadīth is correct.

Letters 27, 28 and 29:

In letter 27 the “Shaykh” invokes Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī as his authority for disputing the authenticity of a ḥadīth. No self-respecting scholar of ḥadīth would ever refer to al-Āmidī, who was an exponent of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, in a question of ḥadīth authentication. It is just as ridiculous as referring a legal matter to a dentist! This had to be pointed out to the “Shaykh” by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. In Letter 29 the “Shaykh” admits al-Āmidī’s incompetence to judge the authenticity of a ḥadīth, saying, “Āmidī has committed a blunder, which indicates his knowledge of traditions and traditionists.”

In this mediocre picture painted by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn of a man whom he himself describes as “distinguished by his vast learning” the discerning reader cannot

fail to detect clear signs of the mendacity ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has made himself guilty of in ascribing half of the letters in *Al-Murāja‘āt* to the Shaykh al-Azhar, Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī.

Conclusion

Debate between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah is an age-old phenomenon that has given rise to a specific genre of polemic literature. This genre of literature was by nature **unilaterally critical**. This means that these works were usually one-sided attacks on the beliefs of the opponents. The closest they ever came to being **bilateral** was when refutations or counter-refutations would be written to earlier works, like in the case of *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, Ibn Taymiyah’s refutation of Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī’s *Minhāj al-Karāmah*, or *Nuzha-e Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah*, Ḥakīm Mīrzā Muḥammad Kāmil’s response to *Tuḥfa-e Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* by Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. But the bilateralness of such refutations could still not generate the placidity and dispassionateness found in **dialogue**, as opposed to the vehemence of polemical debate. The participants in dialogue, unlike debate, are supposed to be free from bigotry, fanaticism, and preconceived notions. Dialogue, it is supposed, takes place in a spirit of neutrality and open-mindedness. The results yielded by such dialogue, therefore, would be vastly more objective—and convincing—than those of the polemical debate.

The author of *Al-Murāja‘āt* knew this only too well. Fired with the zeal to propagate his faith—like most of the ‘ulamā’ of the Shī‘ah are—he knew that no polemical discourse could ever do a tenth of what a dialogue could. The problem lay in getting that dialogue off the ground, and securing a Sunnī participant with sufficient esteem in the Sunnī world to lend credibility and authority to the dialogue.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s solution was ingenious. He was well aware of the importance of al-Azhar in the Sunnī world. He would never find a more distinguished “correspondent” than the Grand Shaykh of that institution. Should he actually seek dialogue with the Shaykh al-Azhar of his time? That would be too precarious,

because the living Shaykh al-Azhar could turn out to be too well versed in Sunnī-Shīī polemics, which would mean that he would be ready with a whole array of answers to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s questions, as well as an arsenal of disturbing questions of his own. The dialogue therefore would have to be fictitious, but garbed in a cloak of reality. Fortunately he would not have to be troubled by his conscience over this deception, because, as a Shīī, he enjoyed the privilege of practising *Taqiyyah*, or dissimulation. In other words, his faith allowed him to twist the truth or invent his own version of it, provided such means finds justification in the end, and what justification could be more weighty than the propagation of “the true faith”?

There now remained one last question: Which past occupant of the office of Shaykh al-Azhar will be given the honour of being his “correspondent”? It would have to be someone who died long ago, so that not too many questions would be asked. He chose Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī, whose death, as we have seen, preceded the publication of *Al-Murāja‘āt* by a full twenty years. Even then too, he was cautious, and did not go to the extent of explicitly identifying his correspondent by name, as we have seen.

Inventing his own correspondent held one crucial advantage: Like a puppeteer, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn would be able to make the “Shaykh al-Azhar” say whatever he wanted to. (This explains the apparent ignorance of the “Shaykh al-Azhar”.) The unwary Sunnī reader who has already swallowed the bait, and actually believes that *Al-Murāja‘āt* is the record of a real dialogue between the Shaykh al-Azhar and ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, would be presented with a “Shaykh al-Azhar” who is unable to counter any of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s arguments, who lavishes praise upon him, who endorses his views and findings, and who ultimately admits the truth of Shīism, and accepts it. By this masterstroke ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn would vanquish not merely his fictitious “Shaykh al-Azhar”, but Sunnism at large.

And *that* is the story of *Al-Murāja‘āt*.

Polemical fiction in Shīʿī literature

The style of writing adopted by ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn in *Al-Murājaʿāt* has long been favoured by Shīʿī authors in polemical literature. They were quite aware that to actually engage the ʿulamāʾ of the Ahl al-Sunnah in debate would considerably curtail their advantage, and therefore they resorted to the more convenient ploy of creating their own opponents, since by doing so they would be able to manipulate the “opponent’s” arguments to their own advantage. When ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn chose this style of writing for the book he himself considered his *magnum opus*, he was not being original at all. He was merely imitating the precedent set by earlier Shīʿī writers like Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī and Raḍiyy al-Dīn Ibn Tāwūs. Below we look at three works in this genre by these two authors.

Ḥusniyyah

A book by this title appeared during the latter half of the previous century, purporting to be the record of a debate that had taken place at the court of Hārūn al-Rashīd between Ḥusniyyah, a slave girl owned by a merchant friend of Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq, and the Imāms Abū Yūsuf and al-Shāfiʿī. This slave girl had supposedly stayed with Imām Jaʿfar up to the age of twenty, and had acquired expertise in numerous branches of knowledge from him. In the book she publicly humiliates the two Imāms, defeating their arguments, and presenting them with “incontrovertible evidence” of the truth of the creed of the Shīʿah.

The book is full of anachronisms. For one, al-Shāfiʿī came to Baghdād only after the death of Abū Yūsuf, so it is impossible that they could ever have taken part together in any discussion. The book also speaks of a third learned man by the name of Ibrāhīm Khālīd of Baṣrah, who was supposedly regarded by Abū Yūsuf as “superior to them all.” When they themselves were unable to answer the arguments of Ḥusniyyah, they referred the matter to this Ibrāhīm Khālīd, but he too, was incapable of responding to her. History, however, has recorded nothing of a person by this name, and the effort to identify him with Abū Thawr, whose name was Ibrāhīm ibn Khālīd, is futile, since Abū Thawr was a Baghdādī by birth

and lived there all his life. Far from being regarded as al-Shāfiʿī's superior, he was his student, and one of the four narrators of his *qadīm* views. Even of Ḥusniyyah herself, the annals of history and biography have recorded nothing at all. It is only in this belated document that mention is made of her existence.

Āqā Buzurg Tehrānī, the eminent Shīʿī bibliographer, records in his bibliographical lexicon *al-Dharīʿah* that this booklet was originally found in the possession of a sayyid in Syria by Mullā Ibrāhīm al-Astarābādī when he returned to Iran from Hajj in the year 958/1551. He translated it into Persian, and it was first published in 1287/1870.¹ The Shīʿī biographer Mīrzā ʿAbd Allāh Effendī al-Iṣfahānī has done us a favour by exposing the real author of the book *Ḥusniyyah*, and his purpose in writing such a book. He writes in his book *Riyād al-ʿUlamāʾ*:

Such a degree of learning and eminence is accorded to Ḥusniyyah in this booklet, that it creates the impression of it being the fraudulent work of Shaykh Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, written and forged by him. He ascribed it to Ḥusniyyah in order to bring disgrace to the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah, and to humiliate them by exposing their beliefs.²

The identification of Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī as the author of the booklet *Ḥusniyyah* is supported by Sayyid Muḥsin al-Amīn, the author of *Aʿyān al-Shīʿah*, one of the most authoritative contemporary biographical dictionaries of the Shīʿah. He states categorically that this book “is the work of Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī”.³

Yūhannā the Christian

This same Shaykh Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī is credited with the authorship of another spurious polemical tract called *Risālat Yūhannā al-Nasrānī* (the tract of Yūhannā [John] the Christian). In this tract, quoted by a number of Shīʿī writers as factual

1 *Al-Dharīʿah* vol. 4 p. 97 no. 452 (3rd ed., Dār al-Adwāʾ, Beirut 1401/1981)

2 *Riyād al-ʿUlamāʾ* vol. 5 p. 407 (Maktabat Āyatullāh al-Marʿashī, Qum 1401/1981)

3 Cited by al-Mahallātī in *Rayāhīn al-Sharīʿah* vol. 4 p. 148 (Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah)

truth,¹ a Christian by the name of Yūhannā engages the Sunnī ‘ulamā of Baghdād in a debate during which he demonstrates the “fallacies” in the creed of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Eventually he declares his acceptance of Shī‘ism as the true religion. Mīrzā ‘Abd Allāh Effendi ascribes this work to Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī. The “strength” of this polemic is supposed to derive from the fact that even a non-Muslim is able to discern the “falsehood” of Sunnī belief from the “truth” of Shī‘ism.

‘Abd al-Maḥmūd the Dhimmī

Raḍīyy al-Dīn Ibn Tāwūs belonged to a prominent Shī‘ite family that lived at Ḥillah near Najaf at the time of the sack of Baghdād by the Tartars under Hulagu. Shī‘ite complicity in the fall of Baghdād is a fact of history. Al-Mustansir’s wazīr, Mu‘ayyid al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Alqamī treacherously co-operated with the Tartars to secure the downfall of the ‘Abbāsids. This wazīr was a close friend of Ibn Tāwūs.² Ibn Tāwūs’s acceptance of the post of Naqīb al-Ashrāf from Hulagu, having earlier refused it from the ‘Abbāsīd khalīfah al-Mustansir, is quite significant.

With the fall of Baghdād came a new surge in Shī‘ite propagation, the like of which was only seen in the days of the Buwayhids. The high positions occupied by Shī‘ite dignitaries in the *Ilkhānid* (Tartar) administration afforded the Shī‘ah the influence and leverage they needed to prosper. The town of Ḥillah soon developed into the most important centre of Shī‘ite learning, producing the likes of al-‘Allāmah (Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn Muṭahhar) al-Hillī, Ibn Dāwūd al-Rijālī, al-Muḥaqqiq (Ja‘far ibn Ḥasan) al-Ḥillī, and al-Shahīd al-Awwal (Muḥammad ibn Makkī al-‘Āmilī).

This age also saw the composition of a number of polemical works. Amongst the better known of these works is Ibn Muṭahhar’s *Minhāj al-Karāmah*, in refutation of which Ibn Taymiyyah composed his celebrated *Minhāj al-Sunnah*. Ibn Tāwūs also

1 See for example *al-Anwār an-Nu‘māniyyah* by Sayyid Ni‘mat Allāh al-Jazā‘irī, vol. p. (Mu‘assasat al-Ā‘lamī, Beirut)

2 *Al-Shahīd al-Thānī*, quoted by Muḥammad Baḥr al-‘Ulūm in a footnote to *Lu‘lu‘at al-Baḥrayn* of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, p. 236 (Dār al-Adwā’, Beirut 1986)

contributed to this genre of literature. However, he preferred to do so under an assumed identity. His book, entitled *al-Tarāʾif fī Madhāhib al-Tawāʾif*, was written under the nom-de-plume ʿAbd al-Maḥmūd ibn Dāwūd al-Muḍarī. He commences his book with the (false) statement that he is a man from amongst the *Ahl al-Dhimma* (Jews or Christians living under the protection of the Muslim state). He then proceeds with a comparative study of different religious persuasions, and predictably enough, ends up with Ithnā ʿAsharī (Twelver) Shīʿism as the only true religion. Like Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī before him, he seeks to introduce objectivity into his work by assuming the identity of a supposedly unbiased observer.¹

These are three classical examples of fictitious polemical works. Besides them there are several more, a number of which were composed relatively late. Thus, when ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn decided to write his own polemical masterpiece, he had before him the examples of eminent scholars of his sect who had made use of the literary style that might be termed “polemical fiction”. Polemical fiction was by that time an established style of writing amongst Shīʿī polemicists. It may therefore be concluded, with considerable certainty, that *Al-Murājaʿāt* too, falls in this category.

Al-Murājaʿāt in the Sunnī world

Sunnī reactions to *Al-Murājaʿāt* have been varied. Some persons were completely deceived by ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn’s careful forgery. Amongst these one may count Shaykh Muhammad Maraṭ al-Amīn al-Antākī of Aleppo, Syria. This shaykh was an al-Azhar educated ʿālim whose reading of *Al-Murājaʿāt* led him to embrace the Shīʿī faith. His own book, *Limādḥā Ikhtartu Madhhab al-Shīʿah* (Why I embraced the madhhab of the Shīʿah) is virtually a reproduction of ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn’s arguments in *Al-Murājaʿāt*.

There were others, like the Lebanese writer Dr. ʿĀtif Salām, who seemed to have found in this book a foundation whereupon Sunnī-Shīʿī unity could be built. Like

1 *Riyāḍ al-ʿUlamāʾ* vol. 5 p. 407

al-Antākī, he too, has reproduced verbatim entire sections from *Al-Murāja'āt* in his book *al-Waḥdat al-'Aqā'idīyah 'inda al-Sunnah wa al-Shī'ah* (Doctrinal Unity between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah). His sentiments were shared by a number of figures who were involved in the Dār at-Taqrīb in Cairo, and were thus already receptive of the idea of unity.

This receptivity, coupled with a number of other factors, is probably the cause of their uncritical acceptance of *Al-Murāja'āt* as an authentic document. The first of these factors was their belief in the complete honesty and openness of Shī'ī participants in unity endeavours. This rendered them credulous, and caused them to disregard the possibility of *Taqīyah* on the part of their Shī'ī counterparts. Secondly, most, if not all, of those who were misled into believing in *Al-Murāja'āt* as an authentic record of Sunnī-Shī'ī dialogue were simply not adequately qualified in the field of schismatology. A person like Dr. Ḥāmid Ḥifnī Dāwūd, for example, who wrote a foreword to one edition of *Al-Murāja'āt*, might have been the dean of the Faculty of Arabic Language at 'Ayn Shams University, but that does not make him an expert on comparative studies between Sunnism and Shī'ism. Dr. Muhammad Yūsuf Mūsā, who also wrote a foreword, was a specialist in fiqh, and not in Sunnī-Shī'ī comparative studies. None of these men are known for any manner of expertise in the field of ḥadīth, which is a *sine qua non* for a proper appraisal of the book, as will be revealed in the course of this detailed critical analysis. Strangely, not a single one of them seems to have taken the trouble of learning more about Shī'ism from its authoritative sources. Their blind acceptance of the words of Shī'ī propagandist writers like 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, without bothering to compare them with what is contained in the classical legacy of the Shī'ah, is in itself proof of their extreme credulousness.

And last, but most definitely not least, all Sunnī “admirers” of *Al-Murāja'āt* seem to overlook the fact that the arguments advanced in the book effectively negate the validity of Sunnī Islam. Endorsing the book is therefore tantamount to the acknowledgement that Sunnī Islam is a corrupt and deviate form of original Islam. Therefore, logically, the only ones who could admire the book are those

who were actually convinced by it to embrace Shī'ism. Any Sunnī who endorses the book but still remains a Sunnī finds himself in the contradictory position of regarding one thing as the truth—since that is what the book claims Shī'ism is—but following and practicing another.

There has also been the tendency amongst Sunnī 'ulamā' to ignore the very existence of the book. This trend is reminiscent of Imām Taqiyy al-Dīn al-Subkī's reaction to the book *Minhāj al-Karāmah* by Ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah's rebuttal of it, the *Minhāj al-Sunnah*. He set forth his opinion on the *Minhāj al-Karāmah* in verse as follows:

إِنَّ الرُّوَافِضَ قَوْمٌ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَجْهَلِ النَّاسِ فِي عِلْمٍ وَأَكْذِبِهِ
وَالنَّاسُ فِي غُبَيْةٍ عَنْ رَدِّ إِفْكِهِمْ لِهَيْجَنَةِ الرَّفِضِ وَاسْتِقْبَاحِ مَذْهَبِهِ

The Shī'ah are a wretched people, most ignorant in knowledge, and most false.

There is no need to rebut their lies, since Shī'ism itself is so vile and repugnant.

This attitude of trusting that the common people will find Shī'ism itself so repulsive that there would be no need to reply to Shī'ite propaganda in detail, overlooks the fact that the Shī'ite propagandist does not approach his target with the repulsive features of his belief. He propagates his faith with a careful strategy calculated to create doubt in the mind of the Sunnī about his beliefs as a Sunnī, but not so aggressive as to repel him. Like any adept salesman he presents his own faith in a most convincing way, and steers well clear of any controversial elements. The success the book *Al-Murāja'āt* has had in Sunnī circles is proof of the fact that ignoring its existence aids, rather than hinders, its task.

It is for this reason that al-Subkī's attitude came under severe criticism from later scholars. One of them, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf of Yemen had the following to say:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّجُلُ الْحَامِي لِمَذْهَبِهِ أَلَزِمْتَ نَفْسَكَ أَمْرًا مَا أَمَرْتَ بِهِ
تَقُولُ فِي بَاغِضِي صَحْبِ الرَّسُولِ وَمَنْ يَرَى مَسَبَّتَهُمْ أَضْلًا لِمَذْهَبِهِ
وَالنَّاسُ فِي غُنَيْتِهِ عَنِ رَدِّ إِفْكِهِمْ هَذَا هُوَ الْإِفْكُ لَكِنْ مَا شَعَرْتَ بِهِ
بَلْ رُدُّهُ وَاجِبٌ نُصْحًا وَمَعْذِرَةٌ وَنُصْرَةٌ لِسَبِيلِ الْحَقِّ مِنْ شُبْهِهِ
إِذَا تَقَوْلَ فِي الصَّحْبِ الْكِرَامِ فَمَا ذَا تُوجِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ يَا دَوَى النَّبِيِّ
وَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ بِأَنَّ الشَّخْصَ دَاعِيَةً إِلَى ضَلَالٍ بِلَا رَيْبٍ وَلَا شُبْهِهِ

O you who stand in defence of your opinion, you have taken up something other than what you were ordered to.

You say about those who hate the Companions of the Messenger and believe cursing them to be a fundamental of their faith:

“There is no need to rebut their lies”? This, indeed, is the real lie, though you do not know.

Rather, refuting it is obligatory, as an extension of goodwill, a discharge of duty, and in defence of truth against dubious claims.

When this person slanders the Companions, then what punishment do you declare him liable of, O men of intelligence,

knowing without doubt, and without ambiguity, that he is an inviter towards deviation?

Another poet, Abū al-Muzaffar Yūsuf ibn Muhammad ibn Mas‘ūd al-Surramarī, says:

أَكُلُّ مَا ظَهَرَتْ فِي النَّاسِ هُجْنَتُهُ يَصِيرُ أَهْلًا لِإِهْمَالِ النَّكِيرِ بِهِ
وَاللَّهِ لَا غُنَيْتَةَ عَنِ رَدِّ إِفْكِهِمْ بَلْ رُدُّهُ وَاجِبٌ أَعْظَمُ بِمُوجِبِهِ
أَيُّرْكُونَ يَسْبُونَ الصَّحَابَةَ وَالْإِسْلَامَ يُخْتَالُ زُهَوًا فِي تَصَلِّيهِ

هَذَا مَقَالٌ شَنِيعٌ لَمْ يَقُلْ أَحَدٌ بِهِ وَلَا رَهْطٌ جَهْمٌ فِي تَحْزِينِهِ
 وَاللَّهِ لَوْ لَا سُيُوفٌ مِنْ أُنْمَتِنَا فِي كَاهِلِ الرَّفِضِ لَا تَلْوِي وَمُنْجِيهِ
 لِأَضْحَتِ السُّنَّةُ الْعَرَاءُ دَائِرَةً بَيْنَ الْبَرِيَّةِ كَالْعُنُقَا وَأَعْرَبِهِ

Does everything whose repulsiveness has become commonly manifest deserve to be ignored and not refuted?

By Allah, there is no way we can refrain from refuting it. It is a duty, and Great is He who ordained it.

Shall they be left to arrogantly and fanatically vilify the Ṣaḥābah and Islam?

This is indeed an evil claim which no one, not even the followers of Jahm, ever made.

By Allah, had it not been for the unflinching swords of our Imāms upon the shoulders of Shī'ism,

The resplendent Sunnah, just like the 'anqā bird, would have been obliterated amongst men.¹

There has been very little critical work done on *Al-Murāja'āt*. Mention may be made here of two sterling efforts. The first is the work of Maḥmūd al-Zu'bī entitled *al-Bayyināt fī al-Radd 'alā Abāṭīl Al-Murāja'āt* (Clear Signs: a Refutation of the Falsehoods of *Al-Murāja'āt*). This book in two volumes is probably the most comprehensive response to *Al-Murāja'āt*. Our present study started out as a translation of this work. It soon became clear that a mere translation would not serve the needs of the English-speaking public. It was therefore decided to write an independent refutation that would draw from al-Zu'bī's work and at the same time fill the gaps left by him. To him, however, goes the honour of chronological precedence.

The second noteworthy contribution is that of the great contemporary muḥaddith, Shaykh Muhammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. The shaykh's series on

1 See *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah*, part 2, pp. 2-11 (Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut n.d.)

spurious aḥādīth entitled *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍaʿīfah* is well known. In the second volume of this series he discusses a ḥadīth cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn in *Al-Murājaʿāt*. The shaykh states:

There are several reasons for discussing and analysing the authenticity of this particular ḥadīth. One of it is that I have seen the shaykh called ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Mūsawī, the Shīʿī, citing it in his book *Al-Murājaʿāt* in such a way as to create the impression of it being authentic, which is a thing he habitually does in this type of ḥadīth.¹

He then gives a lengthy discussion on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deliberate abuse of a simple mistake on the part of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī whereby he (i.e. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn) has attempted to prove that the ḥadīth in question is actually authentic. Al-Albānī seriously questions the honesty and scrupulousness in citing Sunnī references for which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s admirers have so much praised him. He goes on to say:

The book *Al-Murājaʿāt* is filled with *ḍaʿīf* (weak) and *mawḍūʿ* (forged) narrations on the subject of the merits of ‘Alī عليه السلام, in addition to ignorance of this science (of ḥadīth) and the tendency to mislead and deceive the reader. It even contains blatant falsehood in a way that the reader could never imagine possible from a self-respecting author. It is for this reason that I have resolved to discuss critically all those aḥādīth, as many as they may be, to point out the causes of their weakness, and to reveal the deception and delusion in (the author’s) words. That will be published, if Allah permits, from numbers 4881 to 4975 (in this series).²

To the best of our knowledge this part of *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍaʿīfah* has not yet seen publication. The value of al-Albānī’s *takhrīj* (tracing and critical appraisal) of the aḥādīth cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn in *Al-Murājaʿāt* is evident, taking into account his vast knowledge, acknowledged expertise, and long experience in the field

1 Al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍaʿīfah wa al-Mawḍūʿah*, vol. 2 p. 295 (Maktabat al-Maʿārif, Riyadh 1992)

2 *ibid.* vol. 2 p. 297

of ḥadīth. Recent controversies centering upon him are more jurisprudential in nature, and do nothing to affect his competence as a muḥaddith. It would therefore be in the interest of our study to have access to this forthcoming (if not already published) volume of his Silsilah.

As has been mentioned, the book *Al-Murāja'āt* has seen publication in a number of languages. Presently the English translation of Yasin T. Al-Jibouri is especially popular and widely circulated online. Despite the wide circulation it enjoys and its easy availability to the public very little, if anything, has been done to tackle the issues and the evidence it presents. It is either accepted at face value, or else simply ignored. Both these options are equally detrimental, as we have seen. The mirage of *Al-Murāja'āt* will only be exposed and shattered through a comprehensive critical study of its contents.

From here onwards the actual content of the book comes under critical discussion. Since it is expected that many readers would not have a copy of *al-Murāja'āt* or its translation on hand, it was considered useful to reproduce the entire text of the book before responding to it. In this way we would also prevent the suspicion of misrepresenting the author. The letters in *al-Murāja'āt* are reproduced in red print in groups of two, with our critical commentary following after every second letter, in black.

Letter 1

Thul Qi`da 6, 1329 A.H.

I. Greeting the Debater,

II. Asking Permission to Debate.

1. Peace and Allah's mercy and blessings be upon the learned honourable Shaykh `Abdul-Husayn Sharafuddin AlMusawi.

I have not been acquainted yet with Shi`as' conscience, nor have I tested their manners, for I have never kept company with any of them, nor come to know the traditions of their folks. But I have always been eager to debate with their renown scholars, anxious to mix with their commoners, in order to sift their trends and attempt to know their inclinations, until Allah helped me stand by the spacious shore of your ocean of knowledge, and you let me taste of your brimful cup; Allah helped me quench my thirst. I swear by the city of Allah's knowledge, your Chosen Grandfather, and by its gate, your pleased ancestor, that I have never tasted anything so satisfying to the thirsty, and so curing to the sick, like your overflowing stream. I used to hear that you, Shi`a folks, prefer to avoid your brethren, the Sunnis, and keep away from them, and that you find your ease in loneliness, resorting to isolation, and so on and so forth. But I have found your person to be gently charming, keen in debating, courteous, strong in argument, well humoured, honest in duel, appreciated in misunderstanding, cherished in competition; therefore, I have found the Shi`a a pleasant fragrance to sit with, and the quest of every man of letters.

2. While standing by the shore of your tumultuous sea, I ask your permission to swim in it and dive deeply in pursuit of its jewels. If you grant me your permission, we will dig deeply for the root causes of particulars and obscurities which have long been agitating me; if not, it is entirely up to

you. In raising my questions, I do not look for a fault or a defect, nor do I oppose, nor refute; instead, I have only one quest: searching for the truth. When truth is manifest, it then deserves to be followed; if not, I am only like one (poet) who said:

We in what we have, and you in what you offer,

Are all satisfied, even when our views differ.

I will, if you permit me, confine my debate with you to two topics: one deals with the sect's Imamate, in its roots and branches,[1] and the other deals with the general Imamate, i.e. succession to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. My signature at the close of all my debates shall be "S," and let yours be "Sh." In advance, I solicit your forgiveness for every fault, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

1. Having sought permission to debate, he starts explaining the debate's subject-matter, thus demonstrating his moral accomplishments and excellence as far as the norm of debate is concerned. The use of the initials "S" and "Sh" is an obviously suitable vehicle for carrying such a debate on, since "S" denotes his name "Salim" and his being a Sunni, while "Sh" signifies the author's surname "Sharafud-Din," and his being a Shi'a.

Letter 2

Thul Qi`da 6, 1329 A.H.

I. Greetings Reciprocated,

II. Permission to Debate Granted.

1. Peace of Allah be with Maulana Shaykh alIslam, His mercy and blessings.

Your very kind letter has granted me and bestowed upon me so many graces for which the tongue can hardly thank you enough, nor can it fulfill a portion of its duty even in a lifetime. You have placed your hopes on me and brought me your request while you yourself are the hope of anyone with a quest, the refuge of whoever seeks refuge. I myself have come to you all the way from Syria in order to relish your knowledge and seek your favours, and I am sure I will leave you strong in optimism except if Allah wills otherwise.

2. You have asked permission to speak up. You have the right to bid and forbid. Say whatever you will: you have the favour; your judgment is final, your verdict fair, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussion

It has already been shown that the publishers of the English translation of *al-Murāja'āt* of Muḥammad Amir Haider Khan preferred not to include the author's own introduction as part of the book, for the simple reason that a careful reading of that introduction reveals the book's true provenance. Instead of the author's own translation the publishers of the English translation opted to include an introduction of their own, after which they launch directly into Letter 1.

The initials "S" and "SH", and the liberty taken by the translator in his rendering of the footnote have also been discussed earlier under the heading "Identity of the correspondent". We will therefore not repeat that discussion here.

Sūriyā

Sūriyā is the Arabic name for modern Syria. This name has its origins in antiquity and is closely associated with the Christian culture of Syria. The Syrian Christians speak a dialect of Aramaic called Syriac, and their church is known as the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Ever since Syria became part of the Islamic world it was known as *al-Shām*, which was the Arabic name for Syria. *Shām* included more than just modern Syria; Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon were part of *Shām*. In the Arabic language this name was retained until Ottoman times, when the region of *Shām* was governed as the three provinces of Damascus, Aleppo, and Beirut. In Turkish it was referred to as *'Arabistān*. With the collapse of the Ottoman empire during World War I Britain and France in 1916 concluded the secret Sykes-Picot agreement under which *Shām* would be carved up into the four territories of Syria, *Transjordan* (Jordan), Lebanon, and Palestine (which was then further divided into Jewish Israel and Arab Palestine). In 1918 British forces entered Damascus and Ottoman administration of *Shām* came to an end. An Arab administration was set up under the Amīr Fayṣal, son of the Sharīf Ḥusayn of Makkah. Fayṣal was elected king of Syria in 1920. The official replacement of the old name *Shām* with *Sūriyā* in

Arabic took place either in 1918 or 1920. Prior to this date the only ones who were known to use the term *Sūriyā* in Arabic were Christian Syrian nationalists whose religion and culture were better identified by this term than by the Arabic *Shām* or Turkish *‘Arabistān*.

Al-Murāja‘āt was supposedly written in 1911. During this time Syria was still known in Arabic as *Shām*. The switch to *Sūriyā* would come at least seven years later. However in the original Arabic text of *al-Murāja‘āt* ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn writes distinctly of *Sūriyā*. At this stage we need to keep the fact in mind that *al-Murāja‘āt* was first published in 1936. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s usage of the term *Sūriyā* will only seem proper if the actual writing of the book is placed in the 1920’s or even the early 1930’s, long after the death of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī in 1916. In 1911 the usage in Arabic of the term *Sūriyā* is as anachronistic as the usage of the name Saudi Arabia for Najd and Ḥijāz before 1932.

This one single word provides us with a strong indication of the time when *al-Murāja‘āt* was really written. It is clear that Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī, who died in 1916, could not have had anything to do with *al-Murāja‘āt*. In 1911—when ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn claims to have had the correspondence with al-Bishrī—or even 1916—when Shaykh al-Bishrī died—no Muslim Arab would call *Shām* by the name *Sūriyā*. It could only be used after 1920—and by then the Shaykh was long dead. It is therefore manifestly evident that *al-Murāja‘āt* had only one, and not two authors.

Correspondence by post

It is vehemently asserted that this alleged exchange took place in Cairo itself, and not between Cairo and Syria, which leaves us with a the nagging question: Why would two people who live in the same city, who know each other well, and who are in regular contact with one another, need to correspond with one another by post? This entire correspondence seems to have only taken place in the imaginative mind of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

Letter 3

Thul Qi`da 7, 1329 A.H.

I. Why do Shi`as not Uphold the Majority's Sects?

II. The Need for Unity,

III. Unity Achieved Only by Adhering to the Majority's Sects.

1. I ask you now about the reasons why you (Shias) do not follow the sect of the majority of Muslims, I mean the sect of alAsh`ari, in determining the principles of the creed, and the four sects in its branches. Muslims agreed to abide by them in each time and clime, unanimously acclaiming their founder's fairness and ijthad, their trustworthiness, piety, renunciation of worldly riches, straightforwardness, good morals and lofty status in knowledge and deeds.
2. How great our need today for unity and uniformity is! This can be achieved through your own adherence to these sects according to the general consensus of Muslims, especially when the religion's enemies have made up their minds to harm us by all possible means. They have set their minds and hearts upon such goals while Muslims are heedless, as if they are overcome by slumber, assisting their enemies against their own selves by letting them split their own ranks and tear their unity apart through partisanship and fanaticism, leaving them disunited, divided, leading each other astray, excommunicating one another; hence, wolves preyed on us while dogs coveted our flesh.
3. Do you see other than what we state here, may Allah lead your steps to unite our ranks? Tell me, for you will be heard when you speak and obeyed when you command, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

1. The followers of Abu al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, 270-320 A.H., a pupil of Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, surnamed al-Jubbay. Ashʿarī broke away from his tutor and founded his own sect which is named after him. The beliefs of the Ashʿarīs are briefly as follows: (1) The Qurʿan is uncreated; (2) Mankind is not free to choose between right and wrong because all our actions are predestined; (3) Allah’s attributes are distinct from His essence. By means of the second belief mentioned above, the Ashʿarī seek to justify all the evil deeds of such persons as Yazīd and others whom they regard as Khalīfahs; hence their insistence on predestination and on the possibility of Allah being unjust.

Letter 4

Thul Qida 4, 1329 A.H.

- I. Juristic Proofs Mandate Adherence to the Sect of Ahl alBayt,**
- II. There is No Proof for Mandating Adherence to the Majority's Sects,**
- III. Generations of The First Three Centuries Never Knew Those Sects,**
- IV. Possibility of Ijtihad,**
- V. Unity can be Achieved by Respecting Ahl alBayt's Sect.**

1. Our adherence, in the principles of the creed, to a sect other than that of alAsh`ari, and our following in the branches of Islam of a sect other than those four sects, has never been due to partisanship nor fanaticism, nor has it been because of doubting the ijtiḥad of the Imams of these sects, of their fairmindedness, trustworthiness, integrity, or loftiness in knowledge and deeds.

Juristic proofs, rather, have mandated upon us to follow the sect of the Imams from the Household of Prophethood, the cradle of the Message, and the place the angels frequent, the abode of revelation and inspiration. We have always, therefore, referred to them in order to comprehend all matters related to the creed's branches and doctrines, in the roots and in the bases of fiqh, in the knowledge of ethics, behaviour, and manners. We have done all this in accordance with the judgment of evidence and proof, following the Sunnah of the Master of Prophets and Messengers, peace of Allah be upon him and all his progeny.

Had the proofs allowed us to differ from the Imams of Muhammad's progeny, or had we been able to achieve nearness to Allah, Glory to Him, by following others' sects, we would then have followed in the general public's footsteps, asserting the friendship and strengthening the ties of

fraternity. On the contrary, positive proofs stand in the believer's way, diverting him from following his own inclinations.

2. Still, the majority cannot prove that their own sect must be preferred over those of others, let alone making it obligatory. We have looked into Muslims' pretexts as one inquiring in depth with keen eyes, but we have found no proof for your argument except what you mentioned of their ijtihad, trustworthiness, fairmindedness and loftiness.

You, however, know that ijtihad, trustworthiness, fairmindedness and loftiness of status are not a monopoly of them only; therefore, how, since the case is as such, can their sects be obligatory by your merely pointing them out?

I do not think that there is anyone who dares to advocate their preference in knowledge or deeds over our Imams who are the purified `itra, the nation's life-boats, the Gate of Salvation, the security against dissension in religion, the flags of its guidance, the descendants of the Messenger of Allah and his remnant in his nation. He, Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "Do not go ahead of them lest you should perish, nor should you lag behind them lest you should perish. Do not teach them, for they are more learned than you." But it is the dictates of politics at the dawn of Islam.

I wonder about your claim that the good previous generations adhered to those sects, finding them the most fair and the best of sects, and that they agreed to adhere to them in every time and clime. You say so as if you do not know that our predecessors, the good past generations that followed the progeny of Muhammad and that, literally, constituted half the Muslim population, followed only the faith of the Imams among the descendants of Muhammad, peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny. They did not find for it any substitute, and they have been this way ever since the days of `Ali and Fatima, when neither alAsh`ari nor any Imam of the other four sects, or even their fathers, existed, as you very well know.

3. The generations of the first three centuries, then, never followed any of those sects at all. Where were those sects during those three generations, the best generations ever? AlAsh`ari was born in 270 A.H. and died in 320 A.H. Ibn Hanbal was born in 164 A.H. and died in 241 A.H. AlShafi`i was born in 150 A.H. and died in 204 A.H. Malik was born in 95 A.H.[1] and died in 179 A.H. Abu Hanifah was born in 80 A.H. and died in 150 A.H. Shi`as follow the sect of the Imams from the Prophet's Household, and the household surely know what their house contains. NonShi`as follow the sects of the learned sahabah and tabi`in; so, what makes it "mandatory" on all Muslims, after those three centuries had gone by, to follow those sects instead of the one followed before them? What made them divert their attention from those who were peers only to the Book of Allah and its own companions, the descendants of the Messenger of Allah and his trustees, the nation's ark of salvation, the leaders, the security, and the Gate of Salvation?
4. What caused the door of ijthihad to be shut in the face of Muslims after it had been kept widely open during the first three centuries other than resorting to reluctance, comfort, laziness, the acceptance of deprivation and the satisfaction with ignorance? Who would permit himself, knowingly or unknowingly, to say that Allah, Dignity and Glory to Him, has not sent the best of His Messengers and Prophets with the best of His religions and codes, nor has He revealed unto him His best Books and Tablets, judgment and doctrines, nor has He completed His Religion for him and perfected His blessing unto him, nor has He taught him the knowledge of the past and the present, except for the sole purpose that the whole matter would end to the Imams of those sects to monopolize for their own selves? They would then forbid all others from acquiring it from any other source, as if the Islamic faith, in its Book and Sunnah, and in all other signs and testaments, a property of their own, and that they forbade faring with it in any way contrary to their own opinions... Were they the Prophets' heirs, or had Allah sealed through them the successors and Imams, or taught

them the knowledge of the past and the present, and that He bestowed upon them what He had never bestowed upon anybody else among all human beings?

No! They were just like many others, pillars and caretakers of knowledge, ministers and callers. Those who call for knowledge are far above closing its doors against others or forbidding others from reaching it. They never curb the minds, nor confine public attention only to their own selves, nor can they seal people's hearts or make others deaf, blind, dumb, handcuffed, or chained. This can never be attributed to them except as a liar's allegation, and their own statements bear witness to ours.

5. Let us now concentrate on the matter to which you attracted our attention: the unity of Muslims. What I see is that this matter does not depend on Shi`as forsaking their faith, nor the Sunnis forsaking their own. Asking Shi`as to do so without asking others (Sunnis) to do likewise is to prefer without preponderance, or even to favour the less preferable. It is demanding what is beyond one's capacity as it is known from our Introduction.

Yes. Unity and uniformity can be achieved if you release Ahl alBayt's sect and view it as you view any of your own sects so that the Shafi`is, Hanafis, Malikis and Hanbalis may consider the followers of Ahl alBayt just as they consider each other. Only then can the unity of Muslims be achieved, and they will be unified in one fold.

The difference among Sunni sects is not less than it is between the Sunni and Shi`a schools of thought as thousands of books on the principles and branches of the creed of both groups testify; therefore, why have several people among you condemned the Shi`as for differing from the Sunnis? Why have they not, by the same token, condemned the Sunnis for differing from the Shi`as, or even for differing from one another? If sects can be four, why cannot they be five? How come it is alright to have

four sects but not five? How can four sects be considered as “unifying” Muslims, and when they increase to five unity is shattered and Muslims are divided unto themselves? I wish when you invited us to “sectarian unity” you also invited the followers of the four sects to the same. The latter will be a lot easier for you and for them. But why have you singled us out for your invitation anyway? Do you find the followers of Ahl alBayt breaking the unity while the followers of others unite the hearts and determination even though their sects and minds are different, their tastes and inclinations are numerous? I think of you to be above that, knowing your love for your kinfolk, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussion

A layman's question

One of the most common points of criticism against *al-Murāja'āt* has been its portrayal of the “Shaykh al-Azhar”.¹ Throughout the book the impression is conveyed of the “Shaykh” as lacking in knowledge of elementary points in the various disciplines, as well as in the ability to research them from their standard sources. Here, at the very outset of the book, we have the first glaring example of that phenomenon.

Throughout its history as an educational institute, al-Azhar possessed large and well-stocked libraries. Many of the manuscripts its libraries once housed are still preserved in the Taybarsiyah and Aqbughāwiyah sections of the Azhar complex. Besides the Azhar libraries there were numerous other richly stocked book collections in Cairo, evidence of which can still be seen in the wealth of manuscripts preserved today in the Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah.

Yet, despite this obvious wealth of literature at his disposal, the “Shaykh al-Azhar” is constantly portrayed as an ignorant commoner who finds himself compelled to put questions to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn at a level no self-respecting scholar would stoop to, especially not one whom ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn himself describes as a man “distinguished by his vast knowledge” and who “deservedly and rightfully occupied the post of religious leadership [in Egypt]”.²

Even if we were to assume, for argument's sake, that the “Shaykh”, despite his vast knowledge on other subjects, might have been not too knowledgeable about Shī'ism—as is evident from the opening words of Letter 1—there still remains a nagging question that needs to be adequately answered. That question is: If

1 See Maḥmūd al-Zu'bī, *al-Bayyināt fī al-Radd 'alā Abāṭīl al-Murāja'āt* vol. 1 p. 14, and Dr. Nāsir al-Qafārī, *Mas'alat al-Taqrīb bayna Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Shī'ah* vol. 2 p. 215

2 *Al-Murāja'āt* p. 76 (Arabic edition)

the “Shaykh” was aware that his own knowledge in this field was deficient, why did he not take the trouble of acquainting himself with some of what has been written by the experts before him? The libraries of al-Azhar in particular, and Cairo in general, were at that time filled with scores of books that could have been of use to him. Yet not once do we find him so much as referring to any of those sources. The only source of knowledge he can ever be seen to take recourse to is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn himself.

What is even stranger is that throughout the book ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn provides innumerable references—complete with volume and page numbers—from Sunnī works. The “Shaykh”, however, is always content with what he receives from his correspondent, never daring as much as to refer to facts about Shī‘ism and its history that any serious participant in a dialogue of this nature would normally have taken the trouble of familiarising himself with.

We return to the point. In Letter 3 we have the “Shaykh” asking ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn why the Shī‘ah do not follow the same authorities whom the Sunnīs follow. To the layman this question might appear to be a very crucial one, and therefore a good one with which to start this kind of dialogue. But that is simply because **it is a layman’s question**. It is the question of a person who sees before him two groups, and wonders why the one cannot simply join the other. It is not the kind of question that would be asked by a scholar, since the scholar would know and appreciate the causes of the existing disunity. The scholar’s opening question would therefore be on a different level. The type of information sought in the “Shaykh’s” opening question is general knowledge to the adept scholar. Even if the “Shaykh” was not adept, he must have had sufficient academic integrity to research the issue he was about to debate on.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn wrote his book for the Sunnī public, and not their ‘ulamā’. It was therefore necessary that discussion in the book be kept at a level that would be both understandable and appealing to the layman. Although he used a scholar as his participant, the discussion is generally kept to the level of the layman.

Unfortunately, in trying to maintain that precarious balance, he inadvertently exposed the truth behind *al-Murāja'āt*: Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī was never involved in the evolution of this book. It came completely from the mendacious pen of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn himself.

Predestination

At the bottom of “Shaykh’s” letter a note has been inserted that does not appear in the Arabic edition. This note, which gives information about Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī and his creed, may therefore be assumed to have been inserted by the translator. There would have been nothing remarkable about it if the translator had stuck to introducing al-Ash‘arī and his creed. But his zeal overcame him and he ended up identifying the cause for the Ahl al-Sunnah’s belief in Qadar (predestination) with a desire “to justify all the evil deeds of such persons as Yazīd and others whom they regard as Khalīfahs; hence their insistence on predestination and on the possibility of Allah being unjust.”

At no place in the book is the desire of its publishers to attract Sunnīs to Shī‘ism by means of disillusioning them with their own faith as clearly or blatantly exposed as it is here. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn himself had no objective in writing the book other than that of the translator and the publishers, but shrewdness and tact made him avoid such transparent tactics by all means. The translator and/or the publishers seem not to have been gifted as the author, for in the last sentence of that footnote they have effectively undermined the claim that this book was written and published for the purpose of forging a better understanding between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah. In that single sentence the entire myth of *al-Murāja'āt* is undone, despite all the care and effort that went into its creation and presentation as a serious effort of *Taqrīb* (rapprochement) between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah.

The doctrine of Qadar is as firmly entrenched in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah as any other article of faith of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Though this would not be the proper place for going into a deeper discussion of this doctrine, we will, for the sake of

the sceptic reader, quote from the Qur'ān and ḥadīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ texts in which the foundations of Qadar are to be found.

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

*Verily, We created everything with qadar.*¹

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* we find the well-known ḥadīth in which Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, in human form, put certain questions to Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the presence of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. One of his questions was, “Tell me about īmān.” To this Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied:

That you believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and that you believe in Qadar, the good of it and the bad of it.²

The above are but two examples. Besides them there are several other verses in the Qur'ān that refer to Qadar, while the literature is replete with aḥādīth on the subject.³ One is simply at a loss to find a sensible reason why the writer of the footnote had to demean himself by stating so emphatically that the reason for the Sunnīs' insistence on belief in Qadar is their desire to justify the evil deeds of Yazīd and his ilk.

This tendency of finding an origin for the faith and practice of the Ahl as-Sunnah in the political occurrences of early Islam is quite a familiar theme in Shī'ism. In fact, according to the classical teachings of Ithnā 'Asharī Shī'ism (Twelver), the differences that exist between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah are the result of a conspiracy by the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ to corrupt and distort the teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. (More details about this tendency follow shortly under the

1 Sūrah al-Qamar:49

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (with al-Nawawī's commentary) vol. 1 p. 157

3 See for example *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras* (Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane) vol. 5 pp. 317-318, and *Miftāḥ Kunūz al-Sunnah* pp. 393-395

heading, *Sunnī-Shīʿī Differences in Fiqh*) To the one already aware of this tendency this statement by the writer of the footnote comes as no real surprise. The only surprise lies in the crass manner in which it was made to surface here. With an attitude like that—of accusing the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم and the Tābiʿīn of wilful corruption and innovation in Dīn—persisting amongst contemporary Shīʿah, and particularly those of them who pride themselves on working towards unity with the Ahl as-Sunnah, one is left to wonder about their true intentions. Furthermore, the display of such an attitude strengthens the conviction that more than the Ahl as-Sunnah, it is the Shīʿah who need to learn the true meaning of the “tolerance” and “mutual respect” which they often accuse Sunnīs of lacking.

It also needs to be stated here, before continuing with the next point, that the writer of the footnote has clearly displayed his ignorance of his own faith. Qadar, as the Ahl al-Sunnah believe in it, is not unique to them. The early writers of the Shīʿah were all firm believers in Qadar.¹ Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 A.H), the author of one of the four major Shīʿī ḥadīth collections, and also the author of a famous tract on Shīʿī belief, affirmed the belief in Qadar. It was the injection of Muʿtazilite rationalism into Twelver Shīʿism by his student al-Mufīd (died 413 A.H) that led to a change in Shīʿī belief. In his recension of his mentor’s aforementioned work on dogma, al-Mufīd practically rejected this belief, and Shīʿī scholarship after him have generally followed his lead. However, several of their ‘ulamā’ have reverted to the original position on Qadar, influenced by the large number of narrations from their Imāms contained in their canonical collections, all of which point to a belief in Qadar on exactly the same lines as the Ahl al-Sunnah. An example would be Shaykh Muhammad Riḍā al-Muzaffar, whose booklet entitled, *The Faith of Shi’a Islam*, is very popular and widely distributed. Under the heading “Doctrine of al-Qaḍā (Predetermination) and al-Qadar (Divine Decree)” he first states the belief of the Mujabbirah, who maintain that Allah is entirely responsible for the action of his creatures, and that mankind has no free will, and then of the Mufawwiḍah, who believe in free will. Then he states the belief of the Shīʿah as follows:

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 2 p. 92, cited in al-Qaffārī, *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shīʿah al-Imāmiyyah al-Ithnā ʿAshariyyah* p. 638

Now our belief in this matter follows the teachings of our Imams, that the reality is between these two extremes, a middle way between the two opinions, something which cannot be understood by these disputants in theology (Ahl al-Kalām) who have gone some to one extreme, some to the other... Imam Ṣādiq عليه السلام truly said in clarifying the middle way that “There is no compulsion (jabr) from Allah, nor is there any absolute delegation of power (tafwīḍ) (from Allah to man), but the real position is between the two extremes.” What marvellous significance lies in this saying, and how exact is its meaning! It points out that our actions are, from one angle, really our own actions, and we are the natural cause so that they are all under our control and subject to our free choice; and from another angle they are decreed by Allah and are subject to His Power, because it is He who gives existence. He does not compel us in our actions in such a way that He wrongs us by punishing us for our evil deeds, for we have the power and the choice in what we do. But He has not delegated to us the creation of our actions so that they come beyond His Power, for to Him belongs Creation, Judgement, and Command. He is Powerful over all things and He has complete authority over all things.¹

The above expression of Qadar by a contemporary and popular Shīṭī scholar is an exact reflection of the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah as well. To understand just how absurd the contention of the writer of the footnote is, one merely has to imagine the possibility of this Shīṭī author believing in Qadar out of a desire to “justify the evil deeds of Yazīd and other khulafā”.

The faith of the Ahl al-Bayt

The issue of predestination is not the only place where the author/translator/publisher has allowed the true purpose behind *al-Murāja'āt* to become visible to the careful reader. The manner in which the “faith of the Ahl al-Bayt” is dealt with makes it clear that the book was not written for the sake of rapprochement, but rather for proselytization. This comes through very clearly in the first of the

1 Al-Muzāffar, *The Faith of Shi'a Islam* p. 12 (Ansariyan, Qum) The discussion on Shīṭī belief in Qadar is owed to Dr. Nāṣir al-Qaffārī in his aforementioned work.

headings which sum up the content of Letter 4, where the author states that “theological proofs make it incumbent upon *everybody* to follow the Ahl al-Bayt”.

The existence of difference between the Shī‘ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah is a centuries old phenomenon. During the times when colonial powers were occupying Muslim countries, concerned persons from both groups expressed the hope that Sunnī-Shī‘ī unity might be a step towards the solidarity needed for throwing off the yoke of imperialism. From the Sunnī side the concern was earnest. There is very little evidence, if any, of Sunnīs taking advantage of concern for Muslim unity amongst the Shī‘ah by attempting to convert them. On the Shī‘ī side the opposite was the case. In Iraq, for example, while others were preoccupied with European hegemony, Shī‘ī preachers were industriously converting entire tribes of nominal Sunnīs to Shī‘ism.¹

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn al-Mūsawī was one of those persons who were ostensibly preoccupied with the idea of Sunnī-Shī‘ī unity. However, instead of any sincere effort, all his efforts in this field bear the distinct traces of proselytization. In his book *Abū Hurayrah* he blatantly slanders the character of that Ṣaḥābī with the ill-concealed motive of undermining the ḥadīth legacy of the Ahl al-Sunnah. In the present book, *al-Murāja‘āt*, he presents a set of fictitious correspondences between himself and the “Shaykh al-Azhar” with the clearly articulated purpose of converting the Ahl al-Sunnah. Yet he is persistently portrayed as a leading figure in the movement towards Taqrīb, and his book is still regarded as a milestone in that field. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn may be regarded as a true champion of Sunnī-Shī‘ī rapprochement only if the true meaning of this rapprochement is the conversion of the Ahl al-Sunnah to Shī‘ism.

Attitudes amongst the Shī‘ah do not seem to have changed much. In the present political climate, with the Muslim world pitted against the superpowers, the propagators of Shī‘ism were once again quick to take advantage of Sunnī

1 See Dr. ‘Abd Allāh al-Gharīb, *Wa Jā‘a Dawr al-Majūs*, p. 318

fascination with the Iranian revolution to start proselytizing amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah.

But let us return to the point. This entire book by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is an attempt to prove the position of the Ahl al-Bayt as the sole authorities in religion after Rasūlullāh ﷺ. He makes that very clear right from the beginning. The preceding paragraphs are not precisely a response to that claim. They are neither an attempt to draw the reader’s attention away from the issue. In them we have merely attempted to put the book *al-Murāja‘āt* into its proper perspective.

As for the suggestion that unity will be achieved by the Ahl al-Sunnah agreeing to follow the Ahl al-Bayt, the question that arises here is this: Is the faith and practice of the *Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah* really that of the Ahl al-Bayt? To the uninformed, this question might seem to be just another case of hair-splitting to avoid the issue. However, when one studies *Ithnā ‘Asharī* Shī‘ism from within its classical legacy, and not just from the writings of its modern proponents and apologists, one is increasingly seized by the conviction that the legacy they ascribe to the Ahl al-Bayt—or at least those members of the Ahl al-Bayt whom they take as their Imāms—that this legacy could never have derived from those noble, pious, and learned personalities. The hypocrisy of Taqīyyah clashes too blatantly with their courageousness. The bitter acrimony against the Ṣaḥābah collides with their known reverence for them; Sayyidunā ‘Alī, for example, named three of his children Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān.¹ The doctrine of *Tahrīf al-Qur’ān*, so widespread in the writings of the ‘ulamā’ of the Shī‘ah and in the narrations which they ascribe to their Imāms, violently assaults the very foundations of Islam. These are but a few examples amongst a multitude of others, for refusing to acknowledge that the faith and practice of the *Ithnā ‘Asharī Shī‘ah* derives from the Ahl al-Bayt.

We have seen in the case of Qadar how Mu‘tazilism came to influence Shī‘ism. That was not a solitary example. The influence of Mu‘tazilism on *Ithnā ‘Asharī Shī‘ism*,

1 See al-Mufīd, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, pp. 269-269 (Ansariyan Publications, Qum)

and the role played in this regard by al-Mufīd, is vast enough to constitute an independent area of study. In the ḥadīth literature which the Shī'ah ascribe to their Imāms too, there are enough discrepancies and irregularities upon which to base the contention that this legacy was more likely the creation of the Shī'ah themselves than of the Imāms. This too, is an area of investigation that requires individual attention and effort, and for which a few paragraphs or pages will not suffice.

In short, what we are saying is that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's claim that the problem of disunity will be solved by the Ahl al-Sunnah agreeing to follow the Ahl al-Bayt, falls flat when we consider that there is no way we can ever consider the beliefs and practices of the Shī'ah to be the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Sunnī-Shī'ī Differences in Fiqh¹

It is often alleged by the protagonists of Sunnī-Shī'ī unity—like 'Abd al-Ḥusayn here—that differences between the two sects are not more grave or serious than the differences that exist within the four Sunnī schools of jurisprudence. They therefore demand that Sunnī-Shī'ī differences be treated with the same tolerance and acceptance as Ḥanafī-Shāfi'ī differences, and it is in the spirit of this proposed “mutual tolerance” that the advocates of unity speak of the Shī'ī Ja'farī school of jurisprudence as nothing more than a “fifth madhhab”.

It is therefore only normal for the average Sunnī lay person who has come into contact with advocates of Sunnī-Shī'ī unity to wonder about, or even be taken in, by such a claim. How serious are the differences between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah really? Could they ever be reconciled? If not, could there at least be an amicable agreement to disagree, just like the Ḥanafīs disagree with the Shāfi'īs, or the Mālikīs with the Ḥanbalīs? It is these questions that this article sets out to answer.

1 The material under this caption appeared as an independent article which was published in *Al-Istiqāmah* vol. 1 no. 2 (April 1997) under the title *The Roots of Sunnī-Shī'ī Differences in Fiqh*. I have slightly adapted it to be included here.

Full reconciliation between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Ithnā ‘Asharī Ja’farī Shī‘ah is not merely elusive, it is simply an impossibility. Anyone who knows the reality of the issues that separate the Shi‘ah from the Ahl al-Sunnah is bound to agree. Nothing sums up the truth of the situation better than the words of Hamid Algar, who describes Sunnism and Shī‘ism as “two parallel lines that cannot meet”. The endeavour to bring about reconciliation between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah is therefore a wasted effort. The next best option is thus mutual tolerance and acceptance.

In order to test the viability of tolerance and acceptance between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah we will have to look more closely at the issues that separate the one from the other. These issues can be categorised into two groups:

1. **Fundamental differences**, which include articles of faith, and all such issues that could be termed “differences in principle”, that by their nature give rise to differences in secondary matters;
2. **Secondary differences**, i.e. difference in matters of jurisprudence, like the way ṣalāh is performed, or that marriage and divorce take place, etc.

Each of the fundamental issues of difference would require a separate study to see how they affect compatibility between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah. Here it is our intention to look more closely at the type of difference that is usually dismissed as “secondary”, and thus “unimportant”. Are differences in fiqh between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah really so insignificant that we can justifiably turn a blind eye when we encounter them?

There can be no doubt that this question is anathema to the propagators of Shī‘ism amongst the Ahl al-Sunnah, as well as to those who have fallen prey to their propaganda. Yet, if it is truth we seek, we cannot allow the preferences of such obviously biased persons to deter us. The “unity” such people strive to achieve, and which they accuse others of trying to destroy, is a unity forged in ignorance. How much do we really know about the Shī‘ah? Does our knowledge of the Shī‘ah

and Shī'ism qualify us to make the judgement that the differences which exist between ourselves and them are negligible and that they may be ignored for the sake of unity? We have taken them on face value, and on grounds of what we have thus learnt about them we proceed to create unity. The naivety of such a position in a matter of far reaching religious implications is far too obvious. A unity founded upon ignorance is a very precarious unity indeed. Like a mirage, it seems very real when seen from afar, but as soon as you attempt to approach it, it slips out of existence.

There are two levels at which one can look at the differences in jurisprudence between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah. The first is the level of external appearance. When the differences in Fiqh are inspected at this level they do not seem any more alien than the differences that exist between the various schools of Sunnī jurisprudence. In fact, in many, or even most cases one will find the Shī'ī position to be conformity with at least one of the four Sunnī madhāhib. This is illustrated in the following three examples:

1. In the ṣalāh, the *jalsat al-istirāḥah* is held to be sunnah by the Shī'ah. In this they concur with the view of the Shāfi'ī madhhab.
2. In marriage the majority of Shī'ī jurists hold the view that *khalwah*, i.e. valid seclusion, has no effect on the *mahr* (dowry) nor upon any other aspect of the marital contract. In this they are once again agreement with the Shāfi'īs, but differ from the other three schools.
3. If the husband is unable to pay the mahr, the wife is not entitled to divorce according to the Shī'ī and the Ḥanafī schools. The Mālikīs, the Shāfi'īs, and the Ḥanbalīs all have different views.

It is at this level that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn wishes us to look at the differences, because when we look at it on this level we would probably agree with him that we should "look upon the Shī'īs in the same way as [we] regard the Ḥanafīs, the Shāfi'īs, the Mālikīs, and the Hanbalīs"; and that by us doing so "the unity of Islam will be achieved and discord healed". Even certain 'ulama' of the Ahl al-Sunnah,

looking at the matter on this level, have been known to express the view that “differences between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī’ah are no more serious than the differences that exist between the various schools of Sunnī jurisprudence”.

However, when we confine ourselves to viewing the problem of Sunnī-Shī’ī differences on this level we are in effect closing our eyes to the most important aspect of those differences: **the root**. The true nature of Sunnī-Shī’ī differences can never be appreciated or understood in full without comprehending the reasons for their existence. It is only when the problem has been viewed and grasped on the level of the **reasons for difference**, and not merely the **external appearance of difference**, that one is justified to take further steps.

When the Shī’ah differ from the Ahl al-Sunnah, it is not the same as when one Sunnī school differs from the other. This is because the various Sunnī schools all trace their roots back to the same legacy. They share a common heritage in the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. When differences do occur, they occur not because one madhhab bases itself on a legacy other than the legacy of the other. Both believe in and hold on to the same legacy. Their differences are caused by secondary factors, like whether certain categories of ḥadīth possess binding authority or not, or the divergence in the methods they regard as valid to interpret the legacy and extrapolate from it. The following two examples illustrate how such differences occur:

1. The *mursal ḥadīth* (a ḥadīth with an interruption in its chain of narrators between the Prophet ﷺ and the Tābi’ī), for example, is deemed to possess binding authority by the Ḥanafīs, while the Shāfi’īs do not accept it, except when it is supported by any one of a number of external factors. If we imagine a *mursal ḥadīth* that is not supported by any of the factors the Shāfi’īs stipulate, it is only logical to expect that the Shāfi’ī ruling on the issue the ḥadīth pertains to will differ from the Ḥanafī ruling.
2. Spoken words are sometimes accompanied by implied meanings. For example, when it is said, “Stay awake”, this also means “Don’t sleep”. This

unspoken opposite meaning is termed *mafhūm al-mukhālafah*. The Shāfi‘īs accept it as a valid means of extracting meaning from a text, while the Ḥanafīs do not. If the former extract such meaning from a text and base a ruling upon the meaning inferred by this method, and the latter base their ruling upon some other grounds, there is bound to be a measure of difference in the outcome of their respective views.

Sunnī-Shī‘ī differences, on the other hand, are fundamentally distinct from inter-Sunnī differences. While it may rightly be claimed that the Shī‘ah, too, have their particular principles of extrapolation, it would be incorrect to describe those principles as the root cause of difference between them and the Ahl al-Sunnah, the reason for that being that while the Sunnī schools each have methods of extrapolation particular to themselves, **they all apply their respective methods to the same legacy**. The Shī‘ah, on the other hand, have not only their own set of principles, but also a legacy distinct from the legacy of the Ahl al-Sunnah. When there are differences between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah, they arise not on account of differences in interpretation or methods of extrapolation, but because **the source from which the Shī‘ah draw their law is a source other than the source of the Ahl al-Sunnah**.

What is this “legacy”, the reader may well ask. It is embodied in the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. As far as the Qur’ān is concerned, although history is witness to a lot of Shī‘ite calumny against the inviolability of the Qur’ān, most contemporary Shī‘ī scholars, and even many of their classical ‘ulamā’ who staunchly believe in its interpolation, will admit the Qur’ān’s status as the prime source of legislation.¹ Since the Qur’ān is thus “agreed upon” between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī‘ah, there remains only the other part of the legacy we inherited from the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ: the Sunnah.

1 A Shī‘ī scholar of the present century, Sayyid Ṭayyib al-Mūsawī, reconciles belief in the interpolation of the Qur’ān with acceptance of the Qur’ān as a source of legislation by contending that “interpolation occurred specifically in those verses relating to *Imāmah*.” Verses with a legal purport were thus left uncorrupted. See his introduction to *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, published by Kitāb farosh-e ‘Allāmeḥ, Qum 1968.

Essentially, the difference lies in the concepts each have of what constitutes the Sunnah. According to the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Sunnah is everything narrated from the Prophet ﷺ, as long as the transmitters are trustworthy. The Shī'ah, on the other hand, will only accept as the Sunnah that which is transmitted by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه and the rest of the Twelve Imams, and that which is narrated from these Imāms by their Shī'ah followers. Leave aside what is narrated by the rest of the Ṣaḥābah, not even the narrations of other members of the household of the Prophet ﷺ—like his daughters other Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها, his wives, his cousins or uncles—are considered part of the Sunnah by the Shī'ah. That is the first observation.

The second is the way in which the Shī'ah look upon the legacy upon which the foundations of Sunnī fiqh rests. Since the days of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ was handed down by one generation to the next. The Ṣaḥābah narrated it to the Ṭābi'īn, they to the generation after them, and so on, until it came to be compiled in what we know today as the ḥadīth literature. To the Shī'ah, when this legacy is found to be in contradiction to what is supposedly narrated from their Imāms, the reason behind it is that **the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم were guilty of wilfully distorting and corrupting the Dīn of Muhammad ﷺ**. Thus, where inter-Sunnī differences amount to nothing more than technicalities, Sunnī-Shī'ī differences are differences in historical perspective.

To use an example: In ṣalāh, the Mālikīs let their hands hang by their sides, while the Ḥanafīs, Shāfi'īs, and Ḥanbalīs fold their hands. The Shī'ah too, let their hands hang by their sides. In this single issue of fiqh we thus have an inter-Sunnī difference as well as a Sunnī-Shī'ī difference. Between the Mālikīs and the other three madhāhib the difference is a mere technicality. The Mālikīs accept the validity of folding the hands in ṣalāh (after all, Imām Mālik himself in the *Muwatta'* narrates a ḥadīth that supports the folding of the hands), but prefer letting the hands hang for the reason that in Imām Mālik's day this was the practice of the community in Madīnah. The other madhāhib take into consideration that the Companions of the Nabī رضي الله عنهم who narrate his Sunnah were not exclusively

settled in Madīnah. Many of them resided in the Makkah, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Aḥādīth to the effect that it is Sunnah to fold the hands have been authentically narrated from a number of Ṣaḥābah (amongst whom is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه), therefore this, and not the practice of the people of one particular city, takes precedence. Between the Sunnī schools this difference is a mere technical one—one that amounts to giving preference to one view over another. But between the Shī‘ah and the Ahl al-Sunnah the issue assumes much more serious proportions. From a question of mere technical preference it turns into an acrimonious indictment of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم. Traditions in the book *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*—one of the four major collections of Shī‘ī ḥadīth—describe the folding of the hands in ṣalāh as “an act of *takfīr* (un-Islamic gesture of obeisance)” that is “only done by the fire-worshippers”.¹

Here one would have to ask: How could an alien practice like this have crept into Islam? We will take the answer from another Shī‘ī scholar who, like ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, was an ardent advocate of Sunnī-Shī‘ī unity Āyatullāh Rūḥullāh al-Khumaynī. In his treatise *Al-Ta‘ādul wa al-Tarjīḥ* he quotes the following tradition from the book ‘*Ilal al-Sharā‘i*’ by Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī:

Abū Ishāq al-Arjānī says—Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq) asked, “Do you know why you are commanded to act contrary to the ‘Āmmah (the Ahl al-Sunnah)?”

I replied, “I do not know.”

He said, “Verily, the Ummah contradicted ‘Alī in each and every aspect of his religion, intending thereby to destroy his cause. They used to ask him about things they did not know, and when he gave a ruling they would invent an opposite verdict from their own side to mislead the people.”²

1 *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2 p. 84

2 *Al-Ta‘ādul wa al-Tarjīḥ* by Ayatollah al-Khumaynī, p. 82, cited in Dr. Zayd al-‘Is: *al-Khumaynī wa al-Wajh al-Ākhar* p. 131

In the Shīṭ perspective of the history of Islamic jurisprudence the fact that the Ṣaḥābah deliberately corrupted and distorted the teachings of the Nabī ﷺ is such a fundamental truth, that it came to be looked upon as a criterion of truth in itself. This position is reflected in the way they deal with the phenomenon of Shīṭ narrations that contradict one another. Abū Ja'far al-Kulaynī, in the introduction to *al-Kāfī*, the most important of their four canonical ḥadīth collections, expresses it in the following terms:

Know... that no one can distinguish narrations of the Possessors of Knowledge (the Imāms) by his opinion; except in accordance with the words of the Possessor of Knowledge: “Compare it to the Qur’ān. Accept that which is in accordance with it, and reject that which contradicts it,” and his words: “Abandon that which is in accordance with the people (the Ahl as-Sunnah), for truly, guidance lies in being different to them”.¹

This particular perspective has persisted in the Shīṭ psyche over the centuries since al-Kulaynī and his teacher al-Qummī, until it became, in the opinion of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, al-Khumaynī, and all other Shīṭ jurists; one of the two principal methods of juridical preference in cases of conflicting narrations. In light of the alarming frequency with which contradictions occur in the aḥādīth of the Shī’ah (one of their four major ḥadīth sources, *al-Istibṣār*, is devoted to the phenomenon of contradiction) the importance of a principle of this nature is evident. We reproduce here from al-Khumaynī’s works various Shīṭ narrations in which he and other Shīṭ mujtahids find justification for their view:

1. Ḥasan ibn Abī al-Jahm asked, “If something is narrated from Abū ‘Abd Allāh (Imām Ja’far), and something contrary to it is also narrated from him, which should we accept?”

The Imām answered, “Accept that which is in contradiction to the people, and avoid that which is accordance with them.”²

1 *Al-Kāfī* vol. 1 pp. 55-56 (Dār al-Aḍwā’, Beirut 1992)

2 *Al-Ta’ādul wa al-Tarjīḥ* p.80

2. Abū ‘Abd Allāh said, “Our Shī‘ah are those who submit to our command, who accept our words, and who act contrary to our enemies. Whoever is not like that is not of us.”¹
3. ‘Alī ibn Asbāt narrates that he asked Imām al-Riḍā, “(What should I do in case) an incident occurs for which I am need of a legal opinion, but nowhere in the city do I find anyone of your partisans (the Shī‘ah) whom I can ask?”

He replied, “Go to the (Sunnī) faqīh of the city and refer your case to him. Then take the opposite of whatever answer he gives you, for verily, therein lies the truth.”²

It is on account of these and other similar narrations which the Shī‘ah claim to emanate from their infallible Imāms that the mujtahids of the Ja‘farī madhhab were led to formulate the principle which al-Khumaynī expresses in these terms:

In cases of conflicting reports, contradiction of the Ahl al-Sunnah is a factor of preference... In fact, it is the most common and widespread factor of preference in all chapters of Fiqh and upon the tongues of the Fuqahā’.

There is no ambiguity with regard to the issue of contradicting the Ahl al-Sunnah being a factor of preference in the case of conflicting narrations.³

The factors of *tarjih* (preference) are limited to two: (1) Conforming to the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, and (2) Contradicting the Ahl al-Sunnah.⁴

All of these quotations show a definite obsession with being different from the Ahl al-Sunnah. We therefore ask: If so much importance is attached to being different, to the point of it being regarded as the criterion of truth, why should

1 *Tahrīr al-Wasīlah* p. 83, from *al-Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah* by al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī p. 225

2 *Al-Ta‘ādul wa al-Tarjih* p.82, from *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā* by Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, vol. 1 p. 275

3 *Al-Ta‘ādul wa al-Tarjih* p. 83

4 *ibid.* p. 84

there be such a noise and clamour for unity? Why should the Shī'ah seek unity with people whose version of Islam they regard as the corruption of the Dīn of Muhammad ﷺ wrought by the hands of his Companions? And even if the Shī'ah do manage to create a semblance of such unity, how much goodwill and sincerity can be expected of them if one considers their particular perspective of the legacy which forms the basis of our faith and practice?

We have chosen al-Khumaynī's views as representative of Shī'ī opinion for a very special reason, and that is the fact that in the contemporary world it has been he and his successors who are the most vociferous proponents of Sunnī-Shī'ī unity, and who dismiss Sunnī-Shī'ī differences as negligible. In more than one of his public addresses he has taken to task those who attempt to create mischief amongst the Muslims by "misleading" them into believing that there are substantial differences between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah. However, closer scrutiny of his jurisprudential works reveal that such condemnations are nothing but political rhetoric. When we remove the image he projects as Leader of the Revolution, we are left with merely another Shī'ī scholar imprisoned by the fundamentals of his faith. In his eyes, and likewise in the eyes of generations of Shī'ī scholars before him, the legacy of the Sunnah upon which their Sunnī "brothers" base their practice of Islam is the product of the envious mischief and the disbelief of the Ṣaḥābah, who in the hope of destroying the cause of the Ahl al-Bayt distorted every teaching of the Nabī ﷺ they could lay their hands upon. If this is how they regard the very basis upon which the foundations of our Dīn rests, what remains to be said for unity?

It is true that we have quoted from the works of al-Khumaynī, and not those of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn. However, that does not constitute a problem at all, since what al-Khumaynī expressed were not merely his own personal opinions. The quotations adduced here are part of the very same legacy which 'Abd al-Ḥusayn buys into, and when al-Khumaynī declared it a criterion of truth to contradict the Ahl al-Sunnah, he was not speaking for himself. He explicitly ascribes it to the 'ulamā' of the Shī'ah—one of whom, we must remember, was 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn.

Letter 5

Thul-Qi'da 9, 1329 A.H

I. Admitting Our Argument

II. Asking for Detailed Proofs

1. Your letter has been quite clear, very well arranged, praiseworthy. It is eloquent, powerful in determination, and strong in argument. It spares no attempt to prove that it is not compulsory to follow the majority's sects in the principles and branches of religion, saving no effort to confirm that the doors of ijtiḥād must remain open.

Your letter, therefore, is strong in both matters, correct in proving each one of them, and we do not deny your careful research in their respect, your clarification of their obscurities, although we really were not acquainted with them, and our view in their regard is identical to yours.

2. We had asked you about your reason for not accepting the sects followed by the Muslim majority, and your answer was that because of "judicial proofs," whereas you were expected to explain that in detail.

Could you please yield now to explaining them with positive proofs from the Book (Qur'an) or the Sunnah which, as you mentioned, divert the believer from following his own inclinations?

Thank you, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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Letter 6

Thul-Qi'da 12, 1329 A.H.

I. References to Proofs Mandating Following the 'Itra

II. The Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام Invites to Ahl Al-Bayt's Sect

III. Relevant Statement of Imam Zainul 'Abidin

You, thanks to Allah, can be convinced by a mere hint, without the need for an explanation, and you are above doubting the very fact that the purified offspring ('itra) are superior to all others. Their case is quite clear: they have surpassed those with qualifications and have distinguished themselves from seemingly equal peers. They have carried from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, the knowledge of the prophets, and from him have they digested secular and religious jurisdictions.

1. The Prophet, hence, has made them equal only to the Glorious Book and set them models of conduct for those endowed with reason, and the ark of safety when hypocrisy with its tumultuous waves overwhelms the security of the nation, safeguarding it against dissension if the tempests of division rage, the Gate of Salvation: whoever enters it is forgiven, and the strong Rope of Allah which is unbreakable.
2. The Commander of the Faithful is quoted in sermon 86 in Nahjul Balagha as saying:

“‘Where are you heading (Qur’an, 81:26),’and ‘where are you straying (Qur’an, 6:95, 10:34, 35:3, 40:62),’ since the flags are poised up high, the Signs are clear, and the lighthouse is erected? So, where are you straying? Nay! How can you be blindfolded while you have among you the household ('itra) of your Prophet?

They are the reins of righteousness, the religion's flags, and the tongues of truth; therefore, accord them as you accord the Qur'an and approach them as thirsty camels approach the water. O people! Take this 1 from the last of the Prophets, Allah's peace be upon him and his progeny: 'whoever among us passes away, he is not really dead, and whoever disintegrates (after dying) from among us does not really disintegrate; therefore, do not say what you do not know, for there is the greatest truth in what you deny.

Accept the argument of one against whom you have no argument and it is: 'Have I not dealt with you according to the Greatest Weight² (Qur'an)? Have I not left among you the Lesser Weight (Ahl Al-Bayt) and laid firm among you the flags of faith?'"

He, peace be upon him, said, in sermon 96 of Nahjul Balagha, "Behold the Household of your Prophet; emulate their example and follow in their footsteps, for they shall never take you out of guidance, nor shall they ever bring you back into destruction; halt when they halt, and rise when they rise, and do not go ahead of them lest you should stray, nor should you lag behind them lest you should perish."

He, peace be upon him, has mentioned them once, as stated in sermon 237 of Nahjul-Balaghah, saying: "They are the life of knowledge and the death of ignorance; their forbearance informs you of their knowledge, and their outward appearance informs you of their conscience. Their silence indicates the wisdom of their speech. They neither differ from truth, nor do they differ among themselves about it. They are the pillars of Islam and the gateways to salvation. Through them, justice was achieved and wrongdoing was removed, and its tongue was uprooted. They comprehended the creed with care and concern, not like hearing and reporting, for the 'reporters' of knowledge are many indeed, but those who safeguard it are few."

He, peace be upon him, as stated in sermon 153 in Nahjul-Balaghah, has also said, "His offspring ('itra) is the best, and his family is the best. His

tree is the best of trees: it was planted in the sacred place (Haram), and it grew like a vine; it has long branches and its fruit is not unattainable.”

He, peace be upon him, is quoted in sermon 153 of Nahjul-Balaghah saying: “We are the banner, the companions, the trustees and the gates. Houses are not supposed to be approached except through their gates: whoever approaches them otherwise is called a thief,” until he said, describing the purified offspring (‘itra), “They are the vital portions of the Qur’an, and they are the treasures of the Merciful. They tell the truth when they speak, or when they remain silent; none can speak ahead of them. Therefore, let the forerunner speak the truth to his people, maintaining his reason.”

He has said in sermon 146 of Nahjul-Balaghah: “You should know that you will never know guidance unless you know who abandons it, nor will you abide by the Book (Qur’an) unless you know who contradicts it, and you will never uphold it unless you know who has discarded it; so, seek that from those who possess it, for they are the life of knowledge and the death of ignorance. They are the ones whose judgment informs you of their knowledge, their silence of their power of speech, their outer appearance of their inner selves; they neither violate the religion, nor do they differ among themselves about it, while it is among them a truthful witness and a silent speaker.”

There are many similarly impressive statements of his, peace be upon him, in this regard. Consider this one which is excerpted from sermon 4 in Nahjul-Balaghah: “Through us you received guidance in the darkness, ascending the zenith of nobility, and through us you reached the light and dissipated the gloomy night. May the ears that do not listen to the summoned be deafened.”³

He is quoted in sermon 104 of Nahjul-Balaghah saying: “O people! Secure your light from the flame of the lamps of a preacher who follows what he preaches, and drink from a spring cleansed from impurity.”

He has also said the following in sermon 108: “We are the tree of Prophethood, the place of the Message, the ones to whom the angels make a pilgrimage, the treasures of knowledge, the springs of wisdom. Our supporter and lover awaits the mercy, while our enemy or antagonist us awaits the wrath.”⁴

Among what he has said in this regard is sermon 143 of Nahjul-Balaghah wherein he says: “Where are those who claimed to be deeply versed in knowledge other than our own selves?⁵ It is a lie and a transgression against us, for Allah has raised us high while putting them down; He bestowed upon us while depriving them, and He permitted us to enter (in the fortress of knowledge) while turning them out. Through us, guidance is achieved and blindness is removed. Surely the Imams from Quraysh have been planted in Hashim’s loins. Imamate can never fit anyone else, nor can government either.”

Then he stated: “But they preferred a speedy gain to a later one, forsaking a pure well to drink from an impure one,” up to the end of his statement. He has also said at the conclusion of khutba (sermon) 189 of Nahjul-Balaghah: “Whoever among you dies on his bed knowing the rights of his Lord and knowing the rights of His Messenger and his family (Ahl Al-Bayt) dies as a martyr, and his reward will be incumbent upon Allah, and he deserves the reward of what good deeds he has intended to do: his own intention will make up for his use of his sword (in jihad).”

Also, he, peace be upon him, has said: “We are the virtuous; our descendants are the descendants of Prophets; our party is the party of Allah, the Sublime, the Glorified, while the transgressing party is the devil’s; whoever equates us with our enemy is certainly not of us.”⁶

Imam al Mujtaba Abu Muhammad al Hasan, the patient, master of the youths of Paradise عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, has said the following in one of his sermons: “Fear Allah regarding us, for we are your rulers.”⁷

3. Whenever Imam Abu Muhammad, 'Ali son of al-Husayn Zainul 'Abidin, master of those who prostrate in prayer, used to recite this verse of the Almighty: "O ye who believe! Fear Allah and be with the Truthful," he would make a lengthy invocation to Allah containing his plea to be included among "the Truthful" to attain the high ranks. He would then count the calamities and innovations of the group that split from the Imams of Faith and the Tree of Prophethood. Then he would say: "Some people went as far as underestimating us, making excuses for the Qur'anic verses which seem to them to be alike, giving their own interpretation thereof, and casting doubts about the transmitted narrations in our honour," until he would say: "With whom shall people in this nation seek refuge, since the pillars of this creed have been forgotten and the nation has divided upon itself with dissension, each party accusing the other of kufr, while Allah says: 'Do not be like those who became divided and disagreed (with each other) even after receiving the Clear Evidences (Qur'an, 3:104)?"

Who can be trusted to convey the Divine proofs and interpret the Judgment other than the peers of the Qur'an and the descendants of the Imams of Guidance, the lamps amidst the darkness, those whom Allah made as His Arguments against His servants? He has never left His creation alone without a Proof. Do you know them or find them except from the branches of the Blessed Tree, the remnant of the Elite from whom Allah has removed all impurity, purifying them with a perfect purification, clearing them from sinning and decreeing their love in His Book?"

That was his own speech, peace be upon him, verbatim.⁸ Look into it and into our quotations from the speech of the Commander of the Faithful; you will find them both representing the Shi'a School of Muslim Thought in this regard very clearly. Consider this much of their speech as a specimen for all such speeches of the Imams from Ahl al-Bayt. They all are unanimous in this respect, and our sahih books quoting them are mutawatir (consecutively reported), and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
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Footnotes

1. He means to say: “Learn this from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny: ‘When a member of the Prophet’s Household dies, he in reality does not die,” that is, his soul remains shining in the real world. This is also stated by Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abdoh and others.
2. The Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام acted upon the Greater Weighty Thing, namely the Holy Qur’an, leaving the Lesser Weighty Things, i.e. both his sons, behind. It is also said that his progeny are the models of conduct for others, as stated by Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abdoh and other commentators of Nahjul Balaghah.
3. In his commentary, Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abdoh says: “The ‘sarar,’ pronounced like ‘sahab’ and ‘kitab,’ is the last night of the lunar month during which the moon disappears. The meaning would be: ‘You entered into the dawn,’ meaning ‘You used to live in utter darkness, the darkness of polytheism and misguidance, till you emerged into the light through our guidance and instruction,’ a reference to Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, and his cousin Imam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, the one who supported his mission.
4. See the conclusion of sermon 105, page 214, Vol. 1, of Nahjul Balaghah. Ibn ‘Abbas has said: “We are members of the Prophet’s Household whose homes are the visiting places of the angels, the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, and members of the household of mercy and knowledge.” He is quoted saying so by a group of most reliable Sunni traditionists and as stated at the conclusion of his chapter on the characteristics of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام, on page 142 of Ibn Hajar’s Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa.

5. See also Qur'an, 3:7 and 4:162
6. This statement is quoted by many authors, including Ibn Hajar at the conclusion of his chapter on the characteristics of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام near the conclusion of page 142 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa where he makes quite a few lies about them, being grossly unfair to them.
7. Refer to it at the conclusion of his chapter on the will of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in their regard on page 137 of Ibn Hajar's Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
8. Refer to it on page 90 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa where Ibn Hajar explains the meaning of the fifth verse: "And uphold Allah's rope all of you together" as one of many others which he explains in Section 1, Chapter 11.

Discussion

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn’s meagre offering does nothing to whet the appetite of a novice student of the Islamic disciplines, never mind satiate the cravings of the inquiring mind of a scholar who is Shaykh al-Azhar. The previous discussion in this series has sufficiently proven the alleged exchange between ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn and Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī is nothing more than fiction. To labour this point would be counterproductive, though it is perhaps worth pointing out another angle at this moment.

Challenges of post-humous correspondence

Why would ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s portrayal of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī paint such a dismal picture of him? ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s self-aggrandizement and verbose flattery appear to be cunning strategies which serve the purpose of creating an impression of academic rigour in the mind of the unsuspecting reader.

The problem with post-humous correspondence is that it inevitably opens itself up to internal inconsistencies. There is no dispute in the fact that Ijtihād is of no consequence in the face of unequivocal text. This is because Ijtihād of this nature is as good as exercising Ijtihād in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ without referring the matter to him. The appointment of Imāms in the Shī‘ī tradition is considered a divine duty. The status of an Imām, if not superior to that of the Prophets, is certainly not inferior to it based on Shī‘ī sources. This leads us to the question; what role does Ijtihād play in the presence of the Imāms? Surely, a scholar of the calibre of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī would have recognised the inconsistency in arguing for the continuity of Ijtihād whilst proving the necessity of following a single Imām whose obedience is divinely mandated.

Superiority

The sweeping claim that the individual members of the Prophet’s ﷺ blessed family are superior to all requires qualification as well as substantiation. If it is

understood in terms of excellence of lineage there is no issue with that. However, if it is meant in the sense of excellence in faith and excellence in righteousness, it requires evidence.

Those who lived with the Prophet ﷺ, witnessed the revelation of the Qur'an, stood beside him in battle, and accompanied him during his travels describe a situation in stark contrast to what 'Abd al-Ḥusayn would lead us to believe.

'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said:

عن ابن عمر رضی الله عنهما قال كنا في زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا نعدل بأبي بكر أحدا ثم عمر ثم عثمان ثم نترك أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا نفاضل بينهم

During the Prophet's ﷺ time we would not compare anyone with Abū Bakr. 'Umar came next and then 'Uthmān. We then would leave the rest of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ without treating any as superior to another.¹

'Abd Allah bin Shaqīq relates:

عن عبد الله بن شقيق قال قلت لعائشة أى أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان أحب إلى رسول الله قالت أبو بكر قلت ثم من قالت عمر قلت ثم من قالت ثم أبو عبيدة بن الجراح قلت ثم من قال فسكتت

قال أبو عيسى هذا حديث حسن صحيح

I asked 'Ā'ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, "Which of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ were the most beloved to him?"

She said, "Abū Bakr."

I said, "Then who?"

She said, "Then 'Umar."

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, ḥadīth (3697).

I said, “Then who?”

She said, “Then Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ.”

I said, “Then who?”

He said, “Then she was silent.”¹

Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه reported:

عن أنس أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم رأى صبيانا ونساء مقبلين من عرس فقام نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ممثلا فقال اللهم أنتم من أحب الناس إلي اللهم أنتم من أحب الناس إلي يعني الأنصار

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم saw children and women from the Anṣār returning from a wedding feast. The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم stood up motionless (as a mark of respect) and said, “By Allah! You are amongst the most beloved people to me.” referring to the Anṣār and repeating it twice.²

As a matter of fact ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه was heard repeatedly praising some of the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions on the mimbar in Kūfah:

لا أوتى برجل يفضلني على أبي بكر وعمر إلا جلدته حد المفتري

Let not a man be brought before me who considers me superior to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar lest I prescribe for him the punishment of those who make false accusations!³

The evidence to this end is abundant, and these will be presented throughout the critical analysis of *al-Murāja‘āt*. Suffice to say that the underlying premise of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s correspondence in this letter is inherently flawed.

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, ḥadīth (4018).

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Manāqib al-Anṣār, ḥadīth (3785); *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, ḥadīth (2508).

3 *Al-Kashshī* (257); *al-Sunnah* by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad (1312).

Authority of Ahl al-Bayt

It was the responsibility of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn to prove that the statements of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and the rest of the Ahl al-Bayt are in fact authoritative and share a common authority. His entire correspondence overlooks any evidence from the common sources of law and heads directly for statements from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه and some of his son’s, which allegedly prove their unfettered leadership after the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

It is futile to argue their binding authority from their own statements. The alleged request in the letter from Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī seeks ‘juristic proofs’ neither of which have been furnished by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

Nahj al-Balāghah

Nahj al-Balāghah is an anthology of sermons and sayings that have been ascribed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. These have been compiled in the 4th century by either al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 406 A.H) or his brother al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 436 A.H).

In addition to the dispute regarding its author, the historic reliability of what it contains is called into question due the gap of close to 400 years from the time of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه until the book was compiled.

The trend in ḥadīth literature is to support a statement attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم or his Companions by presenting the chain of transmission for the individual report. The function of the chain is to examine the manner in which the information was passed down. If it becomes apparent that a person of weak memory or lacking in religious integrity participated in the transmission of this information it would not be relied upon. Similarly if there is any interruption in the chain of transmission it would be called into question.

The primary problem with *Nahj al-Balāghah* is that it suffers the complete lack of any chain by which the information—in this case the sermons and sayings of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه—was transmitted. Thus it cannot be objectively assessed in terms of its historic reliability.

It suffers from a series of further problems in that the style of language, and rhyming prose is inconsistent with the type of language which was in vogue during ‘Alī’s عليه السلام time. It reflects a later style of Arabic, albeit fluent and eloquent. The literary value of the book is certainly acknowledged; just not its reliable attribution to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام.

In his encyclopaedic work on biographies, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, al-Dhahabī has this to say under the biography of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā:

He is the compiler of *Nahj al-Balāghah* that contains words that have been attributed to Imām ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with him). It contains no chains. Some of it is false and within it is some truth. However, it contains fabrications that the Imām would never speak of, Allah forbid. Some have considered it the compilation of his brother, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.¹

The details of the sermons found in *Nahj al-Balāghah* are found in stark contrast to what has been reliably reported from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام. The extent of this contrast casts further doubt on the reliability of this text.

Undoubtedly some of what it contains could possibly be attributed to ‘Alī عليه السلام, however it would have to be further corroborated by sources which have more rigorous standards of reliability. One of the clearest indicators of tampering is the fact that succinct quotations appearing in earlier literary works are found in *Nahj al-Balāghah* with significant addition.

The Sunnī scholarly community would never rely on *Nahj al-Balāghah* nor would it count as ‘juristic proof’ by any stretch of the imagination. On the contrary the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah would hold the Shī‘ah to account for information it contains, not because Sunnīs accept it but because it is accepted by the Shī‘ah.

After establishing that *Nahj al-Balāghah* is unreliable there remains very little to respond to the ‘juristic proofs’ presented by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn since it has yet to

1 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol.17 pg.589.

be proven that the statements of ‘Alī عليه السلام count as proof. Even if they did, the quotations from *Nahj al-Balāghah* cannot be objectively ascribed to him in any way which discounts the entire argument offered by this letter in *al-Murāja‘āt*.

Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah

The editor of *al-Murāja‘āt* was perceptive to the glaring error in arguing for the absolute authority of Ahl al-Bayt based on citations from Shī‘ī sources alone. He diligently sort to provide references from Sunnī sources with the aim of diluting any objection to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s Shī‘ī references. If these remarks are found in Sunnī texts, what are the grounds for objection?

Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah is an academic work in refutation of Shī‘ī doctrine. It was penned by the famous tenth-century Shāfi‘ī Faqīh of Makkah, Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī.¹ In the opening passages of his book he describes how he was prevailed upon to compile a book in which he proves the validity of the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar عليهما السلام. He later added many other discussions to the book.

Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī’s expertise in Ḥadīth criticism could not match his level of proficiency in Fiqh, more specifically the minutiae of the Shāfi‘ī school. In the century that followed the passing of his namesake, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, there was a noticeable decline in critical ḥadīth study. As such, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī’s grading of aḥādīth was hardly taken as authoritative.

If one considers the comments above, the narrations appearing in *al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah* span the entire spectrum of grades, from the most rigorously authenticated narrations to fabrications. This does not imply that Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī filled his book with all sorts not giving consideration to their reliability. In fact he relies on acceptable narrations primarily in developing his argument. In order to add to what he has already included he brings narrations which have been graded as weak. However, in so doing he at times has included narrations

1 Not to be confused with Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī [d. 852 A.H].

which he duly clarified as being weak; but upon further investigation turned out to be either severely weak on account of the narrator being accused of forgery, or even found to be a fabrication. We ought to add that he also cites the evidence relied on by his opposition—the Shī'ah—for the purpose of refuting them.

Bearing these facts in mind let us turn our attention to the references in *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah* by the editor of *al-Murāja'āt*. Under footnote no.4 he says:

Ibn 'Abbas has said: "We are members of the Prophet's Household whose homes are the visiting places of the angels, the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah, and members of the household of mercy and knowledge.ḥ" He is quoted saying so by a group of most reliable Sunni traditionists and as stated at the conclusion of his chapter on the characteristics of Ahl al-Bayt عليه السلام, on page 142 of Ibn Hajar's *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muḥriqah*.

'Abd al-Ḥusayn has cited *Nahj al-Balāghah* quoting these words from 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام. The reference provided by the editor cites *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, quoting Ibn 'Abbās عليه السلام. Is it true that both of them said this? If so, then according to 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's reasoning the Abbasid Khalīfahs ought to be accepted by the Shī'ah as legitimate rulers. If this quotation is proven to be true, the logical conclusion is that the family of al-'Abbās عليه السلام is also part of the Ahl al-Bayt whose obedience is a divine injunction. No Shī'ī accepts this though!

That aside, let us see what Ibn Ḥajar actually wrote. He says:

It appears by way of Ibn 'Abbās, through a weak chain of transmission, that he said, "We the Ahl al-Bayt..."¹

So this narration is actually declared weak by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī but the editor of *al-Murāja'āt* ignored this. Instead he lied to his audience ascribing the authentication of this narration to 'a group of the most reliable traditionists', citing Ibn Ḥajar!

1 *Al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah* pg. 640.

Under footnote 6 he tries to be honest as he accuses Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī of being grossly unfair. He was cautious not to mention expressly that Ibn Ḥajar declared the chain of narration for this quotation from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه unreliable.¹

The narration in question under footnote 7 also refers us to *al-Ṣawā‘iq*. Let us first see how ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cites the narration before commenting.

Imam al Mujtaba Abu Muhammad al Hasan, the patient, master of the youths of Paradise عليه السلام, has said the following in one of his sermons: “Fear Allah regarding us, for we are your rulers.”

The narration in *al-Sawā‘iq*² quotes al-Bazzār. However that was said in response to an attempt to assassinate him by a person from ‘Irāq. The attack was unsuccessful. He then ascended the mimbar and addressed the people of ‘Irāq informing them to fear Allah.

We find that this was a sermon delivered specifically to the people of ‘Irāq as they had pledged their allegiance to Ḥasan رضي الله عنه after his father’s murder. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has truncated the narration and given it a spin that this was a sermon to the entire Ummah. We understand from its context that Ḥasan رضي الله عنه was not claiming absolute authority for Ahl al-Bayt, but reminding the people of ‘Irāq to fear Allah in respect to those whom they had pledged their allegiance to. How else could one account for his reconciliation with Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه.

Finally, footnote 8 cites *al-Ṣawā‘iq*³, who in turn cites al-Tha‘labī in his *Tafsīr*. It is well-known that al-Ṭha‘labī makes no distinction of what he narrates in his *Tafsīr*. Upon referring to his *Tafsīr*, *al-Kashf wa al-Bayān*,⁴ the chain is quoted by way of Abān ibn Taghlib, a well-known Shī‘ī narrator who will feature in later discussions.

1 *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah* pg. 640.

2 *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah* pg. 406.

3 *Al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah* pg. 435.

4 *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī* vol.3 pg.163.

Letter 7

Thul-Qi'da 13, 1329 A.H.

I. Requesting Proofs from Statements by Allah and His Messenger

II. Proofs from Ahl alBayt are Circumventive

1. Bring the proofs from the statements of Allah and His Messenger bearing witness to the mandatory allegiance to the Imams among the Ahl alBayt exclusively, and leave aside the speech of anyone else in this respect except those of Allah and His Messenger.
2. Your Imams' statements cannot serve as arguments against their rivals, and such an argument creates a logical cycle, as you know, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 8

Thul-Qi'da 1329

- I. Overlooking Our Previous Statements**
- II. Error in Necessity of (Logical) Cycle**
- III. Hadith of the Two Weighty Things**
- IV. Its Tawatur**
- V. NonAdherents to the 'Itra Shall Stray**
- VI. Their Similitude to the ark of Noah, the Gate of Salvation, and the Security Against Religious Dissensions**
- VII. What is Meant by "Ahl alBayt" in this Regard**
- VIII. Reasons for Similitude to Noah's Ark and the Gate of Salvation**

1. We have not neglected deriving our proofs from the traditions of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny. As a matter of fact, we referred to them at the beginning of our letter which clearly stated that following the Imams from Ahl alBayt exclusively is mandatory.

We did so when we stated that he, peace be upon him and his progeny, had compared them with the Glorious Book, setting them as a model for those endowed with reason, equating them with the ark of salvation, the nation's security, the gate of salvation - all in reference to and quotations from the wellknown clear texts in the sahih books. We have also said that you would be satisfied with the hint instead of the details, without the need for further explanations.

2. The statements of our Imams, then, as we have explained, do fit to be used as an argument against their opponents, and using it as such a manner cannot be regarded as a (vicious) cycle, as you yourself know.

3. Take, for example, the statements of the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, to which we referred whereby he struck an awe in the heart of the ignorant, calling upon the indifferent, as quoted by alTirmithi and alNisa'i from Jabir and they, in turn, are quoted by alMuttaqi alHindi at the beginning of his chapter on those who uphold the Book and the Sunnah in his work Kanzul'Ummal , Vol. 1, page 44, saying:

“O people! I am leaving with you the Book of Allah and my household (‘itra), my family (my Ahl alBayt). As long as you uphold them, you shall never go astray.”

He has also said:

“I have left with you that which, as long as you uphold, you shall never let you stray after me: Allah’s Book, a Rope extending from heavens to earth, and my ‘itra , my Ahl alBayt. These twain shall never separate from one another till they reach me by the Pool; therefore, see how you succeed me in faring with them.”¹

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has also said:

“I am leaving among you two successors: the Book of Allah, a rope extending from heavens to earth - or between heavens and earth - , and my household (‘itra) from my family (Ahl alBayt); they shall never separate from each other until they reach me by the Pool.”²

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, also said:

“I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my Ahl alBayt; they shall never separate from each other till they reach me at the Pool.”³

He, peace be upon him, has said:

“Me thinks I am going to be called upon and shall answer the call, and I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things, the Book of Allah Almighty and my offspring, my Ahl alBayt. The Sublime and omniscient has informed me that they shall never part from each other till they reach me by the Pool; so, see how you succeed me in faring with them.” 4

Having returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, camped at Ghadir Khumm and ordered the area underneath a few huge trees to be swept clean then said in his sermon:

“It seems as if I am going to be called upon and shall answer the call, and I am leaving with you the Two Weighty Things, one of which is greater than the other: the Book of Allah Almighty, and my Household; so, see how you succeed me in faring with them, for they shall never separate from each other until they reach me at the Pool.”

Then he (pbuh) added:

“Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime, is my Master, and I am the master of every believer.” Having said so, he took ‘Ali’s hand and said: “To whomsoever I have been a master, this ‘Ali is his master. O Allah! Befriend whosoever befriends ‘Ali, and be the enemy of whosoever opposes him, etc.” 5

‘Abdullah ibn Hantab has said: “The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) delivered a sermon to us at Al-Juhfa wherein he asked us: ‘Don’t I have authority over your own selves more than you yourselves do?’ Attendants there answered: ‘Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah!’ Then he said: ‘I shall then question you about these two: the Qur’an and my ‘itra.’” 6

4. The sahih books which deem it mandatory to follow the Two Weighty Things are successive through more than twenty companions who all are

in consensus in this regard. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has emphasized these things on numerous occasions: on Ghadir Khumm's Day, on the 'Arafat day of his Farewell Pilgrimage, after leaving Taif, from his pulpit in Medina, and inside his blessed chamber during his sickness, when the room was full of his Companions.

He said in the latter incident: "O people! I feel I am going to die very soon, and I had previously informed you as my duty, and to leave no excuse for you, that: I am leaving with you the Book of Allah, the Glorious and Mighty, and my 'itra , my Ahl alBayt." Having finished, he took 'Ali's hand and lifted it saying: "This 'Ali is with the Qur'an, and the Qur'an is with 'Ali: they shall never separate from one another till they reach me by the Pool." 7

A learned group among the majority has admitted the above. Even Ibn Hajar, quoting the tradition of the Two Weighty Things, says, "Be informed, then, that the tradition calling for upholding both of them comes through numerous ways narrated by more than twenty companions."

Further he says, "Here a doubt arises about when he said so. Some traditionists say he said so at Arafat during the Farewell Pilgrimage and others that he said so in Medina when he was sick, while his room was crammed with his companions. Another group say that he made that statement at the Khumm swamp, and in yet another that he made it, by way of preaching, after having left Ta'if as mentioned above."

Ibn Hajar furthermore says, "There is no contradiction here, for there is no objection to his repeating it at those places, and at others, out of his own concern for the unassailable Book and the Purified 'itra," up to the end of his statement." 8

Suffices the Imams from the Purified 'itra the fact that their rank with Allah is similar to that of the Book which falsehood cannot approach from front or from back. This must be sufficient testimony that takes people by

the neck and obligates them to abide by their sect. A true Muslim does not accept any substitute for the Book of Allah; therefore, how can he deviate from the path of those who are its own peers?

5. The gist of his saying, "I am leaving unto you that which, as long as you uphold to it, shall never let you stray: the Book of Allah and my 'itra " is that anyone who does not uphold both of them spontaneously will eventually stray. This is supported by his saying, peace be upon him and his progeny, in the tradition of the Two Weighty Things, as Tabrani narrates it, "Do not go ahead of them else you should perish, and do not teach them for they are more learned than you."

Ibn Hajar has said: "In his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, 'Do not go ahead of them else you should perish, and do not teach them for they are more learned than you,' there is proof that whoever among them is elevated to high offices and religious vocations must be preferred over all others," up to the end of his statement. 9

6. What makes it compulsory to follow and refer to Ahl alBayt is this hadith of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny: "The similitude of my household among you is that of the ark of Noah: whoever embarks upon it is saved, and whoever lags behind it is drowned,"¹⁰ and his statement (pbuh), "The similitude of my Household among you is that of the ark of Noah: whoever boards it is saved, and whoever lags behind it is drowned. And the similitude of my Household among you is the Gate of the Israelites: whoever enters it is forgiven."¹¹

Also, consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "The stars protect the inhabitants of earth against drowning, and my Ahl al-Bayt protect my nation against dissension (in religious matters). If a tribe among the Arabs differs (regarding the commandments of Allah, the High, the Mighty) from them, they will all then differ and become the party of Satan."¹²

This is fully sufficient to oblige the nation to follow them and to protect it against differing from them. I do not think that there is any language of man more clear than this hadith to support my argument.

7. What is meant by his word, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Ahl al-Bayt” (i.e. “Household”) here is their entirety, collectively, as being their Imams, not merely their entirety inclusively, for this status is nothing but a testimony for the Proofs of Allah - particularly those who stand for His Commandments - as reason and scholarship would rule. A learned group among the majority has admitted the same, such as Ibn Hajar in his *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* . Some of them have said that what is probably meant by ‘Ahl alBayt’ who are a security are their own learned men, for they are the ones who are like guiding stars; when lost, inhabitants of the earth will get what they were ominously warned against.

Ibn Hajar said: “That will be during the time when alMehdi عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام appears, and the tradition indicates that Jesus will pray behind him, and the anti-Christ will be killed during his time; after that, unusual events will succeed one another,” up to the end of his statement which is quoted in the exegesis of verse 7, in Chapter 11, page 91, of *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* . Somewhere else he indicates that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, was asked once: “How would people live after them?” and he answered: “They will live like an ass whose spleen has been broken.”¹³

8. You know that likening them with the ark of Noah implies that whoever resorts to them in matters related to the creed, deriving the branches and basics of religion from their virtuous Imams, will certainly be saved from the fire of hell, and whoever lags behind them is like one who seeks shelter during the flood with a mountain so that it may save him from Allah’s destiny, but he will eventually be drowned in water while the first will be hurled in the inferno, may Allah protect us from it.

The reason why they, peace be upon them, are compared to the Gate of Salvation is that Allah has made that Gate a symbol of humility before His Greatness and submission to His Judgment; therefore, it becomes a reason for forgiveness. This is the reason for the similitude.

Ibn Hajar, in the exegesis of Chapter 7 of the Holy Qur'an, in Chapter 11, page 91, of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, has accepted it while saying, after quoting these and other similar traditions, "The reason for their similitude to the ark is that whoever loves and highly respects them as means of thanking the One Who gave them honours, following the guidance of their learned men, will be saved from the darkness of dissension, and whoever lags behind it is drowned in the sea of ingratitude and will perish in the paths of tyranny."

Then he adds the following: "As to the Gate of Salvation (meaning thereby their similitude thereto), Allah has made entering that gate, which probably was the gate of Shittim or of Jerusalem, in humility, seeking forgiveness, a reason for salvation, and He (likewise) has made loving Ahl alBayt a reason for this nation's salvation."¹⁴

The sahih books are consecutive in stating that following Ahl alBayt is mandatory especially quoting the purified 'itra. Had I not curbed my pen for fear of boring you, I would have elaborated in detail, but what I have stated here must suffice for the purpose.

Wassalam

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes:

1. Al-Tirmithi quotes it from Zayd ibn Arqam. It is hadith 874 of the ahadith quoted in, on p. 44, Vol. 1, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.
2. Imam Ahmad includes it among the ahadith narrated by Zayd ibn Thabit from two sources one of which is stated at the beginning of page 182, and the other at the conclusion of page 189, Vol. 5, and also by Ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Ya'li, and Ibn Sa'd, from Abu Sa'id. It is hadith 945 on p. 47, Vol. 1, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.
3. It is included by al-Hakim on page 148, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*. The author comments thus: "This is one hadith the narrators of which are trustworthy according to both Shaykhs, though the latter did not transmit it." Al-Thahbi includes it in his abridged volume of *Al-Mustadrak*, admitting its authenticity due to the endorsement of both Shaykhs.
4. Included by Imam Ahmad in the hadith narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri from two sources one of which is mentioned on page 17, and the other at the end of page 26, Vol. 3, of *Al-Musnad*. It is also quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Ya'li, and Ibn Sa'd from Abu Sa'id. It is hadith 945 as listed in page 47, Vol. 1, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.
5. It is sequentially quoted by al-Hakim from Zayd ibn Arqam on page 109, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*. The author adds: "This hadith is authentic according to both Shaykhs who did not narrate it in its entirety." He quotes it from another source from Zayd ibn Arqam on page 533, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, adding: "This hadith is narrated by reliable narrators, yet they (both Shaykhs) did not publish it themselves." Al-Thahbi has included it in his *Talkhis*, admitting its authenticity.
6. Al-Tabrani has included it, as referred to in Nabhani's *Al-Arba'in*, and in Sayyiti's *Ihya'ul Mayyit*. You are aware of the fact that his *khutba*, peace be

upon him and his progeny, was not confined to this much, for nobody who narrates just this much can claim that he had heard it. But politics tied many tongues of traditionists and chained the pens of many writers. In spite of all this, such a drop of the ocean suffices; praise be to Allah.

7. Refer to it at the conclusion of Section 2, Chapter 9, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa by Ibn Hajar, after the forty ahadith referred to in that Section on page 57.
8. Refer to it in the exegesis of the fourth chapter:
9. "And stop them, for they shall be questioned (Qur'an, 37:24)," which is quoted in Section One, Chapter 11, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, at the conclusion of page 89.

Refer to it in the chapter dealing with the Prophet's will on page 135 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, then ask him why he preferred to follow al-Ash'ari in the roots of religion, and the four jurists in its branches, and how he came to consider as superior to them in the narration of hadith men like 'Umran ibn Hattan and his likes among the Kharijites, favouring over them in exegesis Muqatil ibn Sulayman, the Murji'ite who believes that Allah has a physical form, and favoured to them in the sciences of ethics, etiquette, conduct, and psychology Ma'ruf and his likes, and how he disregarded the Prophet's own brother and wali, the one and only executer of his will, for general caliphate and representation of the Prophet ﷺ.

Then ask him how he came to prefer to the descendants of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, the descendants of cowards. What would one who turns away from the purified progeny of Muhammad ﷺ in all such lofty stations and religious obligations and follows in the footsteps of those who oppose them do with the sahihs of the Two Weighty Things and the like? And how can he claim that he is upholding the progeny and embarking upon their Ark and entering through their Gate of Salvation?

10. Al-Hakim quotes it from Abu Tharr on page 151, Vol. 3, of his *Sahih Al-Mustadrak*
11. Al-Tabrani quotes it in his *Al-Awsat* from Abu Sa'id. It is hadith 18 of the 25th *Al-Arba'in* [forty] ahadith of Nabhani's *Al-Arba'in Al-Arba'in* (the sixteen-hundred ahadith), p. 216.
12. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 149, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak* from Ibn 'Abbas. Al-Hakim adds: "This is an authentic hadith though they (both Shaykhs, i.e. Bukhari and Muslim) did not include it (in their own books).
13. Refer to the conclusion of his chapter on the predictions of the holy Prophet ﷺ of hard times following his death, near the conclusion of page 143 of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*. We ask Ibn Hajar: "Since this is the status enjoyed by the scholars of *Ahl al-Bayt* عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, why do you then turn away from them?"
14. Consider this statement of his, then tell me why he did not follow the guidance of their Imams in the branches and tenets of the faith, or in the principles and bases of jurisdiction, or in the sciences of the Sunnah and the Book, or in anything related to ethics, conduct, and etiquette, and why he lagged behind and thus drowned himself in the oceans of those who deny Allah's favours, ruining themselves in the avenues of oppression. May Allah forgive him for telling lies about us and unfairly assaulting our beliefs.

Discussion

Circular reasoning

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is aware of the logical fallacy in the previous exchange. He is heedful of a potentially alert reader so he sets about to dismiss the lingering problem in the mind of his reader by raising the question of circular reasoning. He deftly avoids the question by feigning surprise at the fact that Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī failed to pick up on the suggested evidence that he had furnished earlier on. He sets out to convince the reader that it is not necessary to surmise; the detailed proofs substantiating the authority of the ‘Itrah will be presented as his correspondence continues.

The perennial problem with forgeries reveals itself time and again. Even if it is proven that the words of ‘Alī عليه السلام are tenable proofs, the evidence that he has provided in his previous correspondence is based entirely on an unreliable; *Nahj al-Balāghah*.

Nonetheless, it is not for us to prematurely dismiss his attempt at proving that the speech of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his sons after him عليهم السلام are authoritative in terms of the Sharī‘ah. However, failure to prove their binding authority not only renders his earlier correspondence invalid, but it will be a fair indicator of the logical fallacies that surface regularly in his writings.

Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn

It is not surprising that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn would hurtle for *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn*, also known as the Ḥadīth of the Two Weighty things. One would expect that he would begin by citing proofs from the Qur’an and substantiate these with Aḥādīth. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn knows too well that in the absence of the backdrop of these selected aḥādīth whichever verse he cites is virtually defeating the purpose; since there is nothing in the verse itself to indicate the authority of the ‘Itrah.

To begin with, he cites six narrations with slight variations in the way they are worded. Thereupon he concludes that the transmission of this Ḥadīth has reached the level of *Tawātur*, mass transmission to the extent of absolute certainty. There is no harm in saluting his wily strategy wherein he proceeded by citing the narrations before concluding that they are *Mutawātir* [meet the criteria of *Tawātur*]. It further gives the impression that this ḥadīth had passed the blessed lips of our beloved Prophet ﷺ repeatedly.

Before looking into the meaning of this Ḥadīth, it would be prudent to undertake a critical study of the chains of transmission since this Ḥadīth has been narrated by way of a number of Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ with significant textual variations. It is therefore necessary to analyse the various wordings of Ḥadīth al-Thaḳalayn and grouping them according to the narrators who narrate them. By identifying common points in the chains of transmission we would be in a better position to compare the data in order to gain an objective perspective of what the Prophet ﷺ actually said. It is through this technique that we can avoid the tendency of manipulating the data to suit a preconceived outcome.

A last word before proceeding with the critical study of this Ḥadīth; the criteria for acceptance of a narration was a matter of debate but what was eventually found acceptable was a standard that fairly represented the existing tradition. The technical definition, which was well-structured and carefully-worded, was composed by the seventh century Ḥadīth expert Abū ‘Amr, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Shahrazūrī, commonly known as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. His accomplishment was to be able to express in very refined sentences that which was known intuitively, and applied by the centuries of scholars who preceded him. His definition takes cognisance of five elements. Every Ḥadīth must be transmitted with an unbroken chain in addition to every narrator being above suspicion of deliberate misrepresentation as well as displaying the competency in transmitting the data accurately, without error. Furthermore, the narration ought to be free from anomalies and contradictions. This, in general, maps out the broad framework which has been employed by the experts in the field of Ḥadīth verification over the centuries.

Elements of Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn

- A. Mention of leaving behind the Two Weighty things [Thaqalayn]
- B. Mention of Imminent departure from this world
- C. Identifying them as the Qur’ān and the Prophet’s ﷺ honourable family
- D. Identifying one Weighty object greater than the other
- E. Avoid being led astray through holding firm to the Book of Allah
- F. Instruction to respect and uphold the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt
- G. Avoid being led astray by holding firm on the Book of Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt
- H. Describing the Qur’ān as a rope extended from the Heavens
- I. The two will not be separated until reuniting with him ﷺ at the Pond
- J. Speech given at Ghadīr Khum
- K. Speech given at ‘Arafah during Ḥajj

In summary these are the various elements found in these narrations. We shall now proceed by gathering the narrations and grouping them according to common narrators.

1. Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Anṣārī

- a. **Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anmāṭī**—Ja‘far al-Sādiq—Muḥammad al-Bāqir—Jābir: I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on Ḥajj, on the day of ‘Arafah^K, seated on his camel al-Qaṣwā’, delivering a sermon, “O people, I have left behind for you that, which if you hold onto, you will never go astray, the Book of Allah and my ‘itrah; my Ahl al-Bayt.^G “¹

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, ḥadīth 3788; *al-Muḥjam al-Kabīr* li al-Ṭabarānī, ḥadīth 2680; *al-Muḥjam al-Awsaṭ li al-Ṭabarānī*, ḥadīth 4757—He comments saying that none relates this from Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad except Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan.

b. Ḥaḥṣ ibn Ghiyāth—**Mujālid ibn Saʿīd al-Kūfi**—‘Āmir al-Shaʿbī—Jābir from the Prophet ﷺ, “... I am but a man who will soon be visited by a messenger from his Lord, whose call I will answer ^B. I leave behind the Two Weighty things ^A. The first of them is the Book of Allah ^C wherein there is light and guidance. Whoever holds firm on to it will be on certain guidance and whoever lets go or leaves it will be led astray ^E. Also, my family ^C, I remind you to fear Allah with regards to my family ^F. Hold firm to the rope of Allah and do not become disunited.”¹

In these narrations there are some narrators who do not fit the criteria of reliability and some for trustworthiness. These have been pointed out in bold.

a. **Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anmāṭī**

- Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī said of him, “A Kūfan. He came to Baghdād. Extremely unreliable.”²

b. **Mujālid ibn Saʿīd al-Hamadānī al-Kūfi**

- Al-Bukhārī said of him, “Yaḥya al-Qaṭṭān considered him unreliable and Ibn Mahdī would not narrate from him.”
- Al-Jawzajānī said of him, “His narrations are to be considered weak.”³
- Aḥmad said of him, “Not [worth] anything.” In another report Aḥmad said, “Such-and such—then moved his hand—however, he adds to the chain of transmission.” In another report from him he said, “Mujālid from al-Shaʿbī and others, weak, how many a strange narration from Mujālid!”

1 *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād Ahl al-Sunnah* vol. 1 pg. 87.

2 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 10 pg. 51.

3 *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl* (biography no. 126).

- Yahya said of him, “He was weak.” He also said, “I do not consider his narrations reliable.”
- Al-Nasā’ī said of him, “A Kūfan, weak.”¹
- Ibn ‘Adī said of him, “Most of what he narrates is uncorroborated.”²

Due to these problematic narrators in both these chains we realise that the narration by way of Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه is unreliable. Furthermore, the detail of this speech occurring at ‘Arafah cannot be verified since this detail appears via this chain exclusively.

2. Ḥudhayfah ibn Usayd

a. **Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anmāṭī—Ma‘rūf ibn Kharbūdh al-Makkī³**—Abū al-Ṭufayl—Ḥudhayfah ibn Usayd al-Ghifārī that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “O people! I will soon depart, going ahead to receive you at the pond ^B, which is wider than what is between Ṣan‘ā’ and Buṣrā, whose silver drinking utensils outnumber the stars. I will ask you when you meet me regarding al-Thaqalayn ^A, so beware of how you succeed me regarding them. The greater of the two is the Book of Allah ^D, the Exalted and Majestic. One end is in your hands and the other end is with Allah ^H. Hold firmly onto it and do not deviate or change ^E. And (the other is) my Ahl al-Bayt ^C. The Most Knowledgeable and Aware has informed me that they will not separate until they meet me at the Pond.”

Appearing in this chain is Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anmāṭī whose details have previously been mentioned. In addition, his teacher, **Ma‘rūf ibn Kharbūdh**, is a narrator about whom the experts had a divided opinion.

1 *Al-Du‘afā wa l-Matrūkīn* (biography no. 552).

2 *Al-Kāmil* (6/423); *al-Tahdhīb* (4/24).

3 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* ḥadīth 2783, 3052.

- Yaḥya ibn Maʿīn regarded him unreliable whereas others have considered him on the border.
- Ibn Abī Ḥātim indicated that his narrations may be recorded [for the purpose of corroboration].
- Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī considered him trustworthy though he is known for errors.¹

If we consider the situation of Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anmāṭī, coupled with the known errors of his teacher. This narration does not meet the standard of acceptance either. As such, all additional elements have no credibility.

3. Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī

a. Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-Aʿmash², **Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Ishāq al-Kūfī**³, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulaymān⁴, **Hārūn ibn Saʿd**⁵, Zakariyyah ibn Abī Zāʿidah⁶, and **Kathīr al-Nawā**⁷—**ʿAṭīyyah al-ʿAwfī**—Abū Saʿīd.

b. **Hārūn ibn Saʿd**—ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Saʿīd—Abū Saʿīd.⁸

These are two chains from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī. However, both chains suffer from a lack of credible chain. The multiple sub-chains eventually

1 *Al-Kāshif* (5551); *al-Taqrīb* (6791).

2 *Musnad ʿAlī ibn Jaʿd* vol.1 pg. 397, ḥadīth 2711; *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 17 pg. 211; *Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 779, *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah*; *al-Ṭabaqāt* vol.2 pg.2; *al-Tirmidhī* ḥadīth 3788; *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* ḥadīth 2679.

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 17 pg. 169; *Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥābah* vol.2 pg.779 ḥadīth 1382.

4 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.17 pg 308, vol.18 pg. 114; *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā* ḥadīth 1140; *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr li al-Ṭabarānī* ḥadīth 2678.

5 *Al-Muʿjam al-Ṣaḥīḥ* ḥadīth 376.

6 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah*, ḥadīth 30704 (Dār al-Qiblah); *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā* ḥadīth 1027.

7 *Al-Muʿjam al-Awsaṭ* vol.3 pg. 374, vol.4 pg. 33; *al-Muʿjam al-Ṣaḥīḥ* vol. 1 pg. 226.

8 *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Kabīr li al-ʿUqaylī* vol.4 pg. 362.

all converge on a common narrator, ‘Aṭīyyah ibn Sa’d al-Jadalī al-Kūfī. This means that he is the central figure around which all the subsequent narrations revolve. Before we address the issue with him, let us briefly point out the opinion of the expert ḥadīth scholars about some of those who transmit from him.

a. Abū Isrā’īl Ismā’īl ibn Abī Ishāq al-Mulāṭī¹.

- ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Mubārak said about him, “Allah conferred His favour on the believers through the weak memory of Abū Isrā’īl.”
- Abū Ḥātim states, “His narrations are not proof worthy.”
- Abū Zur‘ah states, “He is honest, though extreme in his doctrine.”
- Ibn Ma‘īn’s opinions differed about him. Some quote him as saying, “Honest.” Others relate that he considered Abū Isrā’īl weak.
- Al-Dhahabi says, “He was a fanatic Shī‘ī, with much hatred [for some Companions.] He used to consider ‘Uthmān an infidel!” He goes further, “They considered him unreliable!”

b. Hārūn ibn Sa’d

- Al-Dhahabī says, “He is honest, but he is an extreme Rāfidī, filled with hatred.”²
- Abū Ja‘far al-‘Uqaylī says of him, “A Kūfan, extreme in his brand of Rafḍ (Shī‘ism).”³

The narration via the alternate chain is also by way of Hārūn ibn Sa’d. It appears that he has contradicted himself since he narrates it both ways. His level is not such that he is acknowledged when he narrates in isolation.

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol 4. Pg. 490.

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 284.

3 *Al-Ḍu‘afā’ al-Kabīr li al-‘Uqaylī* vol.4 pg. 362.

c. Kathīr al-Nawā', Kathīr ibn Ismā'īl al-Nawā'

- Al-Dhahabī says, “A Shīṭ die hard. Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā'ī deem him incompetent and weak.”¹

d. 'Aṭīyyah al-'Awfī

Ibn Ḥajar states in his *Tahdhīb*:

Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj said about 'Aṭīyyah al-'Awfī that “His narrations are unreliable.” Thereafter he said, “I have been made aware that 'Aṭīyyah would visit al-Kalbī asking him about tafsīr. He had conferred on him the title Abū Sa'īd which was his unique way of referring to him. Thereafter, he would narrate to people saying, “Abu Sa'īd said”.

Hushaym considered his narrations to be *da'īf* (weak).

Al-Jawzajānī said, “He was inclined towards Shī'ism.”

Al-Nasā'ī said, “He is weak.”

Ibn 'Adī included him among the Shī'ah of Kūfah.

Ibn Ḥibbān says that he had given him (al-Kalbī) the title Abū Sa'īd. Later he would narrate in such a way that he gave the impression that he was narrating from Abu Sa'īd al-Khudrī, whereas he was actually referring to his codename for al-Kalbī. It is not permissible to write his narrations except to note down their peculiarities. He adds that Abū Bakr al-Bazzār considered him from the Shī'ah.

Despite his weak memory which is sufficient to discount this version of the narration entirely. It carries the possibility of subterfuge in that 'Aṭīyyah might have meant al-Kalbī by Abū Sa'īd, and not the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم Companion Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه.

1 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 402.

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī is on record having said that this ought to apply to what he narrates in terms of Tafsīr.¹ Notwithstanding this, al-Bukhārī has quoted his teacher, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who pointed out the serious problems with this narration in particular

قال احمد في حديث عبدالملك عن عطية عن ابي سعيد قال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم تركت فيكم الثقلين... احاديث الكوفيين هذه مناكير

Aḥmad said about the hadith of ‘Abd al-Malik—from ‘Aṭīyyah—from Abū Sa‘īd that the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘I have left behind Two Weighty things...,’ “These narrations of the Kūfans are anomalous and rejected.”²

All that remains is to produce the wordings of these narrations so that the elements that remain uncorroborated may be pointed out.

I am leaving amongst you that which if you hold on to you will never go astray ^G, the Thaḳalayn ^A. One of them is greater than the other ^D, the Book of Allah is like a rope that has been extended from the sky to the earth ^H and my ‘itrah are my Ahl al-Bayt ^C. These two will never separate until they meet me at the pond ^I.

Another version from Abū Sa‘īd is worded as follows:

Soon I will be invited and I will accept the invitation ^B. I am leaving behind the Two Weighty things ^A, the Book of Allah and my ‘itrah ^C. The Book of Allah is like a rope that has been extended from the sky to the earth and my ‘itrah is my Ahl al-Bayt ^H. Indeed the One who is All-Knowing and All-Aware has informed me that these two will never separate until they meet me at the pond ^I. Beware of how you treat them in my absence ^F.

1 *Sharḥ al-‘Ilal* vol.2 pg. 823.

2 *Al-Tārīkh al-ṣaghīr* pg. 302.

4. ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

- a. Sa‘ād ibn Sulaymān—Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī—al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-A‘war al-Kūfī—‘Alī¹ from the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, “Soon I will be taken away^B, and indeed I have left behind for you the Two Weighty things^A, the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt^C. Indeed you will not go astray after them^C. The final hour will not arrive until the Prophet’s Companions are sought ought just as a lost item is searched for, but they will not be found.”

Sa‘ād ibn Sulayman is known for his Shīī leanings. In addition to this his narrations are not independently strong, though they may take strength through stronger supporting narrations. Some critics have deemed him unreliable. It is not known when he received ḥadīth from Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī whose memory faltered towards the end of his life. Al-Ḥārith al-A‘war is a narrator around whom there is a great deal of debate. Some, like Shu‘bah went as far as to call him a liar, whilst others merely settled for unreliable.²

5. Zayd ibn Thābit

- a. Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakhaī—Rukayn ibn al-Rabī‘ al-Fazārī—al-Qāsim ibn Ḥassān al-‘Āmirī—Zayd ibn Thābit that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “I will leave amongst you two successors after me, the Book of Allah and my ‘itrah, my Ahl al-Bayt. Indeed the two of them will not separate until they meet me at the pond.”³

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd-Allah al-Qaḍī, Abū ‘Abd-Allah, the Kūfan, is weak, especially in that which he narrated from memory after being assigned a post in the judiciary.

1 *Musnad al-Bazzār* vol.3 pg 89.

2 *Al-Kāshif* no. 1816, no. 859; *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol.2 pg. 118; *al-Ḍū‘afā’ wal Matrūkīn li al-Nasāī* (116).

3 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* ḥadīth 32337; *Musnad Aḥmad* ḥadīth 21654, 21578.

- Ibn Ḥibbān said, “Towards the end he erred regularly and his memory failed him. Therefore, those narrations of those who heard from him in his early days in Wāsiṭ do not have confusion—like Yazīd ibn Harūn, Ishāq al-Azraq—as for those who heard from him later on in Kūfah, their narrations have many mistakes.”¹
- Ibn ‘Adī said, “The general status of his narrations is that of reliability and is acceptable. However, his narrations became objectionable on account of weakness of memory and not deliberate narration of that which is deserving of being declared weak.”²
- Sāliḥ Jazarah said, “He is truthful, but when he took up the post in the judiciary his memory became inconsistent.”

The reliable ḥadīth which meets the criteria of the scholars of ḥadīth is the one narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam. This narration has equal variations in terms of how it is worded when compared to the narrations before it. For the sake of brevity we shall provide the narration which appears in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. Since this narration is not disputed in any way it will be a fair control to test the various elements found in the ḥadīth.

This narration is transmitted by way of Zuhayr ibn Harb and Shuja ibn Makhlad—Ibn ‘Ulayyah (Ismā‘īl ibn Ibrāhīm)—Abū Ḥayyān—Yazīd ibn Ḥayyān who said:

عن يزيد بن حيان قال انطلقت أنا وحصين بن سبرة وعمر بن مسلم إلى زيد بن أرقم فلما جلسنا إليه قال له حصين لقد لقيت يا زيد خيرا كثيرا رأيته رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وسمعت حديثه وغزوت معه وصليت خلفه لقد لقيت يا زيد خيرا كثيرا حدثنا يا زيد ما سمعت من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يا ابن أخي والله لقد كبرت سني وقدم عهدي ونسيت بعض الذي كنت أعي من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فما حدثتكم فاقبلوا وما لا فلا تكلفوني ثم قال قام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما فينا

1 *Al-Thiqāt* vol. 6 pg. 444.

2 *Al-Kāmil* vol.4 pg.22.

خطيباً بماء يدعى خمأ بين مكة والمدينة فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ووعظ وذكر ثم قال أما بعد ألا أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ثم قال وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي فقال له حصين ومن أهل بيته يا زيد أليس نساؤه من أهل بيته قال نساؤه من أهل بيته ولكن أهل بيته من حرم الصدقة بعده قال ومن هم قال هم آل علي وآل عقيل وآل جعفر وآل عباس قال كل هؤلاء حرم الصدقة قال نعم

Ḥuṣayn ibn Sabrah, ‘Amr ibn Muslim, and I all went to visit Zayd ibn Arqam. As we sat at his side Ḥuṣayn (ibn Sabrah) said to him, “O Zayd! You witnessed much good. You saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ you heard his speech, participated in military campaigns with him, and prayed behind him in ṣalāh. O Zayd! You witnessed such good; relate to us some of what you had heard from the Prophet ﷺ.”

He responded, “O my nephew! By Allah, I have become very old and a long time has passed (since the Prophet’s passing) and I have forgotten some of what I used to remember from the Prophet ﷺ. Accept from me what I relate and do not impose upon me (to narrate) what I no longer remember.”

He went on to say, “One day the Messenger ﷺ stood up to deliver a sermon at a watering stop known as Khumm, which is situated between Makkah and Madīnah. He praised and glorified Allah, admonished and reminded us and said, ‘Listen O people, I am merely a human being. A Messenger from my Lord will soon approach me and I will respond to his call. I am leaving behind two weighty things; the First is the Book of Allah which contains guidance and illumination. So accept the Book of Allah and hold firmly to it.’”

He emphasized practising on the Book of Allah and holding firmly onto it. Then he said, ‘(And the second is) My family (Ahl Baytī). I remind you of Allah with regards to fulfilling the rights of my family. I remind you of Allah with regards to fulfilling the rights of my family.’”

Ḥusayn said to Zayd, “O Zayd! Who is his family? Are his wives not part of his family?”

Zayd responded, “His wives are part of his family, but his family (in terms of blood relation) are those whom charity is unlawful for.”

Ḥuşayn asked, “Who are they?”

Zayd replied, “They are the family of ‘Alī, family of ‘Aqīl, family of Ja‘far, and the family of Ibn ‘Abbās.”

Ḥuşayn then asked, “Is it not permitted to give charity to all of them?”

Zayd replied, “Yes.”¹

If we examine the various elements mentioned in the ḥadīth we realise the following:

1. The Prophet ﷺ delivered this sermon at Ghadīr Khumm, on his return from Ḥajj.
2. The Prophet ﷺ was about to depart from this world.
3. The Prophet ﷺ left behind two weighty things.
4. He advised how to deal with each of these weighty things differently.
5. One of them is the Book of Allah; which he exhorted towards in terms of holding on to and abiding by its injunctions.
6. The second was his family, the Ahl al-Bayt for whom the Prophet ﷺ invoked our fear in Allah in terms of respecting them, honouring them, and safeguarding them.
7. Zayd ibn Arqam identified who the Ahl al-Bayt are in terms of the ḥadīth. He also pointed out who are the Ahl al-Bayt in terms of receiving Ṣadaqah.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fāḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah, ḥadīth (5920).

It is equally important to note that this was a single speech. There was no instruction to “hold on to” the Ahl al-Bayt in terms of religious authority. Why then would some versions of the ḥadīth have these? The weakness in the previous narrations have already been demonstrated, however, the fact that many of those narrators, even those who were not weak, happened to have some Shīʿī inclinations. So it is highly possible that the narrator paraphrased the narration in a way that he understood it.

This brings us to the next point. The Ahl al-Sunnah, love and adore ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. They acknowledge all the narrations which have been reliably attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم in his favour. At the same time, an attempt is made to understand those merits in context with what is in the Qur’ān, what is found in the Sunnah of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, as well as what appears to be a fair reflection of reality. As such, the aḥādīth in praise of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه do not—by necessity—qualify his exclusivity for the task of Imāmah.

The claim of Tawātur

A hadith which satisfies the conditions of Tawātur ought to be narrated in such abundance at all levels that no room remains for doubt. In the case with this narration it was merely the case of single change—with a common point of convergence—in almost all cases, which had been transmitted in abundance during the later centuries. Therefore one would have noticed the fact that many chains merely relied on a single chain at some point or the other.

Secondly, the sheer number of people ought to dispel the idea of possible corroboration to unite on a lie. However, as is the case with some of the narrations above, they appear to have been available to unscrupulous individuals in particular regions. Al-Bukhārī quoted Imām Aḥmad demonstrating how a single report became the communal untruth that was being circulated to all and sundry in Kūfah.

Quoting Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī

Once we have realised this, we know, from our previous discussions that quoting Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī does not carry much weight as the opinions of the likes of al-Bukhārī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal when it comes to Ḥadīth grading. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī was an authority of Fiqh in the Shafīī school, but his opinions on the grading of Ḥadīth do not hold the same authority within the framework of Sunnī scholarship. While Ibn Ḥajar might have erred in this regard, it is no more than a drop in the ocean of knowledge that he has left behind.

Similarly, qualifying the Ahl al-Bayt by applying it to the scholarly among them is the natural consequence of relying on the narration which speaks of holding firmly on both of the Weighty Things. However, we have demonstrated that the correct wording, as is related in the authentic narration of Zayd ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه, is the instruction to hold firmly to the Book of Allah. The bequest for the second of the Weighty Things was to me reminded of Allah in upholding their rights and caring for them.

Thirdly, we refer the esteemed reader to the definition of a sound Ḥadīth—being free from anomaly and contradiction. The Ḥadīth of Jābir which identifies ‘Arafah as the setting for this sermon is only narrated by way of Zayd ibn Ḥasan al-Anmāī, who, as has been sufficiently proven, is extremely unreliable. All the others who narrate the lengthy Ḥadīth of Jābir, describing the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Ḥajj journey do not mention any such sermon at ‘Arafah. Thus, the reconciliation attempted by Ibn Ḥajar was not necessary to begin with since the only narrations mentioning a setting other than Juḥfah (or Ghadīr Khumm) are found wanting in terms of their chains of transmission.

Fourthly, the narration which is cited in *al-Ṣawā‘iq* describing those who will live like assess¹ has been mentioned by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī as an afterthought. It has also been cited by Ibn ‘Adī in his compendium of weak narrators under the

1 See footnote 13 of *al-Murāja‘āt* above.

biography of Aḥmad ibn Bashīr.¹ Ibn ‘Adī cites this as one of his most confounded, unreliable narrations!

Lastly, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has conveniently omitted significant details when quoting from *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Muḥriqah* of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. He omits the fact that when citing the Ḥadīth which compares the Noble Family to the stars, Ibn Ḥajar explicitly states that this has been narrated by numerous chains, all of them unreliable! Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, after seeing numerous chains volunteers his opinion that this might elevate the status of this narration, if taken in light of other narrations as well. However, al-Dhahabī has graded these as forgeries in his abridgement of the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim.²

Ḥadīth of the Ark

The ḥadīth of the Ark of Nūḥ عليه السلام revolves around a series of weak and abandoned narrators. In the chain is **Ḥasan ibn Abī Ja’far** and he is *matrūk* (suspected of forgery), as well as ‘Alī ibn Zayd who is a weak transmitter.

In al-Ṭabarānī’s chain of this ḥadīth appears **‘Abd Allāh ibn Dāhir** and he is *matrūk*.

The editor of the published version of *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* of Imām Aḥmad agrees because of a narrator in the chain, **Mufaḍḍāl ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Naḥḥās al-Asadī**, who the scholars of verification grade as weak. Al-Dhahabī says about him, “Mufaḍḍāl is weak.”

From Abū Dharr, who said, the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “The likeness of my Ahl al-Bayt is the likeness of Nūḥ’s ark. Whoever boards it is saved and whoever lags behind drowns. And whoever fights at the end of days he is like the one who fights Dajjāl.” This is narrated by al-Bazzār and Ṭabarānī in the three. In al-Bazzār’s sanad is **al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Ja’far al-Ja’farī** and in Ṭabarānī’s sanad is **‘Abd Allāh ibn Dāhir** and **both of them are matrūk**.

1 *Al-Kāmil* vol.1 pg. 166.

2 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol.2 pg 486, ḥadīth no.3676.

Ibn ‘Abbās, is alleged to have said, the Messenger ﷺ said, “The likeness of my Ahl al-Bayt is the likeness of Nūḥ’s ark. Whoever boards it is saved and whoever lags behind drowns.” This is narrated by al-Bazzār and Ṭabarānī and in it is **al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Ja’far** and **he is matrūk**.

From ‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr that the Prophet ﷺ said, “The similitude of my Ahl al-Bay is the similitude of Nūḥ’s ark. Whoever mounts it is saved and whoever lags behind drowns.” This is narrated by al-Bazzār and in it is **Ibn Lahī’ah** and **he is a weak transmitter**.

From Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, he said, I heard the Messenger ﷺ saying, “The example of my Ahl al-Bay amongst you is the example of Nūḥ’s ark. Whoever mounts it is saved and whoever lags behind drowns. And the example of my Ahl al-Bay amongst you is the example of the door of Ḥiṭṭah amongst the Banī Isrā’īl. Whoever enters it is forgiven.’ This is narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Ṣaghīr* and in *al-Awsaṭ* and in it is a group (of transmitters) I do not know.¹

Kanz al-‘Ummāl

In an attempt to embellish his citations, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is extremely eager to refer to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. So what is special about *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* and why do the Shī’ah love to cite it?

Ḥadīth compilation has two basic forms. Books which are compiled with their own chains of transmission; these are known as primary sources. There are also books which collect, reorganise, select aḥādīth for a particular purpose; and for the sake of expedience the isnād is often times omitted. Therefore it is no stretch of the imagination to say that whatever is found in the primary books is of significance. Secondary books merely refer to primary books.

In the 10th century of Islam, a dedicated and celebrated polymath from Egypt, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, collected a series of narrations from a primary work. However,

1 *Majma’ al-Zawā’id wa Mamba’ al-Fawā’id* by Al-Haytamī, vol. 9, p. 167.

the arrangement of these narrations was less than ideal. Alī Muttaqī, an Indian scholar from Gujarat, with an affinity for ḥadīth, had recently taken up residency in Makkah. He undertook to rearrange the narrations of an earlier secondary source, by al-Suyūṭī and named it *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. Essentially it serves as a ḥadīth directory or an index for finding a ḥadīth from a primary source. The work *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* comprises of over 90 books of ḥadīth which have no academic criteria of acceptance. One can expect to find an entire spectrum of narrations in a work like this; from the most authentic to complete fabrications.

The pedagogy of the Ahl al-Sunnah is to rely on what has been authentically related from the Prophet ﷺ. As such, a narration is only considered to have legal consequence once it has been satisfactorily established that it is from the Prophet ﷺ. It is within this academic framework that our discussions around the *al-Murāja‘āt* will unfold.

In conclusion, we have demonstrated that the logical fallacy of circular reasoning most definitely applies to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s argument in Letters 5 and 7. Furthermore, the claim of Tawātur for Ḥadīth al-Thaḳalayn has been debunked. The only independently sound version is the narration of Zayd ibn Arqam in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. The other narrations suffer from inherent flaws which certainly keeps the claim of Tawātur at bay. In addition to this we come to realise that Ḥadīth al-Thaḳalayn was not repeatedly articulated by the Prophet ﷺ, but it was part of a lengthier speech that he delivered at Ghadīr Khumm, near Juḥfah on his return from Ḥajj. The purport of Ḥadīth al-Thaḳalayn is exhortation to hold firmly to the Qur’an and to maintain love and respect for the Family of the Prophet ﷺ. In no way does it confer legal authority to the members of Ahl al-Bayt. The narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt being the Ark of Nuḥ عليه السلام have been discovered to be baseless narrations which have been narrated exclusive with weak and severely weak chains of transmission.

Letter 9

Thul Qi'da 1329

I. Requesting more relevant texts

Do not curb your pen, and do not worry about boring me. I am all ears listening to you; my chest is wide, and in learning from you, my heart is at ease and soul in peace and tranquility. All the proofs and arguments which you have stated made me even more enthusiastic, thus removing the obstacle of boredom. Send me, therefore, more of your captivating speech and manifestations of wise genius. I find in your speech the quest of the wise, and it is thus more saturating to my heart than crystal—clear cool water; so, let me have more, may Allah bless your father, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 10

Thul-Qi'da 1329

I. A Glimpse of Sufficient Texts

If you have been pleased by receiving my letter, and if you have approached it with selfsatisfaction, then I have often placed my hope on you for victory and concluded my effort with success. Whoever intends well, adopting a good attitude while being humble, amiable, dignified, crowned with knowledge, wellmannered with patience, is surely worthy of being truthful in what he says and writes, while equity and integrity are in his hand and on his tongue.

It is you to whom I owe my thanks when you asked for more, for who else can be more graceful, kind and humble? In order to grant your quest and cool your eyes, I would like to state the following:

Both alTabrani's Al-Mujma' al-Kabir and Rafi'i's Musnad, quoting Ibn 'Abbas, state that "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: 'Let whoever is pleased to live like me and die like me and inhabit Eden's Paradise which my Lord cultivated take 'Ali as his master after me, and let him obey whoever he places in charge over him, and let him follow the example of my Ahl Al-Bayt after me, for they are my progeny: they are created of my own mould and blessed with my own comprehension and knowledge. Woe unto those who reject them and separate me from them! May Allah never permit them to enjoy my intercession.'"1

Al-Matir, al-Barudi, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Shahin, and Ibn Mundah have all quoted Ishaq citing Ziyad ibn Matraf saying: "I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying: 'Whoever wishes to live my life and die my death and enter the Garden which my Lord promised me, the Garden of eternity, then let him take 'Ali and his progeny after him as his masters, for they shall never take you out of guidance, nor let you stray.'"2

Similarly, Zayd ibn Arqam is quoted in one hadith saying: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: ‘Whoever wishes to live like me and die my death and inhabit the perpetual Garden promised to me by my Lord, let him take ‘Ali as his master, for he shall never get you out of guidance, nor shall he let you stray.’”³

Also, consider this tradition narrated by ‘Ammar ibn Yasir: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: ‘I admonish whoever believed in me and held me truthful to accept the government of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, for whoever accepts him as the ruler accepts me as such, and whoever loves him loves me too, and whoever loves me loves Allah. Whoever hates him hates me, and whoever hates me hates Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty.’”⁴

Ammar quotes others stating this hadith: “O Lord! Whoever believed in me and held me truthful, let him take ‘Ali as his master, for his government is also mine, and mine is that of the Almighty Allah.”⁵

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, once delivered a sermon wherein he said: “O people! Favours, honours, prestige and government are for the Messenger of Allah and his progeny; therefore, let no falsehood divert you.”⁶

He, peace be upon him and his progeny said: “In every generation of my nation there are members of my Household who equal only my own self and who safeguard this religion from the distortion of wrongdoers and the interpretation of the ignorant. Be informed that your Imams are your deputies to Allah; so, see who you send to Him as your deputies.”⁷

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has also said: “Do not go ahead of them else you should perish, nor should you lag behind them else you should perish. Do not teach them, for they are more learned than you.”⁸

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “Consider my Ahl Al-Bayt among you as you consider the head of the body, and the eyes in the head, for the head is guided by the eyes.”⁹

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: “Uphold loving us, we Ahl Al-Bayt, for whoever faces Allah loving us shall enter Paradise through our intercession. I swear by the One in Whose Hands my soul is placed that the good deeds of a believer shall never avail him except through recognizing our rights.”¹⁰

And he has also said: “The knowledge of the progeny of Muhammad brings salvation from the Fire, and loving Ahl Al-Bayt is walking on the Straight Path. Allegiance to the progeny of Muhammad is a security against the torture.”¹¹

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “The feet of any servant of Allah shall never move on the Day of Judgment unless he is asked about four things: how he spent his life, what he wore his body out for, how he made and spent his wealth, and about loving us, we Ahl Al-Bayt.”¹²

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “If a man stands in prayer between the Rukn and Maqam, hating Muhammad’s progeny, he shall still enter Hellfire.”¹³

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has also said: “Whoever dies because of his love for the progeny of Muhammad dies a martyr. Whoever dies because of loving the progeny of Muhammad dies as a believer of a perfect faith.

Whoever dies for loving Muhammad’s children will be given the glad tidings of entering Paradise by the angel of death, then by Munkir and Nakir. Whoever dies for loving Muhammad’s descendants will be taken to Paradise like a bride taken to her groom’s house. Whoever dies loving Muhammad’s progeny will have two doors in his grave overlooking Paradise. Allah will make the grave of whoever dies for loving Muhammad’s children a visiting place for the angels of mercy. Whoever dies for loving Muhammad’s progeny dies adhering to the Sunnah and consensus.

Whoever dies hating Muhammad’s progeny will come on the Day of Judgment with this inscribed between his eyes: ‘He should despair of Allah’s mercy,’” up to

the end of his unmatched sermon,¹⁴ the sermon whereby he, peace be upon him and his progeny, intended to divert the inclinations and whims.

The implication is that all these traditions are unanimously agreed upon, especially those narrated through the authority of the purified 'itra. Their status would not have been confirmed had they not been the obvious Proofs of Allah and the fountainhead of His Jurisprudence, the obvious Proofs of Allah, the fountainhead of His Jurisprudence, the ones who represent the Messenger of Allah in bidding or forbidding, his own deputies in the most clear terms.

Whoever loves them, therefore, is also a lover of Allah and His Messenger, and whoever hates them is an enemy of Allah and His Messenger. He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "None loves us except a Godfearing and sincere believer, and none hates us except a hypocritical wretch."¹⁵ It is for these reasons that al-Farazdaq, the poet, has said these verses in their praise:

You are ones loving whom is belief, hating an abomination;

Nearness to you is indeed a rescue and a salvation.

If the pious ones are counted, you will be their Imams; it is true.

If one asks: "Who are the best of man?" the answer will be you.

The Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, used to say:

"I and the virtuous among my descendants are the best in manners when young, and the most learned when old. Through us does Allah obliterate lies, and through us does He turn the wild fox's teeth ineffective. Through us does Allah cure your barrenness, and through us does He emancipate you. Through us does Allah begin and conclude."¹⁶

Suffices us a reason for preferring them over others the fact that Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, has preferred them over all others, making sending prayers unto them part of the obligatory prayers, albeit if the one saying his

prayer were a Siddiq or Faruq, with one light, or two, or with numerous lights. Nay! Everyone who worships Allah by performing His obligations also worships Him while doing so by sending blessings unto them, just as he worships Him when testifying through the two parts of the Shahadah. This, indeed, is a status before which the nation's heads were lowered, and in front of which the eyes of whoever you mentioned of the imams have submitted. Imam alShafi'i, may Allah be pleased with him, has said:¹⁷

O Household of Allah's Messenger! Loving you is an obligation

Which Allah has enforced in His Honored Revelation;

Suffices you a great honour if one sends no prayer unto you all,

It will be as though he did not say his prayers at all.

Let us now be satisfied with this much of the sacred Sunnah in testimony to the fact that following their Sunnah is compulsory; so is emulating them. In the Book of Allah Almighty, the Sublime and the Omnipotent, there are clear verses which make that, too, compulsory. It is to such verses that we would like to attract your aware conscience and sensitive reason. You can be satisfied with an indicative hint, and a signal suffices to attract your attention; all praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the world.

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes:

1. This hadith, verbatim, is hadith 3819 of the ones included on page 217, Vol. 6 of Kanz al-'Ummal. He also quotes it in Muntakhab al-Kanz; so, refer to the latter's text at the beginning of the footnote on page 94 of Vol. 5 of Ahmad's Musnad, although the author states: "They were endowed with

my comprehension,” rather than “comprehension and knowledge.” The copier may have committed a mistake. Al-hafiz Abu Na’im, in his *Hilyat al-Awliya’*, has also quoted it, and he in turn is quoted by the Mu’tazilite scholar on page 450, Vol. 2, of his commentary on *Nahjul Balaghah*, Egyptian edition. He also quoted something similar on page 449 from Abu ‘Abdullah Ahmad ibn Hanbal in both his *Musnad* and his book titled *Manaqib ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib* عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

2. This hadith is number 2578 of the ones quoted in *Kanz al-Ummal*, Vol. 6, page 155. It is also quoted by *Muntakhab al-Kanz*; so, refer to the latter and read the last line of the footnote on page 32, Vol. 5, that quotes Ahmad’s *Musnad*. It is also quoted by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani abridged in the biography of Ziyad ibn Mutraf in Part One of his *Isaba*, then he adds: “This hadith is quoted by Yahya ibn Ya’li al-Muharbi, a weak traditionist.” This is strange coming from al-‘Asqalani, for Yahya ibn Ya’li, according to the consensus of scholars of hadith, is quite trustworthy. In his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes his ahadith related to the Hodaybiya treaty. He taught hadith to Muslim Ghaylan ibn Jami’. Moreover, al-Thahbi, in his *Mizan*, takes the man’s integrity for granted, and so do many authorities held reliable by both Shaykhs as well as by others.
3. This is quoted by al-Hakim at the end of page 128, Vol. 3, of his authentic book *Al-Mustadrak*. He adds the following: “The narrators of this hadith are all trustworthy, and they (both Shaykhs) did not quote it.” It is quoted by al-Tabrani in his *Al-Jami’ al-Kabir*, and by Abu Na’im in his book dealing with the excellences of the sahabah. It is hadith 2577 of the ones included in *Kanz al-Ummal* on page 155, Vol. 6. The author also quotes it in his *Muntakhab al-Kanz*; so, refer to the footnote on page 32, Vol. 5, of the *Musnad*.
4. Al-Tabrani has quoted it in his *Al-Jami’ al-Kabir*, and so has Ibn ‘Asakir in his history book, and it is hadith 2571 of the ones included in *Kanz al-Ummal* at the end of page 154, Vol. 6.

5. Al-Tabrani has quoted it in his Al-Jami' al-Kabir as narrated by Muhammad ibn Abu 'Ubaydah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Umayr ibn Yasir who quotes his father citing his grandfather 'Ammar. It is hadith 2576 of the ones included in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 155, Vol. 6. It is also quoted in Muntakhab al-Kanz.
6. It is narrated by Abul Shaykh in a lengthy hadith and transmitted by Ibn Hajar at the end of maqsad 4 of his Maqasid while explaining, on page 105 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, the verse enjoining kindness to the Prophet's kin after having scrutinized it, and in the supreme maqsad of his book Ghayat Al-Maram. Do not overlook his statement: "Do not accompany the wrong-doers."
7. This is quoted by al-Malla in his Sirat, as in Ibn Hajar's explanation of the verse "And follow in their footsteps, for they shall be questioned" in his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 90, suggests.
8. This is quoted by al-Tabrani who discusses the hadith of the Two Weighty Things, and he is quoted by Ibn Hajar when the latter explains the meaning of this verse of Chapter Four: "And follow in their foot steps, for they shall be questioned," a verse which he discusses in Chapter 11 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 89.
9. This is quoted by a group of authors of books of traditions from Abu Tharr, and it is transmitted by Imam al-Sabban while enumerating the excellences of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام in his work Is'af al-Raghibin, and by Shaykh Yusuf al-Nabhani on page 31 of Al-Sharaf al-Mu'abbad, and by many other authorities. It is a text which enforces their leadership and implies that guidance to righteousness can be attained only through them.
10. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Al-Awsat as transmitted by al-Sayyuti in his Ihya'ul Mayyit; by al-Nabhani in his Forty Forty [ahadith]; by Ibn Hajar in his chapter discussing enjoining their love in Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, in addition to many other renowned authorities; so, consider his statement: 'Nobody's good deeds will avail him unless he is mindful of our rights,'

then tell me what these rights are, the ones that are considered by Allah as prerequisites to the acceptance of good deeds. Is it not obeying them and attaining Allah's Pleasure through following their RIGHT PATH? What is the commandment to which both Prophethood and caliphate attach such a great significance? But we have simply been inflicted by people who do not contemplate; so, "We are Allah's, and unto Him is our return."

11. This is quoted by the judge 'Iyaz in a chapter explaining the fact that to venerate the Prophet ﷺ and be worthy of pleasing him is to please his progeny and descendants, as indicated at the beginning of page 40, Part Two, of the book titled Al-Shifa which was printed in Istanbul in 1328 A.H. You know that "knowing" them in this text does not mean just knowing their names and persons, and that they are kin of the Messenger of Allah, for even Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab knew all of that, but it means recognizing the fact that they are the authorities after the Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, as he himself has said: "Whoever dies not knowing the Imam of his time surely dies the death of Jahiliyya," and the meaning of loving them and their wilayat is the love and wilayat that are obligatory upon "those who follow righteousness," i.e. the Imams of Truth, a fact that is quite obvious.
12. This is so due to the fact that Allah has granted them a special status which requires obedience to them. Loving them as such is rewardable. This hadith is quoted by al-Tabrani from Ibn 'Abbas, and it is transmitted by al-Sayyuti in his Ihya'ul Mayyit, and by al-Nabhani in his Al-Arba'in, besides many other renowned authorities.
13. This is quoted by al-Tabrani and al-Hakim, and it also exists in Nabhani's Al-Arba'in, in Sayyuti's Ihya'ul Mayyit and in others. This hadith is akin to his saying, peace be upon him and his progeny, as in one hadith which you have already heard, "By the One in Whose Hands my life is, nobody's good deeds will be of any avail without recognizing our right." If hating them is not hating Allah and His Messenger, the good deeds of those

who hate them would not have been rendered vain even if they spend their life between the Rukn and the Maqam [of Ibrahim, as] praying and supplicating; even then, they would not have enjoyed such a status. Al-Hakim and Ibn Hayyan, in his sahih, as stated in Nabhani's Al-Arba'in Arba'in and Sayyuti's Ihya'ul Mayyit, from Imam al-Hasan, the Prophet's grandson, who said to Mu'awiyah ibn Khadij once: "Beware of hating us, we Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, for the Messenger of Allah has said: 'Whoever hates or envies us would be pushed away from the Pool [Kawthar] with whips of fire.'" The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, delivered a sermon once and said: "O People! Anyone who hates us, we Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment as a Jew." This hadith is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Al-Awsat as stated in al-Sayyuti's Ihya'ul Mayyit and Nabhani's Al-Arba'in Arba'in and in other books.

14. This is quoted by Imam al-Tha'labi in his explanation of the verse enjoining the love of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ in Al-Tafsir al-Kabir from Jarir ibn 'Abdullah al-Bijli from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. Al-Zamakhshari takes its authenticity for granted in his own exegesis of the same verse in his book Al-Kashshaf; so, refer to it.
15. Al-Malla has recorded it in the second maqsad of Chapter 14 of the Holy Qur'an in his own Chapter 11 of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
16. This is quoted by 'Abdul-Ghani ibn Sa'd in his Eizah al-Ishkal. It is hadith 6050 of the ones included in Kanz al-'Ummal at the end of page 396, Vol. 6.
17. These two couplets of al-Shafi'i are very well-known and in wide circulation. Many trustworthy authorities have taken this fact for granted, indicating that he is the one who has composed them. Among them are: Ibn Hajar, who quotes them while explaining the verse "Allah and His angels send prayers unto the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ," on page 88 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; al-Nabhani on page 99 of his Al-Sharaf al-Mu'abbad, Imam Abu Bakr ibn Shihabud-Din in his Rashfatul Sadi, and by many others.

Discussions

No argument to date

An astute reader would have been attentive to the obvious lack of evidence from the common legacy. All that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has managed to bolster up thus far amount to nothing more than a series of sermons attributed to Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ from a fourth century anthology of literature. In addition to the logical fallacy of circular reasoning, these texts cannot be objectively proven to be the words of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. In arguing for the legal authority of the Ahl al-Bayt ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn resorted to the famous Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn. He pursued the angle of mass-transmission (*Tawātur*) with the aim of according this narration absolute reliability (*Qaṭ’ī al-Thubūt*) within the framework of Uṣūl al-Fiqh. This theory, however, has been proven false in the course of the previous discussion. The authentic Ḥadīth, narrated by way of Zayd ibn Arqam, in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, further confirms that the textual implication of the Ḥadīth does not support the theory that the Ahl al-Bayt yield legal authority or have divine mandate.

Forgeries within forgeries

In the opening passages of his introduction ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has committed to only supporting his position with either rational arguments or ‘authenticated quotations from both groups.’¹

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s tale of fiction has unfolded in a unique dimension. The evidence upon which his arguments rest is no less fictional than the correspondence itself. His correspondence comprises of 15 narrations from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ which, he alleges, are acceptable by both parties and decisive in proving beyond any doubt that the Ahl al-Bayt are the absolute religious authority after the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. This is followed with a quote from ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and excerpts of poetry which supposedly support this claim.

1 *Shī‘ī Sunnī dialogue*, pg. 23

It is farfetched that a senior ranking scholar would have been oblivious of the glaring forgeries that form the basis of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s arguments. While much can be said of what the Shaykh al-Azhar might—or might not—have known, our task, for the next few pages, is to scrutinize the narrations which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has painstakingly listed in his round of correspondence.

The first narration

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has cited the narration by way of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, “Let whoever is pleased to live like me...”

This narration has been ascribed to *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī and al-Rāfiʿī.

Let us begin by pointing out that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn actually cites this narration from a secondary source, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, which we have previously discussed. This particular narration could not be traced to al-Ṭabarānī’s *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*. However, it appears by way of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه in two later sources. It has been recorded by Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī in *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ*¹, and by Ibn ‘Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq*². Ibn ‘Asākir narrates it by way of Abū Nuʿaym, the chain is as follows:

Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad — Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh — Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar — **Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm** — Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Sulaym — **‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Imrān ibn Abī Laylā** — **Yaʿqūb ibn Mūsā al-Hāshimī** — Ibn Abī Rawwād — Ismāʿīl ibn Umayyah — ‘Ikrimah — Ibn ‘Abbās.

The editor of *al-Murājaʿāt* went to great pains to lay on the references, citing numerous sources including *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ*. However, he conveniently omitted Abū Nuʿaym’s comment after presenting the narration.

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyāʾ* vol. 1, pg. 86

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42, pg. 241

Abū Nu‘āym indicated the unreliability of the narration saying, “*Gharīb* (This is an unsubstantiated ḥadīth).”¹

After Ibn ‘Asākir narrated it in his *Tārīkh* he had this to say about it, “This is a dubious ḥadīth with more than one unknown narrator.”²

All those in bold are narrators whose status in terms of reliability remains a mystery due to their anonymity as narrators of ḥadīth.

Was ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn so desperate that he resorted to a narration that has not only been declared unreliable by those who record it, but is riddled with flaws in that the bulk of those who narrate this ḥadīth are unknowns?

The second narration

This narration is cited by way of Ziyād ibn Muṭarrif and is ascribed to al-Matir (the correct name is Muṭayyin)³, al-Bārūdī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Mandah, and Ibn Shāhīn.

It appears that he relied entirely on *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, since the reference provided by the editor corresponds to the Hyderabad edition of the book. In this edition the name Muṭayyin is spelled incorrectly. This could easily have been the result of an unclear manuscript since the letter *Rā’* could easily be mistaken for a *Nūn*.⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn painstakingly recorded this narration, along with its error, from *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* yet he deliberately ignored the comments of ‘Alī Muttaqī immediately thereafter! ‘Alī Muttaqī declared this narration substantially weak!⁵

Al-Haytamī cites this narration in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*⁶ stating that it is sometimes narrated by way of Ziyad ibn Mutarrif, from the Prophet ﷺ and some

1 *Al-Hilyah*, vol. 1, p. 86

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 42, pg. 241

3 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol. 6, pg. 155

4 (مَطِيرٌ - مُطَيْرٌ)

5 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol. 6 pg. 155

6 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9, pg. 108

versions include Zayd ibn Arqam between Ziyad and the Prophet ﷺ. He goes on to point out that the common narrator in this chain, Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī, is weak.

In his compendium on the biographies of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, under the biography of Ziyad ibn Mutarrif, ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī analysed this narration and declared it weak on account of the same narrator, Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā. However, it appears that ibn Ḥajar had a lapse of concentration, and when clarifying which Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā, he wrote Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Muḥāribī instead of al-Aslamī.

The editor of *al-Murāja‘āt* used this oversight to give a new spin to this narration. He inferred that the narration was only declared weak on account of this single narrator. However, the experts seem to have confused him with someone with a similar name suggesting that the narration ought to be accepted. These are his words:

This is strange coming from al-‘Asqalani, for Yahya ibn Ya‘li, according to the consensus of scholars of hadith, is quite trustworthy. In his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari quotes his ahadith related to the Hudaibiya treaty.

This crafty manouevre is further confirmation of the fact that the contents of *al-Murāja‘āt* were known forgeries since a little investigation reveals that Ibn Ḥajar himself grades al-Muḥāribī reliable. He said, “Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā ibn al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāribī al-Kūfī; a reliable narrator.” Then, under the biography of al-Aslamī he writes, “Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī al-Kūfī; a Shī‘ī and a weak narrator.”¹

Al-Dhahabī lists Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī in his encyclopaedia of weak narrators, *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl*, and quotes al-Bukhari, who declared him *Muḍṭarib* (confused).

He also cites Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who considered Yaḥyā weak.

Al-Dhahabī goes on to explain that Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī was known to have transmitted many disreputable narrations.²

1 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* by Ibn Ḥajar, vol. 2, p. 319

2 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 4, pg. 415

The third narration

This narration has been cited by way of Zayd ibn al-Arḡam, and has been referenced to *al-Mustadrak* quoting his verification. Likewise it has been attributed to al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*, and Abū Nuʿaym in *Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥābah*. Thereafter reference is given to *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl*.

The truth is that it is essentially the same narration as the one before it. The common narrator is Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿlā al-Aslamī. All that this narration proves is that he used to muddle his narrations. So sometimes he would narrate this by way of Ziyād, from the Prophet ﷺ directly, and other times from Ziyād ibn Muṭarrif, from Zayd ibn Arḡam, from the Prophet ﷺ.

The narration in *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* is by way of:

ʿAlī ibn Saʿīd al-Rāzī — Ibrahīm ibn ʿĪsā al-Tanūkhī — **Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿlā al-Aslamī** — ʿAmmār ibn Zurayq — **Abū Ishāq (al-Sabīʿī)** — Ziyād ibn Muṭarrif — Zayd ibn Arḡam — (and sometimes Zayd was omitted).¹

The narrations appears with the following chain in *al-Mustadrak*:

Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣayrafī — Ishāq — **al-Qāsim ibn Abī Shaybah** — **Yaḥyā ibn Yaʿlā al-Aslamī** — ʿAmmār ibn Zurayq — **Abū Ishāq (al-Sabīʿī)** — Ziyād ibn Muṭarrif — Zayd ibn Arḡam.

Conveniently, al-Dhahabī’s rectification of al-Ḥākim has been omitted, despite ʿAlī al-Muttaqī clearly stating this after referencing this narration to al-Ḥākim’s *Mustadrak*. In his gloss on *al-Mustadrak*, al-Dhahabī says:

How could this possibly be declared authentic whereas al-Qāsim is abandoned (because of accusation of forgery), and his teacher, Yaḥyā, is weak! Its wording is poor. On the contrary it appears to be a fabrication.²

1 *Al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* vol. 5, pg. 220

2 *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 1418

Abū Nu‘aym narrates it with his chain to Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī, who narates it with the same chain.¹

The discussion on Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā preceded in the discussion on the second narration. It is clear for all to see that he is the common narrator, and it is on account of him that this narration is unreliable.

However, there is another angle to this narration and that is Abū Ishāq al-Sabī‘ī who, despite being a reliable narrator in general, was known for *Tadlīs*, which was in the form of omitting the name of his teacher in such a way that it would appear that he narrates from someone higher in the chain. To overcome this problem, the scholars would look out for the narrations in which he narrates it without using the phrase “from”. Instead he would be required to transmit it in such a way that eliminates the possibility of omission. Furthermore, his memory lapsed in his old age and the later scholars were cautious about what he narrated after his memory lapse.²

Considering all the factors above it is evidently clear why these narrations are unreliable.

The fourth narration

This has been narrated by way of ‘Ammar ibn Yasir and the reference in the footnote is from *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, attributing this narration to *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī and *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn ‘Asākir.

It appears that this narration is to be found in the sections of *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* which are no longer extant. However, we were able to trace this narration through *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* to *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*. It comes as no surprise to read the comment of Al-Haytamī:

1 *Al-Ḥilyah* vol.4 , pg.3 49-350

2 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 5, pg. 431

Al-Ṭabarānī relates this with two chains, the better of which comprises of a series of unreliable narrators, some of whom there is a divided opinion.¹

Thankfully, the common narrator for this particular ḥadīth has been quoted in *al-Kanz*;² Abū 'Ubaydah ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ammār ibn Yāsir, who narrates from his father, from his grandfather. Having this part of the narration made it easier to trace from other sources.

Ibn 'Adī has recorded this narration in his anthology of unreliable narrators, *al-Kāmil fī Ḍu'afā' al-Rijāl*, under the biography of Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi'.³

He transmits it with his chain as follows:

Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn Fuḍayl — 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk — Ibn 'Ayyāsh — **Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi'** — Abū 'Ubaydah ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ammār ibn Yāsir — his father — his grandfather

Ibn 'Asākir narrates it with a number of chains to **Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi'**, and the rest of the chain remains the same.⁴

Al-Dhahabī included him his book on unreliable narrators, *Mīzān al-I'tidāl*, and quotes al-Bukhārī saying that the scholars considered him significantly weak.

Abū Ḥātim is on record saying that he is severely criticised as a narrator.

Al-Dhahabī ends off his biographical note with a statement from Ibn 'Adī who said that he is considered among the Shī'ah of Kūfah.⁵

1 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol.9 pg. 109

2 *Kanz al-'Ummāl* vol.6 pg. 155

3 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 7 pg. 273

4 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42, pg. 239-240, vol. 52, pg 7

5 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 3pg. 634-635

The fifth narration

This narration is also by way of ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir. The reference to *al-Mu‘jām al-Kabīr* is given via *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* and the chain is also provided.

Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Ubaydah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir —
from his father — from his grandfather — from ‘Ammār.¹

The narration could not be traced via *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, so it appears that this is the second chain that he was referring to when he commented on the ḥadīth under our discussion on the fourth narration.

Fortunately we were able to trace the chain via al-Ṭabarānī through *Tārīkh Dimashq*². The chain is as follows:

Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥaddād — Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Rīdhah — Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī — **Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah** — **Aḥmad ibn Ṭāriq al-Wābīshī** — ‘Amr ibn Thābit — **Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Ubaydah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir** — his father — his grandfather — ‘Ammār.

Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah

He is a narrator about whom the critics are divided. Some have accepted his narrations while others have severely criticised him. Those that argue for accepting his narrations have presented a fair case, although the criticism cannot be completely ignored. As such, his narrations are borderline acceptable.³

Aḥmad ibn Ṭāriq al-Wābīshī

The issue with Aḥmad ibn Ṭāriq al-Wābīshī is his anonymity. His status as a narrator is unknown. All that we have found on him—despite extensive searching—is that

1 *Al-Kanz* vol. 6 pg. 155

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42, pg. 239

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 7, pg. 340-342

Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from him. The protocol of the expert scholars is to refrain from accepting a narration from a narrator whose details remain anonymous. As such, their narrations are treated as unreliable unless there is external evidence to suggest the reliability of such a narration. Considering this principle, and the fact that Aḥmad ibn Ṭāriq al-Wābishī remains unknown, these are sufficient grounds to dismiss this narration.

‘Amr ibn Thābit

‘Amr ibn Thābit is a famous Shī‘ī from Kūfah.

- Yahyā ibn Ma‘īn said of him that he is worth nothing.
- Al-Nasā‘ī held him in contempt and said that he is severely impugned.
- Ibn Ḥibbān accused him of narrating forgeries.
- Finally, Abū Dāwūd pointed him out as an extremist among the Shī‘ah of Kūfah.¹

Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Ubaydah.

Finally, no details could be found on Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Ubaydah. Which means his status is indeterminate. As such, the same principle will apply as with Aḥmad ibn Ṭāriq al-Wābishī, above.

This narration is, therefore, found wanting in terms of its chain. Just like its predecessor, it suffers with a series of flaws in terms of the status of the narrators who transmit it. By no means would such a narration meet the criteria of acceptance. It remains on the list of forgeries that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn so neatly gathered.

1 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3, pg. 249

The sixth narration

This narration appears without any chain of transmission in later sources. The reference to *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah* is of no consequence after we have demonstrated that it goes contrary to academic practise to rely entirely on a secondary source. The absence of any chain makes it nearly impossible to verify objectively.

Technical issues aside, if we consider this 'sermon', assuming its reliability, it speaks of devotion to the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ. Naturally, this excludes 'Alī رضي الله عنه as he is not from the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ. In his haste to fill his list of narrations, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn overlooked this detail—that 'Alī رضي الله عنه is excluded from the children of the Prophet ﷺ.

If we turned a blind eye to that for a moment, we ought to consider that this narration appears in such an obscure source. That is sufficient to raise the eyebrow of even a novice student. Are we to believe that someone who enjoys the academic prestige of Shaykh al-Azhar would accept such narrations without objection?

The seventh narration

Just like the narration before it. This narration is ascribed to a late source without any chain of narration to verify it against. This narration is ascribed to the *Sīrah* of Mullā 'Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir al-Mawṣilī al-Dimashqī, who lived in the sixth century and was a contemporary of the famous Ayyūbid Sulṭān, Nūr al-Dīn al-Shahīd. This work of his was printed in Hyderabad under the title *Wasīlat al-Muta'abbidīn*, though it remains incomplete.

Furthermore, if we consider the purport of the ḥadīth it stands in stark contrast to reality since the transmission of the Prophetic Sunnah was not accomplished exclusively at the hands of the Ahl al-Bayt. As a matter of fact there exists no single chain of transmission of the Qur'ān which is transmitted exclusively by the

Ahl al-Bayt. The ḥadīth found in the books of the Twelver Shī'ah are also narrated from other than the Ahl al-Bayt. This ḥadīth, if proven correct, deals a deathblow to the concept of *Ghaybah* (occultation). The Ghaybah of the twelfth Imām is a violation of this ḥadīth since the adherents to the teachings attributed to these Twelve Imāms have been leaderless for nearly a millenium. The masses have no option but making Taqlīd of the Shī'ī Marja's.

If we consider the text of this narration, “In every successive generation of my nation there are members of my Household who possess religious integrity, they safeguard this religion from the distortion of those who are misguided and the false interpretation of the ignorant...,” it appears that we, the Ahl al-Sunnah are warding off the false attribution of these narrations to the Prophet ﷺ. We have sufficiently demonstrated the extent of unreliability of these narrations. The paradox is that the ones who—by virtue of this narration—ought to be preserving the religion from distortions are the ones guilty of collecting all these unreliable narrations and presenting them as the basis for one's religion.

The eighth narration

This narration is attributed to Zayd ibn Arqam and is referenced to *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī, via *al-Ṣawā'iq*.

In *Majma' al-Zawā'id* Al-Haytamī has pointed out that this is merely an extension of Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn. Only that this addition is exclusively narrated by way of Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr who is unreliable.¹ This narration appears twice in *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*² with a common chain by way of:

‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr al-Ghanawī — Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr — Abū al-Ṭufayl
— Zayd ibn Arqam.

1 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 9, pg. 164

2 *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* vol.3 pg. 66 , vol. 5 pg. 166

‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr

- He was declared weak by al-Sājī.
- Abū Ḥātim said that he was from the Shī‘ah.
- Ibn ‘Adī point out some of his baseless narrations.
- Al-Dhahabī graded him spurious.¹

Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr

- He was declared weak and inconsistent by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.²
- Al-Nasā’ī said that he is not strong.³
- Al-Dāraquṭnī stated that he was severely impugned, *Matrūk* (suspected of forgery).⁴
- Abū Dāwūd stated that his narrations were worth nothing.⁵
- Ibn Ḥibbān included him in his encyclopaedia on unreliable narrators, *al-Majrūhīn*, and said that he was a fanatic Shī‘ī.⁶

This chain is therefore significantly unreliable and is inadmissible as proof.

The ninth narration

This narration has been attributed to Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه and is said to be narrated by a number of scholars who compiled Sunan works. What is surprising is that the editor of *al-Murāja‘āt* could only provide references to much later works which have been authored on the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt. The academic rigour in some

1 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 399, *al-Mughnī fi al-Ḍu‘afā’* vol.1 pg. 333

2 *Al-Ḍu‘afā’* vol. 1 pg. 230

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol.1 pg. 583

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ibid*

6 *Al-Majrūhīn*, vol. 1, pg. 246

of these works is sometimes found wanting in many respects. However, that does not obviate the requirement of providing genuine references.

The expert eighth century Ḥadīth scholar, al-Mizzī, has compiled an index of all the narrations found in the six famous Ḥadīth compilations called *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf*. He arranged the book according to the Ṣaḥābī who narrates the Ḥadīth, listing them in alphabetical sequence. We have gone through the entire section with the Aḥādīth of Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه but were unable to locate this narration. Similarly, it cannot be found in the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad as well, who has arranged the aḥādīth according to the Ṣaḥābī who narrates it. Eventually, the narration was found through the aid of *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, wherein Al-Haytamī references this narration to Salmān al-Fārisī by way of al-Ṭabarānī. However, this narration is a statement of Salmān رضي الله عنه and is not ascribed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Secondly, Al-Haytamī points out another significant issue; an extremely unreliable narrator appearing in the chain of this narration.

The narrator in question is Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir.

Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir

- Al-Haytamī states is extremely unreliable, suspected of forgery.¹
- Al-Dhahabī lists him in *al-Mīzān*² identifying him as Abu al-Jārūd, Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir, to whom the *Jārūdiyyah* sect is ascribed.
- Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn clearly pointed him out as a liar.
- Al-Nasāʾī graded him as suspected of forgery.
- Ibn Ḥibbān is quoted as saying that he was a fanatic Shīʿī who fabricated narrations regarding the virtues of some, and alleged pitfalls of others.

The narrations being presented appear to be increasingly compromised even though all of them cannot be reliably attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

1 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 9 pg. 172

2 *Al-Mīzān* vol.2 pg. 93

The tenth narration

This narration is cited by way of Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and is referenced to *al-Mu‘jam al-Aswaṭ* of al-Ṭabarānī.

Al-Haytamī lists it in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*¹ and confirms that it is in *al-Awsaṭ*. However he points out a weak narrator, **Layth ibn Abī Sulaym** among others.

The narration is found in *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*² with the following chain:

Ḥarb ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭaḥḥān — **Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Ashqar** — Qays ibn al-Rabī — **Layth ibn Abī Sulaym** — Ibn Abī Laylā — Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī.

Ḥarb ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭaḥḥān

- Ibn Ḥajar quotes al-Azdī’s grading of Ḥarb; ‘not all that.’ He then mentions that Ibn Ḥibbān included him in his book *Al-Thiqāt*.³

Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Ashqar

- He has been discredited by al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur‘ah—who considered him completely unreliable—and Abū Ḥātim.
- Al-Jūzajānī calls him an extremist Shī‘ī accused of cursing the Companions.
- Ibn ‘Adī has pointed out the fact that he was known to have narrated many baseless narrations.⁴

Layth ibn Abī Sulaym ibn Zunaym

He is Layth ibn Abī Sulaym ibn Zunaym, al-Qurashī, Abū Bakr, a Kūfan.

1 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol.9 pg. 172

2 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* vol. 2 pg. 360

3 *Lisān al-Mizān* vol.3 pg. 8

4 *Mizān al-‘tidāl* vol.1 pg. 531

- ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad, relates from his father, “Irreconcilable inconsistency in what he narrates, however some have narrated from him.”¹
- Ibn Ma‘īn² said of him, “Weak. Although, his narrations may be recorded.”
- Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd did not narrate from him, and Ibn ‘Uyaynah considered weak the narrations of Layth ibn Abī Sulaym. Ibn Abī Ḥātim said, “I heard my father and Abū Zur‘ah saying, ‘Layth ibn Abī Sulaym is fairly weak, his narrations are not independently authoritative according to the scholars of Ḥadīth.’”³
- Ibn Sa‘d has said, “He was a man of righteousness and worship, he was weak as a narrator. It is said he would ask ‘Aṭā’, Ṭāwūs, and Mujāhid about something and they would differ. However, he would—unintentionally—narrate it as though they were in agreement.”⁴
- Ibn Ḥibbān said in *al-Majrūhīn*, “His memory failed him towards the end of his life, he would switch the chains, and connect the interrupted chains, and relate from the reliable narrators that which has not been narrated by them. Al-Qaṭṭān abandoned him [his narrations], as well as Ibn Maḥdī, Ibn Ma‘īn, and Aḥmad.”
- Al-Tirmidhī said, “Muḥammad said that Aḥmad would say of Layth that his narrations were not pleasing. Muḥammad said that Layth is truthful, but makes mistakes.”⁵
- Al-Hākim Abū Aḥmad said, “He is not strong according to them.”
- Al-Hākim Abū ‘Abd-Allah said, “It is unanimous among them that he has a weak memory.”
- Al-Jūzajānī said, “His narrations are considered weak.”⁶

As such, this narration cannot be relied on as well

1 *Al-Ḍu‘afā al-Kabīr* vol.4 pg. 16

2 *Tārīkh ibn Ma‘īn* narration of al-Dūrī vol. 1 pg. 158

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol.7 pg. 178

4 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* vol. 6 pg. 349

5 *Al-‘Ilal al-Kabīr* (293), *al-Tahdhīb* vol. 8 pg. 418

6 *Aḥwāl al-Rijāl* (biography 91)

The eleventh narration

This narration is ascribed to *al-Shifā* of al-Qaḍī ‘Iyāḍ al-Yaḥṣubī. Unfortunately it has not been narrated with any chain, nor has al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ commented on the reliability of this narration in any way.

This is not as significant as the fact that al-Qāḍī cited this narration under the chapter that states that part of reverence for the Prophet ﷺ and fulfilling his rights is to be dutiful to his family, wives, and children. Then he cites the famous *Āyat al-Taṭhīr* in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn omitted the mention of wives from the quotation from *al-Shifā* with clinical precision, even though al-Qāḍī mentions it.

The editor saw it fit to take advantage of this narration and gifted the Sunnī’s another narration from Shī‘ sources which states that those who die, not acknowledging the Imām of their time die on Jāhiliyyah. So much for Shī‘-Sunnī unity!

The twelfth narration

This narration has been related by way of Ibn ‘Abbās and is referenced to *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī.

Al-Haytamī lists it in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*¹ and he confirms it from *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* by way of Ibn ‘Abbās. However he points out the fact that this version of the narration is only known by way of **Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Ashqar** who is severely weak.

The details of this narrator preceded under the discussion on the tenth narration.²

1 *Al-Majma‘* vol. 10 pg. 346

2 Refer to Pg 142 of this book.

The severe weakness of this narrator is further compounded by the fact that an authentic version of this ḥadīth contradicts what is mentioned in this version.

Al-Tirmidhī narrates by way of Abū Barzah al-Aslamī رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

The feet of the slave of Allah shall not move [on the Day of Judgement] until he is asked about his life and what he did with it, about his knowledge and how he practised on it, about his wealth, how he earned it and where he spent it; and about his body and for what did he wear it out.¹

Al-Tirmidhī graded this as authentic and provided corroborating narrations as well.

We can thus conclude that the narration brought by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is baseless due to the severity of weakness in the narrator of that chain, added to it contradicting what has been authentically narrated and corroborated by other narrations.

The thirteenth narration

This narration is related by way of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما and is referenced to al-Ṭabarānī and the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim.

Upon investigation we become aware of two interesting details. Firstly, the wording presented by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is significantly truncated. The complete narration begins with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم addressing the entire Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. The complete narration indicates who is meant by the Ahl al-Bayt in this context, namely the entire Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. This includes the family of ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

Secondly, the purport of this sermon is clearly a warning against bearing enmity for the Ahl al-Bayt; hereby inferring the necessity of loving them and upholding

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb Šifat al-Qiyāmah*, ḥadīth no. 2417

their rights. However, there is nothing to indicate a divine mandate according to their legal authority.

The Ahl al-Sunnah find no dilemma in distinguishing between loving the Ahl al-Bayt and accepting them as a religious authority. As a matter of fact, there are leagues between warning against animosity for the Ahl al-Bayt and granting them a legal mandate. However, in the Shī'ah paradigm not accepting their legal authority is perceived as hatred for them. The predicament that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn faces—and all the Imāmiyyah for that matter—is proving the legal authority of Ahl al-Bayt.

As far as loving the Ahl al-Bayt is concerned and revering them, there is no arguing that these are not only acknowledged, but upheld by the Ahl al-Sunnah. Furthermore, ignorance of this dichotomy is very hard to imagine from someone who holds the position of Shaykh al-Azhar.

The next challenge faced by the Twelver Shī'ah is restricting the comprehensive term, Ahl al-Bayt, to specific individuals. Therefore we find the sequence in which the Shī'ah string their theory of Imāmah is to begin with reliable narrations which are vague, inexplicit, and mention the excellence of the Ahl al-Bayt. The next step is to assign a predetermined understanding to those texts, by subjecting them to unreliable narrations which suggest the predetermined meaning. The unreliable texts are then elevated in status to acceptable, and then based on their sheer number, they are further elevated to the status of *Tawātur*. These '*Mutawātir*' narrations are then further twisted by the fabricated narrations which identify specific individuals whom they have annointed as infallible Imāms.

That being said, let us reveal our findings after studying the chains of the narrations cited by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn.

The chain in both *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*¹ and *al-Mustadrak*² have a common narrator from whom the chain continues until the Prophet ﷺ.

1 *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 176

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg.148, 149

Ismā'īl ibn Abī Uways — **his father** — Ḥumayd ibn Qays — 'Aṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ — ibn 'Abbās

Al-Ḥākim graded it Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ, on the criteria of Muslim, and al-Dhahabī concurs.¹

The grading of al-Ḥākim, and al-Dhahabī's concurring, has raised an eyebrow in this case, since Muslim does not transmit from Ismā'īl ibn Abī Uways, from his father. Infact he does not narrate from the father except in a supporting narration to corroborate it. As such, it cannot be said to be on the criteria of Muslim. Al-Dhahabī attests to this himself in his *Mīzān*.

He goes on to list the critical reviews on Abū Uways, 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī 'Āmir al-Madanī, the father of Ismā'īl ibn Abī Uways:

- Aḥmad and Yaḥyā, “Weak.” At another place Yaḥyā states, “He is not Thiqaḥ (one who combines integrity and competency).” And at yet another place he states, “There is no problem with him.”
- Ibn Maḍīnī, “Our companions considered him weak.”
- Abū Dāwūd, “He is fair.”
- Al-Nasā'ī, “He is not strong.”²

These we can see that the opinions were divided on whether he was on the higher level of weak narrators, or the lowest level of acceptable narrators. As such, his narrations would be accepted in a secondary capacity, when they are corroborated by other narrations.

These are further confirmed by Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī who says:

He is *ṣadūq* (trustworthy), though he makes mistakes.³

1 Ibid

2 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 450

3 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. (3412)

He also listed a group of scholars have graded him weak on account of his poor memory to the extent that Abū Ḥātim said:

His narrations are to be recorded but not relied upon independently. He is not strong.¹

Al-Haytamī has listed two other chains for this narration, both from al-Ṭabarānī. We were unable to locate the narration in al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, so we have no resort but to rely on the details provided in *Majma' al-Zawā'id*.²

After quoting it from Ibn 'Abbās he states:

Al-Ṭabarānī has narrated it from his teacher—Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Ghallābī—and he is weak. Ibn Ḥibbān included him in *Al-Thiqāt*.³

Al-Dāraquṭnī accused him of forging ḥadīth and al-Dhahābī criticised him strongly.⁴

The second narration is in *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, from 'Abd Allāh ibn Ja'far who says that 'Abbās رضي الله عنه approached the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم complaining that people avoided his company. Thereupon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم allegedly said, “By He in whose hands lies my life, none of them truly believes unless they love you for my sake...” Al-Ṭabarānī goes on to say, “This narration is not transmitted from 'Abd Allāh ibn Ja'far except with this chain.”⁵

After quoting this narration Al-Haytamī adds:

Appearing in this chain is Aṣram ibn Ḥawshab and he is abandoned (accused of lying).

1 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol.5 pg. 281

2 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol.9 pg. 171

3 *Ibid*

4 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol.3 pg. 550

5 *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ* vol. 5 pg. 52

His biographical sketch in al-Dhahabī's *Mizān al-I'tidāl* reflects the same conclusion.¹

If we consider the fact that these narrations which might be cited as corroboration for the narration by way of Ismā'īl ibn Abī Uways, from Ibn 'Abbās; we realise that they are severely weak and do not meet the standards of support and corroboration. As such, the narration of Ibn 'Abbās with the chain from Ismā'īl ibn Abī Uways remains a solitary narration and falls short of the grade of reliability.

The editor sought to lend further support to this narration and he listed a further four narrations, all of which suffer from weak or unknown narrators.

As a final comment on this narration, we reiterate our preceding comments. The Ahl al-Sunnah have always maintained a policy of loving the Ahl al-Bayt, this concept is maintained in this narration. The narration suggest nothing further in terms of conferring legal authority on the Ahl al-Bayt, just as it does not limit the application of Ahl al-Bayt to specific individuals among them. All those who accepted Islam from the Prophet's ﷺ family are deserving of love and respect.

The fourteenth narration

This narration is only found by way of the *Tafsīr* of al-Tha'labī. Al-Zamakhsharī did not mention his source, but it was most likely al-Tha'labī.

Any self-respecting scholar would realise that the *Tafsīr* of al-Zamakhsharī does not fit the catchment area for sound narrations not to be found in the major Ḥadīth collections. To this end Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī has done a review of all the narrations appearing in al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf*, called *al-Kāfī al-Shāfī fi Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Kashshāf*. He traced this narration to al-Tha'labī's *Tafsīr* and concluded that the evidence of forgery is quite visible for all to see in this narration.²

1 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol.1 pg. 272

2 *al-Kāfī al-Shāfī* pg 145, Ḥadīth no. 354

Even Ibn Ḥajar Al-Haytamī, who was repeatedly quoted in these letters, concludes that this appears to be a forgery, citing al-Sakhāwī, who in turn relied on Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī.¹ Why was the reference to *al-Ṣawā‘iq* omitted? How does ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn fair in his commitment to rely exclusively on sound narrations?

The fifteenth narration

This narration is ascribed to the *Sīrah* of Mullā ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir al-Mawṣilī al-Dimashqī, via al-Ṣawā‘iq of Ibn Ḥajar Al-Haytamī. We have pointed out earlier that this is a secondary source wherein the chains of transmission have been omitted. It is therefore extremely difficult to evaluate this narration due to the lack of data by which we can verify its authenticity.

That being said, there is nothing objectionable in this narration. The Ahl al-Sunnah maintain that it is a religious duty to love and respect the Ahl al-Bayt. The narration does not suggest that the Ahl al-Bayt are infallible or that they yield legal authority. In fact, it is not much different than the narration which has reached us by way of Anas ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

Loving the Anṣār is a sign of faith and hating them is a sign of hypocrisy.²

Poetry of al-Farazdaq

It is strange that in arguing for the legal authority of the Ahl al-Bayt, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn rests his argument on a poem attributed to a poet who did not even witness the Prophetic Era. If the opinions and statements of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه are not proofworthy, certainly this applies even greater to al-Farazdaq.

Another factor worthy of consideration is: Whom were these verses of poetry composed for? There is no indication that it applies to the Ahl al-Bayt. That is merely assumed. Poets were—and still are—famed for exaggeration in praise.

1 *al-Ṣawā‘iq* pg. 629

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Īmān, ḥadīth no. 17; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, ḥadīth no. 74

Early experts on Arabic literature have suggested that these lines of poetry were added to a poem of his at a later stage. Other experts have pointed out that these verses of poetry were said in praise of a ruler from the Umayyads.

The sixteenth narration

Notwithstanding the fact that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has failed to prove the necessity of accepting the words of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ—that they are binding—he failed to find a strong reference for this narration. As such he relied exclusively on a narration which is found in an extremely obscure origin.

Finally the poetry of al-Shāfi‘ī

These verses have been cited out of context and without seriously considering the flaws in the argument. Similarly, that which is versified in poetry lends itself to contextual meaning.

Al-Shāfi‘ī did not claim the Ahl al-Bayt infallible. Nor did he say that they have the divine mandate to lead the Ummah after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise. All he said is that it suffices the Ahl al-Bayt in honour and virtue that they are included in the salutations of the final sitting in prayer. This is the preferred formula of salutation, known as the *Ṣalāt Ibrāhīmiyyah*. There are other formulas of salutation which clarify who is intended by the Family of Muḥammad in the *Ṣalāt Ibrāhīmiyyah*.

Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā‘idī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates:

عن أبي حميد الساعدي رضي الله عنه قال قالوا يا رسول الله كيف نصلي عليك؟ قال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى أزواجه وذريته كما صليت على آل إبراهيم وبارك على محمد وعلى أزواجه وذريته كما باركت على إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد»

They asked the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ how they were to ask for blessings upon him and he replied that they should say, “O Allah, confer mercy upon Muḥammad, his wives, and his descendants; as You conferred mercy upon the family of Ibrāhīm, and give blessings to Muḥammad, his

wives, and his descendants; as You gave blessings to the family of Ibrāhīm.
You are worthy of Praise and Glorious.¹

We have pointed out numerous times that the religious obligation of loving the Ahl al-Bayt is distinct from conferring upon them the mantle of Imāmah.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Da‘awāt, ḥadīth no. 6360; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt, ḥadīth no. 407

Letter 11

Thul-Qi'da 1329

I. Admiring Our Clear Texts

II. Wondering at Compromising Them With the Majority's Beliefs

III. Asking for Clear Signs from the Book

1. I have been honoured to receive your highly esteemed letter which I found to be authentic in its mainstream, comprehensible. You have filled your bucket to the brim. The flood of your eloquence has surmounted the highest peaks. I have scrutinized your letter very carefully, and I have found you to be far in vision, firm, strong in argument, outspoken.

2. Having deeply considered your argument and dug deep into your proofs, I found myself in a very dangerous situation: When I look into your proofs, I find them convincing. When I consider your explanations, I find them indicative. When I look at the Imams of the Purified 'itra, I find Allah and His Messenger commending their status, highlighting its greatness and prestige.

Then when I look at the majority of Muslims, who represent most of this nation, I find them differing from Ahl Al-Bayt, contrary to the obligation of those proofs. Now I find myself to be split in two parts: one part of me yielding to the proofs, while the other seeking refuge with the majority of Muslims. I have submitted the first to you to lead: it is tame in your hands, while the other has stubbornly rejected you.

3. Could you please, therefore, overcome the latter's stubbornness with convincing proofs from the Book which could curb it and divert it from yielding to the common beliefs? Peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 12

Thul-Qida 1329

I. Qur'ānic Proofs

You, praise to Allah, have studied the Book thoroughly, becoming acquainted with both its obvious and implied meanings. Has there been anyone praised therein like the Purified 'itra? Have its perfect verses described any as “purified from all uncleanness”¹ other than them?

Has the verse of Purification been revealed in honour of anyone else?² Has the perfect Revelation commanded love for any others?³ Has Gabriel brought the verse of Mubahala in praise of anyone else?⁴

Has “Hal Ata” been revealed in praise of others? No! I swear By the Lord Who rightly used it for them, Who is right and fair.⁵

Are they not “Allah’s Rope” concerning whom He has said: “Hold together to Allah’s Rope and do not be divided (Qur’ān, 3:103)”⁶?

And “the truthful” concerning whom He has said: “Be ye all with the Truthful (Qur’ān, 9:119);”⁷

“Allah’s path” about which He has said: “Do not follow different paths else they should divert you from Allah’s path (Qur’ān, 6:153);”⁸

The ones “entrusted with authority among you (Qur’ān, 4:59);”⁹

The “custodians of Revelation” about whom He says: “Ask the custodians of Revelation when you do not know (Qur’ān, 21:7);”¹⁰

The believers about whom He says: “Whoever differs from the Messenger, after guidance has been made clear to him, following paths other than those of the

Believers, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and place him in Hell, what an evil refuge (Qur’ān, 4:115),”¹¹

And the “guides” about whom He says: “You are a warner, and for each nation there is a guide”?¹²

Are they not among those upon whom Allah has showered His blessings and to whom He has referred in the Fatihah and the Glorious Qur’ān saying “Guide us unto the Right Path, the Path of those whom You have blessed,”¹³

and He has also said: “These are with those whom Allah has blessed from among the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous (Qur’ān, 4:69)”?¹⁴

Has He not granted them the general authority? Has He not confined it only to them after the Prophet? Read:

“Your Master is Allah and His Messenger and the Believers who uphold prayers and pay zakat even while prostrating; whoever takes for Master Allah and His Messenger and the Believers, then the Party of Allah are indeed the victorious (Qur’ān, 5:58).”¹⁵

Has He not made salvation for those who repent and do good deeds dependent upon accepting their guided authority, saying: “I am most Forgiving for those who repent, believe, do good deeds, and received guidance (Qur’ān, 20:82)”¹⁶?

Isn’t their wilayat part of the “trust” about which the Almighty says: “ We offered the trust unto the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they all refused to bear it out of extreme fear, then man bore it: he is most unjust, most ignorant (Qur’ān, 33:72)”?¹⁷

Have they not been the “peace” wherein Allah has commanded everyone to enter, saying, “O ye who believe! Enter in peace all of you, and do not follow the steps of Satan (Qur’ān, 2:208)”¹⁸.

Are they not the “blessing” concerning whom Allah the Sublime has said, “You will be questioned on that Day about the Blessing (Qur’ān, 102:8)”¹⁹?

Has not the Messenger of Allah ﷺ been commanded to convey all of this? Has Allah not emphasized conveying it in such a language which sounded like threatening, saying, “O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you, and if you do not do it, then you have not really conveyed His Message at all, and Allah shall protect you from (mischievous) people (Qur’ān, 5:70)”²⁰?

Has not the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, conveyed it on the Ghadir Day, having reached its plains and delivered the Message, whereupon Allah revealed this congratulating verse: “Today have I completed your religion for you, perfected My blessing unto you, and accepted Islam as your religion (Qur’ān, 5:4)”²¹?

Have you noticed what your Lord did with the person who openly denied their authority saying, “O Allah! If this Message is truly from Thee, then let stones fall upon us²² like rain from the skies, or cause a severe torment to befall upon us”? Allah hurled a Sijjil stone at him as He had done with the Fellows of the Elephant. He revealed these verses on that occasion: “

A person questioned about a penalty to befall the unbelievers which cannot be warded off: (a penalty) from Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent (Qur’ān, 70:12).” People will certainly be questioned about such authority when they are resurrected as indicated in the explanation of the verse saying: “And follow in their footsteps, for they have the authority (Qur’ān, 37:24).”²³

There is no room to wonder any longer, then, especially when we discern the fact that their authority has been sanctioned by Allah unto people through His prophets, providing proofs and arguments for it, as indicated by the explanation of His saying:

“And ask the Messengers whom We sent before thee (Qur’ān, 43:45).”²⁴

Nay! Allah has even taken for it a promise on the Day of Alasto from the souls of His creatures even before creating their physical forms, as referred to in this verse:

“When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, making them promise, asking them: ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said: ‘Yes! We testify!’ This is so lest you should say on the Day of Judgment: ‘Of this we were never mindful (Qur’ān, 7:172).’”²⁵

Through their intercession has Allah granted forgiveness to Adam who learned the words of repentance referred to in Chapter 2, Verse 37, of the Holy Qur’ān.²⁶

“Allah does not expose them to torture,”²⁷

for they are the security of the inhabitants of earth and mankind’s means towards Him. They are the ones of whom people are jealous and about whom Allah says:

“Should they feel jealous of them because Allah Has granted them His favours (Qur’ān, 4:54)?”²⁸

They are the ones who are “deeply grounded in knowledge” about whom He says: “Those who are deeply grounded in knowledge say:

‘We believe (Qur’ān, 3:7)!’”²⁹

They are the ones who will be upon the Heights and to whom Allah refers when he says,

“Upon the Heights are men who know all by their marks (Qur’ān, 7:48).”³⁰

They are the men of truth about whom He says:

“Among the Believers are men who fulfilled their promise unto Allah; some of them have passed away, while others are waiting, and they have not changed in the least (Qur’ān, 33:23).”³¹

They are the ones who glorify Allah continuously. About them He has said:

“He is Glorified in the early morning and during the night by men who are not diverted, by either trade or selling, from mentioning Allah, the saying of prayers, or the paying of zakat: they fear the Day when hearts and sights are overturned (Qur’ān, 24:3637).”³²

Their houses are the ones mentioned in Allah’s verses saying:

“In houses which Allah permitted to be elevated and His Name be recited therein.”³³

Allah has made their niche, in Surat An-Nur (Qur’ān, 24:35),³⁴ an example for His own Light:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche, within it is a Lamp: the lamp is enclosed in glass; the glass is as (bright as) a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is wellnigh luminous, though fire scarcely touches it: Light upon Light! Allah guides whom He will to His Light: Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah knows all things.

They are the foremost in accepting the faith and implementing it, and they are the nearest to Allah, as He indicates in Chapter 56, verses 10 and 11.³⁵ They are those who testify to the Prophet’s truthfulness (Qur’ān, 4:69).³⁶ They are the martyrs and the virtuous. Regarding them and their followers has Allah said:

“Among Our creation is a nation calling unto the right guidance through the truth, and they are most just therein” (Qur’ān, 7:181).³⁷

Also, Allah has said the following about their party and about that of their enemies:

“Inhabitants of the Fire are not equal to those of Paradise: inhabitants of Paradise are the victorious.”³⁸

About both parties He has also said:

“Should We treat those who believe and do good deeds as We treat those who cause corruption on earth, or should We equal the virtuous to the corrupt (Qur’ān, 38:28)?”³⁹

He has also said the following verse concerning both parties:

“Do those who commit bad deeds surmise that We will treat them like We treat those who believe and do good deeds, in life and in death? Ill is their judgment.”⁴⁰

About them and their supporters He has said:

“Those who believe and do good deeds are the best of creation (Qur’ān, 98:7).”⁴¹

About them and their adversaries Allah has said:

“These are two opponents who differed regarding their Lord: those who disbelieve will be clothed with clothes of fire: boiling liquid shall be poured on their heads (Qur’ān, 22:19).”⁴²

Regarding them and their enemy, Allah has revealed these verses: “Is this who has been a believer like unto him that who has been an evildoer? They are not equal. As for those who believe and do good deeds, their abode shall be Perpetual Gardens, a reward for their good deeds. As for those who cause corruption, their abode is Hell-fire; every time they want to get out of it, they are turned back into it and is said to them:

“Taste the torment of the Fire in which you disbelieved (Qur’ān, 32:19 20).”⁴³

Concerning them and those who boasted of providing water for the pilgrims and looking after the Haram mosque, Allah has revealed this verse:

“Do you count the providing of the pilgrims with water and the maintenance of the Haram mosque equal to (the value of) those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and fight in the Way of Allah? They are not equal in the eyes of Allah, and Allah does not lead the wrongdoers (Qur’ān, 9:19).”⁴⁴

About their triumph in many trials and the magnitude of their patience, the Almighty says:

“Among people is one who sells his life in return for Allah’s Pleasure; Allah is Clement towards His servants (Qur’ān, 2:207).”⁴⁵

Regarding their endeavour in the way of Allah and their toil, Allah has said:

“Allah has traded the believers’ lives for Paradise: they fight in the Way of Allah and they kill or get killed. It is His true Promise in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur’ān: who fulfils his promise better than Allah? Rejoice, therefore, for your bargain; that is the great victory. Those who turn (to Allah) in repentance, worship Him, and praise Him, wander in devotion to the Cause of Allah, bow down and prostrate in prayer, enjoin goodness and forbid evil, and observe the limits set by Allah (they do rejoice). So, proclaim the glad tidings to the Believers (Qur’ān, 9:111112).”

“Those who (in charity) spend of their possessions by night and by day, in secrecy and in public, have their reward with their Lord: on them there shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Qur’ān, 2:274).”⁴⁶

They truly say only the truth. The Truthful Himself, blessed be His Name, has borne witness to that, saying:

“Those who have brought forth the truth, believing therein, are indeed the God-fearing (Qur’ān, 39:33).”⁴⁷

They are the faithful relatives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his kinfolk, whom Allah Has chosen for His beautiful care and great attention, saying:

“And warn your near in kin (Qur’ān, 26:214).”

They are his relatives, and

“Relatives have the priorities according to the Book of Allah” (Qur’ān, 8:75; see also 33:6).

On Doomsday, they will ascend to his rank and join him in the perpetual gardens of felicity as witnessed by Allah’s statement:

Those who believe and whose families follow them in faith - to them shall We join their families: We shall never deprive them (of the fruit) of aught of their deeds, (yet) each is in pledge for his deeds. (Qur’ān, 52:21)48

They have the right dues as the Qur’ān has stated:

“And give the near in kin his dues (Qur’ān, 17:26),”

and they have the fifth: nobody’s responsibility will be cleared until he defrays it:

“Know ye this: whatever ye obtain of spoils, its fifth goes to Allah, the Messenger, and the (Messenger’s) kinfolk (Qur’ān, 8:41).”

They are the ones upon whom Allah’s favours have been bestowed as implied in this verse:

“What Allah has bestowed on His Apostle - (and taken away) from them - for this ye made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry, but Allah gives power to His apostles over any He pleases, and Allah Has power over all things (Qur’ān, 59:7).”

They are Ahl Al-Bayt addressed by Allah thus:

“Allah desires to remove all abomination from you, Ahl Al-Bayt, and purify you with a perfect purification (Qur’ān, 33:33).”

They are the family of Yasin whom Allah greets in the Glorious Qur’ān thus:

“Peace be unto the family of Yasin (Qur’ān, 37:130).”⁴⁹

And they are the family of Muhammad upon whom greetings and peace have been enforced by Allah Who says:

“Allah and His angels send greetings unto the Prophet: O ye who believe! Send greetings unto him and many salutations (Qur’ān, 33:56).”⁵⁰

Some people asked the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny,

“O Messenger of Allah! We know how to greet you with peace, but how can we greet you with prayers?” He, Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny, answered, “Say: ‘O Allah! Send blessings unto Muhammad and the family of Muhammad,’” according to the hadith. It was then understood then that greeting them was part of the prayers enjoined by this verse. This is why learned men have included the verse quoted above among others in their praise. Ibn Hajar has listed it in part 11 of his *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* among verses in their praise,⁵¹ peace be upon them. A good resort for them and a good reward: Gardens of Eden with gates wide open to receive them.⁵²

Who can compete with them? In the sun is meaning and heat,

Parching, exerting the one who dares to compete.

Allah has chosen them for His favours, and they are the ones who are faster than all others in doing good deeds; they inherit the Book of Allah; about them He has said the following therein:

“Among men is one who wrongs his own self (by ignoring the Imams), and one who seeks righteousness (by following the Imams), and one who is faster than others in doing good deeds by the Will of Allah (who is the Imam himself): this indeed is Allah’s great favour (Qur’ān, 35:32).”⁵³

These verses which demonstrate the Imams’ virtues and merits must suffice. Ibn ‘Abbas has said:

“In praise of ‘Ali alone, three hundred verses were revealed.”⁵⁴

Others say that one fourth of the Holy Qur’ān has been revealed in their praise. This comes as no surprise when we consider the fact that they and the Qur’ān are twin brothers who do not separate from one another.

Be satisfied for now with what we have stated here of the perfect verses of the Holy Qur’ān. Take them easily going and returning, making the advent of morning beams, easily and nicely, forgiving and at ease, from someone very well acquainted therewith, for none can tell you better than one endowed with experience, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes

1. As it ruled in its departure therefrom according to the Almighty’s statement:

“Allah wishes to remove all abomination from you, members of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام and purify you with a perfect purification (Qur’ān, 33:33).”

2. Nay! Nobody else can claim that at all. They have been selected for it; so, nobody can reach their station nor dream of attaining their achievements.

3. Nay! Allah has selected them for it and preferred them over all others, saying:

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘I do not ask you for any reward other than being kind to my kin,’ and whoever attains a good deed [being kind to them], We shall certainly increase him in goodness; verily, Allah is Forgiving [to those who are kind to them], Appreciative [of such kindness] (Qur’ān, 42:23).”

4. Nay! The verse of Mubahala was revealed specifically in their praise. Allah, the Dear One, says therein:

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Let us bring our sons and your sons,... (Qur’ān, 3:61).”

5. This is a reference to the revelation of Ayat al-’Asr (Chapter of Time) regarding them and their foes, and whoever wishes to be familiar with this matter as dealt with in the verse of purification, verse of mubahala, the verse enjoining kindness to the Prophet’s kin, and the verse of time, he must refer to our own statement in this regard, for it is the remedy for every ailment. It brings the foes back to their senses, and it provides knowledge for those who do not know, and praise be to Allah.

6. In his commentary on the meaning of this verse in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, Imam al-Tha’labi quotes Aban ibn Taghlib reporting that Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq عليه السلام has said:

“We are Allah’s rope about which He has said: ‘And uphold Allah’s rope all of you together, and do not be separated (Qur’ān, 3:103).”

Ibn Hajar has included this verse among others revealed in their praise, being the fifth in the series of verses which he enumerates in Chapter 11 of Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa. While explaining its meaning, the author quotes al-Tha’labi, as you have heard above, citing Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. Imam al-Shafi'i is quoted in Rashfatul Sadi by Imam Abu Bakr ibn Shihabud-Din as having said:

When I saw people being carried away to the seas of misguidance and ignorance by their sects,

I boarded, in the Name of Allah, the Ark of Salvation, that is, the Household of the Chosen One, the Seal of Prophets.

And I upheld Allah's Rope, and it is obedience to them, as He has commanded us to uphold to the Rope.

7. The "truthful" here are Allah's Messengers and the Imams of his purified progeny, according to our consecutive sahihs, and as supported by al-Hafiz Abu Na'im and Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad, and transmitted by Ibn Hajar in his explanation of Chapter 5, Section 11, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 90, quoting Imam Zaynul 'Abidin عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in a statement quoted above (see Letter No. 6).
8. Imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ used to always say: "The RIGHT PATH here is the Imam, and do not follow diverse paths (imams of misguidance) for they will divert you from His Path (and we are His Path)."
9. In his authentic sahih, the trusted authority of Muslims, Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni, has quoted Burayd al-'Ajli saying: "I asked Abu Ja'far (Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, as) about the verse saying:

'Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you (Qur'ān, 4:59),'

and he answered me by saying:

'Have you not observed those (Jews) who are given a portion of the (knowledge of the) Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah so that

it might decide between them, then a party among them turns back (therefrom), and they withdraw (Qur'ān, 3:23),'

how they believe in sorcerers and tyrants instead, and how they say to those who disbelieve that they are closer to the Straight Path than the Believers? They tell the imams of misguidance and the callers unto the Fire that their guidance is more accurate than that of Muhammad's progeny;

'Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book has been given? They believe in idols and false deities and say of those who disbelieve: These are better guided in the path than those who believe. Those are they whom Allah has cursed, and whoever Allah curses, you shall never find for them any helper. Or have they a share in the kingdom? But then they would not give people even the speck in a date stone (Qur'ān, 4:51-53),

'nor will they ever own aught of Allah's domain, that is, Imamate and Caliphate, '... or do they envy the people for what Allah has bestowed upon them of His own favours (Qur'ān, 4:54)?'

We are the ones who are envied because of the Imamate which Allah has bestowed upon us rather than anyone else among His creation;

'We bestowed upon the descendants of Ibrahim (Abraham) the Book and the Wisdom, and We provided them with a great kingdom (Qur'ān, 4:54),'

meaning He made some of them messengers, prophets, and imams; so, how can they recognize its existence to the descendants of Ibrahim while denying it to the descendants of Muhammad ﷺ?!"

"Among them are those who believed in it, and among them are those who turned away therefrom, and Hell suffices for a torment (Qur'ān, 4:55)."

10. Explaining this chapter, al-Tha'labi quotes Jabir saying the following in his book Al-Tafsir al-Kabir: "When this Chapter was revealed, 'Ali عليه السلام

said: ‘We are the people of remembrance,’ and this is the case with all the Imams of guidance.’ The Bahraini scholar has quoted in Chapter 35 more than twenty authentic ahadith bearing this meaning.

11. Ibn Mardawayh, in his explanation of this Chapter, has indicated that “... to argue with the Messenger” in this context means to dispute with him regarding ‘Ali عليه السلام, and the guidance referred to in the verse “... after guidance has been made manifest to him” is the guidance provided by ‘Ali, peace be upon him.” In his Tafsir, al-’Ayyashi states something almost similar to this, and the sahihs are consecutive from the sources of the purified progeny in stating that “the path of the believers” is the path of their own (progeny), peace be upon them.
12. Explaining this verse in Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, al-Tha’labi quotes Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “When this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم put his hand over his chest and said: ‘I am the warner and ‘Ali عليه السلام is the guide, and through you, O ‘Ali, guidance is achieved.’” Many scholars of exegesis and authors of books of traditions quote Ibn ‘Abbas and Muhammad ibn Muslim saying: “I asked Abu ‘Abdullah (Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq عليه السلام) about the implications of this verse and he answered: ‘Each Imam is the guide of his time.’ Imam Abu Ja’far al-Baqir has said the following regarding its explanation: ‘The warner is the Messenger of Allah, and the guide is ‘Ali,’ then he adds: ‘By Allah, imamate shall remain with us till the Hour approaches.’”
13. In his exegesis of Surat al-Fatiha, al-Tha’labi, in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, quotes Abu Buraydah saying that “al-sirat al-mustaqim (the Straight Path) is the path of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and his progeny عليهم السلام.” Interpreting this sura, Waki’ ibn al-Jarirah quotes Sufyan al-Thawri through a chain of narrators including al-Sadi, Asht, Mujahid, all quoting Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “‘Guide us to the Straight Path’ means ‘Guide us to the love for Muhammad and his progeny.’”

14. The Imams from among Ahl al-Bayt عليهم السلام are without any argument the masters of siddiqs, martyrs, and the righteous.
15. Scholars of exegesis are unanimous, as al-Qawshaji, imam of the Ash'aris, has admitted in his chapter on "Sharh al-Tajrid," saying that this verse was revealed in honour of 'Ali عليه السلام when he offered charity while engaged in the ceremonial supplication performing the prayers. In his sahih, al-Nisa'i quotes 'Abdullah ibn Salam testifying to its revelation in honour of 'Ali عليه السلام. This view is supported by the author of Al-Jami' Baynal Sihah al-Sitta while explaining Surat al-Ma'ida [Chapter of Table of Viands]. Al-Tha'labi has indicated its revelation in honour of the Commander of the Faithful in his book Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, as we will explain when we discuss it.
16. In Chapter 11, Part One, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, Ibn Hajar states: "The guidance referred to in Chapter 8 which states: 'I am all-Forgiving for those who repent, believe, and do good deeds, then seek guidance,' according to Thabit al-Banni, means the seeking of guidance from the household of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم." This is narrated from Abu Ja'far al-Baqir, too. Ibn Hajar has narrated several ahadith testifying to the salvation of those who seek and act upon their guidance, peace be upon them. He also refers to what he quotes from al-Baqir's statement referring to the conversation between Imam al-Baqir عليه السلام and al-Harith ibn Yahya in which the Imam says: "O Harith! Have you not seen how Allah has made it clear that repentance, belief, and good deeds are not sufficient without seeking guidance from our authority?" then he, peace be upon him, quotes his grandfather the Commander of the Faithful saying: "By Allah! If a man repents, believes, and does good deeds, but he does not seek guidance from our authority, nor recognizes our rights, all of these things will be utterly in vain." Abu Na'im the hafiz quotes Awn ibn Abu Jahufah who in turn quotes his father narrating a similar tradition from 'Ali عليه السلام. Al-Hakim has published similar ahadith from Imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and from Thabit al-Banni and Anas ibn Malik.

17. Refer to the meaning of this verse in Al-Safi, and in ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Tafsir, and to the traditions narrated by Sunnis explaining its meaning as compiled by the Bahraini scholar in Chapter 115 of his work Ghayat al-Maram.
18. In chapter 224 of Ghayat al-Maram, the Bahraini scholar quotes twelve traditions from our sahihs testifying to the fact that this verse was revealed regarding ‘Ali’s government and that of the Imams among his descendants, barring the leadership of all others. In Chapter 223, he states that al-Asfahani al-Amawi narrates the same about ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ quoting various sources.
19. In Chapter 48 of his Ghayat al-Maram, the Bahraini scholar quotes three ahadith narrated by Sunnis testifying to the fact that the “bliss” here is what Allah has blessed people through the government of His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, that of the Commander of the Faithful and Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ. In Chapter 49, he quotes twelve ahadith from our sahihs reflecting the same; so, refer to it if you wish.
20. Only one Sunni faqih among the authors of books of traditions, namely Imam al-Wahidi, while commenting on Surat al-Ma’ida in his book Asbab al-Nuzul, quotes Abu Sa’id al-Khudri saying: “This verse was revealed on the Day of Ghadir Khumm in honour of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.” Imam al-Tha’labi has included it in his Tafsir from two sources, and al-Hamawani al-Shafi’i includes it in his Fara’id from various sources from Abu Hurayrah, and it is transmitted by Abu Na’im in his book Nuzul al-Qur’ān from two sources: Abu Rafi’ and al-A’mash, both quoting ‘Atiyyah. In Ghyat al-Maram, there are nine ahadith narrated by Sunnis and eight authentic ones by Shi’as conveying the same meaning; so, refer to it in Chapters 37 and 38.
21. This text is stated by Imam Abu Ja’far al-Baqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, succeeded in narrating it by Imam Abu ‘Abdullah al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. According to authentic narrations,

Sunnis have included six ahadith in their own books of traditions that in the end quote the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, quite clearly emphasizing this very theme. Its explanation exists in Chapters 39 and 40 of *Ghayat al-Maram*.

22. Imam al-Tha'labi has detailed the explanation of this matter in his *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, and it is transmitted by the Egyptian scholar al-Shiblinji who details 'Ali's biography in his book *Nur al-Absar*, page 171, where he, too, explains it in detail. Al-Halabi mentions it at the conclusion of his chapter "Hijjatul Wada'" in Vol. 3 of his book *Al-Sira al-Halabiyya*. Al-Hakim narrates it in "Tafsir al-Ma'arj" in his *Al-Mustadrak*, page 502, Vol. 2.
23. Al-Daylami, as is the case with the explanation of this verse in *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* states that Sa'id al-Khudri quotes the Prophet ﷺ saying: "Follow in their footsteps, for they are responsible concerning 'Ali's wilayat." Al-Wahidi, as is the case with the author of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, explains this verse by saying: "It has been narrated regarding Allah's statement: 'Follow in their footsteps, for they are responsible...,' that the responsibility referred to here is regarding 'Ali's government and that of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ," adding: "For Allah commanded His Prophet ﷺ to make people aware of the fact that he does not ask them for any rewards for conveying His Message other than being kind to his kin..., that is, they will be asked if they properly submitted to their wilayat as the Prophet ﷺ had instructed them, or if they lost it and discarded it, thus becoming subject to Allah's demands and the consequences of such discarding." Ibn Hajar includes it in Chapter 11 of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* among the verses revealed in their praise, being number 4 in such sequence, and he elaborates on it a great deal.
24. Refer to what Abu Na'im al-Hafiz has quoted in his *Hilyat al-Awliya*, and to what is recorded by al-Tha'labi, al-Nisaburi, and al-Barqi regarding its meaning in their own tafsir books, and to what Ibrahim ibn Muhammad

al-Hamawini and other Sunnis have said. Also refer to what Abu ‘Ali al-Tibrisi has said while explaining its meaning in his book *Mujma’ul Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur’ān*, quoting the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. What Chapters 44 and 45 of *Ghayat al-Maram* state in this meaning is something that dispels all doubts.

25. Our own discourse about Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام, while explaining this verse, testifies to this fact.
26. Ibn al-Maghazli al-Shafi’i quotes Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, was asked about the words which Adam had received from his Lord and whereby his repentance was accepted, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: ‘He [Adam] asked Him by the prestige He held for Muhammad, ‘Ali, Fatima, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, and thus did He accept his repentance and forgive him.’” This is what we know for a fact to be the meaning of this verse.
27. Refer to *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* by Ibn Hajar who interprets the verse of the Almighty: “Allah would not torment them...” as verse 7 of those revealed in their honour as recorded in Chapter 11 of the said book where the author endorses our own view stated here.
28. This is admitted by Ibn Hajar who counts this verse among the ones revealed in their honour, numbering it 6 in Chapter 11 of his *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa*. Ibn al-Maghazli al-Shafi’i, as indicated in the explanation of this verse in *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa*, quotes Imam al-Baqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام saying: “By Allah, we are the ones who are envied.” In Chapters 60 and 61 of *Ghayat al-Maram*, as many as thirty authentic ahadith are recorded in this meaning.
29. This is quoted by *Thiqatul-Islam* Muhammad ibn Ya’qub al-Kulayni who quotes an authentic hadith from Imam al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام saying: “We are a people the obedience to whom has been mandated by Allah, the Exalted and the Sublime; we are the ones who are deeply rooted in knowledge,

and we are the ones who are envied. Allah Almighty has said: ‘Or should they envy (certain) people for what Allah has granted them out of His own favour?’” This has also been quoted by al-Shaykh in his Tahthib, also quoting Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him.

30. While explaining this verse in his Tafsir, al-Tha’labi quotes Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “The ‘a’raf’ is an elevated place of the Sirat whereupon al-’Abbas, Hamzah, ‘Ali and Ja’far of the two wings identify the ones who love them by the sign of the whiteness of their countenance, and the ones who hate them by its blackness.” Al-Hakim, too, has quoted ‘Ali عليه السلام saying: “We shall stand, on the Day of Judgment, between Paradise and Hell, and we shall recognize those who support us by their mark and would let them enter Paradise, and we shall recognize those who hate us also by their marks.” Salman al-Farisi is quoted saying: “I have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: ‘O ‘Ali! You and the wasis from your descendants are on the A’raf.’” This is supported by the hadith quoted by Dar Qutni at the conclusion of Part Two, Chapter 9, of Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa. It indicates that ‘Ali عليه السلام delivered a lengthy address to the six persons assigned by ‘Umar to be in charge of the shura in which he stated: “I ask you in the Name of Allah if anyone among you has been told similarly to what I was told by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and that is: ‘O ‘Ali! You are the one who will designate the destination of every person on the Day of Judgment either to Paradise or to Hell?’” They responded: “No, indeed.” Ibn Hajar states the following: “The meaning of this hadith is what is narrated by Antarah from Imam ‘Ali al-Rida عليه السلام who quotes the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying the following to ‘Ali عليه السلام: ‘O ‘Ali! You are the one who will assign people to either Paradise or Hell on the Day of Judgment, telling Hell which one is hers and which one is not.’” Ibn Hajar says: “Ibn al-Sammak narrates that Abu Bakr has said to ‘Ali عليه السلام, may Allah be pleased with both men, “I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying: ‘Nobody can pass on the Sirat except the one permitted by ‘Ali.’”

31. In Section 5, Chapter 9, of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, Ibn Hajar, while discussing 'Ali's assassination, indicates that when 'Ali عليه السلام was on the pulpit in Kufa, he was asked to explain the verse in which this phrase occurs: "Men who proved truthful to their promise to Allah," and he answered by saying: "O Lord! Forgive them; this verse was revealed in honour of myself, my uncle Hamzah, and my cousin 'Ubaydah ibn alHarith ibn alMuttalib. 'Ubaydah died a martyr in Badr; Hamzah died a martyr on Uhud; as to myself, I am awaiting a most painful death, when this shall be drenched from the blood of this," pointing with his hand to his beard and head respectively; "It is a true promise made to me by my beloved Father of alQasim, peace be upon him and his progeny." AlHakim, while interpreting this verse as quoted in al-Tibrisi's *Mujma'ul Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, cites 'Umar ibn Thabit quoting Abu Ishaq quoting 'Ali, peace be upon him, saying: "On our own behalf was this verse revealed: 'Men who proved truthful to their promise to Allah...,' and I by Allah am waiting, and I have never changed aught."
32. Mujahid and Ya'qub ibn Sufyan quote Ibn 'Abbas's interpretation of the verse saying "And when they see trade or amusement, they rush to it, leaving you standing (for prayers alone)," thus: "Dahyah alKalbi once came from Syria on a Friday with a merchandise of foodstuff and he came to a place called Ahjar alZayt where he announced his presence by beating drums to invite people to him. People, therefore, rushed to him, leaving the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم standing on the pulpit preaching with only 'Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn, Fatima, Salman, Abu Tharr, and alMiqdad. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم then said: 'Allah has cast a look at my mosque on a Friday, and had it not been for the presence of these persons, He would have set the city on fire and hurled stones at its inhabitants as He did with the people of Lut.' Allah has revealed in honour of those who remained with the Messenger of Allah at the mosque the verse saying: 'Praising Him therein, during the night and at early dawn, men whom neither trade nor sale can divert.'"
33. Al-Tha'labi, while discussing the meaning of this verse in his *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, quotes Anas ibn Malik and Burayd saying: "The Messenger of

Allah ﷺ once read the verse saying ‘... in houses which Allah has desired that they should be elevated, and His Name shall be mentioned therein,’ whereupon Abu Bakr stood up and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! Is this house (then he pointed to the house where ‘Ali and Fatima were living) among them?’ The Prophet ﷺ answered: ‘Yes; one of their choicest.’ In Chapter 12 of Ghayat al-Maram, there are nine authentic ahadith through which the light of dawn shines.

34. This is a reference to the verse saying: “The similitude of His Light is a Lamp...” Ibn al-Maghazli al-Shafi’i has quoted ‘Ali ibn Ja’far in his Manaqib saying: “I asked the father of al-Hasan (Imam al-Kazim, peace be upon him) about the verse saying ‘... like a niche wherein a lamp...,’ and he, peace be upon him, answered: ‘The niche is Fatima, the Lamp symbolizes al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and ‘the glass is like a shining star,’ indicates that Fatima shone like a star among all the women of the world, receiving its fuel from a blessed tree, the family-tree of Ibrahim (Abraham), neither of the east nor of the west, neither Jewish nor Christian, ‘its oil almost shines (by itself),’ indicates that knowledge almost speaks of itself even when no fire touches it, ‘light upon light,’ wherein there is one Imam after another, ‘Allah guides whomsoever He pleases to His Light,’ implies that Allah guides to our wilayat whomsoever He pleases.” Suffices such an interpretation to be coming from a member of the household upon whom the revelation descended.
35. Al-Daylami, as in hadith 29, Part Two, Section 9, of Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa by Ibn Hajar, quotes ‘Ayesha, al-Tabrani, Ibn Mardawayh, all citing Ibn ‘Abbas saying that the Prophet ﷺ has said: “The foremost in believing in the Prophets are three men: Joshua son of Nun who was the foremost in believing in Moses عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام; the one referred to in Chapter Yasin who was the foremost in believing in Christ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and the foremost in believing in Muhammad is ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.” This hadith is quoted by al-Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad and the faqih Ibn al-Maghazli, both quoting Ibn ‘Abbas.

36. Ibn al-Najjar, as in hadith 30 referred to in Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa quotes Ibn 'Abbas saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: "The siddiqs are three: Ezekiel, who was the foremost to believe [in Moses] from among the descendants of Pharaoh; Habib al-Najjar, who is referred to in Chapter Yasin, and 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ." Abu Na'im and Ibn 'Asakir, as in hadith 31 referred to in Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa quotes Ibn Abu Layla saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: "The siddiqs are three: Habib al-Najjar, the believer referred to in Chapter Ali Yasin as saying: 'O my people, follow the Messengers;' Ezekiel, who was the foremost to believe [in Moses] from among the descendants of Pharaoh, who said: 'Do you kill a man just for saying that his Lord is Allah?' and 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who is the best of them.'" Sahih's are consecutively reported in stating that he is the supreme siddiq and the greatest faruq.
37. The most distinguished among Sunni Imams, namely Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad, has quoted Abu Bakr ibn Mardawayh citing 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ saying: "This nation will be divided into seventy-three groups; with the exception of one, all the rest will go to Hell; this (lucky) group is the one in whose honour Allah, the Exalted and the omni-Scient, has said: 'Among those whom We have created is a group that guides towards righteousness, and through righteousness (alone) do they achieve equity,' and they include me and my Shi'as."
38. In his Amali, Shaykh al-Tusi correctly quotes the Commander of the Faithful saying that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, once recited the following verse: "The companions of the Fire are not equal to those who are the companions of Paradise," whereupon he explained saying: "The companions of Paradise are those who have followed me and recognized the authority of 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ after me." He was asked: "What about the companions of the Fire?" He answered: "These include the ones who are dissatisfied with his (Ali's) government, those who shall violate the covenant and fight him after my demise." This hadith is quoted by al-Saduq from 'Ali, peace be upon him.

Abul-Mu'ayyad Muwaffaq ibn Ahmad has quoted Jabir saying that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "By the One in whose hands my soul is, this ('Ali) and his Shi'as are the winners on the Day of Judgment."

39. Refer to the meaning of this verse in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's tafsir if you wish, or Chapters 81 and 82 of Ghayat al-Maram.
40. This verse descended to honor al-Hamzah, 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and 'Ubaydah who came out to battle 'Utbah, Shaybah, and al-Walid. The believers are Hamzah, 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and 'Ubaydah, and the ones who committed wrong deeds are 'Utbah, Shaybah, and al-Walid. There are many authentic ahadith supporting this argument.
41. Suffices you for proof the fact that Ibn Hajar has admitted its revelation in their own honor, counting it among the verses in their favour, numbering it 11 among such verses in Part One, Chapter 11, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to it to see the verses we have quoted in reference to this verse in the chapter dealing with Sunnis giving credence to Shi'as in our book Al-Fusul al-Muhimma.
42. Al-Bukhari, in his explanation of the Qur'anic Chapter dealing with hajj, on page 107, Vol. 3, of his sahih, quotes 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ saying: "I am the first to kneel down to submit a complaint before Allah on the Day of Judgment." Al-Bukhari then quotes Qays saying: "On their behalf this verse was revealed: 'These are two opponents who have brought their case before their Lord.' They are the ones who came out on Badr to battle 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and his two companions, Hamzah and 'Ubaydah, namely Shaybah ibn Rabi'ah and his two fellows 'Utbah ibn Rabi'ah and al-Walid ibn 'Utbah." On the same page, he quotes Abu Tharr saying that he used to swear by the verse referring to the two opponents who disputed about their Lord which was revealed in honour of 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and two of his companions, and about 'Utbah and both of his companions when they came out to duel at Badr.

43. This verse was revealed on behalf of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام versus al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Ma’it, without any argument. This is ascertained by traditionists and endorsed by scholars of exegesis. Imam Abul-Hasan ‘Ali ibn Ahmad al-Wahidi, while discussing this verse in his book *Asbab a-Nuzul*, quotes Sa’id ibn Jubayr citing Ibn ‘Abbas saying that al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah ibn Abu Ma’it once said to ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام: “I am stronger than you; my speech is more eloquent, and I am faster than you in raising an army.” ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said: “Say no more, for you are none other than a debauchee,” whereupon the verse “Is that who is a believer similar to that who is a debauchee? They certainly are not alike,” was revealed, describing ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام as the believer and al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah as the debauchee.
44. This verse was revealed in honour of ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, his uncle al-’Abbas, and Talhah ibn Shaybah who started thus bragging: “I am in charge of the House (Ka’ba); I have its keys, and mine is its covering cloth.” Al-’Abbas said: “I am the one in charge of siqaya and maintenance.” ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said: “I do not know what you both say, for I have said my prayers in the company of the one [Prophet Muhammad, S] who leads the jihad six months prior to anyone else among all people,” whereupon Allah revealed the verse cited above. This is stated by Imam al-Wahidi while explaining the meaning of this verse in his book *Asbab al-Nuzul* citing al-Hasan al-Basri, al-Sha’bi, and al-Qurtubi. He also quotes Ibn Sirin and Murrah al-Hamadani saying that ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام said the following to al-’Abbas once: “Aren’t you going to migrate? Aren’t you going to join the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny?” He answered: “Do not I have a responsibility that is superior to the migration? Do not I provide water to the pilgrims of the House of Allah and maintain its Haram?” whereupon this verse was revealed.
45. On page 4, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim quotes Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “‘Ali has bartered his own life and has, indeed, put on the Prophet’s garb.” Al-Hakim testifies to the authenticity of this hadith according to

the endorsement of both Shaykhs, although the latter did not narrate it themselves. In his Talkhis *al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim admits the same on the said page, quoting Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husain عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ saying: “The first to barter his life for the Pleasure of Allah is ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who slept in the bed of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ,” then he quoted a few verses of poetry attributed to ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ beginning with these:

I have safeguarded with my own life and strength
 That of the best who walked on the surface of earth,
 And circled the Ancient House, though alone,
 And also around the [Black] Stone.

46. Traditionists, scholars of exegesis, and authors who have written about the causes of revelation of the Holy Qur’ān have all quoted Ibn ‘Abbas explaining the verse reading: “Those who spend their wealth in charity at night, during the day, in secrecy, and in the open,” by saying: “This verse was revealed in honour of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who had once in his possession four dirhams; he spent one of them in the Cause of Allah at night, one during the day, one in secrecy, and in public also one; therefore, this verse was revealed to appreciate what he did.” Imam al-Wahidi, too, has quoted this hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas in his book *Asbabul-Nuzul*. He also quotes Mujahid narrating it, and he transmits it from al-Kalbi in more detail.
47. The one who has brought forth the truth is the Messenger of Allah, and the one who has believed therein is the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, according to the hadith of al-Baqir, al-Sadiq, al-Kazim, al-Rida, peace be upon all of them, as well as by Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn al-hanafiyah, ‘Abdullah ibn al-Hasan, the martyred Zayd ibn ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn, and ‘Ali ibn Ja’far al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. The Commander of the Faithful used to use this verse as a testimonial. Ibn al-Maghazli, in his *Manaqib*, quotes Mujahid saying: “The one who has brought the truth is Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and the one who

has believed in him is ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.” Both huffaz, that is, Ibn Mardawayh and Abu Na’im, have quoted it, and so have others.

48. In his exegesis of Surat al-Tur on page 468, Vol. 2, of his authentic *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Hakim quotes Ibn ‘Abbas paraphrasing the verse reading: “And those who believe and whose families follow them in faith, to them shall We join their families: nor shall We deprive them (of the fruit) of aught of their good deeds; yet each individual is pawned to what deeds he has done,” by saying: “Allah shall elevate the status of a believer’s descendants so that they would be able to join him in Paradise, even if they may be in a lower station,” then he recited the same verse again and said: “Allah says He will not decrease their rewards aught.”
49. This is the third verse of the ones enumerated by Ibn Hajar in Chapter 11 of his *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa*. The author goes on to say that a group of scholars of exegesis have quoted Ibn ‘Abbas saying: “The implication of this verse is to send salutations unto Muhammad’s Progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.” Ibn Hajar says that al-Kalbi, too, has given it the same meaning, then he adds: “Al-Fakhr al-Razi has stated that the Prophet’s Progeny constitutes his [‘Ali’s] peer in five instances: Allah has greeted him by saying: ‘Peace be unto you, O Messenger, and unto the Progeny of Yasin,’ in sending prayers unto him and them in tashahhud, sadaqa, and tahara, when the Almighty says: ‘Taha,’ that is, tahir, purified, and: ‘... purifies you with a perfect purification;’ in loving them, saying: ‘Follow me so that Allah may love you,’ and also: ‘Say: I do not ask you for any reward other than being kind to my kin.’”
50. Al-Bukhari has quoted it in his tafsir of the holy Qur’ān, in Vol. 3 of his *Sahih*, in a chapter dealing with the verse “Allah and His angels send salutations unto Muhammad,” in his exegesis of Surat al-Ahzab. It is also quoted by Muslim in a chapter on sending greetings unto the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in his book on prayers in Vol. 1 of his *Sahih*, and it is quoted by all traditionists from Ka’b ibn ‘Ajjah.

51. Refer to the second of these verses on page 87.
52. Al-Tha'labi, while discussing its meaning in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, quotes hadith in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, says: "Tuba is a tree in Paradise whose root is in my home and whose branch overshadows the residents of Paradise." Some people asked: "O Messenger of Allah! We have asked you before about it, and you told us that its root is in 'Ali's home and its branch is above the residents of Paradise," whereupon he, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: "Aren't my home and 'Ali's the same?"
53. Thiqatul-Islam al-Kulayni has quoted in an authentic hadith Salim saying that he once asked Abu Ja'far (Imam al-Baqir) about the meaning of the verse: "Then We let those whom We have selected from among Our servants inherit the Book." The Imam, peace be upon him, explained it as follows: "The one who rushes to do good deeds is the Imam; the one who is moderate is the one who knows the value of the Imam; and the one who does injustice to his own self is the one who is not aware of the significance of the Imam." Something similar to this is cited from Imams Abu 'Abdullah al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, Abul-Hasan al-Kazim, and Abul-Hasan al-Rida, peace be upon them, who are quoted by al-Saduq and by many others among our narrators. Ibn Mardawayh quotes 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ explaining this verse thus: "The ones implied in this verse are we," and the details are available in our book Tanzil al-Ayat, as well as in Ghayat al-Maram.
54. This is quoted by Ibn 'Asakir from Ibn 'Abbas, as stated in Section 3, Chapter 9, page 76, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.

Discussions

Acceptance of spurious narrations

The first part of the correspondence begins with Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī allegedly accepting these narrations wholeheartedly. Had ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn included some form of resistance on the part of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī it might have been more convincing. It is significantly odd that the Shaykh al-Azhar would have asked for references for narrations which were more ambiguous, yet here he appears to have been bought and sold on the soundness of these narrations.

What becomes increasingly strange is that he sought no clarification of other clear reports which suggest that responsibility for the Ummah will be shared among others besides ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

اقتدوا باللذين من بعدي أبي بكر وعمر

Follow the example of the two after me, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.¹

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا relates:

عائشة قالت قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في مرضه ادعي لي أبا بكر وأحاك حتى أكتب كتابا فإني أخاف أن يتمنى متمن ويقول قائل أنا أولى وأبى الله والمؤمنون إلا أبا بكر

When the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was suffering from that illness from which he succumbed to, he said, “Summon Abū Bakr and your brother, so that no one will desire afterwards or aspire to Abū Bakr’s role.”

He went on, “Allah and the believers would not allow it to be otherwise.”²

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, ḥadīth 4023.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Bāb min Faḍā’il Abī Bakr, ḥadīth 2387.

‘Irbād ibn Sāriyah رضي الله عنه relates:

وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم موعظة وجلت منها القلوب وذرفت منها العيون فقلنا يا رسول الله كأنها موعظة مودع فأوصنا قال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن تأمر عليكم عبد فإنه من يش منكم فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بستي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين عضوا عليها بالنواجذ

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. So we said, “O Messenger of Allah! It is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us.”

He صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “I counsel you to have *taqwa* (fear) of Allah, and to listen and obey [your leader], even if a slave were to become your leader. Verily he among you who lives long will see great controversy, so you must keep to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the rightly guided *Khulafā’*. Cling to it with your molar teeth...”¹

If one considers these texts, among so many others, would the Shaykh al-Azhar not at least sought clarification on these narrations? The lack of resistance and overwhelming acceptance appears all too convenient.

Ḥadīth evidence before Qur’ānic evidence

Anyone familiar with source methodology in Islamic texts would be aware of the phenomenon of forged *aḥādīth*. As such, the natural progression for academic discourse is to commence with the verses in the Qur’ān which are categorically clear, then verses which are less categorical though remain suggestive, then the Prophetic *aḥādīth*.

We have previously alluded to the deficit of evidence from the Qur’ān which support the ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn argument. He has finally come around to presenting proofs from the Qur’ān after having prepared the framework that will achieve his preconceived outcome. What is particularly eye-catching is the sheer abundance

1 Abū Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Sunnah*, ḥadīth 4607; *al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb al-‘Ilm*, ḥadīth 2676.

of narrations that have been cited to support the claim. If one reconsiders for a moment it appears almost as if the Qur’ān—within the paradigm of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s discussion—has been exclusively revealed for establishing the Imāmah of said individuals from the Ahl al-Bayt. Since the alleged evidence from the Qur’ān occurs in such abundance, why begin with Ḥadīth evidence which stands the risk of being debated in terms of acceptance?

The reader is kindly requested to approach the verses from a position of objectivity and neutrality. This is the only way to be shielded from a flawed hermeneutic.

Abundance of verses in praise of Ahl al-Bayt

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn commences this round of correspondence claiming that none have been mentioned in the Qur’ān as much as the Ahl al-Bayt. While this statement is not objectionable at face value, there are a few underlying assumptions that need to be clarified which sheds light on the flawed hermeneutic we hinted at earlier.

At the outset, the Ahl al-Sunnah have intense love for the Prophet’s ﷺ blessed family. This is a matter where there is no dispute. Sunnī’s maintain that their love and respect for the Ahl al-Bayt is kept in check with the regulators of the Sharī’ah and is motivated by revealed texts. Additionally, loving the Ahl al-Bayt is seen separate from infallibility or the pre-eminent mandate to lead the Ummah.

The second underlying principle concerns those intended by the term Ahl al-Bayt. The term Ahl al-Bayt—within the Sunnī paradigm—applies to the Prophet’s ﷺ wives, and those members from his family who accepted Islam upon whom Zakāh is prohibited; Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib. This definition has been understood from *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn* narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*.¹ Even if ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn were alive he ought to have no objection to this definition since it was he who initially cited *Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn*.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, ḥadīth 2408.

Finally, the Ahl al-Sunnah do not view the Prophet's ﷺ blessed family and his noble Companions as adversaries, or as significant others. They are both accorded the love, respect, and admiration as demanded by revealed texts. Bearing this in mind, a merit for the Companions is not a score against the blessed family. Similarly, virtues accorded to the Ahl al-Bayt does not detract from the Ṣaḥābah; may Allah be pleased with them all.

The Verse of Purification

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cites the first of the verses which—according to his claim—exhibit the pre-eminence of the Ahl al-Bayt and proves that following them in all religious matters is necessary. The verse which he cites is referred to as *Āyat al-Taṭhīr*, or the Verse of Purification.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin], O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification.¹

This is actually a portion of a verse which occurs amidst a series of verses addressing the Prophet's wives.

While we agree with ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn in his claim that this refers to the Ahl al-Bayt, we disagree that they are unique in this regard. Allah has revealed the following in praise of the participants at Badr:

إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنزِلُ عَلَيْكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُم رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ
وَلِيُرِيبَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيَتَبَّتْ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ

Behold! He caused slumber to overcome [all of you] as a security from Him. Moreover He sent down upon you from the sky, water to purify you thereby; and to remove from you the defilement of [the whisperings of] Satan, and to gird your hearts, and set firm [your] feet thereby.²

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 33

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 11

It is evident from the verse above that—contrary to what ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn claims—the accolade of purification is not unique to the Ahl al-Bayt. It is, in fact, a trait which is also shared by the valiant participants at Badr.

Some have argued that the verse in *al-Aḥzāb* applies to ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ exclusively as it was they whom the Prophet gathered under his cloak, praying for them to be purified. Thus it does not apply to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ wives.

The absurdity of this claim is exposed by the parlance of the Qur’ān, in addition to the placement of this verse as it is preceded and succeeded by verses addressing the wives of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ specifically. As a matter of fact, the verse commences addressing the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ wives, and immediately addresses them after mentioning purification.

In another verse of the Qur’ān, Allah while informing us of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام says:

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنستُ نَارًا سَاتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ

[Mention] when (Prophet) Mūsā said to his **family [his wife]**, “Indeed, I have perceived a fire. I will bring you from there information.”¹

This verse appears repeatedly with slight variation in wording in many places in the Qur’ān. It refers to the incident where Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was traveling with his wife. They had become concerned as they entered unfamiliar territory and Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام told his wife that he had seen a fire. The part that concerns us is that Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was only traveling with his wife. Therefore, the term Ahl, here, was used exclusively for his wife.

In another verse we find:

1 Sūrah al-Naml: 7

قَالَتْ مَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ أَرَادَ بِأَهْلِكَ سُوءًا إِلَّا أَنْ يُسْجَنَ ...

She said, “What is the recompense of one who intended evil for **your Ahl (wife)** but that he is imprisoned...”¹

This verse refers to the complaint against Yūsuf عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ by the wife of the ‘Azīz of Egypt to her husband. She accused him of making inappropriate advances towards her. Again the word has been used exclusively for the wife.

While in Sūrah Hūd, we find even clearer usage of the word Ahl al-Bayt:

قَالُوا أَنْعَجِبِينَ مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ رَحِمَتُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَتُهُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ إِنَّهُ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

They said, “Are you amazed at the decree of Allah? May the mercy of Allah and His blessings be upon you, **Ahl al-Bayt (people of the house)**. Indeed, He is Praiseworthy and Honourable.”²

In this verse the angels are addressing Sārah, the wife of Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, giving her the glad tidings of the son to be born to her. Again, the term Ahl al-Bayt is used for the wife. The angels conclude the dialogue supplicating for her. It is interesting to note the transition of pronoun from feminine to masculine when Ibrāhīm عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is included in the supplication.

If we study the style and language of the verse above, it solves the dilemma raised by some. They argue that the transition from a feminine pronoun to a masculine pronoun in the verse in Sūrah al-Aḥzāb denotes a change of discourse. However, the verse in Sūrah Hūd addresses this superficial problem and proves that this transition is conventional when the entire family unit is being addressed. Furthermore, the Qur’ān is coherent and consistent. The verses preceding Āyat al-Taḥhīr, and those succeeding it, all include the wives. Why then should they be excluded?

1 Sūrah Yūsuf: 25

2 Sūrah Hūd: 73

The argument in light of *Ḥadīth al-Kisā*, where the Prophet ﷺ took ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn under his cloak, is counterproductive. If anything, it lends itself to the understanding that they were not originally included by the address in *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, hence the Prophet ﷺ later supplicated for them, on the grounds that they are *also* his family, may Allah be pleased with them and elevate their status.

To sum up, we concur that *Āyat al-Taṭhīr* refers to the Ahl al-Bayt. Only we believe it to apply to them in their entirety and that the Prophet’s ﷺ wives are intended in the first degree. We disagree that this spiritual purification was exclusive to the Ahl al-Bayt since the verse in *Sūrah al-Anfāl* speaks of spiritual purification for the heroes of Badr as well. Lastly, the process of purification is a virtue, but not one that qualifies one for incumbent leadership of the Muslims after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise, nor does it confer upon them legal authority.

Āyat al-Mawaddah

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn goes on to suggest that the obligation to love has not been revealed in respect of anyone besides them, citing the verse in *Sūrah al-Shūra*

قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَمَن يَعْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ مُّسْكُورٌ

Say [to them]: I do not ask of you any reward for this except goodwill [that is expected] among close relatives. And whoever commits a good deed—We will increase for him good therein. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Appreciative.¹

In the footnotes ‘a good deed’ is interpreted as loving them and Allah’s forgiveness is promised—based on this interpretation—for those who love them; and it is this that Allah is ever appreciative for.

1 *Sūrah al-Shūra*: 23

Before providing the correct understanding of this verse. It is necessary that we reiterate that the obligation of loving the Prophet's family is undoubtedly a religious duty. Again we confirm that loving the blessed family applies to the Ahl al-Bayt in its entirety.

Having said that we ought to point out that the virtues and merits of Ahl al-Bayt are many, but does this verse refer to the Ahl al-Bayt? To answer this question we seek the guidance of a member of the Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cousin, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-'Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا.

When asked about this verse, Sa'īd ibn Jubayr responded, "To be kind to the family of Muhammad." Immediately Ibn 'Abbās interjected saying, "No, you have jumped to a hasty conclusion. There was no clan among the Quraysh to whom the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not have some ties of kinship." He then interpreted this part of the verse as

فنزلت عليه إلا أن تصلوا قرابة بيني وبينكم

Except that you uphold the ties of kinship that exist between me and you.¹

The verse ought to be understood as an instruction to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to say to the disbelievers from the Quraysh: I do not ask you for anything in return for this message and sincere advice which I bring to you. All I ask of you is that you withhold your evil from me and let me convey the Message of my Lord. If you will not help me, then do not prevent me, for the sake of the ties of kinship that exist between you and I.

Ibn Kathīr has cited this narration and used it to interpret this verse. He then points out a peculiar narration which is found in the Tafsīr of Ibn Abī Ḥātim with its chain to Ibn 'Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, ḥadīth 4818.

‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn — **a man** (Ibn Abī Ḥātīm withheld the name) — **Ḥusayn al-Ashqar** — Qays — al-A‘mash — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, who said that when this verse was revealed the Companions asked the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, “O Messenger Of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم who are those whom Allah has enjoined upon us to love?”

He replied, “Fāṭimah and her children.”

Ibn Kathīr comments on this narration saying, “This chain is unreliable. In addition to the anonymous narrator, his teacher, **Ḥusayn al-Ashqar**, is a fanatic Shī‘ī, whose narrations in this regard are unreliable. Furthermore, the narration suggests that this verse was revealed in Madīnah and this is farfetched. On the contrary, it was revealed in Makkah and Fāṭimah had no children then. In fact she only wed ‘Alī after the Battle of Badr in the second year after Hijrah.”¹

This is the same Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ashqar whose narrations appeared in our discussions on earlier correspondence. He has been discredited by al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur‘ah—who considered him completely unreliable—and Abū Ḥātīm. Al-Jūzajānī calls him an extremist Shī‘ī accused of cursing the Companions. Ibn ‘Adī has pointed out the fact that he was known to have narrated many baseless narrations.²

This clarifies that the instruction was to the Quraysh, the one deserving of love in this instance is the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and the underlying cause was their blood relationship to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Furthermore, even if the verse applied to the Ahl al-Bayt it calls for loving them; there is nothing to suggest absolute obedience to them or that their leadership is mandated.

1 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah al-Shūrā: 23-24. vol. 6 pg. 548.

2 *Mīzān al-‘tidāl* vol.1 pg. 531.

Āyat al-Mubāhalah

Mubāhalah is a term in Arabic which refers to resolving an issuer of great significance by supplicating against the opposing party.

This refers to the verse in Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān:

فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لُغْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكٰذِبِينَ

Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you—say, “Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together] and invoke the curse of Allah upon the liars [among us].”¹

The reason for the call to *Mubāhalah* is that a delegation from the Christians of Najrān (in the south of the Arabian Peninsula) came to Madīnah to debate about ‘Īsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, claiming that he was divine and the son of Allah. In this regard many verses from Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān were revealed. When the debate had reached a point that the Christians were unwilling to admit their error, Allah commanded the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to engage in *Mubāhalah*.

Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

عن حذيفة قال جاء العاقب والسيد صاحبا نجران إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يريدان أن يلاعنا قال فقال أحدهما لصاحبه لا تفعل فوالله لئن كان نبيا فلاعنا لا نفلح نحن ولا عقبنا من بعدنا. قال إنا نعطيك ما سألتنا وابعث معنا رجلا أميناً ولا تبعث معنا إلا أميناً. فقال لأبعثن معكم رجلا أميناً حق أمين فاستشرف له أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال قم يا أبا عبيدة بن الجراح فلما قام قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هذا أمين هذه الأمة

Al-‘Āqib and al-Sayyid, the rulers of Najrān, came to the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with the intention of invoking Allah’s wrath by means of supplication. One

1 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 61.

of them said to the other, “Do not do this. By Allah, if he is indeed a Prophet and we do this, neither we, nor our offspring after us will be successful.”

Then both of them said (to the Prophet ﷺ), “We will give what you should ask but you should send a trustworthy man with us, and do not send any person with us but an honest one.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I will send an honest man who is truly trustworthy.”

Then every one of the Companions of the Messenger ﷺ hoped to be that person.

Then the Prophet said, “Stand up, O Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh.”

When he got up, the Messenger ﷺ said, “This is the Amīn of this Ummah.”¹

Another element in this incident is narrated by ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا that the Prophet ﷺ went out one morning wearing a striped cloak. His grandson Ḥasan approached him, and the Prophet ﷺ embraced him under the cloak, then his brother Ḥusayn came and the Prophet ﷺ covered him with the cloak as well. Thereafter Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا approached and the Prophet ﷺ did the same with her and soon thereafter ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ approached, and the Prophet ﷺ gathered him under the cloak as well. He then supplicated to Allah to rid them of defilement and to purify them.²

This is the complimentary element to *Āyat al-Taṭhīr*. The details have been covered under that discussion.

There is, however, another element related to *Āyat al-Mubāhalah* which has been raised by the Shī‘ah and there is no harm addressing it here. They claim that

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth 4380.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, Ḥadīth 2424.

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ has been equated to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this verse by virtue of the words, “ourselves and yourselves,” which form part of the verse. The *Nafs* [self] being referred to here refers to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ according to the Shī‘ah since it is inconceivable that one would call one’s self. Therefore the *Nafs*, by necessity, has to refer to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

They further claim that since ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ has been equated to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ it is a clear indication of his pre-eminent role as leader after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise.

This interpretation appears to arise out of a deficiency in grasping the style of Arabic used in the Qur’ān, as well as the underlying cultural convention of including one’s son-in-law among one’s children. This in addition to the fact that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was raised by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in his own home.

The idea of addressing one’s self is evident in many passages in the Qur’ān. These are example where the words *Nafs* applies to one’s self. These will include examples that demonstrate the fact that two parties referred to as *Nafs* are not necessarily equal.

فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِينَ

And his own *Nafs* [soul] prompted him to the murder of his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers.

In this verse Allah is referring to the son of Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who killed his own brother. The *Nafs* here referred to himself. It was not some separate entity.

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هٰؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Then, you are those [who are] killing one another.¹

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 85.

Nafs is used here for the collective. It certainly does not mean that every individual who makes up the collective is equal. The summary is that applying the word *Nafs* to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is unconventional, and even if it were acceptable, it does not put ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on equal footing.

Until this point the error has been understanding a verse incorrectly, although there might have been a remote connection in some way to the Ahl al-Bayt. However, in what follows the evidence that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn furnishes is completely isolated from the Ahl al-Bayt that if any person were to read from the Muṣḥaf they would have absolutely no indication that these verses are connected to Ahl al-Bayt in any way.

To overcome this obstacle the Shī‘ah have resorted to an alternative strategy; that is to fabricate an episode which links members of the Ahl al-Bayt to verses of the Qur’ān. Therefore, the verse will only lend itself to their desired meaning if it is accompanied by the forged narration. The extent of their forgeries will be revealed in the pages that follow.

Sūrah al-Dahr

In the footnotes, a comment is made on the verse of poetry cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, that the Sūrah beginning with *Hal Atā* (Sūrah al-Dahr, also known as Sūrah al-Insān) has been revealed regarding ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his children.

Suffice to say that this Sūrah was revealed in Makkah by consensus. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ only wed Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا after the Battle of Badr in the second year after Hijrah. His children were only born much later. The historical inaccuracy disproves the notion that this Sūrah was revealed about these noble individuals.

Al-Tha‘labī quotes a narration by way of:

Al-Qasim ibn Bahrām — Layth ibn Abī Sulaym — Mujāhid — Ibn ‘Abbās

And again by way of:

Al-Kalbī — Abū Šāliḥ — Ibn ‘Abbās

In this narration he relates an incident wherein Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا were ill. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, with some other Companions, went to visit them. The visitors suggested ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ make a vow to Allah: if He were to cure them, he would perform some good action. Thereafter ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, and their servant Fiḍḍah vowed to Allah that they would fast for three days if He would cure Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.

After they were cured ‘Alī and Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا began to fast. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had also borrowed barley from a Jewish person, from which Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ baked bread. Each night, at the time of breaking their fast, someone came to ask food and they gave over their supper. The first night it was a pauper, the second night, an orphan and the third a captive of war. The narration continues that Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام descended with this Sūrah, and their description appears in the verse:

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

They [are those who] fulfil [their] vows and fear a Day whose evil will be widespread. And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive.¹

It does not come as a surprise to know that the narrators in both chains are compromised.

Al-Qāsim ibn Bahrām

Al-Qāsim ibn Bahrām has been declared weak by al-Dāraquṭnī, and Ibn Ḥibbān has included him in his compendium of unreliable narrators.²

1 Sūrah al-Dahr: 7-8.

2 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 8 pg. 308.

Layth ibn Abī Sulaym

Layth ibn Abī Sulaym¹ has been discussed in our previous discussions. He was considered unreliable as well.

Muḥammad ibn Sā'ib al-Kalbī

Appearing in the second chain is al-Kalbī. His complete name is Muḥammad ibn Sā'ib al-Kalbī, who, in addition to his extreme form of Shī'ism, was accused of forging Ḥadīth.²

As a matter of fact, this chain: al-Kalbī — Abū Ṣāliḥ — Ibn 'Abbās forms part of what is known as *Silsilat al-Kadhib* (the chain of lies).³

The Rope of Allah

وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا

And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided.

'Abd al-Ḥusayn's citations reveals the inconsistencies of the Shī'ah. A few pages back, he listed so many narrations—claiming that they were Mutawātir—on Ḥadīth al-Thaqaalayn. If he really accepted them as Mutawātir, they disprove his reasoning here. Those narrations refer to the Book of Allah as His rope suspended from the heavens.⁴

The editor saw it fit to quote Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq interpreting the Rope of Allah in this verse as the Ahl al-Bayt. He has not been able to provide any reference

1 Refer to pg. 142 of this book.

2 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol.1 pg. 101; *al-Majrūhīn* vol.2 pg.253.

3 *Tadrīb al-Rāwī* vol. 1 pg. 181.

4 Refer to pg. 102 of this book.

besides the *Tafsīr* of al-Tha‘labī whose *Tafsīr* combines all sorts of narration. A casual reference like this is insufficient to prove that the narration to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq is reliable. The problem is compounded when one considers the fact that Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq did not witness the revelation of the Qur’ān. Whereas there are individuals who witnessed the revelation of the Qur’ān, and who understood its context, and were aware of whom or what the verses were addressed to. The conclusion is based on a premise that is presumed fact, whereas the premise itself requires proof.

‘Alī عليه السلام seems to have a different view since he has described the Qur’ān as “Allah’s firm rope and His straight path”.¹

Al-Suyūṭī has referenced the opinion of Ibn Mas‘ūd to numerous sources. He has also interpreted the Rope of Allah as the Qur’ān.²

Other opinions on what the Rope of Allah refers to range from:

- the majority of Muslims,
- the religion in general,
- the covenant with Allah,
- sincerity.³

As far as the Ahl al-Sunnah are concerned, these remain opinions. What would make one opinion more deserving than another? Opinions which can be traced to the era in which the Qur’ān was revealed hold much more weight than later opinions; since that generation is the primary audience to receive the Qur’ān. So it stands to reason that they would be in the best position to understand the Qur’ān in terms of its language and context. In this case we have a number of

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Faḍā’il al-Qur’an, Ḥadīth 3153.

2 *Al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 4 pg. 709; *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 5. pg. 646.

3 *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* vol. 4 pg. 709 – 714.

individuals from that generation explaining the Rope of Allah to mean the Book of Allah. This, in addition to the fact that these opinions can be reliably traced back to the Companions, lends credibility to this particular understanding.

The poetry which has been attributed to al-Shāfiʿī by the editor in support of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s interpretation cannot be reliably traced back to him. As a matter of fact, these do not feature in his anthology of poems. It becomes more suspicious when these verses of poetry allude to the narration of the Ark of Nūḥ, which was earlier proven to be a forgery. What makes matters worse still is that the poor level of language in those verses of poetry are not in harmony with the level of Arabic of a scholar who is an accepted authority on the language. At best these might be incorrectly ascribed to him, though the possibility of forgery seems more likely.

The Truthful Ones

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.¹

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn suggests that this verse applies to the Ahl al-Bayt exclusively. The editor takes the claim further saying that it is restricted to the Imāms, based on the Mutawātir reports in their reliable collections.

The truth is that these verses appear at the end of Sūrah al-Tawbah, where Allah gives the details of the expedition of Tabūk. In this expedition, three of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ remained behind in Madīnah without excuse. The Munāfiqīn who remained behind presented false excuses to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and they were let off the hook. However, these three Companions, refused to give false excuses and were excommunicated for a period of over fifty days. During this period they were tempted by offers from neighbouring Kings, to abandon the Prophet

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 119.

صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and join the disbelievers. However, these three Companions remained firm, hoping in Allah; and on account of their blunt honesty and truthfulness to the cause of Islam, they were not only forgiven but had their forgiveness announced in the Qur’ān for all to read until eternity. Allah placed this verse immediately after recounting their ordeal.

Ka’b ibn Mālīk, who was one of the three, retells the story in great detail. Below is an excerpt of his account of what occurred:

After I had offered my Fajr prayer on the early morning of the fiftieth day of this boycott on the roof of one of our houses, and had sat in the very state which Allah described as, “*The earth seemed constrained for me despite its vastness,*” I heard the voice of a proclaimer from the peak of the hill Sal’ shouting at the top of his voice, “O Ka’b ibn Mālīk, rejoice.”

I fell down in prostration and came to know that there was (a message of) relief for me. The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had informed the people about the acceptance of our repentance by Allah after he had offered the Fajr prayer. So the people went on to give us glad tidings and some of them went to my Companions in order to give them the glad tidings. A man spurred his horse towards me (to give the good news), and another one from the tribe of Aslam came running for the same purpose and, as he approached the mount, I received the good news which reached me before the rider did. When the one whose voice I had heard came to me to congratulate me, I took off my garments and gave them to him for the good news he brought to me. By Allah, I possessed nothing else (in the form of clothes) except these garments, at that time. Then I borrowed two garments, dressed myself and came to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. On my way, I met groups of people who greeted me for (the acceptance of) repentance and they said, “Congratulations on the acceptance of your repentance.” I reached the mosque where the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was sitting amidst people. Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allah got up and rushed towards me, shook hands with me, and greeted me. By Allah, no person stood up (to greet me) from amongst the Muhājirīn besides him.

Ka'b said that he never forgot (this good gesture of) Ṭalḥah. Ka'b further said, "I greeted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with Salām and his face was beaming with pleasure.

He ﷺ said, "Rejoice with the best day you have ever seen since your mother gave you birth."

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! Is this (good news) from you or from Allah?"

He said, "No, it is from Allah."

And it was common with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that whenever he was happy, his face would glow as if it were a part of the moon and it was from this that we recognized it (his delight).

As I sat before him, I said, "I have placed a condition upon myself that if Allah accepts my Tawbah, I would give up all of my property in charity for the sake of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ!"

Thereupon Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Keep some property with you, as it is better for you."

I said, "I shall keep with me that portion which is in Khaybar."

I added, "O Messenger of Allah! Verily, Allah has granted me salvation because of my truthfulness, and therefore, repentance obliges me to speak nothing but the truth as long as I am alive."

Ka'b added, "By Allah, I do not know anyone among the Muslims who has been granted truthfulness better than me since I said this to the Prophet ﷺ. By Allah! Since the time I made a pledge of this to Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I have never intended to tell a lie, and I hope that Allah would protect me (against telling lies) for the rest of my life. Allah, the Exalted, the Glorious, revealed these verses:

Allah has already forgiven the Prophet, the Muhājirīn, and the Anṣār who followed him in the hour of difficulty after the hearts of a party of them had almost inclined [to doubt], and then He forgave them. Indeed, He was to them Kind and Merciful.

And [He also forgave] the three who were left behind [and regretted their error] to the point that the earth closed in on them in spite of its vastness and their souls confined them and they were certain that there is no refuge from Allah except in Him. Then He turned to them so they could repent. Indeed, Allah is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful.

O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.

Ka'b continued, "By Allah, since Allah guided me to Islam, there has been no blessing more significant for me than this truth of mine which I spoke to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and if I were to tell a lie I would have been ruined as were ruined those who had told lies, for Allah described those who told lies with the worst description He ever attributed to anybody else...¹

If we consider this narration, it gives a clear idea of the context in which this verse was revealed.

Nonetheless, this interpretation is further supported by a narration from 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا who interpreted the truthful ones in this verse to mean: The Prophet ﷺ and his Companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُم.²

The Qur'an also refers to the Muhājirīn as the truthful ones:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, ḥadīth 4418; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Tawbah, Ḥadīth 2767-2769.

2 Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī vol.12 pg. 67 ; Tafsīr ibn Abī Ḥātim vol.6 pg. 1906.

For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful.¹

The ones intended by this verse primarily are the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Although, the comprehensive expression used in the verse allows for the inclusion of others in a secondary capacity provided they possess the traits espoused by this verse. Even the sequence suggests this. Consider that the Prophet ﷺ was mentioned, then his Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ were mentioned immediately after him, the Muhājirīn, the Anṣār, those who followed him in the most trying expedition, then the three who remained behind. The instruction is then given to fear Allah and be with the truthful ones. Immediately thereafter Allah admonishes those who lagged behind without excuse.

There is no interruption in the Qur’ānic address which would suggest the inclusion of anyone else. The expedition of Tabūk was one where ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not participate because the Prophet ﷺ instructed him to remain behind in Madīnah and see to the affairs of the Prophet ﷺ. Though he is not included in the admonishment, it serves as a further indication of the error of applying this verse to the Ahl al-Bayt, or the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt specifically.

The editor’s claim that this verse applies exclusively to the Imāms is one without any evidence to support it. The only narrations that could be cited in this regard are narrated by way of **Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’ib al-Kalbī**² who was accused of lying and forging narrations.³ And by way of **Aḥmad ibn Ṣabīh al-Asadī** — **Mufaḍḍal ibn Ṣāliḥ** — **Jābir** — Abū Ja’far.

Aḥmad ibn Ṣabīh

Aḥmad ibn Ṣabīh has been declared weak⁴ by the scholars of Ḥadīth.

1 Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr: 7.

2 *Tafsīr al-Thalābī* vol. 5 pg. 109

3 Refer to pg.195 of this book.

4 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol.1 pg. 485

Mufaḍḍal ibn Ṣāliḥ

Mufaḍḍal ibn Ṣāliḥ is also a weak narrator¹ and is one of the narrators of the fabricated Ḥadīth comparing the Ahl al-Bayt to the Ark of Nūḥ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.²

Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Ju‘fī

Jābir is the famous Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Ju‘fī from Kūfah, about whom Abū Ḥanīfah said:

I have never seen a greater liar than Jābir al-Ju‘fī.³

He was accused of lying by many of the Ḥadīth critics, including his peers.⁴

One wonders if these are the Mutawātir narrations that the editor was referring to, which appear in their sound collections.

The Path of Allah and the Way of Allah

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn refers to them as such based on the verse in Sūrah al-An‘ām:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ وَصِيكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَّقُونَ

And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous.⁵

Ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:

1 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 167

2 Refer to pg. 115 of this book.

3 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 379

4 *Ibid*

5 Sūrah al-An‘ām: 153

عن عبد الله بن مسعود قال خط لنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خطا ثم قال هذا سبيل الله ثم خط
خطوطا عن يمينه وعن شماله ثم قال هذه سبيل قال يزيد متفرقة على كل سبيل منها شيطان يدعو إليه ثم قرأ
وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ

The Messenger of Allah drew a line with his hand (in the sand) and said, “This is Allah’s path, leading straight.” He then drew lines to the right and left of that line and said, “These are the other paths, on each path there is a devil who calls to it.” He then recited, “And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way.”¹

This parable is further explained by the narration of Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān, who reports that the Messenger ﷺ said:

عن النّوّاس بن سمعان الكلّابي قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله ضرب مثلا صراطا مستقيما على كنفى الصراط داران لهما أبواب مفتحة على الأبواب ستور وداع يدعو على رأس الصراط وداع يدعو فوقه والله يدعو إلى دار السلام ويهدي من يشاء إلى صراط مستقيم والأبواب التي على كنفى الصراط حدود الله فلا يقع أحد في حدود الله حتى يكشف الستور والذي يدعو من فوقه واعظ ربه

Indeed Allah has made a parable of the straight path: At the sides of the path there are walls with open doors, each door having a curtain. There is a caller at the head of the path calling, and a caller above it calling. And Allah invites to the abode of peace and guides whomever He wills to the straight path. The doors which are on the sides of the path are the *Ḥudūd* (limitations) of Allah; no one breaches the *Ḥudūd* of Allah except that the curtain is lifted, and the one calling from above it is his Lord’s admonisher.²

Imām Aḥmad has related a lengthier narration from Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān رضي الله عنه:

ضرب الله مثلا صراطا مستقيما وعن جنبي الصراط سوران فيهما أبواب مفتحة وعلى الأبواب ستور مرخاة وعلى باب الصراط داع يدعو يا أيها الناس هلموا ادخلوا الصراط المستقيم جميعا ولا تفرقوا

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.7 pg. 207, Ḥadīth 4142.

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb al-Amthāl, Ḥadīth 2859.

وداع يدعو من فوق الصراط فإذا أراد الإنسان أن يفتح شيئاً من تلك الأبواب قال ويحك لا تفتحه فإنك إن فتحته تلجه فالصراط الإسلام والسوران حدود الله والأبواب المفتحة محارم الله وذلك الداعي على رأس الصراط كتاب الله والداعي من فوق الصراط واعظ الله في قلب كل مسلم

Allah has given a parable of the straight path, and on either side of this path, there are two walls containing open doors. On these doors there are curtains that are lowered down. On the entrance of this path there is a caller announcing, “O people! Come and enter the straight path all together and do not divide.” There is also another caller that announces from above the path, who says, when a person wants to remove the curtain on any of these doors, “Woe to you! Do not open this door, for if you open it, you will enter it.” The (straight) path is Islam, the two walls are Allah’s set limits, the open doors lead to Allah’s prohibitions, the caller on the entrance of the path is Allah’s Book, while the caller from above the path is Allah’s admonition in the heart of every Muslim.¹

There is no sound evidence from al-Bāqir or al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ that they interpreted this verse as such. Even if it is proven from them, their authority is still to be proven. That, against the backdrop of the Ḥadīth of Nawwās, wherein the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ clarified the Path to mean Islam, clearly demonstrates the desperate measures to which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn—and the rest of the Shī‘ah for that matter—resort to in order to prove their doctrine.

Those entrusted with Authority

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.²

1 Musnad Aḥmad vol.29 pg. 181.

2 Sūrah al-Nisā’: 59.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn claims that this verse in Sūrah al-Nisā’ applies to the Ahl al-Bayt, hence conferring upon them religious authority. Again, the conclusion relies on a preconceived premise. The evidence presented to indicate that the Imāms are the ones entrusted with authority only originates from the statement of the Imāms in the Shī‘ī texts.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn undertook to only provide evidence which was mutually acceptable. Unfortunately, he has failed to do so in most cases. In the rare cases that he has presented mutually acceptable evidence, it does not support the claim unless it is twisted beyond the fabric of its reality. Evidence that is so farfetched can hardly convince the Shī‘ah who approach the subject objectively let alone Sunnīs trained in the scholarly tradition.

According to the Shī‘ah, the Imāms have been divinely appointed and no one can stand in their place. This means that leadership on the basis of Ijtihād is invalid. Conversely, if it can be proven that the Prophet ﷺ instituted appointments based on Ijtihād, it proves that the Shī‘ī understanding is flawed.

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said that this verse was revealed in connection with ‘Abd Allah ibn Ḥudhāfah ibn Qays ibn ‘Adī when the Prophet ﷺ appointed him as the commander of a *Sariyyah* (army detachment).¹

‘Alī رضي الله عنه narrates:

عن علي رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعث جيشا وأمر عليهم رجلا وأمرهم أن يسمعوا له ويطيعوا فأجج نارا وأمرهم أن يقتحموا فيها فأبى قوم أن يدخلوها وقالوا إنما فرنا من النار وأراد قوم أن يدخلوها فبلغ ذلك النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال لو دخلوها أو دخلوا فيها لم يزالوا فيها وقال لا طاعة في معصية الله إنما الطاعة في المعروف

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent an army and appointed a man as a commander for them and he commanded them to listen to him and obey. He kindled a fire and ordered them to jump into it. A group refused to

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth 4584; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Bāb Wujūb Ṭā‘at al-Amīr, Ḥadīth 1834.

enter into it and said, “We escaped from the fire; a group intended to enter into it. When the Prophet ﷺ was informed about it, he said, “Had they entered into it, they would have remained in it. There is no obedience in matters involving disobedience to Allah. Obedience is in matters which are good and universally recognized.”¹

If we consider this narration carefully, it suggests that obedience to an authority is restricted to matters which are not in disobedience to Allah. The verse tells us that if we dispute something we ought to refer it back to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. This combination is only possible if the authority spoken of in this verse is a person of Ijtihād. The Imāms are said to be infallible. The two are mutually exclusive.

Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates from the Prophet ﷺ:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كانت بنو إسرائيل تسوسهم الأنبياء كلما هلك نبي خلفه نبي وإنه لا نبي بعدى وسيكون بعدى خلفاء فيكثرون قالوا يا رسول الله فما تأمرنا؟ قال أوفوا ببيعة الأول فالأول ثم أعطوهم حقهم وأسألوا الله الذى لكم فإن الله ساتلهم عما استرعاهم

The Prophet ﷺ said, “The Banū Isrā’īl were ruled by the Prophets. When one Prophet died, another succeeded him. There will be no Prophet after me. Khulafā’ will come after me, and they will be many.”

The Companions said, “O Messenger of Allah, what do you command us to do?”

He said, “Fulfil the pledge of allegiance to which is sworn first (then swear allegiance to the others). Concede to them their due rights and ask Allah that which is due to you. Allah will call them to account in respect of the subjects whom He had entrusted to them.”²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Aḥkām, Ḥadīth 7145; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Bāb Wujūb Ṭā’at al-Amīr, Ḥadīth 1840.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth 7053; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, al-Imārah, 1842.

Why would the Prophet ﷺ grant authority to elected leaders if the Qur’ān already specified whom the leaders were going to be?

Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

اسمعوا وأطيعوا وإن أمر عليكم عبد حبشي كأن رأسه زبيبة

Listen and obey even if the person placed in authority over you is an Abyssinian slave whose head is like a raisin.¹

These are many more narrations that serve a common meaning: Obedience to a leader without specifying who the leader is. Furthermore, the leadership and authority being spoken of here demands obedience as long as nothing sinful is instructed. These descriptions stand at stark contrast to what ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn would have us believe.

Furthermore, the verse immediately after it suggests that all matters which are disputed ought to be referred back to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ. Why would this be necessary in the presence of a living Imām who is the authority?

The next Ḥadīth undeniably disproves the interpretation presented by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit رضي الله عنه relates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

دعانا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فبايعناه فكان فيما أخذ علينا أن بايعنا على السمع والطاعة في منشطنا ومكرهنا وعسرنا ويسرنا وأثرة علينا وأن لا ننازع الأمر أهله قال إلا أن تروا كفرا بواحا عندكم من الله فيه برهان

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ called us and we took the oath of allegiance to him. Among the injunctions he made binding upon us was: Listening and obedience (to the leader) in our pleasure and displeasure, in our

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Adhān, Ḥadīth 693.

adversity and prosperity, even when somebody is given preference over us, and without disputing the delegation of powers to a man duly invested with them; except when you have clear signs of his disbelief for which you have a proof of from Allah.¹

This Ḥadīth clearly indicates that authority—as advocated in this verse—is a matter which warrants obedience. However, that authority has limitations. Those limitations, by necessity, prove that the person granted that authority acquires it by Ijtihād and not divine instatement; unless ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is willing to admit that clear disbelief is logically possibility for one of the Imāms.

The Custodians of Revelation

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn dubs them the Custodians of Revelation in reference to the verse in Sūrah al-Nahl:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِيْهِمْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

And We sent not before you except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of the message if you do not know.²

Taking sequence and structural elements into account we find that the people of the message referred to in this verse are the people of scripture.

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه interpreted this verse as follows:

When Allah sent Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم as a Messenger, the Arabs, or some of them, denied him and said, “Allah is too great to send a human being as a Messenger,” so Allah revealed:

Have the people been amazed that We revealed [revelation] to a man from among them, [saying], “Warn mankind and give good tidings to those who believe that they will have a [firm] precedence of honour with their Lord?”³

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth 7055; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, al-Imārah, 1840.

2 Sūrah al-Nahl: 43

3 Sūrah Yūnūs: 2

And He revealed:

And We sent not before you except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of the message if you do not know.¹

meaning, ask the people of the **previous Books**, were the Messengers that were sent to them humans or angels? If they were angels, then you have the right to find this strange, but if they were human, then you have no grounds to deny that Muḥammad is a Messenger.²

From this narration we learn the context in which the verse was revealed and it is in harmony with the sequence and structure of the verses preceding and succeeding it.

In the verses which follow Allah refers to the Qur’ān as the Remembrance [Dhikr]. The narration cited by the editor, by way of al-Tha’labī could not be accurately traced. Even so, the statement of ‘Alī عليه السلام, “We are the *Ahl al-Dhikr*,” in no way specifies the Ahl al-Bayt, nor the Imāms after him. This pronoun seems to apply to the people of knowledge in general; and ‘Alī عليه السلام is included among the knowledgeable of this Ummah.

It is interesting to note that the transmission of the Qur’ān, in terms of the way it is recited, has been taken up by other than the Ahl al-Bayt. If this verse meant that the Ahl al-Bayt were the sole custodians of revelation—as ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn argues—we would expect to find chains of transmission for the Qur’ān which are exclusive to the Imāms. However, no such recitation exists.

The Believers

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn refers to them as the believers mentioned in Sūrah al-Nisā:

1 Sūrah al-Nahl: 43

2 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol.12 pg. 107.

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ
 جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination.¹

Is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn implying that everyone besides them are not believers? Have the believers been limited to three individuals during the Prophet’s ﷺ lifetime? Was his mission such a failure that only his son-in-law and two grandchildren were the only people to believe in his message? Did all those around him oppose him?

Why did ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn even bother to foster relations with the Ahl al-Sunnah when the capacity for salvation was restricted to such a few? Did the Companions oppose the Messenger ﷺ at Badr? Did they oppose him when they undertook the Hijrah and left behind all their wealth in Makkah? Did they oppose him when they provided shelter for him in Madīnah? Did they oppose him when they tied stones to their bellies, digging the Trench?

The narration ascribed to Ibn Mardawayh is untraceable even in secondary sources.

There is nothing to indicate the meaning suggested by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. On the contrary, the scholars of Fiqh, like al-Shafī‘ī, used this verse to prove the legal status of scholarly concensus, *Ijmā‘*. The two concepts are seen as inseparable, opposing the Messenger ﷺ and following a way other than that of the Believers.

The reference to al-‘Ayyāshī’s *Tafsīr* is of very little consequence since al-‘Ayyāshī was a Shī‘ī scholar and relied on Shī‘ī narrations. The reason for not accepting

1 Sūrah al-Nisā’: 115

these narrations is due to the sheer abundance of fabrications found in these texts.

The issue of accepting the narrations of the Shī'ah will be discussed in forthcoming discussions. It suffices us at this point to remind the esteemed reader that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn undertook to only include narrations which were mutually acceptable. However, the narrations which are being quoted are those which 'Abd al-Ḥusayn knows would be unacceptable to the Ahl al-Sunnah.

The Guides

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ

You are only a warner, and for every people is a guide¹

At the onset, let us clarify that there is nothing objectionable – from the perspective of Ahl al-Sunnah – in referring to 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as a guide. He, and his brothers, the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, were all guides for the generations to follow.

'Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates:

وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم موعظة وجلت منها القلوب وذرفت منها العيون فقلنا يا رسول الله كأنها موعظة مودع فأوصنا قال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن تأمر عليكم عبد فإنه من يعش منكم فسيري اختلافًا كثيرًا فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين عضوا عليها بالنواجذ

The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ gave us a sermon by which our hearts were filled with fear and tears came to our eyes. So we said, “O Messenger of Allah! It is as though this is a farewell sermon, so counsel us.”

He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “I counsel you to have *taqwa* (fear) of Allah, and to listen and obey [your leader], even if a slave were to become your leader. Verily he among you who lives long will see great controversy, so you must keep

1 Sūrah al-Ra'd: 7

to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafā'. Cling to it with your molar teeth..."¹

This is further emphasized in the verses in Sūrah al-Tawbah

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirīn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.²

This verse confirms that the Muhājirīn and Anṣār already deserve Allah's pleasure. It goes on to list a third group which is deserving of Allah's pleasure; this group follows the previous two. Certainly, the previous two groups serve as guides for the third group.

Furthermore, the responsibility of being a guide does not necessitate leadership. In the previous generations, the guides were not necessarily their leaders. The Banū Isrā'īl were led by Ṭālūt though he was not a Prophet. Similarly, the scholars of Banū Isrā'īl served as guides, not necessarily leaders.

That being said, does *this* verse refer to 'Alī رضي الله عنه specifically? Or is it just another interpolation through misinterpretation for which the Shī'ah are famous? Assuming that it does refer to 'Alī; how does it extend to the rest of the Imāms?

The editor of *al-Murāja'āt* was quite aware that the connection between 'Alī رضي الله عنه and the 'Guide' in this verse is excessively remote. In order to bridge the gap he presented a narration ascribed to al-Tha'labī, from Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه wherein the

1 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah, ḥadīth 4607; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-'Ilm, ḥadīth 2676.

2 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100

Prophet ﷺ referred to himself as the ‘Warner’ and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه as the ‘Guide’. He goes further to state that this is found in the *Sunan* works.

The *Sunan* works, in customary practise, refers to the four famous works of Ḥadīth compiled by Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah. The only issue that is debated is which of al-Nasā’ī’s works is part of the four; his larger collection, also known as *al-Kubrā*, or the abridged version, known as *al-Mujtabā*. Reference to any of the other *Sunan* works usually bears the name of the author to distinguish it, e.g. *Sunan al-Bayhaqī al-Kubrā*. However, this narration, ascribed by the editor to the *Sunan*, could not be found in any of the four works, including al-Nasā’ī’s *al-Kubrā*.

The narration can be traced via the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī¹ by way of **Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Ansārī — Mu’adh ibn Muslim — al-Harawī — ‘Aṭā’ ibn al-Sā’ib — Sa’īd ibn Jubayr — Ibn ‘Abbās**.

Ibn Kathīr has criticised this narration both in terms of its unreliable chain, and anomalous meaning.

Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Ansārī

Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Ansārī al-‘Uranī is seriously compromised as a narrator.

- Ibn Abī Ḥātim said that he was not trustworthy, a leading figure among the Shī’ah.
- Ibn ‘Adī says that his narrations are contrary to what others narrate.
- Ibn Ḥibbān commented that he attributed baseless narrations to reliable narrators.
- Al-Dhahabī cited this narration as one of those anomalous, uncorroborated, baseless narrations that he was known for.²

1 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 13 pg. 442

2 *Mīzān al-Itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 483

Mu'ādh ibn Muslim

Al-Dhahabī said that the identity of Mu'ādh ibn Muslim is not known. This is the case with al-Harawī as well. The anonymity of these narrators compounds the problem in this chain, confirming its unreliability.¹

Furthermore, the reliable scholars who narrate from 'Aṭā' ibn al-Sā'ib, from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr provide an interpretation contrary to what has been narrated by way of the defective chain.²

This is yet another example of how the authority which 'Abd al-Ḥusayn, and others like him, attempt to confer upon 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is unfounded. It is unsupported by the verses of Qur'an and the only connection to these verses are obscure narrations which are significantly unreliable.

The Straight Path and Blessed Ones

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

Guide us to the straight path - The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour.³

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed favour of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.⁴

1 Ibid

2 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 13 pg. 439.

3 Sūrah al-Fāṭilḥah: 6-7

4 Sūrah al-Nisā: 69

No doubt, the blessed family of the Prophet ﷺ have been bestowed with Allah's Favour. That, however, is not the issue to be discussed. The question is whether they were the ones primarily intended by these verses; and whether its meaning is restricted to them alone.

It is surprising that 'Alī رضي الله عنه interpreted 'The Straight Path' to mean the Book of Allah.¹ A similar interpretation is attributed to Ibn Mas'ūd.²

The Prophet ﷺ identified those who earned Allah's wrath as the Jews, and those who had gone astray as the Christians. His interpretation of the latter part of the verse provides insights on who is meant by those whom Allah has favoured. It can only apply to an entire community, rather than select individuals among them. The contrast of Muslims to Jews and Christians is more apt than contrasting the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt with the Jews and Christians.

Furthermore, the explanatory verse in Sūrah al-Nisā' calls for obedience to Allah and His Messenger without any mention of the Imāms of Ahl al-Bayt independently. Even if they were intended as 'those whom Allah had favoured by this verse', there is no indication of their exclusive mandate to lead, or that the ummah is obliged to follow them independently.

Āyat al-Wilāyah

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ

Your Walī is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakah, and they bow [in worship].³

This is one of the famous verses cited by the Shī'ah for the Imāmah of the Ahl al-Bayt. The Qur'anic text, however, reveals no connection to 'Alī رضي الله عنه, not even

1 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 1 pg. 173.

2 *Ibid*

3 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 55

remotely. As expected, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn relies on an alleged Ḥadīth which puts ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in pole position for political leadership.

Again, before addressing the reliability of the narration upon which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s warped interpretation rests let us assume its authenticity. The *Wilāyah* mentioned in this verse is limited to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ since it has not been proven that any of the other Imāms had given charity whilst praying. The error in this interpretation is glaringly evident from its form, let alone subjecting the narration to academic scrutiny.

The second problem with this verse, assuming that it applies to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, is determining which form of *Wilāyah* is meant. The term *Walī* traces back to the trilateral root (W-L-Y) and refers both to support, mutual affinity, and friendship, as well as guardianship and authority¹.

The ambiguity in this word does not qualify it to be interpreted either way without subsidiary evidence. Structural elements in this passage of the Qur’an suggest that the interpretation of *Wilāyah* as authority and leadership is inaccurate. This verse is placed between two other verses which prohibit taking the disbelievers as *Awliyā’* [plural of *Walī*]. It is known by necessity that Muslims are not to take disbelievers as authorities. As such, the only valid interpretation which is harmonious with the structure of the entire passage is the one which understands the relationship of *Wilāyah* to be based on support, friendship, and loyalty.

So, even if we were to concede that this verse applies to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ exclusively we find no divine mandate for his political leadership or religious authority. Rather it commands us to be sincere in friendship with ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The Ahl al-Sunnah advocates support for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, loving him, and maintaining a relationship of affinity.

1 *Lisān al-‘Arab* pg. 4920

We have demonstrated that even if we were to concede the reliability of the supporting narration, this verse is problematic in proving the doctrine of Imāmah since it does not allow for the inclusion for anyone besides ‘Alī رضي الله عنه; thus excluding the remaining Imāms as well. We have also demonstrated that lexical and structural elements in the verse indicate that Wilāyah in this context refers to support and friendship rather than authority and guardianship.

All that remains in exposing the warped interpretation provided by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is to analyse the authenticity of the narration upon which his interpretation rests.

The narration provided by the editor of *al-Murāja‘āt* relates an incident wherein ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was praying, and a beggar approached him whilst he was in the posture of Rukū‘. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه allegedly took a ring off his finger and donated it as a charity to the beggar. The narration goes further to say that it was in regards to this that this verse in Sūrah al-Mā‘idah was revealed.

Before we proceed any further let us produce a statement from one of the ‘infallible Imāms’. Abū Nu‘aym relates by way of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Abī Sulayman, who said that he asked Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir about this verse, to which he replied, “The ones intended by it are the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions.” ‘Abd al-Malik says, “I then said to him that people say it refers to ‘Alī?’” He responded, “Well, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is included among them (the Companions).”¹

It seems that al-Bāqir was either unaware of the context of the revelation of this verse, or that the alleged context was an outright forgery!

The narration is ascribed to four of the Companions: Abū Rāfi‘, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Ammār, and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol.3 pg.185.

The narration of Abū Rāfi‘

The narration by way of Abū Rāfi‘ is found in the *Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī.¹ Despite this narration concealing some of the common details and providing other details which are absent from the common narrations, it suffers from further problems when considering the chain of transmission.

Al-Haythamī comments of this chain saying:

Appearing in this chain is Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘ who was considered unreliable by the bulk of the scholars, with the exception of Ibn Ḥibbān. Furthermore, despite the majority of the narrators in this chain being acceptable, it is not free from one Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Furāt whose identity remains anonymous to me.²

The narration of ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir

The narration from ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir is known through a common chain and is found in *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* of al-Ṭabarānī.³ Commenting on this narration al-Haythamī says:

There are narrators who remain unknown to me.⁴

The anonymity of a narrator is one of the flaws by which a narration is deemed unreliable. That, however, is not the only flaw in the chain. The unreliability of this narration is further confirmed by the presence of Khālid ibn Yazīd al-‘Umarī in the chain.

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, vol.1 pg. 321.

2 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol.9 pg. 137.

3 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* narration no. 6232.

4 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 7 pg. 20.

Khālid ibn Yazīd al-‘Umarī

He was made out as a liar by both Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī.¹ The problem with his narration becomes exacerbated when Ibn Ḥibbān—known for his leniency in accepting narrators—declares him unreliable on account of narrating baseless narrations and then attributing them to reliable narrators.²

The narration of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib

The narration by way of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is only known by way of Mūsā ibn Qays al-Ḥaḍramī — Salamah ibn Kuhayl — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.³

Mūsā ibn Qays al-Ḥaḍramī

The scholars are divided on Mūsā ibn Qays⁴ al-Ḥaḍramī with some considering him a liar and others merely acknowledging the fact that some of what he narrates is unsubstantiated in addition to the mediocrity of his ability to accurately relate narrations. This, coupled with his excessive attachment to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه might have compromised the integrity of what he narrates especially when it is related to the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

Salamah ibn Kuhayl

Another serious flaw in this chain is the fact that Salamah ibn Kuhayl was only born years after the demise of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. The interruption in this chain leaves a huge gap — which is more than sufficient grounds to dismiss this report as well.

The narration of Ibn ‘Abbās

After citing this narration with a chain from Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, the famous Ḥadīth expert and erudite commentator of the Qur’ān, Ḥāfiẓ Ismā‘īl ibn Kathīr, states:

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg.646.

2 *Ibid*

3 *Tafsīr ibn Abī Ḥātim* vol. 4 pg. 1162

4 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 4 pg 217

This has also been narrated by way of ‘Alī, ‘Ammār, and Abū Rāfi‘. However, all these narrations are completely unreliable due to the weakness of the narrators who appear in the chains of transmission, in addition to the anonymity of many of the narrators.¹

Finally, the narration which appears by way of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه is narrated via three common chains.²

1. **Muḥammad ibn Marwān al-Suddī – Muḥammad ibn al-Sā’id al-Kalbī**
– Abū Ṣāliḥ – Ibn ‘Abbās.

We have previously commented on al-Suddī and al-Kalbī identifying them as unreliable narrators; especially al-Kalbī who was exposed for his forgeries. This is the famous *Silsilat al-Kadhib* [Chain of Lies].³

2. **‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Mujāhid** – Mujāhid – Ibn ‘Abbās

‘Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Mujāhid

- Ibn Kathīr states that ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is unreliable.⁴
- Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal criticised him severely.
- Al-Bukhārī—quoting Wakī ibn al-Jarrāḥ—adds that he did not hear any narrations from his father.⁵

So the weakness of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is compounded by the fact that he did not hear Ḥadīth directly from his father, Mujāhid ibn Jabr, which leaves this chain interrupted.

1 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah al-Mā’idah verse 55

2 *Ibid*

3 *Tadrīb al-Rāwī* vol. 1 pg. 181

4 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah al-Mā’idah verse 55

5 *Mīzān al-Itidāl* vol2. Pg.682

3. Al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muzāḥim – Ibn ‘Abbās

The problem with this chain is that the two of them did not meet. The interrupted chain renders it unreliable.¹

Ibn Kathīr points out the flaw in the understanding of many who think like ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. He says that it is erroneous to interpret the final phrase of the verse “and give zakah, and they bow” as giving charity whilst in the posture of Rukū‘ since if this were the case, then paying the zakāh while bowing would be the best form of giving zakāh. To the extent of our knowledge no scholar from whom religious rulings are taken says this. The verse, therefore, means they attend the prayer in congregation in the Masjids and spend by way of charity on the various needs of Muslims²

It is evident to the objective seeker that the argument presented by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is extremely farfetched. That, in addition to it being the careful connection with a baseless narration.

Salvation to those who depend on the authority of Ahl al-Bayt

وَأِنِّي لَغَفَّارٌ لِّمَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدَىٰ

But indeed, I am the Perpetual Forgiver of whoever repents and believes, and does righteousness, and then continues in guidance.³

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deceit appears to be imbued with confidence through his blatant interpolation of the verses of the Qur’an. The verses preceding and succeeding the one he has just cited all relate to the story of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and the emancipation of Banū Isrā’īl. The entire passage is cohesive in terms of its structure and flow. There is absolutely no mention of Ahl al-Bayt.

1 *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, biography 2024.

2 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah al-Mā’idah verse 55.

3 Sūrah Ṭāhā: 82

This verse can only be connected to Wilāyah of Ahl al-Bayt through unreliable narrations which we are evidently the cornerstone of all the arguments presented thus far. Establishing the religious authority of Ahl al-Bayt remains a debt on the shoulders of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. Naturally, this relegates the quotations from the Imām—which are yet to be proven reliably attributed to them—to the level of ijtihād.

The narration from Thābit al-Bunānī also remains an interpretation based on Ijtihād, which is also questionably ascribed to him since it appears only by way of ‘Umar ibn Shākir al-Baṣrī whom Ibn ḥajar declared weak.¹

The ijtihād of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه stands in contrast to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s narrations. He is reliably quoted to have interpreted the repentance in the verse as repentance from *Shirk* [associating partners with Allah]. He interprets adherence to guidance in this verse to refer to one who does not have doubts.² Others have interpreted it as steadfastness on the path of righteousness.³

Wilāyah of Ahl al-Bayt is the Amānah [Trust]

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا
الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.⁴

The absurdity in this type of interpretation becomes increasingly self-evident. If the trust being handed down in this verse referred to the authority of Ahl al-Bayt; by necessity it suggests that the heavens and earth refused to bear this trust.

1 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, biography no. 4917.

2 *Tafsīr ibn Jarīr* vol. 16 pg. 130.

3 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr*, Sūrah Ṭāhā, verse 82.

4 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 72

Furthermore, this trust would have been the burden of all the earlier nations. Lastly, the description of those who assumed this trust is that they are unjust and ignorant. Why would they be described as such if the trust was to accept the authority of Ahl al-Bayt?

The narrations which are meant to support this narration are referenced to famous Shīrī books of Tafsīr, wherein there is complete recognition of the fact that the Qur’anic text was interpolated; especially in respect of the Wilāyah of Ahl al-Bayt!

The Blessing [Pleasure]

ثُمَّ لَسْتُمْ لَسْتُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ

Then you will surely be asked that Day about the delight.¹

Consider the paradox in that he earlier described the Wilāyah of Ahl al-Bayt as a burden and obligation to be carried. Now it is interpreted as a blessing and pleasure. If it were the blessing being spoken of here, why would the heavens and earth shy away from enjoying this divine blessing? Furthermore, why would Allah describe human beings with injustice and foolishness for accepting a favour and blessing?

‘Abd Allāh ibn Zubayr relates from his father Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām رضي الله عنه:

When this verse was revealed, “*Then you will surely be asked that Day about the delight!*” Zubayr said, “O Messenger of Allah! Which are the delights that we will be asked about, when they (delights) are but the two black things: dates and water?”

He said, “But it is what shall come.”²

1 Sūrah al-Takāthur: 8

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth no. 3356.

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه relates:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال خرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ذات يوم أو ليلة فإذا هو بأبي بكر وعمر رضي الله عنهما فقال ما أخرجكما من بيوتكما هذه الساعة قالوا الجوع يا رسول الله. قال وأنا والذي نفسي بيده لأخرجني الذي أخرجكما. فوما فقاما معه فأتى رجلا من الأنصار فإذا هو ليس في بيته فلما رآته المرأة قالت مرحباً وأهلاً فقال لها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أين فلان قالت ذهب يستعذب لنا الماء إذ جاء الأنصاري فنظر إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وصاحبيه ثم قال الحمد لله ما أحد اليوم أكرم أضيافاً مني فانطلق فجاءهم بعدق فيه بسر وتمر ورطب فقال كلوا وأخذ المدينة فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إياك والحلوب فذبح لهم فأكلوا من الشاة ومن ذلك العذق وشربوا فلما أن شبعوا ورووا قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لأبي بكر وعمر رضي الله عنهما والذي نفسي بيده لتسألن عن هذا النعيم يوم القيامة أخرجكم من بيوتكم الجوع ثم لم ترجعوا حتى أصابكم هذا النعيم

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم went out (of his house) one day, or one night, and there he met Abū Bakr and ‘Umar also.

He صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “What made you leave your houses at this hour?”

They said, “It is hunger, O Messenger of Allah.”

He said, “By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, what made you leave, made me also leave, so come along!”

He went along with them to a man from the Anṣār, but they did not find him in his house.

When the wife of that man saw the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, she said, “You are most welcome.”

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said to her, “Where is so-and-so?”

She said, “He went to fetch some fresh water for us.”

In the meantime, the Anṣārī came back, saw the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and his two Companions and said, “Praise be to Allah, today no one has more honourable guests than I!”

He then went out and brought them a bunch of date fruit, having dates, some still green, some ripe, and some fully ripe, and requested them to eat from it. He then took his knife (to slaughter a sheep).

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to him, “Do not kill a milking sheep.”

So he slaughtered a sheep for them. After they had eaten and drunk to their satisfaction, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Abu Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما, “By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, you will certainly be questioned about this delight on the Day of Resurrection. Hunger brought you out of your homes, and you do not return to your homes till you have been blessed with this delight.”¹

These narrations clarify what is meant by this verse.

The examples are too many to quote, but the general trend has been demonstrated. None of the verses mentioned are specific in their application to the Ahl al-Bayt. Majority of the verses can only be connected to Ahl al-Bayt via an unreliable chain. This trend is consistent with every single verse cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Dīn, and the problems with the narrations remain consistent in all the footnotes provided by the editor.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ashribah, Ḥadīth 2038.

Letter 13

Thul-Qi'da 1329

I. Argument Regarding These Traditions Weak

May Allah bless your hand and pen! How elevated their pages above the position of that who challenges and opposes! How defensible their wise writings against the sight of the critic and researcher! Their pages struggle towards one destination, going along an aimed path, in a purposeful way. Their arguments do not come across the hearing of the wise without reverberating in acclamation.

Concerning your latest letter, its torrent has been overflowing, overbrimming, supported by perfect verses and worthy proofs, with your own self coming thereby out of the charge put forth against you without committing any shortcoming in whatever entrusted to you. Whoever challenges you is bad in argument, stubborn, arguing about falsehood and acting like the ignorant.

Your opponents, however, may argue that those who narrated these verses supporting your argument are Shi'a, and these cannot be relied upon by the Sunnis. What would your answer, therefore, be? Please kindly provide it, if you will, and please do accept my thanks. Peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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Letter 14

Thul-Qi'da 1329

I. Fallacy of Opponent's Argument

II. Opponents do not Know Shi'as

III. Distinction of Emphasizing Illegality of Falsifying Hadith

1. Our answer is that the argument of such opponents is wrong. It is baseless because of the fallacy of its minor and major arguments.

As for its minor argument, that is, the claim that “Those who narrated the verses concerning your argument are Shi'a” is obviously false as testified by reliable Sunni authorities who recorded their statements in the meaning which we have stated. Their musnads testify to the fact that they are even more in number than Shi'as, as we explained in our book *Tanzilul Ayat alBahira*, in our chapter titled “Virtues of the Purified 'itra.” You may also refer to *Ghayatul Maram* which is widely circulated throughout the Muslim world.

As for the major one, that is, the claim that Shi'as are not regarded by Sunnis as reliable (in narrating hadith), its fallacy is even more obvious than that of the minor one. Sunni Musnads bear testimony to this fact, and the authorities they relied upon are full of Shi'a names.

Take, for example, their six sahih books and others which use them as their authorities, the latter being charged by those who attribute to them deviation from the Right Path, stamp them with the stamps of “Rafidis” and “deviators.” To them have they attributed extremism, fanaticism, and deviation from the Path.

Among Bukhari's mentors are Shi'a men who have been charged with being "Rafidi" and stamped with hatred; nevertheless, this has never made Bukhari nor others doubt their fairmindedness. The latter relied upon them even in the sahih books feeling very comfortable with doing so. So; will the opponents who say that "Shi'as are not relied upon by Sunnis" find a listening ear? Of course not!

2. Such opponents, however, are ignorant. Had they known the truth, they would have come to know the fact that Shi'as have followed in the footsteps of and have emulated the Purified 'itra. Their manners are the 'itra's; therefore, everyone they relied upon is unmatched in truthfulness and trustworthiness. Unmatched are their reliable heroes in piety and caution.

There are no peers for them among their dependable dignitaries in their forsaking the pleasures of this world, in their piety, worship, good manners, selfdiscipline, selfdenial, and selfcriticism. Nobody can equal them in ascertaining facts and looking for them with extreme care and moderation. Had the opponent assessed their value, just as it is in reality, he would have put his confidence in them, entrusting his affairs to them. But his ignorance of them has made him wander at random about them like one riding a blind animal in a dark night.

He would charge the trustees of Islam such as Muhammad ibn Ya'qub alKulayni, and a truthful among Muslims like Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Babawayh alQummi, and a mentor of the nation such as Muhammad ibn alHasan ibn 'Ali alTusi.

He would belittle their sacred books which are the custodians of the knowledge of the family of Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and them, doubting their mentors who are the pioneers of knowledge and the ones who equal the Holy Qur'an and who have dedicated their lives to promote the teachings of Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, His book

and His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, and the Imams of Muslims and their commoners.

3. Both righteous and vicious individuals have equally come to know how these virtuous men judge the case of telling lies. Thousands of their books curse lying, labelling falsification of hadith as sins punishable by Hell-fire. They are distinguished by their judgment of intentional falsification of hadith. They have considered it to break the fast, requiring both compensation and penitence from the person who commits it during the month of Ramadan, and they also require the same for whatever causes the breaking of the fast.

Their Fiqh and hadith are very clear in this regard; therefore, how can anybody charge their narrators while they are the good, the virtuous, the ones who spend the night praying and the day fasting? Since when have the virtuous among the followers and supporters of Muhammad's family been charged, while the Kharijis, Murji'is and Qadris have not? What other than obvious enmity and ugly ignorance?

We seek refuge with Allah against forsaking us, and from Him do we seek help against the bad consequences of injustice and oppression. There is no might nor power except in Allah, the Sublime, the Almighty, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Discussions

Acceptance of Qur'ānic arguments

Our discussions on 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's previous correspondence proves that his letter was brimming only with lies and deceit. Not a single verse from all of the verses cited stood in support of his claim. The unreliable narrations upon which he relied to reinterpret the verse were proven to be either confirmed forgeries or unreliable at best. It is hard to imagine that the Shaykh al-Azhar would swoon at the offerings of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn in his previous correspondence.

Furthermore, if the arguments presented in the earlier correspondence were accepted, the obvious consequence of that – of which there is no alternative – is to denounce the validity of Sunnī belief. Was the Shaykh al-Azhar taken so early in his exchange?

Shī'ah narrators

A possible objection is carefully construed so that the sincere reader, lacking any insights to the field of Ḥadīth study, would be strategically led on with a cunningly worded question.

The question posed by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn with the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī, outwardly appears appropriate whereas it is essentially a very neat exit strategy for 'Abd al-Ḥusayn because it alleges that the only reason to object to the narrations cited by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn is the fact that the narrators were Shī'ah. The elementary flaw in this reasoning provides 'Abd al-Ḥusayn with the perfect opportunity to educate the Shaykh al-Azhar with a masterclass on Ḥadīth methodology despite the fact that anyone whose read the most basic primer on the subject would know not to ask such an ill-advised question.

Let us also be reminded of the initial undertaking by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn to present mutually accepted evidence. Many of the narrations that he cited were taken exclusively from Shī'ah Ḥadīth sources.

Shī'ī Ḥadīth Literature

The impression given by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn is that Shī'ī narrators are beyond all forms of suspicion. He drops subtle hints at the soundness of the Shī'ī Ḥadīth texts, suggesting that their soundness exceeds that of the Sunnī Ḥadīth texts.

He goes on to laud their unmatched truthfulness and trustworthiness. He argues that they are unrivaled, and without peers when it comes to preserving the Prophetic Sunnah. He named three of their early scholars, each famed for his contribution to early Shī'ī Ḥadīth literature; Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī¹, author of *al-Kāfī*; Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī², also known as al-

1 Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kulaynī al-Rāzi

Born: 250 A.H Died: 329 A.H

Foremost compiler of Shī'ah ḥadīth. Author of *Al-Kāfī* -regarded to be the most important and authentic compilation of ḥadīth by the Shī'ah.

Al-Kulaynī lived during the period of the *al-ghaybat al-sughrā* (minor occultation) of the Twelfth Imām. It is believed that he greatly benefitted from the 'living source of knowledge' (Imām al-Mahdī). The Shī'ah regard him as a mujaddid of the third century (refer to *Al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb* of 'Abbās al-Qummī)

2 Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Mūsā ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī

Born: 305 A.H Died: 381 A.H

Referred to by the title Al-Ṣadūq and commonly known as Ibn Bābawayh. The tale of the birth of Ibn Bābawayh is 'amazing':

When his father was in Iraq, it is said that he met Abū al-Qasim al-Ḥusayn ibn Rawḥ- the third agent of the Hidden Imām. During their meeting he asked the latter several questions. Later he wrote to al-Ḥusayn ibn Rawḥ asking him to take a letter to the Hidden Imam. In this letter he asked for a son. Al-Ḥusayn sent back an answer telling him that they (the Hidden Imam and al-Ḥusayn) had prayed to Allah to grant the request and he would be rewarded with two sons. Another version of the story says three sons. The elder, or eldest, of these sons was al-Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

His book, *Man lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faḳīh*, is amongst the four early canonical works of the Shī'ah. Interesting to note is that the work stresses that it was conceived as a reference book to help ordinary Shī'ah in the practise of the legal requirements of Islam, and as a result there is a general absence of asānīd or chain of narrations. The asānīd by which the tradition is received from the Prophet or one of the A'immah - was, and is an all-important feature of the science of traditions. It is a summary of the study of legal traditions by one of their great scholars of traditions.

Ṣadūq, author of *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*; and finally Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī¹, the author of both *al-Tahdhīb*² and *al-Istibṣār*.

The interesting observation when subjecting all these books to academic scrutiny is that one of them, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, is devoid of any chain of transmission. This means that we have to blindly trust a scholar who died in 381 A.H, without being able to objectively study the source of his narrations. While al-Ṭūsī's works both have chains of transmission, we find that they are severely interrupted. This along with the fact that the bulk of his narrations appear to pass through anonymous individuals. Surely, greater care ought to have went in preserving the legacy of the *Infallible Imāms*? After all, they are the custodians of the knowledge of those “who equal the Holy Qur’ān,” in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s own words. Perhaps what he meant was that they had given it equal care, since the Shī’ah are not known to have been transmitters of the Qur’ān. The variant renditions of the Qur’ān are only known by way of the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah. Though his statement could be interpreted in yet another light. Perhaps their knowledge is as susceptible to interpolation as is the Qur’an; since the teacher of al-Kulaynī, whose book, *al-Kāfi*, is filled to the brim with narrations from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, one of the most outspoken voices that insist the Qur’ān has been interpolated.

1 Abū Ja’far Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Ṭūsī

Born: 385 A.H Died: 460 A.H

Commonly known as al-Shaykh al-Ṭā’ifāh. Studied first under Shaykh al-Mufīd in Baghdad. Author of *Al-Istibṣār* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*- two of the four early canonical works of the Shī’ah. Sharīf al-Murtaḍā succeeded Al-Mufīd as leader of the Shī’ah scholars and al-Ṭūsī remained a close associate of his during this time and his principle disciple. After the death of al-Murtaḍā, al-Ṭūsī succeeded him as leader of the Shī’ah scholars.

2 This name, *al-Tahdhīb*, has previously been quoted in this text. Those references refer to *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* of al-Mizzī, which is a Sunnī encyclopaedia which contains the biographies and credentials of all the narrators appearing in the six famous Sunnī Ḥadīth collections. Any reference to *al-Tahdhīb* of al-Ṭūsī will be done as *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* of al-Ṭūsī.

Al-Qummī writes in his *Tafsīr*¹:

As for the verses which are different from how they were revealed, they are as follows:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

*You are the best nation produced (as an example) for mankind. You enjoy what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.*²

Abū ‘Abd Allah (al-Ṣādiq) said to the reciter of this verse, “The best nation? They killed Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn?”

Somebody said to him, “Then how was it revealed, O the son of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ?”

He answered, “This verse was revealed like this:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

You are the best A‘immah produced (as an example) for mankind.

Do you not see the praise of Allah for them at the end of the verse:

تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You enjoy what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.

Similarly the following verse was recited to Abū ‘Abd Allah (al-Ṣādiq)

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

1 *Tafsīr al-Qummī* vol. 1 pg. 10.

2 *Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān*: 110.

And those who say, Our Rabb, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us a leader (i.e. example) for the righteous.¹

Abū ‘Abd Allah (al-Ṣādiq) said, “Indeed they have asked Allah for a great thing; to make them A’immah for the righteous?”

It was asked, “How was the verse revealed, O the son of the Prophet ﷺ?”

He then said, “It was revealed like this:

والذين يقولون ربنا هب لنا من أزواجنا وذرياتنا قرّة أعين واجعل لنا من المتقين إماماً

And those who say, Our Rabb, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make for us a leader from the righteous.

If deliberately lying against the Prophet ﷺ is enough to break the fast, one wonders what is the consequence of those who interpolate the words of the Qur’an. Can they be trusted?

If one chooses to ignore this aspect for the moment, what can be said of the reliability of the books of those whom ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn argues vehemently that an unbiased researcher “would have put his confidence in them, entrusting his affairs to them...” Is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn being completely honest in this claim? The list is long, and this is not the primary point on this issue, but there are at least four Shī‘ī scholars who have dismissed over two-thirds of the content found in *al-Kāfī*, by the unmatched authority, al-Kulaynī. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, Zayn al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad al-‘Āmilī, Murtaḍā al-‘Askarī, and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī are all Shī‘ī scholars whose academic endeavours have led them to dismiss nearly two-thirds of *al-Kāfī*. The last two scholars are contemporary scholars, but the previous two would have been no strangers to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. The irony is that

1 Sūrah al-Furqān: 74

despite their attempts at grading these narrations, the four of them rarely agree on which narrations are authentic. Is this the peerless scholarship that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn suggests we surrender ourselves to?

Shī‘ah vs Rāfiḍah

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn appears to use these terms interchangeably creating the impression that the two convey nearly the same meaning. If the line that separates the Shī‘ah from the Rāfiḍah is erased it becomes very confusing for one to tell the difference. Perhaps it would be prudent to acknowledge our own failings in this regard; our reference to the Shī‘ah has almost exclusively intended for the Twelver Shī‘ah. Although, we might be excused to some extent since the term Shī‘ah, in our times, is used almost exclusively to refer to the Twelver Shī‘ah due to them representing the vast majority among the various Shī‘ī factions that still exist. The term Shī‘ah can thus be said to have evolved in terms of its implications despite retaining its basic element. Historically this term was used to refer to someone who aligned themselves with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه when he became the Khalīfah. The description, however, was not a definition, as such it could even apply to those who deified ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. We realise that the term Shī‘ah applied to a multiplicity of groupings; their alignment with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه being the common element. The term therefore could refer to a divergence in political stance without doctrinal differences. It could also refer to those who considered ‘Alī رضي الله عنه superior to ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, whilst acknowledging the validity of ‘Uthmān’s رضي الله عنه Khilāfah. Others held ‘Uthmān, Ṭalhāh, Zubayr in contempt; whilst others would go further still and criticise them. One would notice the innovation increasing in intensity. When this Bid‘ah reaches the point where there is denouncement of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and disassociation with those who swore allegiance to them, it passes the threshold of *Rafḍ* (rejection). This term was coined by the great-grandson of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, Zayd ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, when the Shī‘ah of his time abandoned him on account of him upholding that the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was valid, in addition to him loving them and invoking Allah’s pleasure upon them.

The theologians among the Rāfiḍah would go on to develop a doctrinal model which stipulates that there were twelve divinely appointed individuals who were to succeed the Prophet ﷺ, and retrospectively they began developing an alternate narrative of history which was meant to be at harmony with their doctrine. Later on this branch of the Shī'ah gained traction and eventually became the face of Shī'ism globally. Whilst other Shī'ī sects remain in existence, the Twelvers are the most popular and common reference to Shī'ahs in our times is almost exclusively directed at them. The same cannot be said for the early period. As such much confusion has risen from the existence of narrators in Sunnī Ḥadīth collections who have been described as being from the Shī'ah. Often times it is assumed that every narrator who has been described as being Shī'ah or having those tendencies was an adherent to what has become popularly known as Twelver Shī'ism; whereas this is not the case. The earlier description of those aligned with 'Alī رضي الله عنه clearly differentiates between those who were merely Shī'ah and those who were Rāfiḍah.

In the next communication from 'Abd al-Ḥusayn one might be led to think that the list of one-hundred narrators found in Sunnī literature refers to the Rāfiḍah. This is anything but true as we will come to see in the discussion on that letter.

Sunnī Ḥadīth Criticism

The critical approach—within the Sunnī paradigm—finds itself rooted in the Prophetic warning against misrepresenting the Prophet ﷺ.

'Alī رضي الله عنه relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

Do not tell a lie against me for whoever tells a lie against me will surely enter the Hell-fire.¹

Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn identified the *Great Fitnah* [Murder of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه] as the event that served as a catalyst for Ḥadīth scrutiny. The tool by which Ḥadīth

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-'Ilm, Ḥadīth. 107

investigation began was to examine the source.¹ Prior to this there was no reason to doubt that someone would ever deliberately misrepresent the Prophet ﷺ.

Anyone ascribing any statement or action to the Prophet ﷺ would be required to furnish his source for it to be accepted. The source was in the form of listing the chain of transmission through which this information passed and was subsequently studied. In terms of assessing a narrator, two major considerations were assessed. Firstly, is there any reason to suspect that the narrator would deliberately misrepresent the Prophet ﷺ. This meant that the moral integrity of the narrator was scrutinised and the scholars of the same generation would either offer their insights in this regard, or their views would be recorded and cross examined by experts of later generations. At times, there was insufficient information before one could make a judgement call on a particular narrator. As such many of the later scholars exercised a policy of prudence and refrained from accepting a narration of any individual when there was ambiguity in this regard. If they found sufficient information the narrator either possessed sufficient moral integrity for him to be trusted; or his lack thereof resulted in rejection of his narrations. A narrator who possessed the necessary moral integrity is referred to as 'Adl. This quality is referred to as 'Adālah.

It was not sufficient that a narrator was found on such moral standing where he would not be suspected of deliberately misrepresenting the Prophet ﷺ for his narrations to be accepted. A subsequent investigation was undertaken on the aptitude of the narrator; assessing his ability to correctly transmit what he had learnt. This was a safety measure for the inadvertent misrepresentation of the Prophet ﷺ by a narrator who would not necessarily attempt to misrepresent the Prophet ﷺ. A narrator whose memory is strong and whose transcription of narrations are well preserved such that there is minimal—if any—discrepancy in his narrations from the time that he received it until he transmits it is referred to as *Ḍābiṭ*; and this ability is called *Ḍabṭ*.

1 *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*

If both ‘Adālah and Ḍabṭ are found in any narrator his narrations deserve to be accepted. However, if a narrator was known to subscribe to heterodox beliefs he might be motivated to adapt his narrations, either by his choice or subconsciously. Therefore, the trustworthiness of a narrator was of paramount importance when it came to accepting the narrations of an innovator. Even if his religious grounding was firm, he would be investigated by comparing his narrations to that of his peers to determine whether his narrations were not marred by bias or prejudice. If the narrator was found favourable in both evaluations there would be strong reason to accept his narrations.

What we have mentioned above is in respect of some of the major considerations of the narrator himself. The narration however, ought to have been transmitted via a continuous chain, since any interruption would raise the question of the anonymity of the missing link. Some interruptions are clearly noticeable whereas others are less obvious.

The early scholars of Ḥadīth did not suffice in merely accepting a source even if it were found acceptable. In addition to this they would collect as much data as possible by cross examining a particular narration with other versions of it; for comparison and corroboration. If any discrepancies were picked up via the cross evaluation, a narration could still be dismissed. This is an extremely brief overview of the phenomenon of Ḥadīth criticism and scrutiny which will—Allah willing—provide some relevance for the discussions which will follow.

Accepting the narrations of Innovators

What is the correct position—as far as the Sunnī Ḥadīth paradigm is concerned—on accepting the narrations of people who held heterodox beliefs? Surprisingly this is an issue upon which the scholars opinions varied. The natural consequence of this difference manifests in the varying criteria extracted from their works.

The first opinion

Those who adopt this view argue that the narrations of innovators are to be rejected without exception. This view has been attributed to Imam Mālik and Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī;¹ they argue that narrating from such people results in promoting their affair and praiseworthy mention of them.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says:

The scholars have differed regarding hearing Ḥadīth from the people of innovation like the Qadariyyah, Khawārij, Rāfiḍah, and upon relying on, and acceptance of their narrations. Some of the early scholars have prohibited this since they are considered disbelievers according to those who pronounce disbelief on the people of Ta'wīl, and they are considered flagrant sinners according to those who do not pronounce disbelief on the people of Ta'wīl. Among those who held this view was Mālik ibn Anas.²

Ibn Ḥajar lists the various positions on this matter:

The prohibition of accepting the narration of the innovators who have not crossed the line into disbelief like the Rāfiḍah and Khawārij and their like is the view of Mālik and his companions; and al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī and his followers.³

In response to this view Ibn Ṣalāh is quoted as saying:

The view of unrestricted prohibition is farfetched from the scholars of Ḥadīth since their books are filled with narrations of people of innovation who did not invite.⁴

1 *Fath al-Mughīth* vol. 3 pg. 60, *al-Tankīl* vol. 1 pg. 45

2 *Al-Kifāyah* pg. 148

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 10

4 *al-Muqaddimah* pg.104

A similar view has also been attributed to Abū Ishāq, Ibrāhīm ibn Ya‘qūb al-Jūzajānī, especially with narrators who were described as being Shī‘ah. He was known to reject the narrations of Shī‘ahs with the exception of a few narrators who were well-known for their excellent memories, precision, and trustworthiness. Al-Dhahabī said about him, “Abū Ishāq al-Jūzajānī’s expressions are harsh and such was his habit...”¹ Al-Mu‘allimī added, “Al-Jūzajānī has the tendency of Naṣb and is especially harsh with criticism of narrators with Shī‘ī tendencies.”²

The second opinion

This view calls for distinction between adherents and fanatics. If the narrators level of commitment leads him to invite others towards his heterodoxy, or is known to be a chief proponent of that particular belief, he would be considered a fanatic and his narrations shall not be accepted. Similarly, his narrations would be accepted if he was not known for inviting to his innovation provided that the underlying criteria of moral integrity and meticulous recall of his narrations are found. Many scholars were inclined to this view.

Al-Khaṭīb ascribed this opinion to Imam Aḥmad and narrates by way of Ibn Maḥdī and Ibn al-Mubārak that Aḥmad said of Shabābah ibn Sawwār, “I abandoned him and did not write from him on account his Irjā,” so it was said to Aḥmad, “What about Abū Mu‘āwiyah?” He responded, “Shabābah was a propagator [Dā‘iyah].”³

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī said:

Whoever held heterodox views still deserves to be considered, but those who invited towards them deserves to be abandoned.⁴

1 *Mīzān al-ʾitidāl* vol. 2 pg. 66

2 *al-Tankīl* vol. 1 pg 46 - See also *Sharḥ al-ʾIlal* of Ibn Rajab vol.1 pg.357, *Al-Thiqāt* of Ibn Ḥibbān vol. 8 pg. 82; *al-Kāmil* of Ibn ‘Adī vol. 1 pg. 310, and *al-Tankīl* vol.1 pg.99

3 *Al-Kifāyah* pg. 149, *Mīzān al-ʾitidāl* vol. 1 pg. 301, *Taḥthīb al-Taḥthīb* vol. 2 pg. 147

4 *Al-Kifāyah* pg.155

‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Shaqīq said:

I said to ‘Abd Allāh—referring to Ibn al-Mubārak—have you heard from ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd? And he indicated with his hand ‘plenty’, so I asked him why do you not name him whereas you name others from the Qadariyyah?

He replied, “Because he was one of their leaders.”¹

Ibn Ṣalāḥ said:

This is the most balanced of the views and the preferred one.²

Al-Nawawī agreed with him saying:

This is the preferred view, and the most balanced of views; adopted by the majority.³

Ibn Kathīr also said:

The majority opinion was to distinguish between those who merely held these views from those who were callers.⁴

Al-Ḥākim has also transmitted the agreement of the scholars on this matter.⁵

Al-Dhahabī said:

As for the extremists and those who invited to their way; majority of the early scholars warned against them and would not narrate from them.⁶

1 Ibid, *Sīyar A‘lām al-Nubalā* vol.8 pg.302

2 *Al-Muqaddimah* pg. 104

3 *Al-Taqrīb* pg. 43

4 *Ikhtishār ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* pg. 299

5 See *al-Tankīl* vol.1 pg.43

6 *Al-Mughnī* vol. 1 pg. 523

He states further, under the biography of Dāwūd ibn al-Ḥuṣayn:

Ibn Ḥibbān said that he was one of the Shurāt—meaning Khawārij—like ʿIkrimah. However, he was not a caller to that way. As for the callers, it is necessary to avoid their narrations.¹

Ibn Ḥajar was skeptical of this being a unanimous view, although he acknowledges its widespread application.² Some have qualified the criteria even further; stating that the narration must not be seen to support the narrators heterodoxy. He elaborates on this point:

It is necessary to restrict our statement of acceptance of the narrations of the innovator if he is trustworthy, and not a caller to his innovation that his narration which he narrates should not be supporting his innovation; for we cannot be sure in that case of his impartiality. And with Allah is success.³

Ibn Ḥajar provides further insight on the types of innovation:

Innovation is of two kinds: it either it necessitates disbelief, in that he believes in something which results in disbelief, or the innovation necessitates *fiṣq* (deviance). Thus the majority do not accept the first, though it is said that it is accepted unequivocally and it is [also] said that it is accepted if the person does not believe in the permissibility of lying to assist his opinion. After investigation the preferred stance is that every report by an innovator that leads to disbelief will not be rejected. This is because every sect claims that the opposing party is heretical and sometimes they exaggerate the claim by declaring them disbelievers. If this opinion was to be accepted generally, then it would necessitate that all sects are disbelievers. Hence the trusted opinion is that the narration of someone who denies the mass-transmitted (*mutawātir*) matters of sharīʿa,

1 *Al-Mīzān* vol. 2 pg. 6

2 *Nuzhat al-Nazar* pg. 137; *Hady al-Sārī* pg.549

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol.1 pg. 11

known in religion through conviction will be rejected. And similar is the case for one who does the opposite (in that he believes in something which is definitively known to be forbidden in sharīah). As for someone who is not of this attribute, coupled with the fact that he is careful in what he reports, with awareness and piety, then there is no hindrance to accepting his report.

In the second—namely the one whose innovative beliefs do not lead to disbelief—here too a difference exists in accepting and rejecting his narrations. Thus it is said that it is unequivocally rejected. This opinion is far-fetched.

The most common reason given for its rejection is that narrating from him will be promoting his belief and will be an approval of it. If this is the case, then the report of any innovator ought to be rejected, wherever an accepted narrator also narrates from the same teacher.

It has also been said that the narrations of an innovator will be accepted without restrictions, except if he believes in the permissibility of lying, as mentioned previously.

It is also said the innovators report is accepted as long as he does not propagate his heterodoxy. This is because appeal to his innovation may result in distorting the narrations [in his favour] and moulding it to comply with the requirements of his innovation. This is the most correct opinion... and this view has been clearly expressed by al-Jawzaqānī, the teacher of al-Nasāī.¹

His preference on this matter is clearly stated in the preface of his expansive commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*:

This view [acceptance of the narrator who does not propagate] is the most balanced, and has become the position many of the scholars have adopted.²

1 *Nuzhat al-Nazar* pg. 136

2 *Hady al-Sārī* pg. 549

The third opinion

The proponents of this opinion argue that innovation does not affect the credibility of a narrator as long as he is well-established in terms of his memory, precision of narration, and trustworthiness. This is because his religiousness and honesty will prevent him from lying.¹

This appears to be the stance of many of the earlier scholars like al-Bukhārī, Muslim, ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī, Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Khuzaymah among many other Ḥadīth experts.

The following case studies demonstrates their stance on this issue

Al-Bukhārī has narrated a single report from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṭṭān, although it would only be fair to point out that there is a supporting narration for what he narrates as well.² ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṭṭān was from the Khawārij. Ibn Ḥajar says, “He was a propogator to his way.”³

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate by way of Ismā‘īl ibn Abī Khālid, from Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, from ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ who said, “I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying openly and not secretly, ‘Verily the Family of Abū – meaning so-and-so – are not my allies. Indeed my only allies are Allah and the righteous of the believers.”⁴

Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim⁵ is accused of the innovation of Naṣb, and this narration appears to support his innovation yet it is still narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.⁶

1 *Al-Tahdhīb* vol.3 pg.317; *Faṭḥ al-Mughīth* vol.2 pg.61

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Chapter of clothing; sub-chapter of wearing silk for men. Ḥadīth (5835)

3 *Hadī al-Sārī* pg 43. in *al-Faṭḥ* vol.10pg.357 he comments : “al-Bukhārī brought his narration on the principle that he will narrate from innovators if they are religious and honest.”

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Adab, Ḥadīth 5990 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth 215.

See also *al-Tahthīb* vol.3 pg.444 and *Faṭḥ al-Bārī* vol.10pg. 516

5 See ‘*al-Tahthīb*’ (3/444) and ‘*Faṭḥ al-Bārī*’ (10/516)

6 See ‘*al-Tankīl*’ (1/51) of al-Mu‘allimī as well as al-Albānī’s comments

Furthermore, Muslim ibn Ḥajjāj narrates by way of ‘Adī ibn Thābit, from Zirr ibn Ḥubaysh, from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام who said: “Indeed it is the covenant of the unlettered prophet to me that none shall love me except a believer and none shall hate me except a hypocrite.”¹

‘Adī ibn Thābit is a well-known Shi‘ī scholar.

Al-Dhahabī says:

‘Adī ibn Thābit is the scholar of the Shī‘ah, their truthful one, their preacher, and the Imam of their Masjid.²

Despite this al-Imām Muslim narrates this narration from him.

Al-Khaṭīb narrates—with his chain—from ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī who said:

I said to Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Mahdī said, “I abandon from the people of Ḥadīth all those who were leaders of innovation.”

So Yaḥya laughed and said, “What will he do about Qatādah? What will he do about ‘Umar ibn Thar al-Hamadānī? What about ibn Abī Rawād?” and Yaḥya listed a number of names which I have refrained from mentioning. Thereafter Yaḥya said, “If ‘Abd al-Raḥmān abandons this type, he will abandon much.”³

Al-Khaṭīb narrates further from ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī who said:

If I abandon [narrations from] the people of Baṣrah on account of Qadar [predestination], and I abandon the people of Kūfah on account of that view — meaning Tashayyu‘ — the books would be ruined.⁴

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth no. 78

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol.3 pg.61

3 *Al-Kifāyah* pg.157. See also *al-Siyar* vol.5 pg.278

4 *Al-Kifāyah* pg. 157

Al-Khaṭīb explains,

His statement, “The books would be ruined,” means that many narrations would be lost.¹

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzaymah states:

‘Abbād ibn Ya‘qūb —who is suspected in his beliefs but reliable in his narration — narrated to us.²

It appears that Ibn Khuzaymah ratified ‘Abbād ibn Ya‘qūb al-Rawājīnī in his narration despite him being suspected of deviated belief.

Al-Dhahabī says:

A group of [narrators] have been accused with [heterodox belief regarding] predestination; yet their narrations appear in the Ṣaḥīḥayn or one of them on account of them being described with honesty and precision and accuracy.³

Al-Mu‘allimī writes:

The scholars of Ḥadīth have ratified a group of innovators and relied on their narrations and transmitted them in their authentic collections. One who gathers their narrations will find a substantial amount of them that appear to support their innovation; whereas the scholars have an alternative interpretation of those reports without censuring them on account of the innovation of the narrator, nor the narrator on account of what he narrates.⁴

1 Ibid

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaymah* vol.2 pg.376

3 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol.7 pg.21

4 *Al-Tankīl* vol.1 pg.50

Al-Dhahabī says:

This is a matter of great significance, i.e. the Qadari, the Mu‘tazilī, the Jahmī, the Rāfiḍī, whose honesty in narration is well known, as well as his piety, and the fact that he does not invite to his corrupted belief. The majority of the Ḥadīth scholars are inclined towards acceptance of his narrations and practicing accordingly. They were less decisive when it came to the matter of one who propagated his (heterodox) beliefs; whether his narrations could be accepted or not. Many of the great scholars avoided their narrations and refrained from narrating from them. On the other hand, some of them said, “If we are aware of his honesty — even though he is a caller to his corrupt beliefs — and we find with him a Sunnah that is not found with others beside him how could we justify abandoning that Sunnah.” So the manner in which all the scholars conducted themselves seems to indicate that if the corrupted belief of a narrator does not warrant departure from the faith and does not necessitate the spilling of his blood, then it is within plausible means that his narration be acceptable.

This particular matter has not become clear to me as I would like; though what appears to be the case to me is that a person who is involved in an innovation and is not considered from the forerunners of that particular view; neither does he delve into the details of it; his narrations ought to be accepted.¹

Ibn Ḥajar says:

Abstaining from accepting the reports of a narrator described with innovation — whose innovation does not result in departure from the religion — is a view adopted by Imām Mālik, and his companions, and al-Bāqillānī and his followers.

The unrestricted acceptance of those whose innovation is not tantamount to heresy and whose integrity does not bring them to lie is a view adopted

1 *al-Siyar* vol.7 pg.154

by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, and a group of scholars, and it has been report of al-Shafī as well.

As for the view which advocates a detailed division; then this is the view of the majority of the scholars of Ḥadīth. Ibn Ḥibbān¹ has transmitted their consensus on this matter; since the innovator who is a caller to his way has an incentive to narrate that which supports his corrupted belief.²

The case of the narrator whose innovation results in departure from the religion; his narrations are to be rejected and al-Nawawī has reported the agreement on this. He said:

Whoever commits disbelief resulting from his innovation is not to be relied upon by consensus.³

Ibn Kathīr states:

The there is no harm in rejecting the narrations of one whose innovation results in heresy.⁴

Ibn Ḥajar says:

The conclusion after examination and investigation is that not every innovators narration is to be rejected — even if it might be considered heresy on some level —since every group accuses the next of innovation and some exceed the bounds and declare statements of disbelief against its opponents. So the upheld view is that the narrations of those who reject what is known of the religion by necessity and transmitted by mass transmission, and believe contrary to it, their narrations will be disregarded.⁵

1 *Al-Thiqāt* vol.6 pg.140), *al-Majrūhīn* vol.1 pg.18

2 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol.1 pg. 10

3 *Tadrīb al-Rāwī* vol.1 pg.383 and al-Nawawī's commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* vol.1 pg.60

4 *Ikhtīṣār 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* vol.1 pg.299

5 *Al-Nuzhah* pg.138

Letter 15

Thul-Qi'da 1329

I. A Flash of the Truth

II. Requesting Details on Sunnis Relying on Shi'a Authorities

1. Your latest letter has been perfect in organization, clear in expression, sweet, great in benefit, easily accessible, vast in sphere, farsighted, well-supported. I have looked into it keenly, and from among its contents indications of your success have flashed, and signs of your victory shone.
2. When you stated that Sunnis rely on Shi'as, however, you were very brief. You did not elaborate on your statement in this regard. It would have been better had you mentioned those men by their names and quoted Sunni texts indicating that those men were Shi'as and that they nevertheless relied on them. Could you please provide it so that the flags of truth may be seen and the lights of certainty shine? Peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 16

Thul-Qi'da 1329

A Hundred Shi'a Authorities Relied upon by Sunnis

Yes. I will provide you in a hurry with what you have requested, confining myself to some of those personalities who were visited by people from far and wide, on the condition that I will not be required to elaborate on them, since there is no room for that in this brief exposition. Here are their names and the names of their fathers arranged alphabetically:¹

1. Aban ibn Taghlib

He was a Kufi] reciter of the Holy Qur'an. AlThahbi has recorded his biography in his own Mizan saying, "Aban ibn Taghlib, MAW, of Kufa, is a persistent Shi'a. He, nevertheless, is truthful; so, we will rely on his truthfulness, and let him be punished for his innovation." He has also said that Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Ma'in and Abu Hatim put their trust in him. Ibn 'Adi quotes him and says that he is "extremist in Shi'ism." AlSa'di describes him as "an open deviator."

Ibn alThahbi goes on to describe the man's credentials, counting him as an authority relied upon by Muslim and authors of the four Sunan books, namely Abu Dawud, alTirmithi, alNisa'i and Ibn Majah, marking his name with the latter's initials.

Refer to his narration of hadith in Muslim's Sahih, in the four Sunan books through alHakam and alA'mash, in addition to Fudayl ibn 'Umar. Sufyan ibn 'Aynah, Shu'bah, and Idris alAwdi quote him as recorded in Muslim's book. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 141 A.H.

2. Ibrahim ibn Yazid

His name is Ibrahim ibn Yazid ibn ‘Umar ibn alAswad alNakh’i alKufi, the faqih. His mother is Malika daughter of Yazid ibn Qays alNakh’i and sister of alAswad, Ibrahim, and ‘AbdelRahman, sons of Yazid ibn Qays. Like their uncles ‘Alqamah and Ubay, sons of Qays, they were all among the most reliable and authoritative among all Muslims. Authors of the six sahih books, as well as others, have all relied upon their authority while keeping in mind their being Shi’as.

As regarding our man Ibrahim ibn Yazid, he has been included among Shi’a dignitaries by Ibn Qutaybah] on page 206 of his work Al-Ma’arif where he enumerates a few Shi’a dignitaries, taking his reliability for granted. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahih books as quoted by the mother of his uncle ‘Alqamah ibn Qays, and by Humam ibn alHarith, Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, ‘Ubaydah, alAswad ibn Yazid, his uncle.

Refer also to his hadith in Muslim’s Sahih through his uncle from his mother’s side, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Yazid, and through Sahn ibn Munjab, Abu Mu’ammar, ‘Ubayd ibn Nadlah, and ‘Abis. In the two sahihs, he is quoted by Fudayl ibn ‘Umar, alMughirah, Ziyad ibn Kulayb, Wasil, alHasan ibn ‘Ubaydullah, Hammad ibn Abu Sulayman, and by Sammak. Ibrahim was born in 50 A.H., and he died at the age of either 95 or 96, four months after alHajjaj’s death.

3. Ahmad ibn al-Mufdil

He is Ahmad ibn alMufdil ibn alKufi alHafri. Abu Zar’ah and Abu Hatim quote him and rely upon him while being fully aware of his status among Shi’as. In Ahmad’s biography, as stated in Al-Mizan, Abu Hatim highlights this fact by saying: “Ahmad ibn alMufdil is one of the Shi’a chiefs, and he is truthful.” AlThahbi mentions him in his book Al-Mizan, putting on

his name Abu Dawud's and alNisa'i's initials, indicating thereby that they consider him an authority. Refer to his hadith in their sahih through al-Thawri. He narrates through Asbat ibn Nasir and Isra'i.

4. Isma'il ibn Aban al-Azdi al-Kufi al-Warraq

He is mentor of al-Bukhari, as the latter indicates in his Sahih. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Mizan. This proves that both al-Bukhari and al-Tirmithi rely on him in their Sahih books. It has also been said that both Yahya and Ahmed cite him, and that al-Bukhari said this about him: "He is truthful," yet others say that the man used to follow the Shi'ite faith. He died in 286 A.H./899 A.D., but al-Qaysarani states that his year of demise was 216 A.H./831 A.D. Al-Bukhari quotes him directly in more than one place of his Sahih, as al-Qaysarani and others have stated.

5. Isma'il ibn Khalifah al-Malla'i al-Kufi "Abu Isra'il"

He is more famous by his kunya, nickname, "Abu Isra'il" whereby he is identified. Al-Thahbi mentions him in a chapter about nicknames in his Mizan saying, "He was a contemptible Shi'ite, one of the extremists who regard Othman as kafir, apostate." He quotes many of his statements in this sense which we do not have to cite here.

Despite all of this, al-Tirmithi quotes him in his Sahih and so do many authors of Sunan books. Abu Hatim considers his hadith as good. Abu Zar'ah says this about him: "He is truthful. There is extremism in his views." Ahmed says, "He used to write down his ahadith."²

Ibn Ma'een said once about him, "He is trustworthy." Al-Fallas has said, "He is not one of those who tell lies [in narrating hadith, as is the case with Abu Hurayra, for e.g.]. You can refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi's Sahih and elsewhere which he narrates through the venues of 'Utaybah and Atiyah al-'Awfi. He is quoted by Isma'il ibn 'Amr al-Bajali and a group

of renowned men from their class. Ibn Quraybah has counted him among Shi'ite men in his Al-Ma'arif book.

6. Isma'il ibn Zakariyya al-Assadi al-Khalliqani al-Kufi

In his Mizan, al-Thahbi records his biography. He says, "Isma'il ibn Zakariyya (peace with Prophet Zakariyya) al-Khalliqani al-Kufi is a truthful Shi'ite," regarding him as one of those on whom the authors of the six Sahih books rely, placing on his name a symbol indicative of their consensus in this regard. Refer to his hadith in al-Bukhari's Sahih through the venue of Muhammed ibn Sawqah and 'Ubaydullah ibn Omar³, and to his hadith in Muslim's Sahih through the venue of Suhayl, Malik ibn Maghul and others. As regarding his hadith about 'Asim al-Ahwal, it exists in both Sahih books. He is quoted by both men through the venue of Muhammed ibn al-Sabah and Abu al-Rabee', and through that of Muhammed ibn Bakar by Muslim. He died in Baghdad in 174 A.H./791 A.D.

His being a Shi'ite is well known, so much so that this statement was attributed to him: "The servant of Allah who was called upon from the side of the Tur (Mount Sinai) was Ali ibn Abu Talib," and that he used to say, "The first, the last, the manifest and the hidden is Ali ibn Abu Talib." All these statements are lies circulated by liars against this man only because he was a follower of Ali, those who preferred Ali over others. While detailing his biography, al-Thahbi says the following in his Mizan after citing all these lies about him, "Such talk has never been proven with regard to al-Khalliqani; it is the speech only of zindeeqs زنادقة, irreligious folks."

7. Isma'il ibn 'Abbad

His full name is Isma'il ibn 'Abbad ibn al-Abbas al-Taleqani (Abul-Qasim) better known as al-Sahib ibn 'Abbad. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his book Al-Mizan putting "DT" on his name to indicate that both Dawud and al-Tirmithi rely on him in their sahih books⁴. Then he goes on to describe

him as “a talented Shi’a a man of letters”. His being Shi’a is a matter which cannot be doubted by anyone. For this reason he and his father earned high marks of prestige and greatness in the Buwayhid state.

He is the first person among their government ministers to be called “sahib” (companion, friend), since he was since his adolescence a companion of Mu’ayyed al-Dawlah ibn Buwayh. This title followed him as he grew up till he was known thereby. Later on it was used for anyone who held the same reins of responsibility in the government. First he was minister to Mu’ayyed al-Dawlah Abu Mansur ibn Rukn al-Dawlah ibn Buwayh.

After the latter’s demise in Sha’ban of 373 in Jurjan Abul-Hassan Ali better known as Fakhr al-Dawlah brother of Mu’ayyed seized authority and retained Sahib’s position. Fakhr al-Dawlah held Sahib in high esteem and fulfilled his wishes in the same way his own father Abu ‘Abbad ibn al-Abbas did while he was in the service of Fakhr al-Dawlah’s father Rukn al-Dawlah.

When at the age of 59 as-Sahib died on Thursday night 24th of Safar 385 in Rayy the city of Rayy closed down its shops as a sign of mourning and people gathered in front of his mansion awaiting his coffin. Fakhr al-Dawlah accompanied by government ministers and commanders of the army went there too wearing mourning clothes. When his coffin came out of his house people cried “Allahu Akbar!” in unison kissed the ground in glorification and Fakhr al-Dawlah followed the coffin on foot with the crowd and sat with them during the three days’ mourning period.

Poets read eulogies and scholars held commemorative ceremonies in his honour and he was praised by all those who could not attend his funeral. Abu Bakr al-Khawarizmi said: “Al-Sahib ibn ‘Abbad grew up in the ministry’s lap learned how to crawl and walk within its precincts was nursed from the most excellent of its bosoms and inherited it [ministry from his own forefathers.” Abu Sa’id al-Rustami composed these verses in

his praise: He inherited ministry: a link in a chain A great man he was heir of great men.

About the ministry of al-Abbas does 'Abbad narrate while from 'Abbad does Isma'il Narrate.

In his biography of Sahib al-Tha'alibi says: "I can find no words to fairly describe Sahib's lofty status in knowledge and arts or the prestige he enjoys for being benevolent and generous or his unique virtues and possession of various merits. The best statement I can make on his behalf falls short of doing justice to the least among his virtues and eminence and my best description falls short of being fair to his virtues and characteristics."

Sahib has written many precious books including Al-Muhit in Language in seven volumes; its chapters are arranged alphabetically. He collected an unmatched library. Nuh ibn al-Mansur one of the kings of Sam'an wrote to him once to invite him to be in charge of running his cabinet of ministers and managing the affairs of his kingdom. He apologized to him saying that he needed four hundred camels just to transport the contents of his library. This much about him should suffice.

8. Isma'il ibn 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Karimah al-Kufi

Better known as al-Suddi he is the renowned interpreter of the Holy Qur'an. Stating his biography al-Thahbi describes him as "charged with Shi'ism." Hussain ibn Waqid al-Maruzi discusses him claiming that he heard him once cursing Abu Bakr and 'Omar. In spite of all these charges he is quoted by al-Thawri and Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash and many in such class of writers.

Muslim and authors of the four sahih books consider him an authority while Ahmed grants him his full confidence. Ibn 'Adi says that he is truthful. Yahya al-Qattan says there is nothing wrong with the ahadith

he narrates. Yahya ibn Sa'id says: "I never heard anyone speaking ill of al-Suddi; none has deserted him." Ibrahim al-Nakh'i once passed by al-Suddi while the latter was interpreting the Holy Qur'an.

Ibrahim said that al-Suddi was interpreting the Holy Qur'an according to the commonly used methods. If you read about al-Suddi in Mizan al-I'tidal you will find more details about what we have stated above. Refer to al-Suddi's hadith in Muslim's Sahih from Anas ibn Malik Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah and Yahya ibn 'Abbad. Abu 'Awanah al-Thawri Hassan ibn Salih Za'idah and Isra'il have all quoted him being their mentor as stated in the four sahih books. He died in 127 A.H./744 A.D.

9. Isma'il ibn Musa al-Fazari al-Kufi

Al-Thahbi's Al-Mizan quotes Ibn 'Uday saying "People despised his extremist Shi'a views." Al-Mizan also quotes 'Abdan saying: "Hammad and Ibn Abu Shaybah opposed our visiting him." He asked him once how he fared with "that immoral who curses our ancestors."

In spite of all of this both Ibn Khuzaymah and Abu 'Arubah quote him being the instructor of their class. He is in the same category with Abu Dawud and al-Tirmithi who quote him and rely on his authority in their sahihs. Abu Hatim mentions him and calls him "trustworthy." Al-Nisa'i says "he is alright." All of this is stated in the man's biography in al-Thahbi's Al-Mizan.

Refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi's Sahih and Abu Dawud's Sunan as narrated by Malik Sharik and 'Umar ibn Shakir a friend of Anas. He died in 245. He was a son of al-Suddi's daughter although he might have denied that and Allah knows best.

10. Talid ibn Sulayman al-Kufi al-A'raj

Ibn Ma'in mentioned him and said: "He used to curse 'Uthman. Some of 'Uthman's followers heard that. They threw a rock at him which broke his

leg, hence his nickname “alA’raj,” the lame. Abu Dawud has mentioned him and said he is Rafidi who curses Abu Bakr and ‘Uthman.

In spite of all of this, Ahmad and Ibn Namir rely on his authority despite their knowledge of his Shi’a beliefs. Ahmad has said, “Talid is a Shi’a, yet we could not find anything wrong with what he narrated.” AlThahbi has mentioned him in his book Al-Mizan, quoting statements about him made by learned men as stated above. He puts al-Tirmithi’s initials on his name to indicate that the latter considers him an authority. Refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi’s Sahih through ‘Ata ibn alSa’ib and ‘AbdelMalik ibn ‘Umayr.

11. Thabit ibn Dinar

Thabit is better known as Abu Hamzah alThamali. His being Shi’a is as clear as the sun. Author of Al-Mizan mentions him, stating that the name of ‘Uthman was mentioned once in Abu Hamzah’s presence. The latter sarcastically asked: “Who is ‘Uthman?!”

It also states that alSulaymani includes Abu Hamzah among the Rafidis. Al-Thahbi puts al-Tirmithi’s initials on Abu Hamzah’s name as an indication of his being an authority. Waki’ and Abu Na’im quote him and use him as their authority. Refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi’s sahih through Anas and alSha’bi and others of the same calibre. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 150 A.H.

12. Thuwayr ibn Abu Fakhita

He is better known as Abu Jahm alKufi, a freed slave of Ummu Hani’, daughter of Abu Talib. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan and quoted Yunus ibn Abu Ishaq’s allegation that he was Rafidi. Nevertheless, both Sufyan and Shu’bah have quoted him, and al-Tirmithi has produced some of his ahadith in his own Sahih through the authority of Ibn ‘Umar and Zayd ibn Arqam.

During the time of Imam al-Baqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, he maintained his loyalty to the Imam, and he came to be known as such. In this regard, he made quite a few interesting dialogues with ‘Amr ibn Tharr, the judge, his contemporary Ibn Qays, and al-Salt ibn Bahram testifying to this fact.

13. Jabir ibn Yazid ibn al-Harith al-Ju’fi al-Kufi

Al-Thahbi has narrated his biography in his own Al-Mizan, describing him as one of the Shi’a ‘ulema. He has quoted Sufyan saying that he heard Jabir saying that the knowledge with the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was transferred to ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, then to al-Hasan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and so on till it reached Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, who was one of his contemporaries.

Muslim has mentioned him in one of the first chapters of his Sahih, quoting al-Jarrah who has heard Jabir saying that he knew seventy thousand ahadith of the Prophet all narrated through the authority of the father of Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ (i.e. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, peace be upon him). He has also quoted Zuhayr saying, “I know fifty thousand ahadith none of which I have narrated yet.”

One day, he quoted one hadith and said, “This is one of the fifty thousand ahadith.” According to his biography in al-Thahbi’s Al-Mizan, whenever Jabir narrated hadith through al-Baqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, he says: “The successor of the successors of the Prophet related to me that...” In his biography in the Al-Mizan, Ibn ‘Uday says: “Commoners alleged that he [Jabir] used to believe in the return.”

Relying on the authority of Za’idah, al-Thahbi has included his biography in his Al-Mizan and said: “Jabir al-Ju’fi is a Rafidi who curses...” In spite of that, both al-Nisa’i and Abu Dawud rely on his authority.

Refer to the hadith which he narrates concerning accidental prostrations in both sahihs. Shihab, Abu ‘Awanah, and many of their calibre, quote him.

Al-Thahbi, who mentions him in his *Al-Mizan*, has put the initials of both Abu Dawud and al-Tirmithi on his name to indicate their reliance on his authority. He also quotes Sufyan saying that Jabir al-Ju'fi is God-fearing while narrating hadith, and that he has said: "I have never seen anyone more pious than him [Jabir]."

He also quotes Shu'bah saying that Jabir is truthful, and "Whenever Jabir narrated hadith, we listened, since he is the most trustworthy of all men." Waki' used to say, "If doubt entertains your mind, you may doubt anyone other than Jabir al-Ju'fi," and that Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam heard al-Shafi'i once saying that Sufyan al-Thawri said once to Shu'bah: "If you ever cast doubt about Jabir, that will signal the end of our friendship." Jabir died in either 127 or 128 Hij., may Allah have mercy on his soul.

14. Jarir ibn 'Abdel-Hamid al-Dabi al-Kufi

In his work *Al-Ma'arif*, Ibn Qutaybah includes him among Shi'a dignitaries, while al-Thahbi mentions him in *Al-Mizan*, marking his name to denote the consensus of the sahihs in relying on his authority. He has praised him saying: "He is the learned man of the Rayy on whose authority many authors rely," testifying to the consensus of opinion regarding his reliability.

Refer to his hadith in Bukhari's and Muslim's *Sahihs* narrated through A'mash, Mughirah, Mansur, Isma'il ibn Abu Khalid and Abu Ishaq al-Shaybani. Qutaybah ibn Sa'id, Yahya ibn Yahya and 'Uthman ibn Abu Shaybah have all quoted his ahadith as stated in both sahihs. He died, may Allah rest his soul in peace, in Rayy in 187 Hij. at the age of 77.

15. Ja'far ibn Ziyad al-Ahmar al-Kufi

Abu Dawud has mentioned him saying: "He is a truthful Shi'a." Al-Jawzjani has said: "He has deviated from the path," meaning from al-Jawzjani's

path to that of the Prophet's Progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Ibn 'Adi has described him as a pious Shi'a.

His grandson al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Ja'far ibn Ziyad has said: "My grandfather Ja'far was one of the chiefs of Shi'as in Khurasan." Abu Ja'far al-Dawaniqi ordered collars⁵ to be put around his neck and the necks of a group of other Shi'as and be pulled like dogs; then he kept all of them in dungeons for quite a long time.

Ibn 'Aynah, Waki', Abu Ghassan al-Mahdi, Yahya ibn Bishr al-Hariri and Ibn Mahdi have all quoted his ahadith, being their mentor. Ibn Ma'in and others have considered him an authority on the Prophet's hadith. Ahmad describes his hadith as "sahih," authentic, accurate. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his *Al-Mizan* and narrated what is stated above, putting the initials of both al-Tirmithi and al-Nisa'i on his name as an indication of both men's reliance on him. Refer to his hadith as they quote it in their sahihs through Bayan ibn Bishr and 'Ata' ibn al-Sa'ib. He is quoted through other men of the same calibre. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 167 Hij.

16. Ja'far ibn Sulayman al-Dab'i al-Basri (Abu Sulayman)

On page 206 of his *Ma'arif*, Ibn Qutaybah includes him among Shi'a dignitaries. Ibn Sa'd has mentioned him and emphasized his being a Shi'a and a trustworthy narrator of hadith. Ahmad ibn al-Miqdam has charged him of being "Rafidi." Ibn 'Adi has mentioned him saying: "He is a Shi'a. There is nothing wrong with his narration; his ahadith are by no means refutable, and I consider him as one whose hadith is acceptable."

Abu Talib has said: "I have heard Ahmad saying that there is nothing wrong with the ahadith narrated by Ja'far ibn Sulayman al-Dab'i." It was said to Ahmad, "But Sulayman ibn Harb says that he did not write down al-Dab'i's ahadith." Ahmad replied by saying that Ibn Harb did not object

that anyone should write down al-Dab'i's ahadith, and that [ibn Harb's prejudice was simply because] al-Dab'i was a Shi'a who quoted ahadith regarding 'Ali [ibn Abu Talib]."

Ibn Ma'in has said: "I have heard certain talk from 'Abdul-Razzaq which testified to the man's "sectarian beliefs." I said to him: "Your mentors, such as Mu'ammara, Ibn Jurayh, al-Awza'i, Malik, and Sufyan, are all Sunnis. Where did you learn this [Shi'a] sect from?" He answered: "One day, Ja'far ibn Sulayman al-Dab'i visited us, and I saw him to be virtuous, pious, and from him did I learn this sect." I guess Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Muqaddami saw contrariwise! He openly used to say that Ja'far learned "Rafidism" from 'Abdul-Razzaq; therefore, he used to curse the latter and say: "Nobody corrupted Ja'far's beliefs other than he [Abdul-Razzaq]."

Quoting Sahl ibn Abu Khadouthah, al-Aqili has said: "I said to Ja'far ibn Sulayman: 'I have heard that you curse Abu Bakr and 'Umar.' He replied: 'Cursing I do not; but hating, you can say whatever you will.'"

Relying on Jarir ibn Yazid ibn Harun, Ibn Haban has said in his Thiqat, "My father sent me once to Abu Ja'far al-Dab'i. I said to the latter: 'I have heard that you curse Abu Bakr and 'Umar.' He replied: 'I do not curse them. But if you want to say that I despise them, feel free;' therefore, I concluded that he was Rafidi."

In his biography of Ja'far in Al-Mizan, al-Thahbi has included all the above and emphasized as well the fact that the man was a pious 'alim "in spite of being a Shi'a." Muslim relies on him in his Sahih and quotes some of his unique ahadith which are published nowhere else as al-Thahbi himself testifies when he narrates Ja'far's biography. Refer to his hadith in the sahih narrated through Thabit al-Banani, al-Ja'd ibn 'Uthman, Abu 'Umran al-Jawni, Yazid ibn al-Rashk and Sa'id al-Jariri. Qatan ibn Nasir, Yahya ibn Yahya, Qutaybah, Muhammad ibn 'Ubayd ibn Hasab, Ibn Mahdi and Musaddid have all quoted his ahadith.

For example, he has said: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, dispatched a division of the Muslim army under ‘Ali’s command, etc.” Another hadith he has narrated states: “What do you want of ‘Ali? ‘Ali is of me, and I am of him. He is the wali (master) after me of every believer;” as quoted in al-Nisa’i’s Sahih and transmitted through Ibn ‘Adi from al-Nisa’i. Al-Thahbi has stated the above while discussing Ja’far in his Al-Mizan. He died in Rajab of 178 Hij.; may Allah be merciful unto him.

17. Jami’ ibn ‘Umayrah ibn Tha’labah al-Kufi al-Taymi (Taymullah)

Abu Hatim has mentioned his biography in his own Al-Mizan at the conclusion of which he states: “Al-Kufi is one of the Shi’a nobility whose hadith is authentically narrated.” Ibn Haban has mentioned him and stated, as indicated in Al-Mizan, that he is “Rafidi.” I say that al-’Ala’ ibn Salih, Sadaqah ibn al-Muthanna, and Hakim ibn Jubayr have all derived their knowledge from him, being their mentor.

The Sunan books quote him thrice. Al-Tirmithi has acclaimed his hadith, as al-Thahbi’s Al-Mizan testifies. He is one of the tabi’in. He learned hadith from Ibn ‘Umar and ‘Ayesha. One of the ahadith which he learned from Ibn ‘Umar states that the latter heard the Messenger of Allah addressing ‘Ali thus: “You are my brother in this life and the life hereafter.”

18. Al-Harith ibn Hasirah Abul Nu’man al-Azdi al-Kufi

Abu Hatim al-Razi describes him as one of the Shi’a nobility. Abu Ahmad al-Zubayri has attributed to him the belief in the return. Ibn ‘Adi mentions him saying: “His hadith is written down in spite of the weakness I have seen therein. He is one of the Kufis who will be burned in the Fire because of their Shi’ism.” Thanij has said: “I once asked Jarir: ‘Have you met al-Harith ibn Hasirah?’ He answered, ‘Yes, indeed, I have. I met him as an old man who used to stay silent most of the time, and he insisted on something quite magnanimous.’”

Yahya ibn Ma'in has mentioned him and said: "He is trustworthy [though] Khashbi [one of the derogatory names downgrading Shi'as, tr.]" Al-Nisa'i, too, trusts him. Al-Thawri, Malik ibn Maghul, 'Abdullah ibn Namir, and a group of their calibre, have all quoted him, since he was their mentor in whom they put their trust.

Al-Thahbi has narrated his biography in his Al-Mizan stating all the above. Refer to his hadith in the Sunan through Zayd ibn Wahab, 'Ikrimah, and a group of their class. Al-Nisa'i quotes 'Abbad ibn Ya'qub al-Rawajni who quotes a chain of narrators including 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Malik al-Mas'udi that al-Harith ibn Hasirah, according to Zayd ibn Wahab, reported that 'Ali عليه السلام was heard once saying: "I am the servant of Allah and the brother of His Messenger; nobody else can say so except a liar."

Al-Harith ibn Hasirah narrates through Abu Dawud al-Subai'i, through 'Umran ibn Hasin, saying: "I was sitting once in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, with 'Ali sitting beside him. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, recited 'Or who else [other than Allah] that would respond to the one in dire need for help, remove his distress, and make ye vicegerents on earth?' 'Ali was shaken and moved a great deal; thereupon, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, patted 'Ali's shoulder and said: 'Nobody loves you except a true believer [a mu'min], and nobody hates you except a hypocrite till the Day of Judgment.'"

Traditionists such as Muhammad ibn Kuthayyir and others have quoted the hadith cited above from Al-Harith ibn Hasirah. Al-Thahbi has transmitted it while stating the biography of Nafi' ibn al-Harith through the same chain of narrators. When he comes to Al-Harith ibn Hasirah, he comments saying, "He is truthful; but he is also Rafidi."

19. Al-Harith ibn ‘Abdullah al-Hamadani

He was one of the close friends of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and one of the best tabi’in. His being a Shi’a needs no proof. He is the first of those counted by Ibn Qutaybah in his Ma’arif as Shi’a dignitaries. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan, admitting that he was one of the most highly recognized ‘ulema among the tabi’in; then he quotes Ibn Haban’s statement saying that he was “extremist” in his Shi’a beliefs. After that, he states a great deal about some people’s anger with him because of his Shi’a beliefs.

In spite of all this, he also records their consensus that the man is the most knowledgeable, pious, and best informed about rituals. He has also admitted that the ahadith narrated by al-Harith are in existence in the four books of sunan. He declares the fact that Nisa’i, in spite of his prejudice, has strongly relied on the authority of al-Harith, admitting that the public, in spite of belittling the man, kept quoting his ahadith in all religious matters, and that al-Sha’bi called him a liar, then he turned around and quoted him!

Al-Thahbi states the following in his Al-Mizan: “Obviously, al-Nisa’i falsifies him when it comes to the latter’s tone and tale; but when the man narrates hadith, he does not disbelieve in him.” Al-Mizan quotes Muhammad ibn Sirin saying: “There were five well-known companions of Ibn Mas’ud. I came to know four of them, but I missed al-Harith whom I never saw. He was the best among them.”

A great deal of controversy exists regarding which of the other three, namely Alqamah, Masruq, or ‘Ubaydah, is the best. I say that Allah has enabled trustworthy traditionists to do justice to al-Sha’bi and prove him a liar. This has been pointed out by Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr in his book Jam’i Bayanul ‘Ilm which quotes the frank statement made by Ibrahim al-Nakh’i belying al-Sha’bi, adding verbatim: “I think that al-Sha’bi has received his

fair punishment for saying the following about al-Harith al-Hamadani: ‘Al-Harith, one of the liars, informed me that..., etc.’”⁶

Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr has said: “Al-Harith has shown no indication of being a liar; some people have borne grudge against him simply because he loved ‘Ali so much and preferred him over others. This is the reason why al-Sha’bi has called him a liar, since al-Sha’bi favours Abu Bakr, stating that the latter was the first to embrace Islam, and he favours ‘Umar, too.”

Among those who bore grudge against al-Harith was Muhammad Ibn Sa’d who included al-Harith’s biography in Volume 6 of his *Tabaqat*, saying that al-Harith speaks “maliciously.” He does not do al-Harith, nor any other Shi’a notable, any justice even when it comes to knowledge or feats. The “malicious” talk Ibn Sa’d is referring to is nothing other than allegiance to Muhammad’s progeny and his taking them for guides in all matters, as Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr has admitted in his above-quoted statement. Al-Harith’s demise took place in 65 Hij.; may Allah have mercy on his soul.

20. Habib ibn Abu Thabit al-Asadi al-Kahili al-Kufi

He was one of the *tabi’in*. Qutaybah, in his *Ma’arif*, and Shahristani, in his *Al-Milal wal Nihal*, have both included him among Shi’a dignitaries. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his *Al-Mizan*, marking his name with the indication that authors of the six *sahih*s rely on his authority without any hesitation. Yahya Ibn Ma’in and a group of other scholars have all trusted him.

Al-Dawalibi, however, has spoken ill of him and classified his traditions as “weak” just because of his being a Shi’a. What truly amazes me is the attitude of Ibn ‘Awn who was unable to find any pretext to cast doubt about Habib’s traditions, in spite of his ardent desire to do so; therefore, he had to look down at him and call him “a’war,” one-eyed. One’s real handicap is sinning and speaking ill of others, not in losing an eye.

Refer to Habib's traditions in Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihs as narrated through Sa'id ibn Jubayr and Abu Wa'il. His hadith narrated through Zayd ibn Wahab is recorded only in Bukhari's Sahih. In Muslim's Sahih, his hadith is narrated through Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, and through Tawus, al-Dahhak al-Mashriqi, Abu 'Abbas ibn al-Sha'ir, Abu al-Minhal 'Abdul-Rahman, 'Ata' ibn Yasin, Ibrahim ibn Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas, and through Mujahid.

In both sahihs, Misar, al-Thawri, and Shu'bah have quoted his traditions. In Muslim's Sahih, his ahadith are quoted by Sulayman al-A'mash, Hasin, 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn Sayah and Abu Ishaq al-Shaybani. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 119 Hij.

21. Al-Hasan ibn Hayy

Hayy's full name is Salih ibn Salih al-Hamadani, brother of 'Ali ibn Salih. Both men, who were born twins, are on the top of the list of Shi'a nobility. 'Ali was born only one hour earlier. Nobody has ever heard his brother calling him by his first name; instead, he used to always refer to him as "Abu Muhammad."

This has been mentioned in Vol. 6 of Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat, in the chapter dealing with al-Hasan. The author states: "Al-Hasan was one of the dignitaries, but he is inflicted with Shi'ism. He did not participate in the Jum'a prayers, and he preached denunciation of unjust rulers." He also mentions the fact that the man never invoked Allah's mercy on 'Uthman.

Ibn Sa'd has mentioned him in Vol. 6 of his Tabaqat, saying, "He is trustworthy; he narrates many ahadith, and he is a Shi'a." Imam Ibn Qutaybah has included his name among other narrators of hadith in his Ma'arif, highlighting his being a Shi'a. At the conclusion of his book, he lists al-Hasan among such narrators. Muslim and authors of the sunan books have all relied on his authority.

Refer to his hadith in Muslim's Sahih as narrated by Sammak ibn Harb, Isma'il al-Sadi, 'Asim al-Ahwal, and Harun ibn Sa'd. 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa al-'Abasi, Yahya ibn Adam, Hamid ibn 'Abdul-Rahman al-Rawasi, 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd, Ahmad ibn Yunus and all renowned men of their intellectual calibre have learned hadith from him.

In his biography in *Al-Mizan*, al-Thahbi indicates that Ibn Ma'in and others have trusted his [al-Hasan's] hadith. He adds saying that 'Abdullah ibn Ahmad has quoted his father saying that al-Hasan is more authentic than Sharik. Al-Thahbi also states that Abu Hatim has said: "He is a trust; he has a sound and authentic memory," and that Abu Zar'ah has said: "He has combined in him accomplishment, fiqh, piety, and asceticism," and that Nisa'i has trusted him.

He also quotes Abu Na'im saying: "I have quoted eight hundred traditionists; I have found none better than al-Hasan ibn Salih," and that he has also said: "I have come across nobody who did not err other than al-Hasan ibn Salih."

He quotes 'Ubaydah ibn Sulayman saying: "Allah is too shy to harm al-Hasan ibn Salih." He quotes Yahya ibn 'Ali Bakir asking al-Hasan ibn Salih: "Describe to us how to conduct the ceremonial bathing of the deceased;" he could not do so because of being overcome by tears.

He quotes 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa saying: "I used to recite the holy Qur'an in the presence of 'Ali ibn Salih. Having finished reciting 'Exercise patience [O Muhammad]!; We have granted them a respite only for an appointed time,' his brother fell down snorting like a wounded bull; so, 'Ali lifted him up, wiped and washed his face then supported him against falling again," and that Waki' has said: "Al-Hasan and 'Ali sons of Salih and their mother divided night-time among them into three parts: each alternates in his portion thereof in keeping vigil, spending it in prayers and adoration. When their mother died, they split it into equal halves. Then 'Ali died; therefore, al-Hasan used to stay all night long worshipping."

Abu Sulayman al-Darani has said: "I have never seen anyone more awe-stricken than al-Hasan son of Salih who stood up one night to recite Chapter 78 of the Holy Qur'an and fainted yet continued reciting till dawn." He was born, may Allah have mercy upon him, in 100 Hij. and he died in 169.

22. Al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah al-Kufi

Ibn Qutaybah has indicated the fact that al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah was a Shi'a in his Ma'arif and included him among Shi'a nobility. Both Bukhari and Muslim rely on his authority. Refer to his hadith in their sahihs as narrated by Abu Jahifah, Ibrahim al-Nakh'i, Mujahid, and Sa'id ibn Jubayr.

In Muslim's Sahih, it is narrated by 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Layla, al-Qasim ibn Mukhaymarah, Abu Salih, Tharr ibn 'Abdullah, Sa'id ibn 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Abzi, Yahya al-Jazzar, Nafi' (a slave of Ibn 'Umar), 'Ata' ibn Abu Rabah, 'Imarah ibn 'Umayr, 'Arrak ibn Malik, al-Sha'bi, Maymun ibn Mahran, al-Hasan al-'Arni, Mus'ab ibn Sa'd and 'Ali ibn al-Husayn.

In both sahihs, his ahadith are quoted by Mansur, Misar and Shu'bah. Particularly in Bukhari's Sahih, his ahadith are narrated by 'Abdul-Malik ibn Abu Ghaniya. In Muslim's Sahih, his ahadith are narrated by al-A'mash, 'Amr ibn Qays, Zayd ibn Abu Anisa, Malik ibn al-Maghul; Aban ibn Taghlib, Hamzah al-Zayyat, Muhammad ibn Jehada, Mutraf and Abu 'Awanah. He died in 115 Hij. at the age of 65.

23. Hammad ibn 'Isa al-Jehni

He drowned at Juhfa. Abu 'Ali has mentioned him in his book Muntahal Maqal. Al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Dawud abridged the said article in his own concise Mukhtasar, in a chapter dealing with biographies of notables, a group of Shi'a 'ulema and authors of biographies and dictionaries who regard him as most trustworthy, a follower of the rightly-guided Imams, peace be upon them. He learned from Imam al-Sadiq, peace be upon him,

seventy ahadith by the holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, but he did not relate more than twenty of them. He has authored a few books with which followers of our faith are familiar.

Once he entered in the presence of Imam Abul-Hasan al-Kazim, peace be upon him, and said: “May my life be sacrificed for you! Please pray Allah to bless me with a house, a wife, a son, a servant, and a pilgrimage every year.”

The Imam said: “Lord! I invoke Thee to send blessings unto Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad, and to bless this man with a house, a wife, a son, a servant, and a pilgrimage for fifty years each.”

Hammad said: “When he prayed for my performing the pilgrimage fifty times, I became sure I would never live beyond that. I have performed the annual pilgrimage forty-eight times; this is my house with which Allah has blessed me; yonder there is my wife behind the curtain listening to me; this is my son, and this is my servant; I have been blessed with all of these.”

Two years later, and having performed the pilgrimage fifty times, he accompanied Abul ‘Abbas al-Nawfali al-Qasir on his fifty-first pilgrimage. When he reached the place where pilgrims put on the ihram garb, he entered the Johfa river for a bath, but the torrent overwhelmed him, and he drowned before being able to perform his 51st pilgrimage. His death, may Allah have mercy on his soul, took place in 209 Hij. His birth-place is Kufa, but he resided in Basrah. He lived over seventy years. We have conducted a thorough research of his biography in our book *Mukhtasar al-Kalam fi Mu’allifi al-Shi’a min Sadr al-Islam* [A Brief Discourse of Shi’a Authors of Early Islam].

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him and put “TQ” on his name as a reference to those among the authors of the Sunan who have quoted him [Tirmithi]

and Dar Qutni, and mentioned the fact that he drowned in 208 Hij., and that he narrated hadith through Imam al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

The author has shown his grudge towards this man, calling his hadith “weak” for no reason other than his beliefs being Shi’a. Strange enough, Dar Qutni calls his hadith “weak” on one hand, while on the other he uses him as an authority in his own Sunan - thus indeed do some people behave!

24. Hamran ibn ‘Ayinah

He is brother of Zurarah. Both men were among the most reliable Shi’as, custodians of the shari’a, oceans of the knowledge about Muhammad’s progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. They were lanterns that shone in the dark and pillars of guidance. They frequented Imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and enjoyed a lofty status in the eyes of the Imams among the Prophet’s descendants.

Al-Thahbi mentions Hamran in his Al-Mizan, marking his name with Q to indicate who among the compilers of the sunan relies upon his authority [i.e. Dar Qutni. Then al-Thahbi adds: “He has narrated hadith from Abul Tufayl and others. Hamzah has recited the holy Qur’an to him, and he himself is used to recite it with perfect accuracy.” Ibn Ma’in considers his hadith “negligible,” while Abu Hatim hails him as a mentor. Yet Abu Dawud labels him “Rafidi.”

25. Khalid ibn Mukhlid al-Qatwani

Also known as Abul-Haytham al-Kufi, he is one of Bukhari’s mentors, as the latter states in his Sahih. Ibn Sa’d mentions him on page 283, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat, saying, “He was a staunch Shi’a. He died in Kufa in mid-Muharram of 213 A.H. during the reign of al-Ma’mun. He was extremist in his Shi’a beliefs, and writers have documented this fact.”

Abu Dawud mentions him saying: “He is truthful; but he follows Shi’ism.” Al-Jawzjani says the following about him: “He never ceases denouncing [certain persons], publicly propagating his corrupt sect.” Al-Thahbi narrates his biography in his own Al-Mizan, quoting the views of both Abu Dawud and Jawzjani stated above.

Yet both Bukhari and Muslim have relied upon his authority in several chapters of their respective sahihs. Refer to his hadith as in Bukhari’s Sahih as narrated from al-Mughirah ibn ‘Abdul-Rahman, and in Muslim’s Sahih by Muhammad ibn Ja’far ibn Abul Kathir, Malik ibn Anas, and Muhammad ibn Musa. Both sahihs quote his Al-Mizan from Sulayman ibn Bilal and ‘Ali ibn Mushir.

Al-Bukhari quotes his hadith in several places of his Sahih, without referring to any chain of narrators, quoting two of his ahadith from Muhammad ibn ‘Uthman ibn Karamah. Muslim narrates his hadith as transmitted by Abu Karib, Ahmad ibn ‘Uthman al-’Awdi, al-Qasim ibn Zakariyyah, ‘Abd ibn Hamid, Ibn Abu Shaybah, and Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Namir. Authors of the sunan have all relied on the authority of his hadith, while being aware of his sect.

26. Dawud ibn Abu ‘Awf (Abul-Hijab)

Ibn ‘Adi has mentioned him saying, “I cannot rely upon his authority due to his being a Shi’a. The majority of the ahadith he narrates are related to the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt.”

Consider with amazement such a statement! No harm, indeed, can reach Dawud from these Nasibis since both Sufyans quote his ahadith, in addition to ‘Ali ibn ‘Abis and others belonging to the elite among their peers. Both Abu Dawud and al-Nisa’i have relied upon his authority, and so have Ahmad and Yahya.

Al-Nisa'i has said the following about him: "There is nothing wrong with his ahadith." Abu Hatim has said: "His hadith is sound." Al-Thahbi has quoted such testimonies in his Sahih. Refer to his hadith in Abu Dawud's Sunan, in al-Nisa'i's through Abu Hazim al-Ashja'i, 'Ikrimah, and others.

27. Zubayd ibn al-Harith ibn 'Abdul-Karim al-Yami al-Kufi

Also known as Abu 'Abdul-Rahman, he is mentioned in al-Thahbi's Al-Mizan where the author says: "He is a trustworthy tabi'i who inclines towards Shi'ism." Then he quotes statements to prove that Zubayd's hadith has been verified by al-Qattan, and that there are other renowned critics and verifiers who regard him trustworthy. Abu Ishaq al-Jawzjani has included a crude statement about him which is typical of his attitude and that of other Nasibis, stating,

"Among the residents of Kufa, there is a faction whose faith is not appreciated [by Nasibis], yet they happen to be masters of hadith. Among them are: Abu Ishaq, Mansur, Zubayd al-Yami, al-A'mash and other peers. People have tolerated them for no reason other than their truth in narrating hadith, and their narrations testify to the authenticity of one another,"

Up to the conclusion of his statement which truth has dictated to him to reveal. Often, truth is spoken by the fair minded just as it is by the stubborn and obstinate. What harm can reach these lofty pillars of knowledge, the masters of hadith in Islam, if such a critic does not appreciate their holding in high esteem the holy Prophet's kin who are the gates of salvation, the protectors of all humans on earth after the Prophet ﷺ himself, his nation's ark of salvation? What harm can befall them from the critic who has no choice except to pursue his quest till reaching their door steps, and no option but to beg their own favours?

If dignitaries of my tribe are pleased with me,
Then let its villains chafe and be angry.

These authorities do not pay any attention to al-Jawzjani or others like him, having been held trustworthy by the authors of the sahih books and by those of all sunan as well. Refer to Zubayd's hadith in both Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihs as transmitted by Abu Wa'il, al-Sha'bi, Ibrahim al-Nakh'i, and Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydullah. Only Bukhari quotes his hadith through Mujahid.

In Muslim's Sahih, his hadith is narrated by Murrah al-Hamadani, Muharib ibn Dithar, Ammarah ibn 'Umayr, and Ibrahim al-Taymi. His hadith is quoted in both sahihs as transmitted by Shu'bah, al-Thawri, and Muhammad ibn Talhah. In Muslim's Sahih, his hadith is narrated by Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah, Fadil ibn Ghazwan, and Husayn ibn al-Nakh'i. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 124 A.H.

28. Zayd ibn al-Habab Abul-Hasan al-Kufi al-Tamimi

Ibn Qutaybah has included his biography among those whose biographies he has included among Shi'a dignitaries in his work Al-Ma'arif. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan, describing him as "pious, trustworthy, truthful."

He indicates his being vouched as trustworthy by Ibn Ma'in and Ibn al-Madini. He has quoted Abu Hatim and Ahmad describing him as truthful, adding that 'Adi has said: "He is one of the reliable Kufi traditionists whose trustworthiness is never doubted."

Muslim has relied on his authority. Refer to the latter's sahih containing his hadith as narrated by Mu'awiyah ibn Salih, al-Dahhak ibn 'Uthman, Qurrah ibn Khalid, Ibrahim ibn Nafi', Yahya ibn Ayyub, Saif ibn Sulayman, Hasan ibn Waqid, 'Ikrimah ibn 'Ammar, 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn Abu Salma, and

'Aflah ibn Sa'id. His hadith is quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah, Muhammad ibn Hatim, Hasan al-Hulwani, Ahmad ibn al-Munthir, Ibn Namir, Ibn Karib, Muhammad ibn Rafi', Zuhair ibn Harb, and Muhammad ibn al-Faraj.

29. Salim ibn Abul Ja'd al-Ashja'i al-Kufi

He is brother of 'Ubayd, Ziyad, 'Umran, and Muslim, sons of Abul-Ja'd.

In Volume 6 of Al-Tabaqat, Sa'd mentions all of them on page 2303 and the succeeding pages. When he comes to Muslim, he says, "Abul-Ja'd begot six sons. Two of them followed Shi'ism. These are Salim and 'Ubayd. Two others are Murji'is, while the remaining two agree with the Kharijites. Their father used to say: 'What is the matter with you? I wonder why Allah has made your views vary so much.'" Ibn Qutaybah has discussed them on page 156 of his Ma'arif in a chapter dealing with Shi'a tabi'in and their successors.

A group of learned scholars has testified to the Shi'a views of Salim ibn Abul-Ja'd. Qutaybah, on page 206 of his Ma'arif, has included him among Shi'a dignitaries, and so has al-Shahristani in his work Al-Milal wal Nihal on page 27, Vol. 2, in the footnote of his chapter on Ibn Hazm. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan, calling him a trustworthy tabi'i. He has also stated that his hadith from al-Nu'man ibn Bashir and Jabir is included in both sahihs.

In fact, his hadith, from Anas ibn Malik and Karib, is included in both sahihs as scholars of hadith already know. Al-Thahbi says that his hadith from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, and from Ibn 'Umar, exists in Bukhari's Sahih. The latter also contains his hadith from Ma'dan ibn Abu Talha and the latter's father.

His hadith is quoted in both sahihs by al-A'mash, Qatadah, 'Amr ibn Murrah, Mansur, and Hasin ibn 'Abdul-Rahman. He also knows hadith quoted by al-Nisa'i and Abu Dawud in their respective Sunan. He died in either 87 or 97

A.H. during the reign of Sulayman ibn 'Abdul-Malik, or, as some say, during that of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul-'Aziz, and Allah knows best.

30. Salim ibn Abu Hafsah al-'Ijli al-Kufi

Shahristani includes him in his book *Al-Milal wal-Nihal* among Shi'a nobility. Al-Fallas says: "He is a weak traditionist who is extremist in his Shi'a beliefs." Ibn 'Adi says: "People criticize his extremism; but I hope there is nothing wrong with his hadith." Muhammad ibn Bashir al-'Abdi says: "I have seen Salim ibn Abu Hafsah as a fool with a long beard - what a beard! He says: 'I wish I had been a partner of 'Ali in everything he possessed.'"

Al-Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Ju'fi has said: "I have seen Salim ibn Abu Hafsah as a fool with a long beard who used to often say, 'Here I come, O killer of Na'thal, annihilater of Banu Umayyah!'" 'Amr ibn al-Salim ibn Abu Hafsah asked him once: "Did you kill 'Uthman?" He answered: "Did I?!" 'Amr said: "Yes, you did. You do not condemn his murder." Abu ibn al-Madini has said: "I have heard Jarir saying, 'I broke my friendship with Salim ibn Abu Hafsah because he used to always defend the Shi'as.'"

Al-Thahbi has detailed his biography, mentioning all the above. On page 234 of Vol. 6 of his *Tabaqat*, Ibn Sa'd mentions him and says: "He was very staunch in his Shi'a beliefs. He entered Mecca during the reign of the 'Abbasides crying, 'Here I come, here I come, O killer of the Omayyads!' His voice was quite loud, so much so that his call was heard by Dawud ibn 'Ali who inquired: 'Who is this man?' People informed him that it was Salim ibn Abu Hafsah, and they explained his story and views."

Al-Thahbi has included his biography in his *Al-Mizan* commenting, "He was chief of those who belittled Abu Bakr and 'Umar." In spite of this, however, both Sufyans quote his hadith, and so does Muhammad ibn Fudayl, while al-Tirmithi has relied on his authority, and Ibn Ma'in has held him trustworthy. He died in 137 A.H.

31. Sa'd ibn Tarif al-Iskafi al-Hanzali al-Kufi

Al-Thahbi mentions him, marking his name with TQ as a reference to the authors of sunan who quote him (i.e. al-Tirmithi and Dar Qutni). Al-Thahbi also quotes al-Fallas saying that Sa'd is "weak, extremist in his Shi'a beliefs." In spite of his being a "Shi'a extremist," al-Tirmithi and others quote him.

Refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi's Sahih as narrated by 'Ikrimah and Abul-Wa'il. He also narrates hadith as transmitted by al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah, 'Uman ibn Talhah and 'Umayr ibn Ma'mun. Isra'il, Haban and Abu Mu'awiyah all quote him.

32. Sa'id ibn Ashwa'

He is mentioned in al-Thahbi's Al-Mizan where the author says: "Sa'id ibn Ashwa' is a famous and truthful Kufi judge. Al-Nisa'i says that there is nothing wrong with his hadith, and that he is a friend of al-Sha'bi. Al-Jawzjani describes him as extremist, heretic, and a Shi'a zealot."

Both al-Bukhari and Muslim rely on his authority in their respective sahihs. His hadith from al-Sha'bi is regarded as authentic by authors of both sahih books. In both Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahihs, his hadith is quoted by Zakariyyah ibn Abu Za'idah and Khalid al-Haththa'. He died during the reign of Khalid ibn 'Abdullah.

33. Sa'id ibn Khaytham al-Hilali

Ibrahim ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Junayd was asked once: "Sa'id ibn Khaytham is a Shi'a. What do you think of him?" He answered: "Let's say that he is a Shi'a, but he also is trustworthy."

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Al-Mizan, quoting Ibn Ma'in narrating the gist of what has just been stated above. He has also marked his name

with the initials of both al-Tirmithi and al-Nisa'i to indicate that both authors quote his hadith in their sahihs. He also mentions the fact that Sa'id narrates hadith from Yazid ibn Abu Ziyad and Muslim al-Malla'i. His nephew, Ahmad ibn Rashid, too, narrates his hadith.

34. Selamah ibn al-Fudayl al-Abrash

He was a Rayy judge and a reporter of traditions related to the battles in which the holy Prophet ﷺ participated as transmitted by Ibn Ishaq. His kunyat (surname) is Abu 'Abdullah. In his biography in the Al-Mizan, Ibn Ma'in says: "Selamah al-Abrash al-Razi is a believer in Shi'ism and a man whose hadith is [often] quoted, and there is no fault in the latter."

Abu Zar'ah has also said in the Al-Mizan that the natives of Rayy do not like him because of his (religious) views. Actually, their attitude is due to their own views regarding all followers of the household of the Prophet ﷺ.

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan, marking his name with the initials of Abu Dawud and al-Tirmithi and saying: "He is well remembered for his prayers and supplications." He died in 191 A.H.

Ibn Ma'in testifies to the fact that the hadith related to the Prophet's military expeditions as narrated by Selamah is more reliable than anyone else's. Zanih is quoted as having said that he had heard Selamah al-Abrash saying that he had heard hadith related to the expeditions from Ishaq twice, and that he had also written down his ahadith as he had done with those of the expeditions.

35. Selamah ibn Kahil ibn Hasin ibn Kadih ibn Asad al-Hadrami Abu Yahya

A group of scholars following the faith of the majority of Muslims, such as Ibn Qutaybah in his Ma'arif, who mentions on page 206 his distinction, and

al-Shahristani in his *Al-Milal wal-Nihal*, on page 27, Vol. 2, have included him among Shi'a nobility. Authors of the six sahihs have all relied on his authority, and so have others. He has learned hadith from men like Abu Jahifah, Suwayd ibn Ghafлах, al-Sha'bi, 'Ata' ibn Abu Rabah, all cited in Bukhari and Muslim.

In Muslim, he quotes hadith from Karib, Tharr ibn 'Abdullah, Bakir ibn al-Ashaj, Zayd ibn Ka'b, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Mujahid, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Yazid, Abu Selamah ibn 'Abdul-Rahman, Mu'awiyah ibn al-Suwayd, Habib ibn 'Abdullah, and Muslim al-Batin. Al-Thawri and Shu'bah have both cited his hadith in these two works, while in Bukhari, his hadith is cited by Isma'il ibn Abu Khalid.

In Muslim, he is quoted by Sa'id ibn Masruq, Aqil ibn Khalid, 'Abdul-Malik ibn Abu Sulayman, 'Ali ibn Salih, Zayd ibn 'Abu Anisah, Hammad ibn Selamah, and al-Walid ibn Harb.

Selahmah ibn Kahil died on 'Ashura of 121 A.H.

36. Sulayman ibn Sa'id al-Khuza'i al-Kufi

He used to be the supreme head of the Shi'as of Iraq, the arbitrator among them, their custodian and advisor. They had all met in his house when they swore the oath of allegiance to Imam Husayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. He is the herald of the tawwabin (the penitents) among the Shi'as, those who rose to avenge the murder of Imam Husayn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.

They were four thousand strong who camped at Nakhila early in Rabi' al-Thani, 65 A.H., then marched towards 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad and engaged his army at Jazira. They fought fiercely till each and every one of them died. Sulayman, too, was martyred at a place called 'Ayn al-Warda after Hasin shot him with a deadly arrow. He was 93 years old then. His head and that of al-Musayyab ibn Najba were carried as trophies to Marwan ibn al-Hakam.

His biography is recorded in Vol. 6, Part One, of Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat*, and in the *Isti'ab* of Ibn 'Abd al-Birr. All those who wrote the stories of the ancestors have recorded his biography and praised his virtues, faith and piety. He enjoyed a lofty status, a position of honour and dignity among his folks, and his word weighed heavily. He is the one who killed Hawshab, the notorious enemy of the Commander of the Faithful, in a duel at Siffin. Sulayman was keen to notice that the enemies of Ahl al-Bayt had gone astray. Traditionists have sought his audience.

The ahadith he narrates about the Prophet ﷺ, the ones which he directly reported or those transmitted by Jubayr ibn Mut'im relying on his authority, are recorded in both Bukhari's and Muslim's *Sahihs*.

In the latter, he is cited by Abu Ishaq al-Subay'i and 'Adi ibn Thabit. Sulyman has narrated ahadith which are not included in either *sahihs*. These include ahadith from the Commander of the Faithful, his son Imam al-Hasan al-Mujtaba عليه السلام, and A'biy. In works other than these *sahihs*, his hadith is transmitted by Yahya ibn Ya'mur, 'Abdullah ibn Yasar, and by others.

37. Sulayman ibn Tarkhan al-Taymi al-Basri

A slave of Qays, the imam, he is one of the most reliable authorities on hadith. Ibn Qutaybah has included him among Shi'a dignitaries in his book *Al-Ma'arif*. Authors of the six *sahihs*, as well as others, have relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith in both *sahihs* through Anas ibn Malik, Abu Majaz, Bakr ibn 'Abdullah, Qatadah, and Abu 'Uthman al-Nahdi.

Muslim's *Sahih* quotes his hadith through others. In both *sahihs*, his hadith is cited by his son Mu'tamir, and by Shu'bah and al-Thawri. Another party cites his hadith in Muslim's *Sahih*. He died in 143 A.H.

38. Sulayman ibn Qarm ibn Ma'ath

He is also known as Abu Dawud al-Dabi al-Kufi. Ibn Haban mentions him within the text of Sulayman's biography in Al-Mizan. Ibn Haban has said, "He is a Rafidi - very much so." Nevertheless, Ahmad ibn Hanbal has trusted him. At the conclusion of Sulayman's biography as recorded in Al-Mizan, Ibn 'Adi says, "The ahadith narrated by Sulayman ibn Qarm are authentic. Moreover, his are by far more reliable than those related by Sulayman ibn Arqam."

Muslim, al-Nisa'i, al-Tirmithi, and Abu Dawud have all cited his ahadith. When al-Thahbi mentions him, he puts the initials of these traditionists on his name. Refer to Muslim's Sahih where Abul-Jawab's hadith is narrated by Sulayman ibn Qarm from al-A'mash, up to the Prophet ﷺ. The said hadith states that the Prophet ﷺ has said that a man keeps company with those whom he loves.

In the sunan, his ahadith quote Thabit through Anas successively saying that the Prophet ﷺ has said: "Seeking knowledge is a religious obligation upon every Muslim." He quotes al-A'mash from 'Amr ibn Murrah, from 'Abdullah ibn al-Harith, from Zuhair ibn al-Aqmar, from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar who says that al-Hakam ibn Abul 'As used to keep company with the Prophet ﷺ and then would go and narrate it [in a twisted manner] to Quraysh; therefore, the Prophet ﷺ denounced his behaviour and all his descendants as well till the Day of Judgment.

39. Sulayman ibn Mahran al-Kahili al-Kufi al-Asla'

He is one of the Shi'a nobility and a most trusted traditionist. Many a genius among Sunni men of knowledge, such as Ibn Qutaybah in his Ma'arif and al-Shahristani in his Al-Milal wal-Nihal, as well as many others, have all included him among Shi'a dignitaries.

In his biography of Zubayd, al-Jawzjani says the following in his book Al-Mizan: “Among the people of Kufa, there are some folks whose sect is not appreciated, yet they are the masters of hadith among Kufi traditionists. Among them are: Abu Ishaq, Mansur, Zubayd al-Yami, al-A’mash, and other peers. People tolerate them only because they are truthful in narrating hadith,” up to the end of his statement which clearly exposes his stupidity and prejudice. What harm can reach these dignitaries if the Nasibis do not appreciate their commitment to discharge the Divine commandment of seeking the Pleasure of Allah through remaining faithful to His Prophet’s kin and kith?

These Nasibis, as a matter of fact, tolerate these men not only because they are truthful in narrating hadith, but rather because they are indispensable. Had they rejected these men’s hadith, the majority of the Prophet’s ahadith would have then been abandoned, as al-Thahbi himself admits in his Al-Mizan while discussing the biography of Aban ibn Taghlib. I think that al-Mughirah’s statement: “Abu Ishaq and your A’mash have rendered Kufa to destruction” is said due only to these men’s Shi’a beliefs. Other than that, both Abu Ishaq and al-A’mash are oceans of knowledge and custodians of the prophetic legacy.

Al-A’mash has left us many interesting incidents which vividly portray his greatness. One of them, for example, is included by Ibn Khallikan in al-A’mash’s biography in Wafiyat al-A’yan where the author states:

“Hisham ibn ‘Abdul-Malik once wrote to al-A’mash saying: ‘Recount for me ‘Uthman’s virtues and ‘Ali’s vices.’ Al-A’mash took the letter and tossed it into his she-camel’s mouth. Then he turned to the messenger and said: ‘This is my answer.’ The messenger, however, pleaded to al-A’mash saying that his master had vowed to kill him if he did not return with an answer. He also pleaded to al-A’mash’s brothers to pressure their brother to write something.

Finally, he wrote: ‘In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Had ‘Uthman had all the virtues of the people of the world, they would not have availed you aught, and had ‘Ali had in him all the vices of the people of the world, they would not have harmed you in the least; therefore, worry about your own soul, and peace be with you.’”

Another anecdote is narrated by Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr in his chapter on the ‘ulema’s statements evaluating each other’s work in his book *Jami’ Bayanul ‘Ilm wa Fada’ilih*.⁷

The author quotes ‘Ali ibn Khashram saying, “I have heard Abul-Fadl ibn Musa say, ‘I entered the house of al-A’mash once accompanied by Abu Hanifah to visit him during his sickness.

Abu Hanifah said: ‘O Abu Muhammad! Had I not feared my visits would be a nuisance to you, I would have visited you more often’.

Al-A’mash answered, ‘You are a nuisance to me even at your own home; so, imagine how I feel when I have to look at your face.’” Abul-Fadl continues to say that having left the house of al-A’mash, Abu Hanifah said, ‘Al-A’mash never observed the fast of the month of Ramadan.’ Ibn al-Khashram then asked al-Fadl what Abu Hanifah meant.

Al-Fadl answered, ‘Al-A’mash used to observe the suhur during the month of Ramadan according to the Prophet’s hadith as narrated by Huthayfah al-Yemani.’” In fact, he used to observe the Holy Qur’anic verse:

“Therefore, eat and drink till you can distinguish the white thread from the black one, from the dawn, and complete the fast till night-time.” (2:187)

Authors of *Al-Wajiza* and *Bihar Al-Anwar* have both quoted Hasan ibn Sa’id al-Nakh’i who quotes Sharik ibn ‘Abdullah, the judge, saying, “I visited al-A’mash when he was sick prior to his demise. While I was there,

Ibn Shabramah, Ibn Layla and Abu Hanifah entered and inquired about his health. He told them that he was suffering from an acute feebleness, that he feared God for his sins, and he almost broke in tears.

Abu Hanifah then said to him: ‘O Father of Muhammad! Fear Allah! Look now after yourself. You used to narrate certain ahadith about ‘Ali which, if you denounce, would be better for you.’ Al-A’mash answered: ‘Do you dare to say this to a man like me?’ He even denounced him, and there is no need here to go into that. He was, may Allah have mercy on his soul, as al-Thahbi describes him in his *Al-Mizan*, a trusted Imam.

He was exactly what Ibn Khallikan had described while discussing his biography in his own *Wafiyat al-A’yan*, a trustworthy and virtuous man of knowledge. Scholars have all conceded his truthfulness, equity and piety. Authors of the six sahih books, as well as many others besides them, have all relied on his authority.

Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahih books from Zayd ibn Wahab, Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Muslim al-Batin, al-Sha’bi, Mujahid, Abu Wa’il, Ibrahim al-Nakh’i and Abu Salih Thakwan. He is cited in these works by Shu’bah, al-Thawri, Ibn ‘Ainah, Abu Mua’awiyah Muhammad, Abu ‘Awanah, Jarir, and Hafs ibn Ghiyath. Al-A’mash was born in 61 A.H. and he died in 148 A.H., may Allah be merciful unto him.

40. Sharik ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Sinan al-Nakh’i al-Kufi the judge

Imam Abu Qutaybah, in his *Ma’arif*, has unreservedly included him among Shi’a nobility. At the conclusion of Sharik’s biography as recorded in *Al-Mizan*, ‘Abdullah ibn Idris swears that Sharik is a Shi’a. Abu Dawud al-Rahawi is quoted in *Al-Mizan*, too, to have heard Sharik saying, “‘Ali is the best of creation; whoever denies this fact is kafir (apostate).”⁸

What he meant, of course, is that ‘Ali is the best of all men excluding the Prophet ﷺ, as all Shi’as believe. For this reason, al-Jawzjani, as quoted in Al-Mizan, describes him as “biased,” meaning biased towards the faith of Ahl al-Bayt and preferring it to Jawzjani’s sect. Al-Mizan also quotes Sharik’s ahadith regarding the Commander of the Faithful. He cites Abu Rabi’ah from Ibn Buraydah from his father upto the Prophet who said: “For every Prophet there is a vicegerent and heir.”

He was very zealous about disseminating the knowledge pertaining to the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, and to pressure the Omayyads to recognize and publicize his merits, peace be upon him. In his work Durrat al-Ghawwas, al-Hariri, as in Sharik’s biography in Ibn Khallikan’s Wafiyat al-A’yan, says, “Sharik had an Omayyad friend of his. One day, Sharik recounted the attributes of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. His Omayyad friend said that ‘Ali was ‘a fine man.’ This enraged Sharik who said, ‘Is this all that can be said about ‘Ali, that he was a fine man, no more?’”⁹

At the conclusion of Sharik’s biography as stated in Al-Mizan, Ibn Abu Shaybah has quoted ‘Ali ibn Hakim ibn Qadim citing ‘Ali saying that once a complaint was brought with a man to Sharik’s attention. The man said: “People claim that your mind is doubtful.” Sharik answered: “You fool! How can I ever be doubtful?! I wish I had been present in the company of ‘Ali to let my sword be drenched with the blood of his enemies.”

Anyone who studies Sharik’s life-style will be convinced that the man was a very loyal follower of the path of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. He transmitted a great deal of traditions narrated by the most learned followers of Ahl al-Bayt. His son ‘Abdul-Rahman has said, “My father has learned queries from Ja’far al-Ju’fi, in addition to ten thousand rare traditions.”

‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak is quoted in Al-Mizan saying, “Sharik is more knowledgeable about the Kufans’ hadith than Sufyan. He was an avowed enemy of ‘Ali’s foes, one who spoke ill of them.” ‘Abdul-Salam ibn Harb once

asked him: “Why don’t you visit a sick brother of yours?” He inquired: “And who is that?” The man answered: “Malik ibn Maghul.” Sharik, as stated in the latter’s biography in Al-Mizan, then said: “Anyone who speaks ill of ‘Ali and ‘Ammar is surely no brother of mine.”

Once the name of Mu’awiyah was mentioned in his presence and was described as “clement.” Sharik, as stated in his biography in Al-Mizan as well as in Ibn Khallikan’s Wafiyyat al-A’yan, said: “Whoever discards equity and fights ‘Ali can never be clement.” He narrated one hadith from Asim, Tharr, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud successively indicating that the Prophet ﷺ had said: “If you see Mu’awiyah on my pulpit, kill him.” This is quoted by al-Tabari, and al-Tabari in turn is quoted by al-Thahbi while the latter discusses the biography of Abbad ibn Ya’qub.

Ibn Khallikan’s Wafiyyat includes a biography of Sharik where the author quotes a dialogue between Sharik and Mis’ab ibn ‘Abdullah al-Zubairi, in the presence of the ‘Abbaside ruler al-Mahdi. Mis’ab asked Sharik: “Do you really belittle Abu Bakr and ‘Umar?” up to the conclusion of the incident.

In spite of all of this, al-Thahbi has described him as a “truthful imam.” He also quotes Ibn Ma’in saying that Sharik is “truthful, trustworthy.” At the conclusion of the biography, the author states: “Sharik was a bastion of knowledge. Ishaq al-Azraq learned from him nine thousand ahadith.” He also quotes Tawbah al-Halabi saying, “We were at Ramla once, and someone wondered who the nation’s man was. Some people said it was Lahi’ah, while others said it was Malik. We asked ‘Isa ibn Yunus to state his view. He said: ‘The nation’s man is Sharik,’ who was then still alive.”

Muslim and authors of the four books of sunan have all relied on Sharik’s authority. Refer to his hadith as they quote it transmitted by Ziyad ibn Alaqah, ‘Ammar al-Thihni, Hisham ibn ‘Urwah, Ya’li ibn ‘Ata’, ‘Abdul-Malik ibn ‘Umayr, ‘Ammarah ibn al-Qa’qa’ and ‘Abdullah ibn Shabramah. These reporters have cited Sharik’s hadith from Ibn Shaybah, ‘Ali ibn Hakim,

Yunus ibn Muhammad, al-Fadl ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn al-Sabah, and 'Ali ibn Hajar. He was born in either Khurasan or Bukhara in 95 A.H., and he died in Kufa on a Saturday early in Thul-Qi'dah, 177 or 178.

41. Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj Abul-Ward al-'Atki al-Wasiti (Abu Bastam)

Born in Wasit but lived in Basra, Abu Bastam is the first to inquire in Iraq about traditionists, and he is credited with helping the weak and the abandoned. He is considered among Shi'a nobility by many highly intellectual Sunni scholars such as Qutaybah in his *Al-Ma'arif*, and al-Shahristani in his *Al-Milal wal-Nihal*. Authors of the six sahih books and others have all relied on his authority.

His hadith is ascertained in Bukhari's and Muslim's sahih books as transmitted by Abu Ishaq al-Subai'i, Isma'il ibn Abu Khalid, Mansur, al-A'mash and others. In both Bukhari's and Muslim's books, his hadith is cited by Muhammad ibn Ja'far, Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan, 'Uthman ibn Jabalah and others. He was born in 83 and he died in 160 A.H., may Allah be merciful on him.

42. Sa'sa'ah ibn Sawhan ibn Hajar ibn al-Harith al-'Abdi

Imam Ibn Qutaybah describes him on page 206 of his *Ma'arif* as one of the famous Shi'a dignitaries. Ibn Sa'd states on page 154, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat*: "[Sa'sa'ah] is very well known all over Kufa as an orator and a companion of 'Ali with whom he has witnessed the Battle of the Camel together with his brothers Zayd and Sihan sons of Sawhan. Sihan is known as an orator before Sa'sa'ah, and he was the standard-bearer during the Battle of the Camel.¹⁰

Having been killed, Sihan was succeeded in bearing the standard by Sa'sa'ah. Sa'sa'ah has narrated hadith from Imam 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and also from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas. He is a trusted traditionist although the ahadith he has

narrated are not many.” Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr mentions him in his Isti’ab saying: “He accepted Islam during the life-time of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ although he never met him in person due to his being very young then.”

He is chief among his tribesmen, descendants of ‘Abd al-Qays. He is quite an eloquent orator, a man of wisdom who has acquired a total command over the language. He is, indeed, a man of piety, virtues, and wisdom. He is counted among the companions of ‘Ali, peace be upon him. Yahya ibn Ma’in is quoted saying that Sa’sa’ah, Zayd and Sihan sons of Sawhan are all orators, and that Zayd and Sihan were killed during the Battle of the Camel.

He also cites a critical problem which ‘Umar, then caliph, could not solve; therefore, the caliph delivered a sermon in which he asked people for their suggestions. Sa’sa’ah, then a youth, stood and clarified its complexity and put forth a suggestion to it which was unanimously accepted. This should not surprise the reader since the descendants of Sawhan were among the most prominent masters of Arabia, pillars in virtue and descent. Ibn Qutaybah mentions them on page 138 of his chapter on renowned dignitaries and men of influence in his Ma’arif.

The author says: “Sawhan’s descendants were Zayd ibn Sawhan, Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan, Sihan ibn Sawhan, of Banu ‘Abd al-Qays.” He adds: “Zayd was among the best of men. He narrated saying that the Prophet ﷺ had said: ‘Zayd is indeed a good man, and Jandab - what a man he is!’ People inquired: ‘Why do you mention these men alone?’ The Prophet answered: ‘The arm of one of them will precede in thirty years the rest of his body in entering Paradise, while the other will deal heavy blows so that right is distinguished from wrong.’

The first, as it came to pass, participated in Jalawla’ Battle where his arm was chopped off. He also participated in the Battle of the Camel on the side of ‘Ali عليه السلام. He asked the Imam: ‘O Commander of the Faithful! It looks

like I am going to meet my fate.’ The Imam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام asked him, ‘How do you know that, O father of Sulayman?’ He answered: ‘I have seen in a vision my arm stretching from heaven to pull me away from this world.’ He was killed by ‘Amr ibn Yathribi, while his brother Sihan was killed during the Battle of the Camel.”

It is no secret that the Prophet’s prophecy regarding Zayd’s arm preceding the rest of his body in entering Paradise is regarded by all Muslims as a testimony for his prophethood, a sign of the truth of the religion of Islam, and a recognition of the men of truth. All biographies of Zayd have mentioned it. Refer to his biography in Al-Isti’ab, Al-Isabah, and others. Traditionists have recorded the above, each in his own way of wording it, adding that [in “spite” of his being Shi’a] he was promised Paradise; so, praise be to the Lord of the Worlds.

Al-’Asqalani mentions Sa’sa’ah ibn Sawhan in Part Three of his Isaba, saying: “He narrates traditions about ‘Uthman and ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. He has participated in the Battle of Siffin on ‘Ali’s side. He is an eloquent orator who has encounters with Mu’awiyah.” Al-Sha’bi has said: “I used to learn how to deliver sermons from him.”¹¹

Abu Ishaq al-Subai’i, al-Minhal ibn ‘Amr ibn Baridah, and others have all cited his hadith. Al-’Ala’i, narrating Ziyad’s encounters, says that once al-Mughirah banished Sa’sa’ah, in accordance to an edict which he had received from Mu’awiyah, from Kufa to Jazirah, or to Bahrain (some historians say to the island of Ibn Fakkan), where he died in banishment just as Abu Tharr al-Ghifari had died before him in the Rabatha desert (southern Iraq). Al-Thahbi mentions Sa’sa’ah and describes him as “a well-known and trusted traditionist,” citing testimonies to his trustworthiness from Ibn Sa’d and Nisa’i, and marking his name to indicate that al-Nisa’i relies on his authority. Whoever does not rely on his authority does not in fact harm anyone but his own self, as the holy Qur’an says:

“We have not done them any harm; they have only harmed their own selves.”(2:57)

43. Tawus ibn Kisan al-Khawlani al-Hamadani al-Yamani

He is ‘Abdul-Rahman’s father. His mother is Persian, and his father is Ibn Qasit, a Namri slave of Bajir ibn Raysan al-Himyari. Sunni intellectuals regard him a Shi’a without any question. Among their dignitaries, al-Shahristani mentions him in his *Al-Milal wal-Nihal*, and Ibn Qutaybah in his *Al-Ma’arif*. Authors of the six sahih books, as well as others, have all relied on his authority.

Refer to his hadith in both sahih books where he cites Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar and Abu Hurayrah, and in Muslim’s Sahih where he cites ‘Ayesha, Zayd ibn Thabit, and ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar. His hadith is recorded in Bukhari alone as transmitted by al-Zuhri, and in Muslim by many renowned traditionists. He died in Mecca while performing the rite of pilgrimage one day before the day of Tarwiya (i.e. on the 7th of Thul-Hijjah), in either 104 or 106 A.H. His funeral was quite eventful. His coffin was carried by ‘Abdullah son of al-Hasan son of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. He was vying with others to carry it, so much so that his headwear dropped, and his clothes were torn from the back side by the stampede, as narrated by Ibn Khallikan in his biography of Tawus in *Wafiyyat al-A’yan*.

44. Zalim ibn ‘Amr ibn Sufyan Abul-Aswad al-Du’ali

His being a Shi’a and a faithful adherent to the faith during the wilayat of Imams ‘Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, as well as other members of the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon all of them, is more visible than the sun, and it requires no reiteration.¹²

We have dealt with it in detail in our work *Mukhtasar al-Kalam fi Muallifi al-Shi’a min Sadr al-Islam*. His being a Shi’a is a matter which nobody

disputes. In spite of this fact, authors of the six sahih books have relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith about ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab in Bukhari’s Sahih. In Muslim’s, his hadith is cited by Abu Musa and ‘Umran ibn Hasin.

In both sahih books, his hadith is cited by Yahya ibn Ya’mur. In Bukhari’s, ‘Abdullah ibn Buraydah quotes him, and in Muslim’s, his hadith is narrated by his son Abu Harb. He died, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him, at the age of 85 in Basrah in 99 A.H. by the plague which devastated the city. He is the one who laid down the foundations of Arabic grammar according to rules which he learned from the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, as we have expounded in our book Al-Mukhtasar.

45. ‘Amr ibn Wa’ilah ibn ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar al-Laithi al-Makki

Also known as Abul-Tufayl, he was born in the same year when the Battle of Uhud took place, i.e. 3 A.H. He was for eight years contemporary of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Ibn Qutaybah has included him among so-called “extremist Rafidis,” stating that he was al-Mukhtar’s standard-bearer and the last of the sahabah to die. Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr has mentioned him in his chapter on kunayat in his Isti’ab saying, “He resided in Kufa, and he accompanied ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in all his battles. When ‘Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was killed, he left for Mecca.” He concludes by saying, “He was a virtuous and wise man, swift in providing an accurate answer, eloquent. He was also one of the Shi’as of ‘Ali, peace be upon him.”

He also indicates that “Once, Abul-Tufayl approached Mu’awiyah and the latter asked him: ‘For how long have you mourned the death of your friend Father of al-Hasan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام?’ He answered: ‘I have grieved as much as the mother of Moses grieved when she parted with her son, and I complain unto Allah for my shortcomings.’ Mu’awiyah asked him: ‘Were you among those who enforced a siege around ‘Uthman’s house?’

He answered: ‘No; but I used to visit him.’ Then Mu’awiyah asked him: ‘What stopped you from rescuing him?’ He retorted: ‘What about you? What stopped you from doing so when sure death surrounded him, while you were in Syria a master among his subjects?!’ Mu’awiyah replied: ‘Can’t you see that avenging his murder is an indication of my support?’ ‘Amir then told Mu’awiyah that he acted exactly like the one implied in the verses composed by the brother of Ju’f the poet in which the latter says: ‘You mourn my death, yet while I was alive, you did not even sustain me against starvation.’”

Al-Zuhri, Abul-Zubair, al-Jariri, Ibn Abul-Hasin, ‘Abdul-Malik ibn Abjar, Qatadah, Ma’ruf, al-Walid ibn Jami’, Mansur ibn Hayyan, al-Qasim ibn Abu Bardah, ‘Amr ibn Dinar, ‘Ikremah ibn Khalid, Kulthum ibn Habib, Furat al-Qazzaz, and ‘Abdul-Aziz ibn Rafi’ have all narrated his hadith as it exists in Muslim’s and Bukhari’s Sahih books. Bukhari’s work contains traditions of the Prophet ﷺ regarding the pilgrimage which are narrated by Abul-Tufayl. He describes the Prophet’s characteristics, and he narrates about the prayers and signs of prophethood from Ma’ath ibn Jabal, and he narrates about fate from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud.

He narrates from ‘Ali عليه السلام, Huthayfah ibn al-Yemani, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas and ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, as is well-known by all researchers of Muslim’s hadith besides that of the authors of his musnads. Abul-Tufayl, may Allah Ta’ala encompass his soul with His mercy, died in Mecca in 100 A.H. (some say in 102, while still others say 120), and Allah knows best.

46. ‘Abbad ibn Ya’qub al-Asadi al-Ruwajni al-Kufi

He is mentioned by Dar Qutni who says, “‘Abbad ibn Ya’qub is a truthful Shi’a.” Ibn Hayyan mentions him and says, “‘Abbad ibn Ya’qub used to invite people to Rafidism.” Ibn Khuzaymah says, “‘Abbad ibn Ya’qub is a man whose traditions are never doubted, though his faith is questioned, etc.” ‘Abbad narrates from al-Fadl ibn al-Qasim, Sufyan al-Thawri, Zubayd,

Murrah, that Ibn Mas'ud used to interpret the verse

“Allah has spared the Believers from fighting” (Qur'an, 25:33)

to imply that they were spared from fighting 'Ali. He quotes Sharik, 'Asim, Tharr, from 'Abdullah who has stated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: “When you see Mu'awiyah on my pulpit, kill him.” This hadith is recorded by Tabari and others. 'Abbad says that anyone who does not mention in his daily prayers that he dissociates himself from the enemies of the Prophet's progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام shall be resurrected in their company. He also says, “Allah Almighty is too fair to let Talhah and al-Zubayr enter Paradise; they fought 'Ali after swearing allegiance to him.”

Salih al-Jazrah has said: “'Abbad ibn Ya'qub used to denounce 'Uthman.” 'Abbad al-Ahwazi quotes his trusted authorities saying that 'Abbad ibn Ya'qub used to denounce “their” ancestors. In spite of all this, Sunni Imams like al-Bukhari, al-Tirmithi, Ibn Majah, Ibn Khuzaymah, and Ibn Abu Dawud rely on his authority, their mentor, in whom they all place their trust.

In spite of his intolerance and prejudice, Abu Hatim has mentioned him and said that he is a trusted shaykh. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Al-Mizan and says, “He is one of the extremist Shi'as, leaders of innovators; yet he is truthful when narrating hadith.” He goes on to mention what has already been stated above regarding 'Abbad's views.

Al-Bukhari quotes him directly while discussing tawhid in his own sahih. He died, may Allah be merciful unto him, in Shawwal of 150 A.H. Al-Qasim ibn Zakariyyah al-Mutarraz has intentionally misquoted 'Abbad's statements regarding the digging the sea and the flow of its water, and we seek refuge with Allah against telling lies about the Believers; He is surely the One Who foils their schemes.

47. 'Abdullah ibn Dawud

He is father of 'Abdul-Rahman al-Hamadani al-Kufi. He resided in Al-Harbiyya, a Basrah suburb. Qutaybah has included him among renowned Shi'a personalities in his own Al-Ma'arif, and al-Bukhari has relied on his authority in his own Sahih. Refer to his hadith from al-A'mash, Hisham ibn 'Urwah and Ibn Jurayh. His hadith is narrated in Bukhari's Sahih by Musaddid, 'Amr ibn 'Ali, and, in some places, by Nasr ibn 'Ali. He died in 212.

48. 'Abdullah ibn Shaddad ibn al-Had

Al-Had's full name is Usamah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Jabir ibn al-Bashir ibn 'Atwarah ibn 'Amir ibn Malik ibn Laith al-Laithi al-Kufi Abul-Walid, a companion of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. His mother is Salma daughter of 'Amis al-Khayth'ami, sister of Asma'. He is nephew, from the mother's side, of 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far and Muhammad ibn Abu Ja'far, and brother of 'Amara daughter of Hamzah ibn 'Abdul-Muttalib from the mother's side. Ibn Sa'd includes him among residents of Kufa who were distinguished for their fiqh and knowledge and who belong to the tabi'in.

At the conclusion of his biography, the author states on page 86 of Vol. 6 of his Tabaqat: "During the reign of 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn al-Ash'ath, 'Abdullah ibn Shaddad was among those who recite the Holy Qur'an and know it by heart and who fought al-Hajjaj, and he was killed during the Dujail Battle." He also says, "He was a trustworthy faqih who narrated a great deal of hadith, and he was a Shi'a."

The battle referred to above took place in 81 A.H. All authors of the sahih books have relied on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Shaddad. His hadith is quoted by Ishaq al-Shaybani, Ma'bid ibn Khalid and Sa'd ibn Ibrahim. Their ahadith from 'Abdullah ibn Shaddad exist in both sahih books as well as in others, in addition to all musnads. Al-Bukhari and Muslim quote his hadith as transmitted from 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, Maymuna and 'Ayesha.

49. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Aban ibn Salih ibn ‘Umayr al-Qarashi al-Kufi

Also known as Mishkadanah, he is mentor of Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Baghwi, and many other peers who all learned hadith from him. Abu Hatim has mentioned him testifying to his truthfulness. He quotes his hadith and states that he is a Shi’a. Salih ibn Muhammad ibn Jazrah has mentioned him and said that he is a Shi’a “extremist.”

In spite of this, ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad has narrated hadith from his father. Abu Hatim states that Mishkadanah is trustworthy. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his Al-Mizan, describing him as “a truthful man who has learned a great deal of hadith from Ibn al-Mubarak, al-Dar Wardi, and their group of scholars. Muslim, Abu Dawud, al-Baghwi and many others have recorded a great deal of his ahadith.” He has marked his name with the initials of Muslim and Abu Dawud indicating thereby their reliance on his hadith, and quoting what the learned scholars named above have said about him. He has also stated that he died in 239 A.H.

Refer to his hadith in Muslim’s Sahih as transmitted through ‘Abdah ibn Sulayman, ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Sulayman, ‘Ali ibn Hashim, Abul-Ahwas, Husayn ibn ‘Ali al-Ju’fi and Muhammad ibn Fudayl. In his chapter dealing with causes of dissension, Muslim quotes his hadith directly. Abul-‘Abbas al-Sarraj has said that he died either in 238 or 237 A.H.

50. ‘Abdullah ibn Lahi’ah ibn ‘Uqbah al-Hadrami Egypt’s judge and scholar

In his Ma’arif, Ibn Qutaybah has included him among famous shaykhs. In his biography of ‘Abdullah ibn Lahi’ah in his Al-Mizan, Ibn ‘Adi has described him as an “extremist Shi’a.” Quoting Talhah, Abu Ya’li states: “Abu Lahi’ah has said: ‘Hay ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ghafari has narrated through

the authority of Abu ‘Abdullah Rahman al-Hibli from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that during his sickness (which preceded his demise), the Messenger of Allah ﷺ told us to fetch his brother.

We brought him Abu Bakr, but he turned away from him and said: ‘I had asked for my brother’. We then brought ‘Uthman, but again the Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned away from him. ‘Ali عليه السلام was then brought in his presence. He covered him with his own mantle and inclined his head on his shoulder for a while (as if he was whispering something in his ear). When ‘Ali left, people asked him: ‘What has the Prophet ﷺ said to you?’ He answered: ‘He has taught me a thousand chapters each of which leads to a thousand sections.’”

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Al-Mizan, marking his name with DTQ to denote who among the authors of the sahih books quotes him [i.e. Abu Dawud, al-Tirmithi, and Dar Qutni. Refer to his hadith in al-Tirmithi’s Sahih, Abu Dawud and all musnads. Ibn Khallikan has greatly praised him in his Wafiyat al-A’yan. Refer to his hadith in Muslim’s sahih as transmitted by Yazid ibn Abu Habib. In his book Al-Jam’ Bayna Kitabay Abu Nasr al-Kalabathi wa Abu Bakr al-Asbahani [Compilation of Both Books of Abu Nasr al-Kalabathi and Abul-Faraj al-Asbahani, al-Qaysarani includes him among Bukhari’s and Muslim’s reliable authorities. Ibn Lahi’ah died on Sunday, mid-Rabi’ul Akhir, 174 A.H.

51. ‘Abdullah ibn Maymun al-Qaddah al-Makki

A friend of Imam Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq عليه السلام, he is relied upon by al-Tirmithi. Al-Thahbi mentions him and marks his name with al-Tirmithi’s initials as an indication that the latter cites his hadith. He adds saying that he narrates hadith through the authority of Imam Ja’far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq عليه السلام, and of Talhah ibn ‘Umar.

52. 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Salih al-Azdi

His name is Abu Muhammad al-Kufi. His friend and student 'Abbas al-Duri says that he was a Shi'a. Ibn 'Adi mentions him and says, "He is burnt in the fire of Shi'ism." Salih Jazrah says that 'Abdul-Rahman used to oppose 'Uthman. Abu Dawud says that 'Abdul-Rahman has compiled a book containing the vices of some of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, and that he is a bad person.

In spite of all this, both 'Abbas al-Duri and Imam al-Baghwi narrate his hadith. Al-Nisa'i has quoted him. Al-Thahbi has referred to him in his Al-Mizan and marked his name with al-Nisa'i's initials as an indication of the latter's reliance on him. He also quotes what the Imams (among the Sunnis) have said about him as stated above. He indicates that Ma'in trusts him, and that he died in 235. Refer to his hadith in the Sunan books as transmitted through Sharik and a group of his peers.

53. 'Abdul-Razzaq ibn Humam ibn Nafi' al-Himyari al-San'ani

One of the Shi'a nobility and honourable ancestry, he is included by Ibn Qutaybah among renowned Shi'as in his Ma'arif. Ibn al-Athir, on page 137, Vol. 6, of his Al-Tarikh Al-Kamil, mentions 'Abdul-Razzaq's death in the end of the events of 211 A.H. thus: "In that year, the traditionist 'Abdul-Razzaq ibn Humam al-San'ani, one of Ahmad's Shi'a mentors, died."

Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi mentions him while discussing hadith number 5994 in his Kanz al-'Ummal, on page 391, Vol. 6, stating that he is a Shi'a. Al-Thahbi, in his Al-Mizan, says, "'Abdul-Razzaq ibn Humam ibn Nafi', Abu Bakr al-Himyari's mentor, is a Shi'a dignitary of San'a, was one of the most trusted traditionists among all scholars."

He narrates his biography and adds: "He has written a great deal, authoring [in particular] Al-Jami' Al-Kabir. He is a custodian of knowledge sought

by many people such as Ahmad, Ishaq, Yahya, al-Thahbi, al-Ramadi, and ‘Abd.”

He discusses his character and quotes al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abdul-‘Azim, accusing him of being a liar. He states that al-Thahbi has denounced such an accusation. He says, “Not only Muslim, but all those who have memorized hadith have agreed with al-‘Abbas, while the Imams of knowledge rely on his authority.”

He goes on to narrate his biography, quoting al-Tayalisi saying: “I have heard Ibn Ma’in say something from which I became convinced that ‘Abdul-Razzaq was a Shi’a. Ibn Ma’in asked him: ‘Your instructors, such as Mu’ammarr, Malik, Ibn Jurayh, Sufyan, al-Awza’i, are all Sunnis. Where did you learn the sect of Shi’ism from?’ He answered: ‘Ja’far ibn Sulayman al-Zab’i once paid us a visit, and I found him to be virtuous and rightly guided, and I learned Shi’ism from him.’”

‘Abdul-Razzaq, as quoted above, statement in which he says that he is a Shi’a indicates that he has learned Shi’ism from Ja’far al-Zab’i, but Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Muqaddimi thinks that Ja’far al-Zab’i himself has learned Shi’ism from ‘Abdul-Razzaq. He even denounces ‘Abdul-Razzaq for this reason. In Al-Mizan, he is quoted as saying, “I wish I had lost ‘Abdul-Razzaq for good. Nobody has corrupted Ja’far’s beliefs other than he.” The “corruption” to which he refers is Shi’ism!

Ibn Ma’in has heavily relied on ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s authority, in spite of his “admission” that he is a Shi’a as stated above. Ahmad ibn Abu Khayth’amah, as in ‘Abdel-Razzaq’s biography in Al-Mizan, has said, “It has been said to Ibn Ma’in that Ahmad says that ‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa rejects ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s hadith because of his Shi’a beliefs. Ibn Ma’in has responded thus: ‘I swear by Allah, Who is the only God, that ‘Abdul-Razzaq is a hundred times superior to ‘Ubaydullah, and I have heard ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s hadith and found it to be many times more in volume than ‘Ubaydullah’s.’”

Also in ‘Abdel-Razzaq’s biography in Al-Mizan, Abu Salih Muhammad ibn Isma’il al-Dirari is quoted saying, “While we were in San’a guests of ‘Abdul-Razzaq, we heard that Ahmad and Ibn Ma’in, joined by others, had rejected ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s hadith, or say disliked it, because of the traditionist being a Shi’a. The news deeply depressed us. We thought that we had spent our resources and taken the trouble to make the trip there all in vain. Then I joined the pilgrims for Mecca where I met Yahya and asked him about this issue. He, as stated in ‘Abdel-Razzaq’s biography in Al-Mizan, said: ‘O Abu Salih! Even if ‘Abdul-Razzaq abandons Islam altogether, we shall never reject his hadith.’”

Ibn ‘Adi has mentioned him and said: “‘Abdul-Razzaq has reported ahadith dealing with virtues, but nobody has endorsed them.¹³ He also counts the vices of certain people, which views are rejected by others;¹⁴ above all, he is believed to be a Shi’a.”

In spite of all this, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked once, as indicated in ‘Abdel-Razzaq’s biography in Al-Mizan, whether he knew of any hadith better than that reported by ‘Abdul-Razzaq, and his answer was negative. Ibn al-Qaysarani states at the conclusion of ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s biography in his own book Al-Jami’ Bayna Rijalul Sahihain, quoting Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal saying, ‘If people dispute Mu’ammara’s hadith, then the final arbitrator is ‘Abdul-Razzaq.’

Mukhlid al-Shu’ayri says that he was once in the company of ‘Abdul-Razzaq when a man mentioned Mu’awiyah. ‘Abdul-Razzaq, as stated in his biography in Al-Mizan, then said: ‘Do not spoil our meeting by mentioning the descendants of Abu Sufyan.’” Zayd ibn al-Mubarak has said: “We were in the company of ‘Abdul-Razzaq once when we recounted ibn al-Hadthan’s hadith.

When ‘Umar’s address to ‘Ali and al-’Abbas: ‘You (i.e. ‘Abbas) have come to demand your inheritance of your nephew (the Prophet, peace be upon

him and his progeny), while this man (i.e. 'Ali) has come to demand his wife's inheritance of her father' was read, 'Abdul-Razzaq, as stated in his biography in Al-Mizan, said: 'Behold this shameless, impertinent man using 'nephew' and 'father' instead of 'the Messenger of Allah ﷺ'!"

In spite of all this, all compilers of hadith have recorded his traditions and relied on his authority. It has even been said, as Ibn Khallikan states in his Wafiyat al-A'yan, that people did not travel to anyone after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ as often as they did to 'Abdul-Razzaq's. He is quoted by the Imams of contemporary Muslims such as Sufyan ibn 'Aynah, among whose mentors 'Abdul-Razzaq himself was one, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Yahya ibn Ma'in, and others.

Refer to his hadith in all the sahih books, as well as all musnads, which all contain quite a few of his ahadith. He was born, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 211 A.H. He was contemporary to Abu 'Abdullah Imam al-Sadiq ﷺ for twenty-two years.¹⁵ He died during the first days of the Imamate of Imam Abu Ja'far al-Jawad ﷺ, nine years before the Imam's demise;¹⁶ may Allah resurrect him in the company of these Imams to whose service, seeking of the Pleasure of Allah, he sincerely dedicated his life.

54. 'Abdul-Malik ibn 'Ayan

He is brother of Zararah, Hamran, Bakir, 'Abdul-Rahman, Malik, Musa, Daris, and Umm al-Aswad, all descendants of 'Ayan, and all are notable Shi'as. They have won the sublime cup for serving the Islamic Shari'a, and they have produced a blessed and righteous progeny that adheres to their sect and views.

Al-Thahbi mentions 'Abdul-Malik in his Al-Mizan, citing Abu Wa'il and others quoting Abu Hatim saying that he has reported authentic ahadith, and that Ma'in has said that there is nothing wrong with his hadith, while another authority testifies thus: "He is truthful, yet he is Rafidi, too." Ibn

Ayinah has said: “Abdul-Malik, a Rafidi, has reported hadith to us.” Abu Hatim says that he is among the earliest to embrace Shi’a Islam, and that his hadith is authentic. Both Sufyans have transmitted his hadith and reported it well-documented by others.

In his book *Al-Jami’ Bayna Rijalul Sahihain*, Ibn al-Qaysarani, as quoted in both works by Sufyan ibn A’yinah, has this to say about him: “Abdul-Malik ibn ‘Ayan, brother of Hamran al-Kufi, was a Shi’a whose hadith about tawhid is recorded by Bukhari as transmitted by Abu Wa’il, and about iman as recorded in Muslim’s.”

He died during the life-time of Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام who earnestly invoked the Almighty’s mercy upon him. Abu Ja’far ibn Babawayh has reported that Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام, accompanied by his disciples, visited ‘Abdul-Malik’s gravesite in Medina. May he receive the good rewards and live eternally in peace.

55. ‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa al-’Abasi al-Kufi

He is al-Bukhari’s mentor, as the latter acknowledges on page 177 of his *Sahih*. Ibn Qutaybah has included him among traditionists in his work *Al-Ma’arif*, stating that the man is a Shi’a. When he recounts a roll call of notable Shi’as in his chapter on sects on page 206 of his book *al-Ma’arif*, he includes ‘Ubaydullah among them.

On page 279, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat*, Ibn Sa’d narrates ‘Ubaydullah’s biography without forgetting to indicate that he is a Shi’a, and that he narrates hadith supportive of Shi’ism, thus, according to Ibn Sa’d, weakening his hadith in the eyes of many people. He also adds saying that ‘Ubaydullah is also very well familiar with the Holy Qur’an. He records on page 139, Vol. 6, of his *Al-Kamil* the date of his death at the conclusion of events that took place in 213 A.H., stating: “‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa al-’Abasi, the jurist, was a Shi’a who taught al-Bukhari as the latter himself acknowledges in his *Sahih*.”

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Al-Mizan saying, “Ubaydullah ibn Musa al-’Abasi al-Kufi, al-Bukhari’s mentor, is no question trustworthy, but he also is a deviated Shi’a.” Yet the author admits that both Abu Hatim and Ma’in have trusted his hadith. He says, “Abu Hatim has said that the hadith narrated by Abu Na’im is more authentic, yet ‘Ubaydullah’s is more authentic than all of them when it comes to the ahadith transmitted by Isra’il.”

Ahmad ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ajli has said, “‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa is very knowledgeable of the Holy Qur’an, a major authority therein. I have never seen him arrogant or conceited, and he was never seen laughing boisterously.” Abu Dawud says, “‘Ubaydullah ibn al-’Abasi was a Shi’a heretic.” At the conclusion of the biography of Matar ibn Maymun in Al-Mizan, al-Thahbi states: “‘Ubaydullah, a Shi’a, is trustworthy.”

Ibn Ma’in used to learn hadith from ‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa and ‘Abdul-Razzaq knowing that they were both Shi’as. In Thahbi’s Al-Mizan, while documenting ‘Abdul-Razzaq’s biography, the author quotes Ahmad ibn ‘Ali Khaythamah saying, “I inquired of Ibn Ma’in once regarding what I heard about Ahmad’s alleged rejection of ‘Ubaydullah ibn Musa’s hadith because of his being a Shi’a. Ibn Ma’in answered: ‘I swear by Allah Who has no associate that ‘Abdul-Razzaq is superior to ‘Ubaydullah a hundred times, and I have heard from ‘Abdul-Razzaq many times more ahadith than I heard from ‘Ubaydullah.’”

Sunnis, like all others, rely on ‘Ubaydullah’s hadith in their respective sahih books. Refer to his hadith in both sahih books transmitted by Shayban ibn ‘Abdul-Rahman. Bukhari’s Sahih quotes his hadith as reported by al-A’mash ibn ‘Urwah and Isma’il ibn Abu Khalid. His hadith as recorded in Muslim’s Sahih is reported from Isra’il, al-Hasan ibn Salih, and Usamah ibn Zayd. Al-Bukhari quotes him directly.

He is also quoted directly by Ishaq ibn Ibrahim, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah, Ahmad ibn Ishaq al-Bukhari, Mahmud ibn Ghaylan, Ahmad ibn Abu Sarij, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Ashkab, Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Thahbi, and Yusuf ibn Musa al-Qattan. Muslim quotes his hadith as reported by al-Hajjaj ibn al-Sha'ir, al-Qasim ibn Zakariyyah, 'Abdullah al-Darmi, Ishaq ibn al-Mansur, Ibn Abu Shaybah, 'Abd ibn Hamid, Ibrahim ibn Dinar, and Ibn Namir.

Al-Thahbi states in his *Al-Mizan* that 'Ubaydullah died in 213 A.H. adding, "He was well known for his asceticism, adoration, and piety." His death took place in early Thul-Qi'da; may Allah Almighty sanctify his resting place.

56. 'Uthman ibn 'Umayr 'Abdul-Yaqzan al-Thaqafi al-Kufi al-Bijli

He is also known as 'Uthman ibn Abu Zar'ah, 'Uthman ibn Qays, and 'Uthman ibn Abu Hamid. Abu Ahmad al-Zubayri says that 'Uthman believes in the return. Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, "Abu Yaqzan was joined in dissenting by Ibrahim ibn 'Abdullah ibn Hasan."

Ibn 'Adi says the following about him: "He has embraced the bad sect, and he believes in the return, although trusted authorities have quoted him knowing that he was weak." The fact of the matter is that whenever some people desire to belittle a Shi'a traditionist and undermine his scholarly ability, they charge him with preaching the concept of the return. Thus have they done to 'Uthman ibn 'Umayr, so much so that Ibn Ma'in has said: "There is really nothing wrong with 'Uthman's hadith."

In spite of all attacks on him, al-A'mash, Sufyan, Shu'bah, Sharik and other peers have not in the least hesitated to quote him. Abu Dawud, al-Tirmithi and others have all quoted him in their sunan and relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith as they record it through Anas and others. Al-Thahbi has documented his biography and quoted the statements by notable

scholars as cited above, putting DTQ on his name to indicate who among the authors of the sunan quote him.

57. 'Adi ibn Thabit al-Kufi

Ibn Ma'in has described him as a "Shi'a extremist," while Dar Qutni calls him "Rafidi, extremist, but also reliable." Al-Jawzjani says that the man has "deviated." Al-Mas'udi says, "We have never seen anyone who is so outspoken in preaching his Shi'a views like 'Adi ibn Thabit."

In his *Al-Mizan*, al-Thahbi describes him as "the learned scholar of Shi'as, the most truthful among them, the judge and Imam of their mosques. Had all the Shi'as been like him, their harm would have been minimized." Then he goes on to document his biography and quote the views of the scholars cited above. He recounts the scholars who describe him as trustworthy such as Dar Qutni, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ahmad al-'Ajli, Ahmad al-Nisa'i, placing on his name the initials of authors of all the six sahih books who quote him.

Refer to his hadith in both Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahih books as transmitted by al-Bara' ibn 'Azib, 'Abdullah ibn Yazid (his maternal grandfather), 'Abdullah ibn Abu Awfah, Sulayman ibn Sard, and Sa'id ibn Jubayr. His hadith reported by Zarr ibn Habish and Abu Hazim al-Ashja'i is recorded in Muslim's Sahih. His hadith is quoted by al-A'mash, Mis'ar, Sa'id, Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari, Zayd ibn Abu Anisa, and Fudayl ibn Ghazwan.

58. 'Atiyyah ibn Sa'd ibn Janadah al-'Awfi

He is Abul-Hasan al-Kufi, the renowned tabi'i. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his *Al-Mizan*, quoting Salim al-Muradi saying that 'Atiyyah adhered to Shi'ism. Imam Ibn Qutaybah has included him among traditionists in his *Ma'arif* following his grandson al-'Awfi, al-Husayn ibn 'Atiyyah, the judge, adding, "'Atiyyah, a follower of Shi'ism, has been a jurist since the reign of al-Hajjaj."

Ibn Qutaybah has mentioned a few renowned Shi'as in his chapter on sects in his Ma'arif, listing 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi among them. Ibn Sa'd mentions him on page 212, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat indicating his firm belief in Shi'ism. His father, Sa'd ibn Janadah, was a companion of 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Once he visited the Imam in Kufa and said: "O Commander of the Faithful! I have been blessed with a newly born son; would you mind choosing a name for him?" The Imam answered: "This is a gift ('atiyyah) from Allah; therefore, do name him 'Atiyyah."

Ibn Sa'd has said: "'Atiyyah ibn al-Ash'ath went out in an army to fight al-Hajjaj. When al-Ash'ath's army fled, 'Atiyyah fled to Persia. Al-Hajjaj wrote an edict to Muhammad ibn al-Qasim ordering him to call him to his presence and give him the option to either denounce 'Ali or be whipped four hundred lashes, and his beard and head be shaven.

So, he called him and read al-Hajjaj's letter to him, but 'Atiyyah refused to succumb; therefore, he had him whipped four hundred lashes and his head and beard were shaven. When Qutaybah became governor of Khurasan, 'Atiyyah rebelled against him and remained there till 'Umar ibn Habirah became ruler of Iraq. It was then that he wrote to him asking permission to go there. Granted permission, he came to Kufa where he stayed till he died in 11 A.H." The author adds, "He was, indeed, a trusted authority, and he reported many authentic ahadith."

All his descendants were sincere followers of Muhammad's progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Among them were noblemen, highly distinguished personalities like al-Husayn ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Atiyyah who was appointed governor of the district of Al-Sharqiyya succeeding Hafs ibn Ghiyath, as stated on page 58 of the same reference, then he was transferred to al-Mahdi's troops. He died in 201 A.H. Another is Sa'd ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Atiyyah, also a traditionist, who became governor of Baghdad.¹⁷ He used to quote his father Sa'd from his uncle al-Husayn ibn al-Hasan ibn 'Atiyyah.

Back to the story of 'Atiyyah al-'Awfi. He is considered a reliable authority

by Dawud and al-Tirmithi. Refer to his hadith in their sahih books from Ibn ‘Abbas, Abu Sa’id and Ibn ‘Umar. He has also learned hadith from ‘Abdullah ibn al-Hasan who quotes his father who quotes his grand-mother al-Zahra’, Mistress of the women of Paradise. His son al-Hasan ibn ‘Atiyyah has learned hadith from him, and so have al-Hajjaj ibn Arta’ah, Mis’ar, al-Hasan ibn Adwan and others.

59. Al’ala’ ibn Salih al-Taymi al-Kufi

In his biography of Al’ala’ in Al-Mizan, Abu Hatim says the following about him: “He is one of the seniors of the Shi’as.” In spite of this, Abu Dawud and al-Tirmithi have relied on his authority. Ma’in trusts him. Both Abu Hatim and Abu Zar’ah say that there is nothing wrong with his hadith.

Refer to his hadith in both al-Tirmithi’s and Abu Dawud’s sahih books from Yazid ibn Abu Maryam and al-Hakam ibn ‘Utaybah, in addition to all Sunni musnads. Abu Na’im and Yahya ibn Bakir quote him, and so do many of their peers. He must be distinguished from Al’ala’ ibn Abul-’Abbas, the Meccan poet. The latter is a Sufyani shaykh.

His hadith is reported by Abul-Tufayl. He is in a higher rank than Abul-’ala’ ibn Salih; the latter is a Kufian, while the poet is Meccan. Both are mentioned in al-Thahbi’s Al-Mizan, where the author inaccurately quotes a statement pertaining to their being Shi’a seniors. Al’ala’ the poet has composed poetry in praise of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ which serves as irrefutable proof of his dedication and also highlights the truth about the Imam. He has also several poetic eulogies appreciated by Allah, His Messenger, and the believers.

60. ‘Alqamah ibn Qays ibn ‘Abdullah al-Nakh’i Abu Shibil

He is uncle of al-Aswad and Ibrahim, sons of Yazid. He is also a follower of the Progeny of Muhammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Al-Shahristani, in his Al-Milal

wal-Nihal, has included him among Shi'a nobility. He is master among the traditionists mentioned by Abu Ishaq al-Jawzjani who spitefully says, "There has been a group of people among the residents of Kufa whose sect [of Shi'ism is not appreciated; they are the masters among Kufi traditionists."

'Alqamah and his brother 'Ali have been companions of 'Ali عَلِيَّهِ السَّلَامُ. They have both participated in Siffin where 'Ali was martyred. The latter used to be called "Abul-Salat" (man of the prayers) due to his quite frequent prayers. 'Alqamah drenched his sword with the blood of the oppressive gang. His foot slid, yet he continued to wage jihad in the way of Allah, remaining an enemy of Mu'awiyah till his death.

Abu Bardah included 'Alqamah's name among the emissary to Mu'awiyah during the latter's reign, but 'Alqamah objected and even wrote to Abu Bardah saying: "Please remove my name (from the list); please do remove it." This is recorded by Ibn Sa'd in his biography of 'Alqamah on page 57, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat*.

'Alqamah's fair mindedness and prestige among Sunnis is undisputed in spite of their knowledge of his Shi'a beliefs. Authors of the six sahih books, as well as others, have all relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Muslim and Bukhari from Ibn Mas'ud, Abul-Darda'ah and 'Ayesha. His hadith about 'Uthman and Abu Mas'ud is recorded in Muslim's *Sahih*.

In both sahih books, his hadith is narrated by his nephew Ibrahim al-Nakh'i. In Muslim's *Sahih*, his hadith is transmitted by 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Yazid, Ibrahim ibn Yazid, and al-Sha'bi. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in 62 A.H. in Kufa.

61. 'Ali ibn Badimah

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan* quoting Ahmad ibn Hanbal saying, "He has reported authentic ahadith," that he is a pioneer of Shi'ism, that

Ibn Ma'in has trusted him, that he narrates hadith from Makrimah and others, and that both Shu'bah and Mu'ammār have learned hadith from him. He marks his name to indicate that the authors of sunan have all quoted his hadith.

62. 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd

He is Abul-Hasan al-Jawhari al-Baghdadi, a slave of Banu Hashim. One of al-Bukhari's mentors, he is included by Qutaybah among notable Shi'as in his book *Al-Ma'arif*. His biography in *Al-Mizan* indicates that for sixty years, 'Ali used to fast every other day. Al-Qaysarani mentions him in his book *Al-Jami' Bayna Rijalul Sahihain*, stating that al-Bukhari alone has narrated twelve thousand ahadith reported by 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd. He died in 203 at the age of 96.

63. 'Ali ibn Zaid

His full name is 'Ali ibn Zaid ibn 'Abdullah ibn Zuhayr ibn Abu Malika ibn Jad'an Abul-Hasan al-Qarashi al-Taymi al-Basri. Ahmad al-'Ajli has mentioned him saying that the man follows the Shi'a School of Muslim Law.

Yazid ibn Zari' has said that 'Ali ibn Yazid has been a Rafidi. In spite of all this, the learned scholars among the tabi'in, such as Shu'bah, 'Abdul-Warith, and many of their peers, have all quoted his hadith. He is one of the three jurists for whom Basrah has acquired fame, the others are Qatadah and 'Ash'ath al-Hadani. They were all blind. When al-Hasan al-Basri died, they suggested to 'Ali to take his place due to his accomplishments. He was so prestigious that only renowned dignitaries were his companions, something not too many Shi'as could enjoy during those days.

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his *Al-Mizan* stating the above facts about him. In his book *Al-Jami' Bayna Rijalul Sahihain*, al-Qaysarani states

his biography and says that Muslim has quoted his hadith as reported by Thabit al-Banani, and that he has learned about jihad from Anas ibn Malik. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 131 A.H.

64. 'Ali ibn Salih

He is brother of al-Hasan ibn Salih. We have already said a word about his virtues when we recounted the biography of his brother al-Hasan. He is one of the early Shi'a scholars, just like his brother. In his chapter on sales, Muslim relies on his authority.

'Ali ibn Salih has reported hadith from Salameh ibn Kahil, while Waki' has quoted him; they, too, are both Shi'as. He was born, may Allah be merciful unto his soul, and his twin brother al-Hasan, in 100 A.H., and he died in 151 A.H.

65. 'Ali ibn Ghurab Abu Yahya al-Fazari al-Kufi

Ibn Hayyan has described him as "an extremist Shi'a." Probably for this reason, al-Jawzjani drops him completely. Abu Dawud has said that 'Ali's hadith has been rejected, while both Ibn Ma'in and Dar Qutni trust him. Abu Hatim has said that there is nothing wrong with his hadith. Abu Zar'ah says he considers him truthful.

Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, "I find him quite truthful." Ibn Ma'in describes him as "the poor man, the man of the truth," while al-Thahbi mentions him in his Al-Mizan quoting both pros and cons regarding his hadith as mentioned above, and marking his name with SQ to identify which authors of the sunan rely on his authority. He reports hadith from Hisham ibn 'Urwah and 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar.

On page 273, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat, Ibn Sa'd says the following about him: "Isma'il ibn Raja' quotes his hadith regarding what al-A'mash had said

about ‘Uthman.” He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in Kufa in early Rabi’ul-Awwal 184, during Harun’s regime.

66. ‘Ali ibn Qadim Abul-Hasan al-Khuza’i al-Kufi

He is mentor of Ahmad ibn al-Furat, Ya’qub al-Faswi and a group of their peers who have all learned hadith from him and relied on his authority. Ibn Sa’d mentions him on page 282, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat* and describes him as an “extremist Shi’a.” Probably for this reason alone that Yahya regards his hadith as “weak.” Abu Hatim says that he is truthful.

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan*, quoting the above stated views about him, and marking his name to indicate that Abu Dawud and al-Tirmithi have both quoted his hadith. His hadith is recorded in their books from Sa’id ibn Abu ‘Urwah and Qatar. He died, may Allah be merciful unto his soul, in 213 A.H. during al-Ma’mun’s regime.

67. ‘Ali ibn al-Munthir al-Tara’ifi

He is professor of al-Tirmithi, al-Nisa’i, Ibn Sa’id, ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Hatim, and other peers who have all learned hadith from him and relied on his authority. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan*, marking his name with TSQ as an indication of which authors of the sunan quote his hadith. He quotes the following from al-Nisa’i: “‘Ali ibn al-Munthir is a staunch Shi’a, very trustworthy.”

He states that Ibn Hatim has said that the man is truthful and trustworthy, and that he reports hadith from Fudayl, Ibn ‘Aynah and al-Walid ibn Muslim. Al-Nisa’i testifies to the fact that he is “a staunch Shi’a,” and that he relies on his hadith which is recorded in both *sahih* books. This, indeed, provides food for thought for those who cast doubt about his reliability. Al-Munthir, may Allah be merciful unto his soul, died in 256 A.H.

68. 'Ali ibn al-Hashim ibn al-Barid Abul-Hasan al-Kufi al-Khazzaz al-'Aithi

He is one of Imam Ahmad's mentors. Abu Dawud mentions him and describes him as a "well-ascertained Shi'a." Ibn Haban says that he is an "Shi'a extremist." Ja'far ibn Aban says, "I have heard Ibn Namir say that 'Ali ibn Hashim is extremist in his Shi'a beliefs." Al-Bukhari has said that both 'Ali ibn Hashim and his father are over-zealous in their Shi'a beliefs.

Probably for this reason, al-Bukhari has rejected his hadith, but all other five authors of the sahih books have relied on his authority. Ibn Ma'in and others have trusted him, while Abu Dawud has included him among the most reliable traditionists. Abu Zar'ah has said that he is truthful, and al-Nisa'i has stated that there is nothing wrong with his hadith. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan*, quoting what we have already cited above.

Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, in a chapter dealing with 'Ali's character in his own *Tarikh* (history), Vol. 12, page 116, quotes Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Baghindi saying that 'Ali ibn Hashim ibn al-Barid is truthful, a man who used to follow Shi'ism. He also quotes Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Ajiri saying: "Once I asked Abu Dawud about 'Ali ibn Hashim ibn al-Barid. He suggested that I should ask 'Isa ibn Yunus. The latter has said: 'He belongs to those who call for Shi'ism.'" All of this is true. He also quotes al-Jawzjani saying that Hisham ibn al-Barid and his son 'Ali ibn Hashim are extremist in their "corrupt sect."

In spite of all this, authors of five sahih books rely on 'Ali ibn Hashim. Refer to his hadith about marriage in Muslim's *Sahih* as reported by Hisham ibn 'Urwah, and in his chapter dealing with seeking permission as transmitted from Talha ibn Yahya. His hadith in Muslim's *Sahih* is transmitted by Abu Mu'ammal Isma'il ibn Ibrahim and 'Abdullah ibn Aban. Ahmad ibn Hanbal, too, has reported his hadith, in addition to both sons of Shaybah, and a group of their class of reporters whose mentor was none other than 'Ali ibn Hashim. Al-Thahbi says, "He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul,

in 181 A.H.,” adding, “His death is probably the earliest of those of Imam Ahmad’s mentors.”

69. ‘Ammar ibn Zurayq al-Kufi

Al-Sulaymani calls him “Rafidi,” as al-Thahbi states while discussing ‘Ammar in his Al-Mizan. In spite of this allegation, Muslim, Abu Dawud and al-Nisa’i rely on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Muslim’s Sahih as transmitted by al-A’mash, Abu Ishaq al-Subai’i, Mansur, and ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Isa. His hadith is reported in Muslim’s Sahih by Abul-Jawab, Abul-Hawas Salam, Ibn Ahmad al-Zubayri, and Yahya ibn Adam.

70. ‘Ammar ibn Mu’awiyah or Ibn Abu Mu’awiyah

He is also called Khabab, or Ibn Salih al-Dihni al-Bijli al-Kufi, Abu Mu’awiyah. He is one of the Shi’a heroes who suffered a great deal of persecution while defending Muhammad’s Progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, so much so that Bishr ibn Marwan cut off his hamstrings only because he was a Shi’a. He is mentor of both Sufyans, in addition to Shu’bah, Sharik, and al-’Abar, who have all learned hadith from him and relied on his authority. Ahmad, Ibn Ma’in, Abu Hatim and other people have also relied on his authority. Muslim and four authors of sunan have quoted his hadith. Al-Thahbi has included his biography in his own Al-Mizan and quoted the views stated above regarding his being a Shi’a and a trustworthy traditionist, adding that nobody had spoken ill of him except al-’Aqili, and that there was no fault in him other than his being a Shi’a. Refer to his hadith about the pilgrimage in Muslim’s Sahih from Abul-Zubayr. He died in 133; may Allah have mercy on his soul.

71. ‘Amr ibn ‘Abdullah Abu Issaq al-Subai’i al-Hamadani al-Kufi

He is Shi’a according to Ibn Qutaybah’s Ma’arif, and Shahristani’s Al-Milal wal Nihal. He was one of the masters of traditionists whose sect, in its

roots and branches, the Nasibis do not appreciate due to the fact that Shi'as have followed in the footsteps of Ahl al-Bayt, deriving their method of worship from their own leadership in all religious matters.

For this reason, al-Jawzjani has said in his biography of Zubayd in Al-Mizan: "Among the residents of Kufa, there is a group whose sect is not appreciated; they are the chiefs of Kufi traditionists such as Abu Ishaq, Mansur, Zubayd al-Yami, al-A'mash and other peers. People have tolerated them because of being truthful in narrating hadith, without adding aught of their own thereto."

Among what the Nasibis have rejected of Abu Ishaq's hadith is this one:

"As the author of Al-Mizan indicates, Amr ibn Isma'il has quoted Abu Issaq saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said, 'Ali is like a tree whose root I am, and whose branches are 'Ali, whose fruit are al-Hasan and al-Husayn, whose leaves are the Shi'as.'"

In fact, al-Mughirah's statement "nobody caused the Kufis to perish except Abu Ishaq and al-A'mash" is uncalled for except for the fact that these men are Shi'as and are loyal to Muhammad's progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. They have become custodians of all ahadith pertaining to the attributes of the latter, peace be upon them. They were oceans of knowledge, and they followed Allah's commandments.

They are relied upon by the authors of all six sahih books and by others. Refer to Abu Ishaq's hadith in both sahih books from al-Bara' ibn 'Azib, Yazid ibn Arqam, Harithah ibn Wahab, Sulayman ibn Sard, al-Nu'man ibn Bashir, 'Abdullah ibn Yazid al-Khadmi, and 'Amr ibn Maymun.

He is quoted in both sahih books by Shu'bah, al-Thawri, Zuhayr, and by his grandson Yusuf ibn Ishaq ibn Abu Ishaq. Ibn Khallikan says in 'Amr's biography in Al-Wafiyat that 'Amr was born three years before 'Uthman

took charge of ruling the Muslims, and that he died either in 127 or in 128, or in 129, whereas both Yahya ibn Ma'in and al-Mada'ini say that he died in 132, and Allah knows best.

72. 'Awf ibn Abu Jamila al-Basri Abu Sahl

He is well known as "al-A'rabi" [the bedouin], although his origin is really not from the desert. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan* and says that "He is also called 'Awf the Truthful, while some say that he follows Shi'ism; despite that, a group of scholars has trusted him." He also quotes Ja'far ibn Sulayman describing him as Shi'a and quotes Bandar calling him "Rafidi."

Ibn Qutaybah has included him in his own *Al-Ma'arif* among Shi'a dignitaries. He has taught hadith to Ruh, Hawdah, Shu'bah, al-Nadr ibn Shamil, 'Uthman ibn al-Haytham and many others of their calibre. Authors of the six sahih books as well as others have all relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari's *Sahih* from al-Hasan and Sa'id, sons of al-Hasan al-Basri, Muhammad ibn Sirin and Siyar ibn Salamah. His hadith in Muslim's *Sahih* is transmitted by Al-Nadr ibn Shamil. His hadith from Abu Raji' al-'Ataridi exists in both sahihs. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 146 A.H.

73. Al-Fadl ibn Dakin

His real name is 'Amr ibn Hammad ibn Zuhayr al-Malla'i al-Kufi, and he is well known by Abu Na'im. He is al-Bukhari's mentor, as the latter admits in his own *Sahih*. A group of elite scholars, like Ibn Qutaybah in his *Al-Ma'arif*, has included him among Shi'a dignitaries.

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Al-Mizan* and says: "I have heard ibn Ma'in saying: 'If a man's name is mentioned in the presence of Abu Na'im and he calls him a good person and praises him, then rest assured that that person is a Shi'a; whereas if he labels someone as Murji', then rest assured

that he is a good Sunni.” Al-Thahbi says that this statement proves that Yahya ibn Ma’in inclines towards believing in the Return. It also proves that the man considers al-Fadl as a very staunch Shi’a.

In his biography of Khalid ibn Mukhlid in his Al-Mizan, al-Thahbi quotes al-Jawzjani saying that Abu Na’im follows the Kufi sect, i.e. Shi’ism. To sum up, the fact that al-Fadl ibn Dakin is a Shi’a has never been disputed. Nevertheless, all authors of the six sahih books rely on him. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s Sahih from Humam ibn Yahya, ‘Abdul-’Aziz ibn Abu Salamah, Zakariyyah ibn Abu Za’idah, Hisham al-Distwa’i, al-A’mash, Misar, al-Thawri, Malik, Ibn ‘Aynah, Shaybah, and Zuhayr.

His hadith in Muslim is transmitted by Saif ibn Abu Sulayman, Isma’il ibn Muslim, Abu ‘Asim Muhammad ibn Ayyub al-Thaqafi, Abul Amis, Musa ibn ‘Ali, Abu Shihab Musa ibn Nafi’, Sufyan, Hisham ibn Sa’d, ‘Abdul-Wahid ibn Ayman, and Isra’il. Al-Bukhari quotes him directly, while Muslim quotes his hadith as transmitted by Hajjaj ibn al-Sha’ir, ‘Abd ibn Hamid, Ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Sa’d al-Ashajj, Ibn Namir, ‘Abdullah al-Darmi, Issaq al-Hanzali, and Zuhayr ibn Harb.

He was born in 133, and he died in Kufa on a Thursday night on the last day of Sha’ban, 210, during al-Mu’tasim’s reign. Ibn Sa’d mentions him on page 279, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat, describing him as “trustworthy, reliable, a man who has narrated a great deal of hadith, and an authority therein.”

74. Fadil ibn Marzuq al-Aghar al-Ruwasi al-Kufi Abu ‘Abdul-Rahman

Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Mizan and describes him as a well-known Shi’a, quoting Sufyan ibn ‘Aynah and Ibn Ma’in testifying to this fact. He quotes Ibn ‘Adi saying that he hopes there is nothing wrong with the hadith he narrates, then he quotes al-Haytham ibn Jamil saying that the latter once mentioned Fadl ibn Marzuq once and described him as “one of the Imams of guidance.”

In his Sahih, Muslim relies on the authority of Fadil's ahadith which deals with prayers as transmitted by Shaqiq ibn 'Uqbah, and with zakat by 'Adi ibn Thabit. His hadith dealing with zakat as recorded by Muslim is transmitted by Yahya ibn Adam and Abu Usamah. In the sunan, his hadith is quoted by Waki', Yazid, Abu Na'im, 'Ali ibn al-Ja'd and many peers. Zayd ibn al-Habab has in fact lied regarding what he attributed to him of hadith dealing with the appointment of 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام as Amr by the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 158.

75. Fitr ibn Khalifah al-Hannat al-Kufi

'Abdullah ibn Ahmad once asked his father about Fitr ibn Khalifah. He answered, "He is a reporter of authentic hadith. His hadith reflects an attitude of a responsible person, but he also is a follower of Shi'ism." 'Abbas has quoted Ibn Ma'in saying that Fitr ibn Khalifah is a trusted Shi'a. Ahmad has said: "Fitr ibn Khalifah is trusted by Yahya, but he is an extremist Khashbi." Probably for this reason alone, Abu Bakr ibn 'Ayyash has said, "I have not abandoned the traditions reported by Fitr ibn Khalifah except because of his bad sect," i.e. for no fault in him other than his being a Shi'a.

Al-Jawzjani says: "Fitr ibn Khalifah has deviated from the path." During his sickness, he was heard by Ja'far al-Ahmar saying: "Nothing pleases me more than knowing that for each hair in my body there is an angel praising Allah Almighty on my behalf because of my love for Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them."

Fitr ibn Khalifah narrates hadith from Abul-Tufayl, Abu Wa'il, and Mujahid. His hadith is quoted by Usamah, Yahya ibn Adam, Qabisah and others of the same calibre. Ahmad and others have trusted him. Murrah has said the following about him, "He is a responsible narrator of hadith who has memorized what he narrates by heart." Ibn Sa'd says, "He is, Insha-Allah, trustworthy." Al-Thahbi discusses him in his Mizan, stating the learned

scholars' views, which have already been stated above, concerning his character. Ibn Sa'd has quoted the same on page 253, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat*.

When Qutaybah mentions renowned Shi'as in his *Ma'arif*, he includes Fitr ibn Khalifah among them. Al-Bukhari has quoted Fitr's hadith as narrated by Mujahid. Al-Thawri has quoted Fitr's hadith dealing with etiquette as recorded in al-Bukhari's work. Authors of the four sunan books, as well as others, have all quoted Fitr's hadith. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 153 A.H.

76. Malik ibn Isma'il ibn Ziyad ibn Dirham Abu Hasan al-Kufi al-Hindi

He is one of Bukhari's mentors as stated in the latter's *Sahih*. Ibn Sa'd mentions him on page 282, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat*. He concludes by saying that "Abu Ghassan is trustworthy, truthful, a very staunch Shi'a." Al-Thahbi mentions him in his *Mizan*, which proves his reliability and prestige, stating that the man has learned the teachings of the sect of Shi'ism from his mentor al-Hasan ibn Salih, that Ibn Ma'in has said that nobody in Kufa is more accurate in reporting hadith than Abu Ghassan, and that Abu satim has said: "Whenever I look at him, he seems as though he has just left his grave, with two marks of prostration stamped on his forehead."

Al-Bukhari has quoted him directly in many chapters of his *Sahih*. Muslim has quoted his hadith on criminal penalties in his own *Sahih* as transmitted by Harun ibn 'Abdullah. Those who narrate his hadith in Bukhari are: Ibn 'Aynah, 'Abdul-Aziz ibn Abu Salamah, and Isra'il. Both al-Bukhari and Muslim quote his hadith from Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in Kufa in 219.

77. Muhammad ibn Khazim

He is very well known as Abu Mu'awiyah al-Darir al-Tamimi al-Kufi. Al-Thahbi mentions him saying, "Muhammad ibn Khazim al-Darir is

confirmed, truthful; nowhere at all have I seen his hadith as weak; I shall discuss him in my chapter on kunayat.” When the author mentions him in his said chapter, he states: “Abu Mu’awiyah al-Darir is one of the most renowned and trustworthy Imams of hadith,” and he goes on to say: “Al-Hakim has said that both Shaykhs rely on his authority, and he is famous for being an extremist Shi’a.”

All authors of the six sahihs have relied on his authority. Al-Thahbi has marked his name with “A” to indicate that all traditionists rely on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahihs from al-A’mash and Hisham ibn ‘Urwah. Muslim’s Sahih contains other ahadith he has narrated through other trusted reporters. In Bukhari’s Sahih, his hadith is reported by ‘Ali ibn al-Madini, Muhammad ibn Salam, Yusuf ibn ‘Isa, Qutaybah, and Musaddad. In Muslim’s Sahih, he is quoted by Sa’d al-Wasiti, Sa’d ibn Mansur, ‘Amr al-Naqid, Ahmad ibn Sinan, Ibn Namir, Issaq al-Hanzali, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Karib, Yahya ibn Yahya, and Zuhayr. Musa al-Zaman has reported his hadith in both sahihs. Muhammad ibn Khazim was born in 113, and he died in 195; may Allah be merciful unto him.

78. Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullah al-Dabi al-Tahani al-Nisaburi Abu ‘Abdullah al-Hakim

He is an Imam of huffaz, those who memorize the entirety of the holy Qur’an and hadith by heart, and author of about one thousand books. He toured the lands seeking knowledge and learning hadith from about two thousand mentors. He may be compared with the most renowned scholars of his time such as al-Sa’luki.

Imam ibn Furk and all other Imams consider his status to be superior even to their own. They appreciate him and his contributions; they cherish his name and reputation, without doubting his mastership at all. All learned Sunni scholars who could not achieve as much as he did envy him. He is one of the Shi’a heroes, a protector of the Islamic Shari’a.

The author of Al-Mizan narrates his biography and describes him as “a truthful Imam, a very renowned Shi’a.” He quotes Ibn Tahir saying: “I once asked Abu Isma’il ‘Abdullah al-Ansari about al-Hakim Abu Abdullah. He said: ‘He is an Imam in hadith, a wretched Rafidi.’” Al-Thahbi has recounted a few of his interesting statements such as his saying that the Chosen One ﷺ came to the world circumcised, with a smile on his face, and that ‘Ali عليه السلام is a wasi.

The author adds the following: “His being truthful and knowledgeable of what he reports is a unanimously accepted fact.” He was born in Rabi’ al-Awwal of 321, and he died in Safar of 405, may Allah have mercy on his soul.

79. Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi’ al-Madani

He, Abu ‘Ubaydullah, his brothers al-Fadl and ‘Abdullah sons of ‘Ubaydullah, his grandfather Abu Rafi’, his uncles Rafi’, al-Hasan, al-Mughirah, ‘Ali, and their sons as well as grandsons, are all among good Shi’a ancestors. The books they have authored testify to the depth of their Shi’a conviction, as we have mentioned in Section 2, Chapter 12, of our book Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah.

Ibn ‘Uday mentions Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi’ al-Madani, adding, at the conclusion of his biography in the Mizan, that the man is among Kufi Shi’as. When al-Thahbi states his biography in his own Mizan, he marks it with TQ as an indication of which authors of the sunan books quote his hadith (i.e. Tirmithi and Dar Qutni). He also mentions that he quotes his father and grandfather, and that Mandil and ‘Ali ibn Hashim quote his hadith. His hadith is also quoted by Haban ibn ‘Ali, Yahya ibn Ya’li and others.

Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi’ al-Madani may have also reported hadith from his brother ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Ubaydullah who is well known as a traditionist by researchers of hadith. Al-Tabarani in his Al-

Mu'jam al-Kabir has relied on the authority of Muhammad ibn 'Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi' al-Madani who quotes his father and grandfather saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said to 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, "The first to enter Paradise will be I and you, then al-Hasan and al-Husayn, with our progeny behind us, and our Shi'as on our right and left."

80. Muhammad ibn Fudayl ibn Ghazwan Abu 'Abdul-Rahman al-Kufi

Ibn Qutaybah has included him among Shi'a dignitaries in his work Al-Ma'arif, and Ibn Sa'd has mentioned him on page 271, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat, saying, "He is a trustworthy and reliable traditionist who as reported a great deal of hadith; he also is a Shi'a, and some scholars [for this reason] do not rely on his authority." Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his chapter containing those well-known because of their fathers' reputation at the conclusion of his Mizan, describing him as a truthful Shi'a.

He also mentions him in his chapter containing those whose first name is Muhammad, describing him as "a man of truth and fame," adding that Ahmad has described him as a Shi'a whose hadith is authentic, and that Abu Dawud has described him as a "Shi'a by profession" (!), adding that he was a man of hadith and knowledge, that he learned the Qur'an from Hamzah, that he has written numerous books, and that Ibn Ma'in has trusted him and Ahmad spoken well of him. Al-Nisa'i has said that there is nothing wrong with his hadith.

Authors of the six sahih books, as well as many others, have relied on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari as transmitted by Muhammad ibn Namir, Ishaq al-Hanzali, Ibn Abu Shaybah, Muhammad ibn Salam, Qutaybah, 'Umran ibn Maysarah, and 'Amr ibn 'Ali. His hadith is transmitted in Bukhari by 'Abdullah ibn 'Amir, Abu Karib, Muhammad ibn Tarf, Wasil ibn 'Abd al-'Ala, Zuhayr, Abu Sa'd al-Ashajj, Muhammad ibn Yazid, Muhammad ibn al-Muthanna, Ahmad al-Wak'i, and 'Abdul-'Aziz ibn 'Umar ibn Aban. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in Kufa in 194 or 195 A.H.

81. Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn al-Ta'ifi

He was one of the most distinguished companions of Imam Abu 'Abdullah al-Sadiq, peace be upon him. Shaykh al-Ta'ifa Abu Ja'far al-Tusi has mentioned him in his book *Rijal al-Shi'a*, and al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Dawud has included him in his chapter on the most trustworthy traditionists in his book *Al-Mukhtasar*. Al-Thahbi includes his biography and quotes Yahya ibn Ma'in and others who say that the man is truthful.

He adds saying that al-Qa'nabi, Yahya ibn Yahya, and Qutaybah have all transmitted his traditions, and that 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Mahdi once mentioned Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn al-Ta'ifi and said: "His books [of traditions] are all authentic," and that Ma'ruf ibn Wasil said: "I saw Sufyan al-Thawri once accompanied by Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn al-Ta'ifi who was writing down his hadith."

Yet those who have labelled his hadith as "weak" have done so only on the grounds of his being a Shi'a, although their prejudice has not at all harmed him. His hadith from 'Amr ibn Dinar about ablution exists in Muslim's *Sahih*. According to Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat*, as stated on page 381, Vol. 5, his hadith is quoted by Waki' ibn al-Jarrah and one hundred others. In that year, his name-sake Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn Jummaz died in Medina. Ibn Sa'd has included both of their biographies in Vol. 5 of his *Tabaqat*.

82. Muhammad ibn Musa ibn 'Abdullah al-Qatari al-Madani

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his *Mizan* quoting Abu Hatim testifying to his being a Shi'a. He also quotes al-Tirmithi saying that the man is trustworthy, and he even marks his name with the initials of Muslim and the authors of sunan as an indication of their reliance on his authority. Refer to his hadith about foods in Muslim's *Sahih* transmitted from 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Abu Talha. He is also quoted by al-Maqbari and a group of his peers. Others who have quoted his hadith are: Ibn Abu Fadik, Ibn Mahdi, Qutaybah, and others of their intellectual calibre.

83. Mu'awiyah ibn 'Ammar al-Dihni al-Bajli al-Kufi

He is among our highly respected and revered Shi'as, prestigious and trustworthy. His father 'Ammar is a good example for perseverance and persistence in adhering to the principles of justice, a model Allah has brought forth for those who are patient while suffering for His Cause. A few tyrants cut off his hamstrings because of being a Shi'a, as we have indicated above, without succeeding in swaying him, till he left this world to receive his rewards.

His son Mu'awiyah was meted the same treatment, and the father is but a model for the son. He has accompanied Imams al-Sadiq and al-Kazim, peace be upon them, and learned from them a great deal. He has authored many books - as indicated above - and he is quoted by Shi'a reporters such as Ibn Abu 'Umayr and others. Muslim and al-Nisa'i have relied on his authority. His hadith about hajj is quoted in Muslim's Sahih by al-Zubayr.

In Muslim, he is quoted by both Yahya ibn Yahya and Qutaybah. He has also narrated hadith from his father 'Ammar, and from a group of his peers, and such ahadith exist in Sunni musnads. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in 175 A.H.

84. Ma'ruf ibn Kharbuth al-Karkhi

Al-Thahbi describes him¹⁸ in his Mizan as "a truthful Shi'a," marking his name with the initials of al-Bukhari, Muslim, and Abu Dawud to indicate that they all quote his hadith. He also quotes Abul Tufayl saying that Ma'ruf narrates a few ahadith. His hadith is narrated by Abu 'Asim, Abu Dawud, 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa and others. He also quotes Abu Hatim saying that the latter writes down his hadith.

Ibn Khallikan mentions him in his Wafiyyat and describes him as one of the servants of 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, peace be upon him. He goes on to

praise him, quoting a statement of his in which he says, “I have come unto the Almighty Allah, leaving everything behind me, with the exception of serving my master ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, peace be upon him.”

When Ibn Qutaybah discusses a few Shi’a notables in his work *Al-Ma’arif*, he includes Ma’ruf ibn Kharbuth among them. Muslim has relied on the authority of Ma’ruf ibn Kharbuth; refer to his hadith about hajj in his *sahih* from Abul Tufayl. He died in Baghdad in 200 A.H.;¹⁹ his grave-site is now a mausoleum. Sirri al-Saqti was one of his students.

85. Mansur ibn al-Mu’tamir ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Rabi’ah al-Salami al-Kufi

He is one of the companions of Imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام, and he has narrated hadith from them, as the author of *Muntahal Maqal fi Ahwal al-Rijal* states. Ibn Qutaybah includes him among Shi’a nobility in his book *Al-Ma’arif*. Al-Jawzjani has included him among the narrators “whose sect is not appreciated by [certain] people” in the roots and branches of religion, due to their adherence to what they have learned from Muhammad’s progeny عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَام.

Says he: “Among the people of Kufa there is a group whose sect is not appreciated; these are chiefs of Kufa’s traditionists such as Abu Ishaq, Mansur, Zubayd al-Yami, al-A’mash and other peers. People have tolerated them just because they are truthful in narrating hadith.”²⁰ Why do they bear so much grudge against these truthful men? Is it because of their upholding the Two Weighty Things? Or their embarking upon the Ark of Salvation? Or their entering into the city of the Prophet’s knowledge through its Gate, the Gate of Repentance? Or is it their seeking refuge with the “Refuge of all the world”? Or is it their obedience to the Prophet’s will to be kind unto his descendants? Or is it their heart’s submission to Allah and their weeping for fear of Him, as is well known about them?

Stating the biography of Mansur ibn al-Mu’tamir ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Rabi’ah, Ibn Sa’d says the following about Mansur on page 235 of Vol. 6 of his

Tabaqat: “He has lost his eye-sight because of excessive weeping for fear of Allah. He used to carry a handkerchief for the purpose of drying his tears. Some allege that he fasted and prayed for sixty years.” Can a man of such qualities be a burden on people? No, indeed, but we have been inflicted by some people who do not know what fairness is; so, we are Allah’s, and unto Him is our return.

In his biography of Mansur ibn al-Mu’tamir ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Rabi’ah, Ibn Sa’d also quotes Hammad ibn Zayd saying, “I have seen Mansur in Mecca, and I think he belongs to those Khashbis, yet I do not think that he tells a lie when he quotes hadith.”

Behold the underestimation, grudge, contempt and manifest enmity this statement bears. How surprised I am when I consider his statement: “I do not think that he tells lies...” As if telling lies is one of the practices of those who are sincere to Muhammad’s progeny. As if Mansur alone is truthful, rather than all other Shi’a traditionists. Name-calling... As if the Nasibis could not find a name whereby they can call the Shi’as other than misnomers such as Khashbis, Turabis, Rafidis, etc. As if they have never heard the Almighty’s Commandment:

“And do not exchange bad names; what an evil it is to use a bad name after having accepted faith (Qur’an, 49:11).”

Ibn Qutaybah has mentioned the “Khashbis” in his book Al-Ma’arif and said: “These are Rafidis. Ibrahim al-Ashtar met ‘Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad in the battle-field. Most of Ibrahim’s men had guaiacum wood panels; therefore, they were labelled ‘khashbis,’ men associated with paneling, out of scorn.” In fact, they called them so just to humiliate them and look down upon them and their wooden weapons with which they were able to beat Ibn Marjanah, predecessor of the Nasibis, thus annihilating those heretics, murderers of Muhammad’s progeny.

“Allah has cut off the tail of those who committed injustice; all praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds (Qur’an, 6:45).”

There is no harm, therefore, in this noble name, nor is there any harm in its synonyms like Turabis, after Abu Turab (Imam ‘Ali, as); we are proud of it.

We have digressed. Let us go back to our main topic and state that it is the consensus of traditionists to rely on Mansur. For this reason, all authors of the six sahih books, as well as others, rely on his authority, knowing that he is Shi’a. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahih from Abu Wa’il, Abul Duha, Ibrahim al-Nakh’i and other peers.

He quotes Shu’bah, al-Thawri, Ibn ‘Aynah, Hammad ibn Zayd and others who are the most distinguished of that class of reporters of hadith. Ibn Sa’d has said that Mansur’s death took place at the end of the year 132, adding, “He is a trusted authority who has reported a great deal of hadith; he is a man of sublime prestige; may Allah have mercy on him.”

86. Al-Minhal ibn ‘Amr al-Kufi the tabi’i

He is one of the renowned Shi’as of Kufa. For this reason, al-Jawzjani has categorized his hadith as “weak,” describing him as a “follower of the bad sect.” Ibn Hazm has spoken ill of him in the same manner, and Yahya ibn Sa’d, too, chews his name. Ahmad ibn Hanbal states contrariwise. He says: “Abu Bishr is more dear to me than a sweet cool fountain, and he is more reliable than others.”

In spite of being a staunch Shi’a, stating so in public even during the time of al-Mukhtar, he is not doubted by scholars regarding the accuracy of his hadith. He is quoted by Shu’bah, al-Mas’udi, al-Hajjaj ibn Artah, and many peers of their intellectual calibre. He is trusted by Ibn Ma’in, Ahmad al-‘Ijli and others. In his Mizan, al-Thahbi quotes their assessment of the

man as we have stated above, marking his name with the initials of Bukhari and Muslim as an indication that they both consider his hadith reliable.

Refer to his hadith in Bukhari's Sahih from Sa'id ibn Jubayr. In Bukhari's Sahih, in the author's section on Tafsir, his hadith is transmitted by Zayd ibn Abu Anisa. Al-Mansur ibn al-Mu'tamir has quoted him in a chapter on prophets.

87. Musa ibn Qays al-Hadrami Abu Muhammad

Al-'Aqili describes him as an "extremist Rafidi." Once, Sufyan asked him about Abu Bakr. He answered: "Ali is more dear to me." Musa ibn Qays reports hadith from Salamah ibn Kahil, Iyad ibn Iyad, ending with Malik ibn Ja'na reporting that "I heard Umm Salamah saying that 'Ali is with the truth; whoever follows him is a follower of the truth, and whoever abandons him certainly abandons the truth; this is decreed." This has been narrated by Abu Na'im al-Fadl ibn Dakin from Musa ibn Qays. Musa ibn Qays has reported hadith praising Ahl al-Bayt in volumes which angered al-'Aqili who said to him what he said. Ibn Ma'in has trusted and relied on him.

Abu Dawud and Sa'd ibn Mansur have both relied on his authority in their respective sunan. Al-Thahbi has included his biography in his own Mizan, stating about him what we have already stated above. Refer to his hadith in the sunan from Salamah ibn Kahil and Hajar ibn 'Anbasah. His hadith is transmitted by Dakin, 'Ubaydullah ibn Musa and other reliable authorities. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, during the reign of al-Mansur.

88. Naif' ibn al-Harith Abu Dawud al-Nakh'i al-Kufi al-Hamadani al-Subay'i

Al-'Aqili described him as being an "extremist Rafidi." Al-Bukhari says: "People speak ill of him [because of being a Shi'a]." Sufyan, Hamam, Sharik and a group of the most renowned scholars of such calibre have all quoted

him. Al-Tirmithi relies on him in his own sahih. Authors of musnads have all recorded his hadith. Refer to his hadith in Tirmithi and others from Anas ibn Malik, Ibn 'Abbas, 'Umran ibn Hasin and Zayd ibn Arqam. Al-Thahbi has included his biography and stated what we have already said above.

89. Nuh ibn Qays ibn Rabah al-Hadani

He is also known as al-Tahi al-Basri. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Mizan, describing his hadith as authentic, adding that Ahmad and Ibn Ma'in trust him. He also quotes Abu Dawud saying that the man is a Shi'a. Al-Nisa'i has said that there is nothing wrong with his hadith, putting on his name the initials of Muslim and authors of the sunan as an indication that they all quote his hadith. In Muslim's Sahih, his ahadith about beverages are quoted by Ibn 'Awn. His ahadith on the dress codes exist in Muslim's Sahih, too, as narrated by his brother Khalid ibn Qays.

In Muslim, he is quoted by Nasr ibn 'Ali. In works other than Muslim's, his hadith is quoted by al-Ash'ath and by many others of his calibre. Nuh ibn Qays ibn Rabah reports from Ayyub, 'Amr ibn Malik and a group of other men.

90. Harun ibn Sa'd al-'Ijli al-Kufi

Al-Thahbi mentions him and puts Muslim's initial on his name as an indication that the latter quotes him, then he describes him as "truthful in his own right," but he also calls him "a hated Rafidi" who narrates from 'Abbas from Ibn Ma'in that he is an extremist Shi'a. He has learned hadith from 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, who in turn quotes Muhammad ibn Abu Hafs al-'Attar, al-Mas'udi, and Hasan ibn Hayy. Abu Hatim says that there is nothing wrong with his hadith. I remember one of his ahadith which describes Hell-fire; it is recorded in Muslim's Sahih as narrated by al-Hasan ibn Salih from Harun ibn Sa'd al-'Ijli, from Salman.

91. Hashim ibn al-Barid ibn Zayd Abu 'Ali al-Kufi

Al-Thahbi mentions him and puts the initials of Abu Dawud and al-Nisa'i on his name to indicate that he is one of their authorities, quoting Ibn Ma'in and others testifying to his being trustworthy, in addition to his own testimony to being a "Rafidi." He quotes Ahmad saying that there is nothing wrong with his hadith. Hashim narrates hadith from Zayd ibn 'Ali and Muslim al-Batin, and he is quoted by al-Kharibi and his son 'Ali ibn Hashim, to whom we referred above, in addition to a group of other renowned scholars. Hashim adhered to Shi'ism, and this has been made clear when we discussed 'Ali ibn Hashim.

92. Hubayrah ibn Maryam al-Himyari

He is one of the companions of Imam 'Ali عليه السلام, equal only to al-Harith in his sincerity as well as companionship. Al-Thahbi mentions him and puts on his name the initials of the authors of sunan books as a reference to his being one of the authorities of their musnads, then he quotes Ahmad saying, "There is nothing wrong with his hadith, and he is more dear to us than al-Harith." Al-Thahbi quotes Ibn Kharash describing Hubayrah as "weak; he used to assault the wounded in Siffin." Al-Jawzjani says the following about him: "He is a follower of al-Mukhtar who used to put an end to the life of those wounded in the Khazir Battle."

Al-Shahristani, in his book *Al-Milal wal Nihal*, has included him among Shi'a notables, a fact taken for granted by everyone. His hadith from 'Ali عليه السلام is unquestioned in the sunan, and he is quoted by both Abu Ishaq and Abu Fakhita."

93. Hisham ibn Ziyad Abul Miqdam al-Basri

Al-Shahristani has included him in his *Al-Milal wal Nihal* among Shi'a notables. Al-Thahbi mentions him twice: once under his alphabetical

index, and once in his chapter on kunayat, placing a Q on his name to indicate that Dar Qutni of the sunan relies on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Tirmithi's Sahih and other works as transmitted from al-Hasan and al-Qardi. He is quoted by Shayban ibn Farukh, al-Qawariri and others.

94. Hisham ibn 'Ammar ibn Nasr ibn Maysarah Abu al-Walid

He is also called al-Zafri al-Dimashqi. He is one of Bukhari's mentors as the latter states in his Sahih. Ibn Qutaybah includes him among Shi'a notables when he mentions quite a few of them in his chapter on sects in Al-Ma'arif. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his Mizan, describing him as "the Imam, orator, and reciter of the Holy Qur'an of Damascus, its traditionist and scholar, a man of truth who has narrated a great deal of hadith, though he has a few [ideological] defects, etc."

Al-Bukhari quotes him directly in his chapter on "those who voluntarily grant extensions for repayment of debt" in his chapter on sales in his sahih and in other chapters with which researchers are familiar. Some of such chapters, I believe, are his books Al-Maghazi, his book on beverages, and his chapter on the attributes of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ. Hisham ibn 'Ammar narrates hadith from Yahya ibn Hamzah, Sadaqah ibn Khalid, 'Abdul-Hamid ibn Abul 'Ishrin and others.

The author of Al-Mizan says: "Many quote his hadith; they travel to his place to learn from him how to recite the Holy Qur'an and the narration of hadith. His hadith is quoted by al-Walid ibn Muslim, one of his mentors, while he himself narrates from Abu Lahi'ah. 'Abdan has said that there is no traditionist like him in the world, while someone else has said that Hisham is outspoken, wise, easy to comprehend, and he has acquired a great deal of knowledge."

Like other Shi'as, Hisham ibn 'Ammar believes that the Qur'anic diction is created only by Allah Almighty. When Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] heard

about this, as the author of Al-Mizan states in his biography of Hisham ibn 'Ammar, he responded by saying, "I have known him to be wreckless; may Allah annihilate him." Ahmad has also come across a book written by Hisham in which one of the latter's sermons says: "Praise be to Allah Who has manifested Himself unto his creatures through what He has created."

This caused Ahmad to be extremely furious, so much so that he required all those who used to pray behind Hisham to repeat their prayers. Ahmad could not see that Hisham's statement is very clear in stating that Allah is superior to being seen, glorified above those who inquire about Him with "how" or "where," appreciative of His norm of creation. His statement may be compared with one saying: "He has manifested His miracles in everything He has created," or it may even be more pertinent and fitting than the latter; but scholars of the same calibre speak of each other in the light of their own likes and dislikes, each according to his own degree of knowledge. Hisham ibn 'Ammar was born in 153, and he died at the commencement of Muharram of 245 A.H.; may Allah have mercy on him.

95. Hashim ibn Bashir ibn al-Qasim ibn Dinar al-Wasiti Abu Mu'awiyah

His birth-place is Balkh. His grandfather al-Qasim had moved to Wasit to engage in trade. Ibn Qutaybah includes him in his Al-Ma'arif among Shi'a nobility. He is mentor of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and all those of his calibre. Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his book Al-Mizan, marking his name with an indication that all authors of the six sahih books rely on his authority, and describing him as one who knows the Holy Qur'an by heart. Says al-Thahbi: "He is one of the most renowned scholars. He learned hadith from al-Zuhri and Hasan ibn 'Abdul-Rahman. His hadith is quoted in turn by al-Qattan, Ahmad, Ya'qub al-Dawraqi, and by many others."

Refer to his hadith in Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahih books as transmitted by Hamid al-Tawil, Isma'il ibn Abu Khalid, Abu Ihaq al-Shaybani, and by others. He is quoted in both books by 'Umar, al-Naqid, 'Amr ibn Zararah,

and Sa'id ibn Sulayman. In Bukhari, his hadith is quoted by 'Amr ibn 'Awf, Sa'd ibn al-Nadir, Muhammad ibn Nabahan, 'Ali ibn al-Madini, and Qutaybah. In Muslim, he is quoted by Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Shurayh, Ya'qub al-Dawraqi, 'Abdullah ibn Mu'it', Yahya ibn Yahya, Sa'id ibn Mansur, Ibn Abu Shaybah, Isma'il ibn Salim, Muhammad ibn al-Sabah, Dawud ibn Rashid, Ahmad ibn Mani', Yahya ibn Ayyub, Zuhayr ibn Harb, 'Uthman ibn Abu Shaybah, 'Ali ibn Hajar, and Yazid ibn Harun. He died, may Allah have mercy on him, in Baghdad in 183 A.H. at the age of 79.

96. Waki' ibn al-Jarrah ibn Malih ibn 'Adi

His kunyat is "Abu Sufyan," after his son Sufyan al-Ruwasi al-Kufi. He belongs to the tribe of Qays Ghilan. In his Ma'arif, Ibn Qutaybah includes him among Shi'a notables. In his book titled Tahthib, Ibn al-Madani has said that Waki' adheres to Shi'ism. Marwan ibn Mu'awiyah never doubted that Waki' was "Rafidi."

Once, Yahya ibn Ma'in visited Marwan and found him with a tablet containing statements about this person and that. Among its contents was a statement describing Waki' as Rafidi. Ibn Ma'in said to Marwan: "Waki' is better than you." "Better than me?!" exclaimed Marwan. Ibn Ma'in answered: "Yes, better than you." Ibn Ma'in indicates that Waki' came to know about this dialogue and he responded by saying, "Yahya is a friend of ours."

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked once, "If there is a discrepancy in narrating hadith between Waki' and Abdul-Rahman ibn Mahdi, whose hadith shall we accept?" Ahmad answered that he personally preferred 'Abdul-Rahman's hadith for reasons which he stated. Among them was this one: "'Abdul-Rahman never speaks in a derogatory manner about our ancestors, unlike Waki' ibn al-Jarrah." This is supported by a statement recorded by al-Thahbi at the conclusion of his biography of al-Hasan ibn Salih wherein he says that Waki' used to say: "Al-Hasan ibn Salih, in my view, is an Imam of hadith." Some people said to him, "But he does not invoke Allah's mercy

on ‘Uthman.” He said, “Do you invoke Allah’s mercy upon al-Hajjaj’s soul?” thus equating ‘Uthman with al-Hajjaj.

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his book Al-Mizan stating the above views about him. All authors of the six sahih books as well as others rely on his authority. Refer to his hadith in Bukhari’s and Muslim’s Sahih books as transmitted by al-A’mash, al-Thawri, Shu’bah, Isma’il ibn Abu Khalid, and ‘Ali ibn al-Mubarak. He is quoted in both books by Ishaq al-Hanzali and Muhammad ibn Namir. Al-Bukhari quotes his hadith as transmitted by ‘Abdullah al-Hamidi, Muhammad ibn Salam, Yahya ibn Ja’far ibn A’yan, Yahya ibn Musa, and Muhammad ibn Muqatil. In Muslim’s book, he is quoted by Zuhayr, Ibn Abu Shaybah, Abu Karib, Abu Sa’d al-Ashajj, Nasr ibn ‘Ali, Sa’d ibn Azhar, Ibn Abu ‘Umar, ‘Ali ibn Kashram, ‘Uthman ibn Abu Shaybah, and Qutaybah ibn Sa’d. He died, may Allah have mercy on his soul, in Fid when he was in the company of a caravan returning from the pilgrimage, in Muharram of 197 A.H. at the age of 68.

97. Yahya ibn al-Jazzar al-’Arni al-Kufi

He is one of the companions of the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his book Al-Mizan and marks his name to indicate that Muslim and authors of the sunan rely on his authority, describing him as “truthful” and “trustworthy,” and quoting al-Hakam ibn Atbah saying that Yahya ibn al-Jazzar is “extremist” in his Shi’a views. Ibn Sa’d has mentioned him on page 206, Vol. 6, of his Tabaqat saying: “Yahya ibn al-Jazzar adheres to Shi’ism, and he goes to extremes in doing so; yet many have said that he is trustworthy, and that he narrates many ahadith.”

I have seen how Muslim’s Sahih contains one hadith about prayers which he narrates from ‘Ali, and another about faith transmitted from ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Layla. Al-Hakam ibn ‘Utayba and al-Hasan al-’Urfi quote his hadith in Muslim and others.

98. Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Qattan

His kunyat is “Abu Sa'id.” He is a slave of Banu Tamim al-Basri, and he is the most renowned traditionist of his time. Qutaybah has included him in his Ma'arif among Shi'a notables. Authors of the six sahih books and others have relied on his authority. His hadith from Hisham ibn 'Urwah, Hamid al-Tawil, Yahya ibn Sa'id al-Ansari and others stands on solid grounds in Bukhari, Musaddad, 'Ali ibn al-Madini and Bayan ibn 'Amr. In Muslim's book, his hadith is transmitted by Muhammad ibn Hatim, Muhammad ibn Khalad al-Bahili, Abu Kamil Fadl ibn Husayn al-Jahdari, Muhammad al-Muqaddimi, 'Abdullah ibn Hashim, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaybah, 'Abdullah ibn Sa'd, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ya'qub al-Dawraqi, Ahmad ibn 'Abdah, 'Amr ibn 'Ali, and 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Bishr. He died, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him, in 198 A.H. at the age of 78.

99. Yazid ibn Ziyad al-Kufi Abu 'Abdullah

He is a slave of Banu Hashim. Al-Thahbi mentions him in his book Al-Mizan, placing on his name the initials of Muslim and four authors of sunan to indicate that they quote him. He cites Abu Fadl saying: “Yazid ibn Ziyad is one of the foremost Shi'a Imams.” Al-Thahbi has admitted that he is one of the renowned Kufi scholars. In spite of all this, many have assaulted him, preparing against him all means of belittling and charging due to the fact that, relying on Abu Barzah or maybe Abu Bardah, he has narrated one hadith stating the following: “We were in the company of the Prophet ﷺ when some singing was heard.

Then 'Amr ibn al-'Aas and Mu'awiyah came singing. The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘O Mighty Lord! Involve both of these men in dissension, and hurl them in Hell-fire.’” Refer to his hadith on beverages in Muslim's Sahih from 'Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Layla as reported from him by Sufyan ibn 'Aynah. He died, may Allah Almighty have mercy on him, in 136 at the age of about ninety.

100. Abu ‘Abdullah al-Jadali

Al-Thahbi has mentioned him in his chapter on kunayat, placing on his name “DT” to indicate that he is among those relied upon by both Dawud and Tirmithi in their sahih books, then he describes him as an “abhorred Shi’a.” He quotes al-Jawzjani saying that the man is the standard-bearer of al-Mukhtar. He also quotes Ahmad describing him as “trustworthy.”

Al-Shahristani has included him among Shi’a dignitaries in his book *Al-Milal wal Nihal*. Ibn Qutaybah has included him among the most zealous of “Rafidis” in his book *Al-Ma’arif*. Refer to his hadith in both Tirmithi’s and Abu Dawud’s sahih books as well as all Sunni musnads.

Ibn Sa’d mentions him on page 159, Vol. 6, of his *Tabaqat* where he says that, “Abu ‘Abdullah al-Jadali is a very zealous Shi’a. Some allege that he headed al-Mukhtar’s police force, and that he was sent once to ‘Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr accompanied by eight hundred men to annihilate them and support Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah against Ibn al-Zubayr’s scheme.”

Ibn al-Zubayr, in fact, had enforced a siege around the houses of Ibn al-Hanafiyyah and Banu Hashim, surrounding them with fire wood in preparation for burning them alive because of refusing to swear the oath of allegiance to him, but Abu ‘Abdullah al-Jadali saved them from a certain death; therefore, may Allah reward him for what he did for His Prophet’s household عليه السلام.

This much concludes what we liked to count in a hurry a hundred Shi’a heroes who are authorities relied upon by the Sunnis. They are custodians of the nation’s knowledge. Through them, the prophetic legacy is preserved, and they are sought by the authors of the sahih and musnad books. We have mentioned them by their names and quoted Sunni texts testifying to their being Shi’as while still remaining authorities, as you had requested. I think those who raise objections will see their error in claiming that the Sunnis do not rely on the authority of Shi’as.

They will come to know that their criterion is truthfulness and accuracy, regardless of the school of thought, Sunni or Shi'a. If the hadith narrated by the Shi'as is all rejected, then the vast majority of the prophetic legacy will be lost, as al-Thahbi himself admits while narrating the biography of Aban ibn Taghlib in his book Al-Mizan. There can be no better testimony than that.

You, may Allah render the truth victorious through your person, know that there have been quite a few ancestors of the Shi'as, other than the ones we have counted here, whose full count is many times more than this hundred, upon whose authority the Sunnis rely. These "others" are even of a higher calibre; they are narrators of even more authentic hadith, having acquired more knowledge. And they were closer to the Prophet's time, with a seniority in embracing the Shi'a beliefs. They are Shi'a companions [sahabah] of the Prophet ﷺ, may Allah be pleased with all of them. We have dealt with their blessed names at the conclusion of our work Al-Fusul al-Muhimmah.

They are also among the trustworthy tabi'in whose authority is relied upon. Each one of them is a trustworthy man who has memorized the entire text of the Holy Qur'an by heart, and his argument is irrefutable. Among such men are those who were martyred while supporting the lesser and the greater Camel Battles, Siffin, Al-Nahrawan, in Hijaz as well as in Yemen, when Bishr ibn Arta'ah invaded them, during the dissension of al-Hadrami who was sent to Basrah by Mu'awiyah.

They include those who were martyred on the Taff Battle with the Master of the Youths of Paradise [Imam Husayn ibn 'Ali, as], and those who were martyred with his grandson Zayd, and many others who had to face a great deal of injustice and persecution, avenging the massacre of the Prophet's progeny. Among them were those who were murdered just because of being very strong in their beliefs.

Others were unfairly exiled from their homes, and those who had to resort to taqiyya, fearing for their lives or due to their physical weakness, such as al-Ahnaf ibn Qays, al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah, Yahya ibn Ya'mur, the latter being the first to apply dots to the Arabic alphabet, al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi, who founded

the rules of Arabic grammar and scansion, Ma'ath ibn Muslim al-Harra, who laid the foundations of the science of conjugation in the Arabic language, and many others whose complete biographies would require huge volumes.

Overlook the hatred of the Nasibis towards these men through their use of attacking; they call them “weak” traditionists, and they chew their names, thus depriving themselves of their knowledge. There are hundreds of reliable Shi'as who have learned hadith by heart, who are light-houses of guidance, ignored by Sunnis.

For these men, Shi'as have dedicated indices and bibliographies containing their biographies and stories. These works prove the extent of service these men have rendered to the tolerant Shari'a. Whoever researches them will find them to be models of truthfulness and trustworthiness, piety, asceticism, worship, and sincerity in bringing people closer to Allah Almighty and to His Messenger ﷺ, to His Book, and to the Imams of Muslims as well as to their commoners. We pray Allah to enable us and your own self to benefit from their blessings; He is the Most Merciful.

Sincerely,
Sh

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1. This Letter has grown quite lengthy because the topic demands it to be as such. Scholars are not bored by its length due to its contents that include precious benefits sought by every researcher and critic. Other than these, let whoever is bored read a portion of it, and let him judge the rest of it accordingly, then let him go directly to Letter No. 17 and the ones that succeed it. For fear of boring you by such a lengthy Letter, we have refrained from including it in lists of books containing valuable and very interesting information.
 2. This statement is important. Many narrators of hadith did not know how to read and write; they simply memorized hadith, as is the case with the most cited Sunni narrator of all, namely Abu Hurayra. – Tr.

3. I think this is a typographical error and that the name should be “Abdullah ibn Omar” instead, the famous traditions and son of second caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab. – Tr.
4. Upon mentioning Isma’il ibn ‘Abbad al-Thahbi departs from his usual approach in his Al-Mizan listing him before Isma’il ibn Aban al-Ghanawi and Isma’il ibn Aban al-Azdi. He has indeed greatly wronged his own self discarding all basic rights.
5. A collar put around the dog’s neck; the meaning here is that his time to depart has come when a rope is tightened around his neck.
6. See page 196 of the abridged version of Al-Jami’ Baynal ‘Ilmi wa Fad’ilih by the contemporary scholar Shaykh Ahmad ibn ‘Umar al-Muhammasani al-Beiruti.
7. Refer to page 199 of its summary in the book written by the scholar Shaykh Ahmad ibn ‘Umar al-Muhammasani al-Beiruti.
8. Ibn ‘Adi quotes a chain of narrators including al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali al-Sukuni al-Kufi, Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Sukuni, Salih ibn al-Aswad, al-A’mash, and ‘Atiyah, stating that Jarir was asked once: “How was ‘Ali’s status among your folks?” Jarir answered: “He was the best of mankind.” This has been quoted by Muhammad Ahmad al-Thahbi in his biography of Salih ibn Abul-Aswad in Al-Mizan. In spite of al-Thahbi’s extreme fanaticism, all he had to say in his comment about this hadith is his statement: “He probably meant during his [‘Ali’s] lifetime.”
9. His statement “What a great man ‘Ali was,” though flattering, does not do justice to the status of the Imam, peace be upon him, even coming from one of his adversaries. Sharik’s rejection of such a feeble compliment and his anger thereat are, according to the norms of tradition, justified. There is quite a difference between the statement of this Omayyad vagabond who infers “What a great man ‘Ali was,” having heard ‘Ali’s outstanding virtues, as well as the verses of the Exalted and Almighty stating: “We have

decreed, and the most capable of decreeing are We...” The comparison between the statement of that Omayyad man and those of Allah is indeed quite manifest; yet Allah Almighty did not content Himself with just saying “What a great servant of Allah he is,” but also added: “He is oft-returning;” so, Wafiyyat al-A’yan does not provide any answer to such a question.

10. He was also one of those who were put in charge of fighting the renegades as Ibn Hajar indicates as he discusses Sihan ibn Sawhan in Part One of his *Al-Isabah*.
11. It was said to al-Sha’bi, as mentioned in the biography of Rashid al-Hijri in al-Thahbi’s *Al-Mizan*, “What is the matter with you? Why do you find fault with ‘Ali’s companions? Haven’t you learned what you have learned from any of them?” He asked: “From whom?” They answered: “From al-Harith and Sa’sa’ah.” He said: “As regarding Sa’sa’ah, he was, indeed, an eloquent orator, and I learned from him how to deliver sermons, and truly al-Harith was an expert in mathematics, and from him did I learn the same.”
12. Suffices you for proof testifying to this fact what is mentioned by Ibn Hajar in his biography in Part Three of his *Isabah*, Vol. 2, page 241.
13. Yes, he was agreed upon by those who are fair, and they included it in their sahihs with satisfaction. Those who opposed it are the Nasibis and Kharijites. It includes what is narrated by Ahmad ibn al-Azhar, who is unanimously considered as an authority, saying: “Abdel-Razzaq has taught me a few exclusive ahadith which he knows through a chain of narrators that includes Mu’ammār, al-Zuhri, and ‘Ubaydullah and ends with Ibn ‘Abbas who says that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ looked once at ‘Ali and said: ‘You are a chief in this life, and a chief in the life to come; whoever loves you loves me, and whoever hates you hates me; the one you love is loved by Allah, and the one you dislike is disliked by Allah; woe unto those who despise you.’” This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 128, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, followed by the author’s comment thus: “This is an authentic hadith according to the authority of both Shaykhs.” Among others is what ‘Abdel-Razzaq has narrated from Mu’ammār, from

Ibn Najih, from Mujahid, from Ibn ‘Abbas who says that Fatima عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ once said: “O Messenger of Allah! You have married me to a provider who has no money.” He said: “Are you not pleased that Allah cast a look at the inhabitants of the earth and chose from among them two men, and He made one of them your father and the other your husband?” This hadith is quoted by al-Hakim on page 129, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak* through Sarih ibn Yunus, Abu Hafs, al-A’mash, Abu Salih, up to Abu Hurayrah.

14. Allah forbid that they have abominations only Mu’awiyah and his oppressive gang are more likely to have. Among such abominations is narrated by ‘Abdel-Razzaq through a chain of narrators that includes: Ibn ‘Aynah, ‘Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jath’an, Abu Nadrah, up to Abu Sa’d who quotes the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: “If you see Mu’awiyah sitting on my pulpit, kill him.”
15. The reason for this is the fact that he, peace be upon him and his progeny, died in 148 at the age of 65.
16. The demise of Imam al-Jawad, peace be upon him, took place in 220; he was 25 years old. They have committed a mistake those who say that ‘Abdel-Razzaq narrated hadith from al-Baqir, for al-Baqir, peace be upon him, died in 114 at the age of 57, twelve years prior to ‘Abdel-Razzaq’s birth.
17. This can be extracted from the biography of his grandfather Sa’d ibn Janadah in Part One of the *Al-Isabah*.
18. Some say “Ibn Fayruz,” others say “Ibn Fayruzan,” while still others call him “Ibn ‘Ali.”
19. Some say in the year 201, while others say it was the year 204.
20. As in Zubayd al-Yami’s biography in *Al-Mizan*. We have quoted this statement from al-Jawzjani while discussing the biographies of Zubayd, al-A’mash, and Abu Ishaq, and we included noteworthy comments on them.

Discussions

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has clearly underestimated the complexity of the science of Ḥadīth. His elementary conceptualization of this subject – which mirrors that of many others besides him – is symptomatic of the limitations within the Shī‘ah approach to Ḥadīth criticism. The purpose of this discussion is not to compare the Sunni/Shī‘ī approach to Ḥadīth. The objective is merely to provide the necessary context to this discussion which will remove the cosmetics from the objection.

The pivotal issue in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s argument is that a Ḥadīth cannot simply be dismissed because its narrators happen to be Shī‘ah. It would stand to reason that the narrations that he has furnished deserve to be accepted despite the fact that they are narrated by Shī‘ahs. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of one-hundred Shī‘ī narrators is produced as unquestionable evidence in support of his allegation and has primarily been collected to impress his real audience; the uneducated common-folk and not Islamic scholars.

While it is true that a narration cannot simply be discarded on account of a Shī‘ī narrator appearing in its chain, the elementary flaws in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s reasoning are revealing on so many levels, and are evident to the novice student let alone an accomplished scholar.

Firstly, the differentiation between a *Rāfiḍī* and *Shī‘ī* has been completely ignored. The key issue is that any person who is tempted to bend the truth because of his ideological leanings, whether Shī‘ī or not, will not be relied upon. We have elaborated on this point in sufficient detail in our discussions on the previous letter and repeating some of those points will make this discussion unnecessarily long. Therefore, we refer the esteemed reader to the previous discussion on this point.

Secondly, the factors which render a narration weak are abundant. It is not restricted to the evaluation of the narrators. It is necessary to establish that each narrator has actually received the narration from the person he cites. Subtle interruptions in the chain (*Mursal Khaḍī*) as well as conscious omissions (*Tadlīs*)

are both flaws which can render a narration unreliable; worse still if there are obvious breaks in transmission (*Inqitāʿ*),

Thirdly, the levels of *ʿAdālah* (moral integrity) and *Ḍabt* (precision), which are key measures of the quality of a narrator, vary in narrators. As such, a narrator might be accepted in a supporting capacity but will not be relied upon independently in establishing a fundamental matter in the Sharīʿah (*Tafarrud bi Aṣl*).

Fourthly, it stands to follow from the previous reason that not every narrator whose narrations appear in Sunnī books is cited for the purpose of accepting his narrations (*Ihtijāj*). Oftentimes the reports of a particular narrator have been cited to point out that his narrations are substantiated by others, not that he deserves to be relied upon independently (*Mutābaʿāt* and *Shawāhid*). It is sometimes the case that a narration is cited to point out that a particular narrator erred, or is the only one to narrate a particular report. It is also possible that a narrator is only cited to contrast his narrations with those of the reliable narrators (*Mukhālafah*). Scholars who compiled biographical profiles on narrators often commented on the manner in which a particular narrator’s reports have been cited. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cannot be blamed for overlooking this aspect since this level of erudition is practically absent from Shīʿī scholarship.

Fifthly, the narrators appearing in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list are not necessarily all Shīʿah. The level of deception is mindblowing when one considers the fact that some of those who are considered Shīʿah from the perspective of Ahl al-Sunnah are unknown entities in the Shīʿī Rijāl Literature, while some of them are even listed as Sunnīs. On the other hand only a limited number of those whose names appear in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list happen to be narrators whose narrations which he cites in his arguments. These are but a handful of the many fissures that are evident in the foundation of his reasoning.

In order to faithfully process the raw data in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of one-hundred we need to sort and classify the narrators into their respective categories so that we have useful information. The most practical classification would be to

separate the narrators who are not Shī'ah from the rest, then to separate those who are considered weak and dubious narrators regardless of their Shī'ī leanings or ideology. After sorting the narrators into their respective categories, the next process is to include their status as documented by Shī'ī scholars. Finally, the biographical profiles of a few narrators from each category will be cited to provide further insight on the status of narrators under each category.

Narrators who were definitely not Shī'ah

No.	Name	Source cited in al-Murāja'āt
2.	Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakha'ī ¹	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
14.	Jarīr ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd ²	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
20.	Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit ³	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif al-Shahrastānī – al-Milal wal-Niḥal
22.	Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Utaybah ⁴	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
28.	Zayd ibn al-Ḥubāb ⁵	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
29.	Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja'd ⁶	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
37.	Sulaymān ibn Ṭarkhān ⁷	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
41.	Shu'bah ibn Ḥajjāj ⁸	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif al-Shahrastānī – al-Milal wal-Niḥal
43.	Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān ⁹	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif al-Shahrastānī – al-Milal wal-Niḥal
47.	'Abd Allah ibn Dāwūd ¹⁰	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif
60.	'Alqamah ibn Qays al-Nakha'ī ¹¹	al-Shahrastānī – al-Milal wal-Niḥal
71.	Abū Ishāq al-Sab'ī ¹²	Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma'ārif al-Shahrastānī – al-Milal wal-Niḥal

94. Hishām ibn ‘Ammār¹³ Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma‘ārif
95. Hushaym ibn Bashīr¹⁴ Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma‘ārif
96. Wakī ibn al-Jarrāh¹⁵ Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma‘ārif
98. Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān¹⁶ Ibn Qutaybah – al-Ma‘ārif

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- 1 1 *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl* vol. 1 pg. 333, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 2 pg. 233, *al-Kāshif* bio.221, *al-Taqrīb* bio.270
- 2 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 371, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 4 pg. 540, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 394, *al-Kāshif* bio. 771, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 916
- 3 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 320, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 5 pg. 354, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 451, *al-Kāshif* bio. 902, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 1084
- 4 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 7. pg. 115, *al-Kāshif* biograpgy no. 1185, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 2 pg. 432
- 5 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 6 pg. 402, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 10 pg. 40, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 bio. 2997, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1729, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 2124
- 6 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 6 pg. 291, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 10 pg. 130, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 5 pg. 108, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1767, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 2170
- 7 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 252, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 12 pg. 5, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* bio. 3481, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 2575
- 8 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 280, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 12 pg. 479, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 7 pg. 202, *al-Kāshif* bio. 2297, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 2790
- 9 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 5 pg. 537, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 13 pg. 357, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 5 pg. 38, *al-Kāshif* bio. 2461, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 3009
- 10 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 295, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 14 pg. 458, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 9 pg. 346, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 3297
- 11 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 6 pg. 86, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 20 pg. 300, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 4 pg. 53, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 4681
- 12 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 6 pg. 313, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 22 pg. 102, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* bio. 6393, *al-Taqrīb* 5065
- 13 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl* vol. 9 pg. 66, *Tahdhīb al-Kamal* vol. 30 pg. 242, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 11 pg. 420
- 14 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 313, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 30. pg. 272, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* bio. 9250, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 7312
- 15 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 394, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 30 pg. 462, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 9 pg. 140 *al-Taqrīb* bio. 7414
- 16 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 7 pg. 293, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 31. pg. 329, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 9 pg. 175, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 7557

One notices a common reference, Ibn Qutaybah. Who was Ibn Qutaybah; and how does he fair in the field of narrator criticism?

‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah, Abū Muḥammad al-Dīnawarī (213-276) was born in Kūfah, Iraq, and lived in the East. He served as a judge in Dīnawar. He was a polymath who wrote on diverse topics including tafsīr, fiqh, ḥadīth, grammar, history, theology, and philosophy. He was well-known for his contributions to Arabic literature as well as his work on reconciling conflicting ḥadīth titled *Ta’wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*.

Opinions regarding him varied in the subjects of ḥadīth and theology. Al-Dhahabī said:

The man is not an authority in ḥadīth even though he is an accomplished scholar who was grounded in diverse disciplines and skilled at important subjects.¹

Oftentimes a scholar will excel in multiple disciplines but will not be regarded an authority in some. This was the case with Ibn Qutaybah. He was a man of letters, and his contribution to the literary arts are his most distinguished accomplishments.

Al-Qāsim ibn Aṣḡagh recalls a discussion about Ibn Qutaybah’s works on various subjects with al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Surayj, especially about Ibn Qutaybahs books on Fiqh. They were not impressed in the least with his books on Fiqh. They went on to criticize the books of Abū ‘Ubayd as well. They said:

This was not their field [Fiqh]. They are authorities in language though. If it is Fiqh that you are asking about, you are better of with the books of al-Shāfi‘ī and Dāwūd.²

1 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 13 pg. 300

2 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 13 pg. 301

His book, *al-Ma'ārif*, is nothing more than a book on history which lacks the academic rigour when it comes to discussions on narrator criticism. As such, any reference to it would never be taken too seriously by a novice student of Ḥadīth, let alone an accomplished scholar. However, since 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's work was intended for a different audience he had no qualms about citing this as a reference, and including Sunnīs in his list of one-hundred Shī'ah narrators.

The same can be said for al-Shahrastānī's work, *al-Mīlal wal-Niḥal*. This is a book on various religions and sects. Al-Shahrastānī's approach in this work is to list the core beliefs and principles of each of the sects that he investigates, with the undertaking to represent their views and beliefs honestly and objectively. He is not known for any expertise in narrator criticism, in fact Ḥadīth is not even his field of expertise.¹

Abū Ḥanīfah, the great Faqīh, whose Madhhab is the oldest of the four remaining Sunnī schools of law, is included among the Shī'ah in al-Shahrastānī's work. If Abū Ḥanīfah is considered a Shī'ī, it does not require a strong imagination to realise that those marked as Shī'ah by al-Shahrastānī have no connection to Shī'ah belief. Abū Ḥanīfah's opposition to the Shī'ah is clearly demonstrated in matters that are not fundamentals of faith, he distinguishes a Sunnī from a Shī'ah on the basis of wiping of the *Khuffayn* [leather socks].² In the issue of *Khilāfah*, he explicitly accepts Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه as the first *Khalīfah* and considers him the most virtuous; just as he accepts the *Khilāfah* of 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī رضي الله عنه. He explains that the sound Islamic belief is that a person loves all the *Ṣaḥābah*, without exceeding the bounds for any one of them in the same way that there is no disassociation with any of them.³

To demonstrate the inaccuracies of these sources let us investigate the biography of Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī. The error of including him among the Shī'ah can be extended to the rest as well.

1 *Al-Taḥbīr* vol. 2 pg. 160, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* vol. 20 pg. 286, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā* vol. 6 pg. 128

2 *Al-'Aqīdat al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, pg 25

3 *Al-'Aqīdat al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah*, pg 29

Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakhaī was the heir to the legal tradition of Kūfah which had begun with ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه. His uncles, ‘Alqamah and al-Aswad were the two distinguished disciples of Ibn Mas‘ūd and their family had a well-known link to ‘Āishah رضي الله عنها. The entire Ḥanafī school of Fiqh is built on the foundations of Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī’s teachings.

As we can see, it is only Ibn Qutaybah who has listed Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī as a Shīī. If that were the case then Abū Ḥanīfah is as much a Shīī as Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī. Abū Ḥanīfah was known for financially supporting Zayd ibn ‘Alī, and later Muḥammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah.¹ However his teachings in ‘Aqīdah have been documented.

One could add to this list:

Zubayd ibn al-Ḥārith – The extent of his Tashayyū‘ was that he considered ‘Alī رضي الله عنه correct in his stance against Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه. This is the view of Ahl al-Sunnah.²

Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad رضي الله عنه – He was a Ṣaḥābī who fought alongside ‘Alī رضي الله عنه when he became Khalīfah. He was responsible for the *Tawwābūn* movement; seeking retribution for Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه. Sadly, he was killed in battle and this movement was then hijacked by the likes of Mukhtār al-Thaqafī the Liar.³

Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A‘mash – Al-Dhahabī says that the allegations of Shīī leanings against al-A‘mash are quite flimsy, he is not certain about al-A‘mash’s stance.⁴ All evidence indicates that the extent of his ‘Shīī’ leanings amount to nothing more than a few misplaced statements which are to be understood in context.

1 *Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, al-Jaṣṣās, vol. 1 pg. 87

2 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 9 pg. 289

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 11 pg. 454, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 3. pg.394

4 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 2 pg. 394

Zālim ibn ‘Amr Abu al-Aswad al-Dīlī – His Shīṭ leanings are only expressed by Ibn Sa’d; which appears very much to be nothing more than a political affiliation. He narrates Ḥadīth from the likes of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه. One would hardly describe a Shīṭ as such.¹

‘Āmir ibn Wāthilah, Abu al-Ṭufayl al-Laythī رضي الله عنه – He was a companion of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He fought alongside ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in battle against Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه. This means that whatever has been attributed to him in terms of Tashayyu‘ amounts to nothing more than political allegiance and has no bearing on his beliefs. After all, he was the last of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنه to pass away; may Allah be pleased with him.²

‘Alī ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Hamadānī – ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn could not provide a single reference from Sunnī books to identify him as a Shīṭ. He therefore resorted to Shīṭ books and abridged his name so as not to completely identify him. By abridging the name it would be plausible to deny this narrator and cite another with the same name.³

Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Ṭā’ifi – The extent of the criticism against him was that he erred when he narrated from memory. There were no problems when he narrated from his original books. We have yet to come across anything that indicates that he was a Shīṭ.⁴

Mu‘āwiyah ibn ‘Ammār al-Duhnī – Besides his relationship with his father, there are no other indicators that suggest any Shīṭ inclinations. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn tries to establish a connection via his father, but this holds very little weight.⁵

1 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 33 pg. 37, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 4 pg. 81, *Tārīkh al-Islām* vol. 2 pg. 735

2 *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 3 pg. 467

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 20 pg. 464

4 *Al-Thiqāt* vol. 7 pg. 399, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 26 pg. 412, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 6293

5 *Al-Thiqāt* vol. 9 pg. 167, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 28 pg. 202, *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 137

Al-Minhāl ibn ‘Amr – Besides al-Jūzajānī, none of the critics appear to ascribe any Shī‘ī thought to him. Al-Bukhārī narrates from him in praise of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهما.¹

Those described with Tashayyū‘

For the sake of brevity we have reduced these narrators to a list and avoided a detailed, or even summarized, biographical account since we concede that there are Shī‘ī sentiments attached to these narrators. This does not mean that they upheld the doctrine of the Twelver Shī‘ah; as elaborated on in our previous discussion. The extent of their Tashayyū‘ could be limited to preferring ‘Alī رضي الله عنه over ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, or being overzealous in accepting the virtuous of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, or being overly critical of those who differed with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, like Ṭalḥah, Zubayr, or Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه.

Their sub-division is the result of consulting numerous works dedicated to narrator biographies and profiles. The sources upon which we have largely relied include, but are not limited to:

Al-Ṭabaqāt of Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* of al-Bukhārī, *Al-Thiqāt* of al-‘Ijlī, *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Al-Thiqāt* of Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Majrūḥīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Kāmil* of Ibn ‘Adī, *al-Istī‘āb* of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Ḍu‘afā wa al-Matrūkīn* of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* of al-Mizzī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* of al-Dhahabī, *al-Mughnī fī al-Ḍu‘afā’* of al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* of al-Dhahabī, *al-Kāshif* of al-Dhahabī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah* of Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān al-Mīzān* of Ibn Ḥajar and *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar

The narrations of the committed Shī‘ī

Al-Dhahabī’s biographical account of Abān ibn Taghlib brilliantly demonstrates the objective, unbiased approach of Sunnī Ḥadīth scholars in the way they

1 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 28 pg. 568, *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 192

accepted Ḥadīth from narrators who were known for heterodox views or beliefs. It is therefore imperative that we reproduce his account which explains why Sunnīs accepted those narrations of a *Mubtadi'* [innovator] who was deemed reliable, including many of the names below.

He writes in *Mīzān al-I'tidāl*:

Abān ibn Taghlib al-Kūfī

²[صح]¹(م ٤)

Notwithstanding the fact that he is a hardcore Shī'ī, he is truthful. We [benefit] from his honesty, and his innovation is his own [responsibility].

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'īn, and Abū Ḥātim have all attested to his reliability.

Ibn 'Adī mentioned him saying that he was extreme in his *Tashayyu'*, and that al-Sa'dī³ said, “[He is] deviant; brazen.”

It might be asked, “How is it possible to credit an innovator; whereas a *Thiqah* [reliable narrator] is defined as one who combines religious integrity along with accuracy [in narration]? Is it plausible that an innovator be described with religious integrity?”

The response comes in realising that innovation is of two kinds; there are minor [heterodoxies] like excessive *Tashayyu'*; or even benign *Tashayyu'* which is not uncommon among the Tābī'īn and those in the generation after them. Many of them displayed traits of religiosity, piety and honesty.

1 These symbols are an abbreviation for the books in which the narrators Ḥadīth are to be found. These symbols tell us that this narrators Aḥādīth can be found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and the Four Sunans.

2 This symbol means that Imām al-Dhahabī is aware of the criticism levelled against the narrator; although his view is that the criticism is either misplaced, or does not affect the reliability of the narrator.

3 This refers to al-Jawzajānī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Ya'qūb al-Sa'dī al-Jawzajānī; who died in 259 A.H.

If the narrations of these types were discarded a great deal of the prophetic legacy would be lost; and the disastrous consequences of this is evident.

Besides this [tier of heterodoxy] are the major heterodoxies, like *Rafḍ*, or excessive Rafḍ; in the form of detracting from Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما, or campaigning for that. These types are not relied upon in Ḥadīth and no honour is lost in that as well. As a matter of fact, I cannot recall at this moment anyone (described as being Rāfiḍī) who is trustworthy and honest. On the contrary, deception is their outer-garment and subterfuge and hypocrisy their inner-garment. Can the narrations of such people ever be trusted? Never!

The extreme Shī‘ī in the early period, and in their vernacular referred to those who were critical of ‘Uthmān, Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه among others who were considered their rivals. Sometimes this led to abrasive statements being made against them.

In our times¹ when we refer to an extreme Shī‘ī it applies to those who declared these noble personalities apostates, and those who disassociate from the Shaykhayn [Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما]. Anyone guilty of this is wayward and deviant.

Abān was not known for any criticism of Abū Bakr or ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما; he did, however, consider ‘Alī رضي الله عنه greater in virtue.²

From this we realise the variant interpretations of extremism in reference to Tashayyū‘, in addition to the fact that a narrators honesty and integrity was not questioned merely because of innovation. It was when the person’s innovation motivated him to distort that draws the line between those whose narrations were accepted and those whose narrations were questioned. The objectivity and fair-mindedness in this approach is a testimony to the sophistication in the discipline of Ḥadīth within the Sunnī world.

1 8th Century A.H

2 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 6

Moderate Shī'ah

4. Ismā'īl ibn Abān al-Azdī al-Warrāq
6. Ismā'īl ibn Zakariyyā
21. Al-Ḥasan ibn Šāliḥ
32. Sa'īd ibn 'Amr
33. Sa'īd ibn Khuthaym
35. Salamah ibn Kuhayl
42. Ša'ṣa'ah ibn Šūḥān
40. Sharīk ibn 'Abd Allah al-Nakha'ī
48. 'Abd Allah ibn Shaddād
53. 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām
57. 'Adī ibn Thābit
62. 'Alī ibn Ja'd
67. 'Alī ibn Mundhir al-Ṭarīqī
69. 'Ammār ibn Ruzayq
72. 'Awf ibn Abī Jamīlah
73. al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn
74. Fuḍayl ibn Marzūq
76. Fiṭr ibn Khalīfah
75. Mālik ibn Ismā'īl
77. Muḥammad ibn Khāzim, Abū Mu'āwiyah
78. Abū 'Abd Allah al-Ḥākīm al-Naysāpūrī
80. Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl ibn Ghazawān
82. Muḥammad ibn Mūsa al-Fiṭrī
84. Ma'rūf ibn Kharrabūdh
85. Maṣṣūr ibn al-Mu'tamir
87. Mūsā ibn Qays
89. Nūh ibn Qays
95. Hāshim ibn al-Barīd

Committed Shī'ah

1. Abān ibn Taghlib
3. Aḥmad ibn al-Mufaḍḍal al-Kūfī al-Ḥafarī
8. Ismā'īl ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī
9. Ismā'īl ibn Mūsā al-Fazārī
15. Ja'far ibn Ziyād al-Aḥmar
16. Ja'far ibn Sulaymān al-Ḍabū'ī
18. Al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīrah
25. Khālīd ibn Makhlad al-Qaṭawānī
26. Dāwūd ibn Abī 'Awf
46. 'Abbād ibn Ya'qūb al-Rawājīnī
49. 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar ibn Abān
52. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Azdī al-'Atakī
54. 'Abd al-Malik ibn A'yan
55. 'Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā al-'Absī
59. 'Alā' ibn Ṣāliḥ
61. 'Alī ibn Badhīmah
65. 'Alī ibn Ghurāb
68. 'Alī ibn Hāshim
70. 'Ammār ibn Mu'āwiyah
90. Hārūn ibn Sa'd al-'Ijlī
92. Hubayrah ibn Yarīm
97. Yaḥyā ibn al-Jazār al-'Uranī
100. Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Jadalī

Those who are considered weak due to bad memory or lack of integrity

5. **Ismā'īl ibn Khalīfah, al-Kūfī, Abū Isrā'īl**¹ – Al-Dhahabī says that he was considerably weak. Ibn Ḥajar says that he is honest but his memory was significantly weak. (al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)

1 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 226, *al-Kāshif* bio. 370, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 440

7. **Ismā'īl ibn 'Abbād al-Ṭālaqānī**¹ - He was not known for narrating Ḥadīth. In addition to his Shī'ī leanings he has invested in many other heterodoxies.
10. **Talīd ibn Sulaymān al-Kūfī**² - Abū Dāwūd referred to him as a Rāfiḍī, known for cursing. Al-Dhahabī said he was weak, and Ibn Ḥajar agrees. Ṣāliḥ Jazarah says he used to call him Balīd³ [Stupid]. (al-Tirmidhī)
11. **Thābit ibn Abī Ṣafīyyah, Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī**⁴ - Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar concur on the fact that he is considered weak, Ibn Ḥajar adds that he is a Rāfiḍī as well. (al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
12. **Thuwayr ibn Abī Fākhītah**⁵ - Al-Dhahabī considers him significantly weak and Ibn Ḥajar agrees with him adding that he is a Rāfiḍī as well. (al-Tirmidhī)
13. **Jābir al-Ju'fī**⁶ - Abū Ḥanīfah said that he had never encountered a bigger liar than Jābir al-Ju'fī. Abū Dāwūd said that he excluded him from his Sunan entirely save for a single Ḥadīth on forgetfulness in prayer. He is considered severely weak on account of lack of integrity. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
17. **Jumay' ibn 'Umayr al-Taymī**⁷ - Al-Bukhārī's criticism is quite distinct. Al-Dhahabī agrees that he is significantly weak. Ibn Ḥajar adds that his errors are evident. (Abū Dawūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah)

1 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'* vol. 16 pg.511, *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 2 pg. 137

2 *al-Kāshif* bio. 670, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 797

3 This is a play on the letters appearing in his name. The two dots appearing above the first letter, Tā' have been replaced by a Bā with a single dot below.

4 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 687, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 818

5 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 725, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 862

6 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 379, *al-Kāshif* bio. 739, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 878

7 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 379, *al-Kāshif* bio. 739, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 878

19. **Al-Ḥārith ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Hamadānī al-A‘war**¹ – He was accused of lying, and much of what he narrates cannot be corroborated. Al-Dhahabī provides a long list of scholars who considered him weak as untrustworthy. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā‘ī, Ibn Mājah)
23. **Ḥammād ibn ‘Isā al-Juhanī**² – Abū Dāwūd, Abū Ḥātim and al-Dāraquṭnī all considered him weak. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar uphold this grading. (al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
24. **Ḥumrān ibn A‘yan**³ - Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn criticized him severely; and Abū Dāwūd confirmed that he was a Rāfiḍī. His brother, Zurārah is a well known fabricator whose biography will be discussed at length later in this book. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar confirm that he was indeed weak and unreliable. (Ibn Mājah)
30. **Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah**⁴ – ‘Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Fallās and al-Nasā‘ī consider him weak, whereas others claim that the accuracy of what he narrates was compromised by the extent of his heterodoxy. Ibn Ḥajar considers him honest, though his innovation becomes problematic. Al-Dhahabī clearly states that he is not to be relied upon. (al-Tirmidhī)
31. **Sa‘d ibn Ṭarīf al-Iskāf al-Ḥanḏalī al-Kūfī**⁵ - Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn said that it is not allowed to rely on him, whilst Aḥmad and Abū Ḥātim declared him weak. Al-Nasā‘ī and al-Dāraquṭnī considered him severely weak, and suspected of forgery, whilst Ibn Ḥibbān claims that he used to fabricate. Both al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar maintain that he is significantly weak and cannot be relied upon. (al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)

1 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 436, *al-Kāshif* bio. 859, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 1029

2 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 599, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1223, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 1503

3 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 605, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1230, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio.1514

4 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 110, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1768, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio.2171

5 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 122, *al-Kāshif* bio. 1831, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 2241

34. **Salamah ibn al-Faḍl al-Abrash**¹ - Iṣḥāq ibn Rāhūyah, al-Nasā'ī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī among others have declared him weak. Some have pointed out the fact that he narrates that which cannot be corroborated and has an abundance of errors. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī)
38. **Sulaymān ibn Qarm**² - He was considered weak on account his memory. Ibn Ma'īn, Abū Zur'ah, Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā'ī consider him weak. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar confirm that this was on account of weak memory. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī)
50. **'Abd Allah ibn Lahī'ah**³ - There is much debate as to his status as a narrator. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās has a lengthy discussion on him, as does the editor of al-Nafḥ al-Shadhī, the commentary on al-Tirmidhī by Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, concludes after thirty pages of discussion that Ibn Lahī'ah is independently weak, but his narrations could be elevated if they are corroborated or supported by other narrations. This applies to his narrations prior to his books even getting burnt.⁴ (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
51. **'Abd Allah ibn Maymūn ibn al-Qaddāh**⁵ - Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and al-Bukhārī considered him significantly weak. Ibn Ḥibbān considered him weak where he was not corroborated. Although al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar uphold the view of severe weakness, under all circumstances. (al-Tirmidhī)
56. **'Uthmān ibn 'Umayr, Abū al-Yaqzān**⁶ - Al-Dhahabī has cited the views of Yahyā ibn Ma'īn, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī, al-Nasā'ī,

1 *Mizān al-'itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 192, *al-Kāshif* bio. 2043, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 2505

2 *Mizān al-'itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 219, *al-Kāshif* bio. 2122, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 2600

3 *Mizān al-'itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 475, *al-Kāshif* bio. 2934, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 3563

4 *Al-Nafḥ al-Shadhī* vol. 2 pg. 792 onwards

5 *Mizān al-'itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 512, *al-Kāshif* bio. 3013, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 3653

6 *Mizān al-'itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 50, *al-Kāshif* bio. 3730, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 4507

‘Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Fallās and al-Dāraquṭnī all confirming the fact that he was weak and unreliable. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)

58. **‘Aṭīyyah ibn Sa’d al-‘Awfī**¹ – Al-Dhahabī claims that the scholars are in agreement that he is weak. Abū Ḥātim says that his weakness is not so severe that his Ḥadīth are not to be recorded. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says that he had heard Ḥadīth from Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī. He also received Tafsīr from al-Kalbī (a known fabricator) and he had given him the Kunyah Abū Sa’īd. When he narrated from al-Kalbī he would say from Abū Sa’īd; giving the impression that it was al-Khudrī. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī)

63. **‘Alī ibn Zayd** ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Zuhayr also known as [**‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān**]² – ibn ‘Uyaynah, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Yaḥyā ibn Ma’īn, al-Bukhārī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, ‘Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Fallās and al-Dāraquṭnī all consider him weak on the basis of his weak memory. There are rare cases where scholars have accepted his narrations and these appear to be cases where he is corroborated by others. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah – although Muslim cites his narrations, it is only in a secondary capacity and not that he relies on him independently)

66. **‘Alī ibn Qādim**³ – Yaḥyā ibn Ma’īn and Ibn Sa’d both consider him weak. Ibn ‘Adī has pointed out some of the narrations in which he erred, especially by way of al-Thawrī. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī)

79. **Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi**⁴ – Al-Dhahabī provides a long list of names of scholars who consider him weak, including Yaḥyā ibn Ma’īn, al-Bukhārī, and Abū Ḥātim. Ibn Ḥajar appears to agree with al-Dhahabī that Ibn Abī Rāfi is weak in Ḥadīth. (Ibn Mājah)

1 *Mizān al-ṭīdāl* vol. 3 pg. 80, *al-Mughnī fi al-Ḍu‘afā’* bio. 4139, *al-Kāshif* bio. 3820, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 4616

2 *Mizān al-ṭīdāl* vol. 3 pg. 127, *al-Kāshif* bio. 3916, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 4734

3 *Mizān al-ṭīdāl* vol. 3 pg. 150, *al-Kāshif* bio. 3955, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 4785

4 *Mizān al-ṭīdāl* vol. 3 pg. 634, *al-Kāshif* bio. 5022, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 6106

88. **Nufay‘ ibn al-Ḥārith**¹ – He was severely criticized by Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn, Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī al-Nasā‘ī and al-Dāraquṭnī. Ibn Ḥibbān went as far as claiming that it was not permitted to narrate from him. Al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar summarized the positions of the earlier scholars stating that he is Matrūk.(al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
93. **Hishām ibn Ziyād**² – Al-Dhahabī quotes Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, and Abū Dāwūd among others who have declared him weak. He then quotes al-Nasā‘ī and Ibn Ḥibbān; both suspecting him of narrating forged narrations and ascribing them to reliable narrators. (al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah)
99. **Yazīd ibn Abī Ziyād** – ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Mubārak, Shu‘bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal consider him weak. Wakī ibn al-Jarrāh points out some baseless narrations that have been narrated by way of Yazīd as well. Notwithstanding his truthfulness, the reason for the scholars not relying on his narrations independently was due to his weak memory as pointed out by al-Dhahabī. (Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā‘ī, Ibn Mājah – Muslim does not rely on him but mentions him along with others)

What do the Twelver Shī‘ah say about these narrators?

We have summarized the views of Ahl al-Sunnah about these narrators. Nearly one-quarter of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100 are not Shī‘ah to begin with, a further quarter of them are not reliable; not because they were Shī‘ah but because the either had weak memories, had not recorded their narrations accurately or were known for deception and dishonesty.

Having summarized the Sunnī views, it is necessary to see what the Shī‘ī scholars have said about these narrators. One of the ost voluminous collection of biographical data on Ḥadīth narrators in the Shī‘ī academic library is a book

1 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 272, *al-Kāshif* bio. 5870, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 7181

2 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 298, *al-Kāshif* bio. 5962, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 7292

titled *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* by the late Abu al-Qāsim al-Khūṭī. His works spans over 24 volumes and lists the biographies of nearly 16000 narrators. His work has been summarized by Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī in a book title *al-Mufīd min Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*. In this work he has restricted himself to the essentials by omitting the extended discussions found in al-Khūṭī's work. Considering the comprehensiveness of this late work – since it might be argued of earlier sources that the material was to be found elsewhere – and the fact that it provides the final grading on the narrator, we shall reproduce ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list with the grading only. This will be a fair alternate representation; and one from which we can gauge the credibility of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s allegations.

1. **Abān ibn Taghlib** – Thiqah, ‘aẓīm al-manzilah fī aṣḥābinā [of great status among our companions]
2. **Ibrāhīm ibn Yazīd al-Nakhaʿī** – Majhūl [unknown]
3. **Aḥmad ibn al-Mufaḍḍal al-Hafarī** – could not find his bio
4. **Ismāʿīl ibn Abān** – Majhūl
5. **Ismāʿīl ibn Khalīfah, Abū Isrāʿīl** – could not find his bio
6. **Ismāʿīl ibn Zakariyyā al-Asadī** – could not find his bio
7. **Ismāʿīl ibn ‘Abbād al-Ṭālaqānī** – ‘Ālim Fāḍil...‘aẓīm al-sha’n [Noble scholar... of high stature]
8. **Ismāʿīl ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Suddī** – Majhūl
9. **Ismāʿīl ibn Mūsā al-Fazārī** – could not find his bio
10. **Talīd ibn Sulaymān** – Majhūl
11. **Thābit ibn Dīnār** – Thiqah
12. **Thuwayr ibn Abī Fākhītah** – Thiqah
13. **Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Juʿfī** - Thiqah
14. **Jarīr ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḍabbī** – Majhūl
15. **Jaʿfar ibn Ziyād al-Aḥmar** – Majhūl
16. **Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān al-Dhabaʿī** - Thiqah

17. **Jumay' ibn 'Umayr al-Taymī** - Majhūl
18. **Al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīrah al-Azdī** – cannot identify him precisely due to shared name
19. **Al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hamadānī** - Thiqaḥ
20. **Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit** – Majhūl
21. **Al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥayy** – Lam Yuwaththaq [not ratified]
22. **Al-Ḥakam ibn 'Utaybah** - Batrī
23. **Ḥammād ibn 'Isā al-Juhanī** - Thiqaḥ
24. **Ḥumrān ibn A'yān** – Thiqaḥ
25. **Khālīd ibn Makhlad al-Qaṭawānī** – could not find his bio
26. **Dāwūd ibn Abī 'Awf** – difference over whether he is credited or not
27. **Zubayd ibn al-Ḥārith ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Yāmī** – could not find his bio
28. **Zayd ibn al-Ḥubāb** – all that is mentioned is that he is the son of Ḥubāb who is Majhūl
29. **Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja'd** – theres no explicit grading of him. The impression given by al-Najāshī under his brothers biography appears to apply to the entire family
30. **Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah al-'Ijlī** – Munḥarif, Ḍāll, Muḍill [Wayward, deviant, misleads others]
31. **Sa'd ibn Ṭarīf** – Thiqaḥ
32. **Sa'īd ibn 'Amr ibn Ashwa'** – could not find his bio; although, all those named Sa'īd ibn 'Amr have been graded Majhūl
33. **Sa'īd ibn Khuthaym al-Hilālī** – Ḍa'īf
34. **Salamah ibn Faḍl al-Abrash** – could not find his bio
35. **Salamah ibn Kuhayl** – Batrī
36. **Sulaymān ibn Ṣurad** – Among the companions of 'Alī and al-Ḥasan, from the senior Tabī'īn
37. **Sulaymān ibn Ṭarkhān** – could not find his bio

38. Sulaymān ibn Qarm – Majhūl
39. Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A‘mash – His arrations in Tafsīr are Mu‘tamad
40. Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha‘ī – opinions varied, without grading. Some details were extracted from al-Dhahabī’s *Mīzān al-‘Itidāl* citing Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn
41. Shu‘bah ibn al-Ḥajjāj – Majhūl
42. Ṣa‘ṣa‘ah ibn Ṣūḥan – Among those who witnessed ‘Alī’s Waṣīyyah
43. Ṭāwūs ibn Kaysān – Majhūl
44. Zālim ibn ‘Amr Abū al-Aswad al-Dilī – Majhūl
45. ‘Āmir ibn Wāthilah Abū al-Ṭufayl – Among the Prophet’s ﷺ companions, and then of ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and al-Sajjād.
46. ‘Abbād ibn Ya‘qūb al-Rawājīnī – Thiqaḥ (although there is confusion between him and a namesake – there are other opinions that grade him as an ‘Āmmī)
47. ‘Abd Allah ibn Dāwūd al-Hamadānī – could not find his bio
48. ‘Abd Allah ibn Shaddād – Among the close companions of ‘Alī
49. ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar Mishkdāneh – could not find his bio
50. ‘Abd Allah ibn Lahī‘ah – could not find his bio
51. ‘Abd Allah ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāḥ – Thiqaḥ
52. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Azdī – could not find his bio
53. ‘Abd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām – he objects to al-Khū‘ī quoting Ibn Ḥajar’s grading
54. ‘Abd al-Malik ibn A‘yan – among the companions of al-Bāqir
55. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā al-‘Absī – Thiqaḥ because a narration of his appears in the Tafsīr of al-Qummī
56. ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Umayr (Abū al-Yaqzān) – could not find his bio
57. ‘Adī ibn Thābit – could not find his bio
58. ‘Aṭīyyah ibn Sa‘d al-‘Awfī – Majhūl
59. ‘Alā ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Taymī – could not find his bio

60. **‘Alqamah ibn Qays** – from the companions of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn
61. **‘Alī ibn Badīmah** – could not find his bio
62. **‘Alī ibn Ja‘d al-Jawharī** – could not find his bio
63. **‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān** – Majhūl
64. **‘Alī ibn Ṣāliḥ** – Majhūl
65. **‘Alī ibn Ghurāb al-Fazārī** – Majhūl
66. **‘Alī ibn Qādim al-Khuzā‘ī (Abū al-Ḥasan)** – could not find his bio
67. **‘Alī ibn al-Mundhir al-Ṭarā‘ifi** – could not find his bio
68. **‘Alī ibn Hāshim** – Majhūl
69. **‘Ammār ibn Zurayq** – Majhūl
70. **‘Ammār ibn Mu‘āwiyah** – Thiqaḥ according to the ‘Āmmāh [Sunnīs]
71. **‘Amr ibn ‘Abd Allah (Abū Ishāq al-Sabī‘ī)** – Majhūl , not far-fetched that he is from the ‘Āmmāh [Sunnīs]
72. **‘Awf ibn Abī Jamīlah** – could not find his bio
73. **Faḍl ibn Dukayn** – Majhūl
74. **Fuḍayl ibn Marzūq** – Majhūl
75. **Fiṭr ibn Khalīfah** – Majhūl
76. **Mālik ibn Ismā‘īl** – Majhūl
77. **Muḥammad ibn Khāzim** – could not find his bio
78. **Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Ḍabbī** – could not find his bio
79. **Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘** – Majhūl
80. **Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl ibn Ghazawān** – Thiqaḥ
81. **Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn al-Ṭā‘ifi** – Min Awthaq al-Nās
82. **Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Fiṭrī** – Majhūl
83. **Mu‘āwiyah ibn ‘Ammār al-Duhnī** – Thiqaḥ
84. **Ma‘rūf ibn Kharrabūdh** – Thiqaḥ because his narration appears the Tafsīr of al-Qummī
85. **Manṣūr ibn al-Mu‘tamir** – Batrī

86. Al-Minhāl ibn ‘Amr – Majhūl
87. Mūsā ibn Qays al- Ḥaḍramī – could not find his bio
88. Nufay‘ ibn al-Ḥārith – Majhūl (narrated spurious narrations)
89. Nūḥ ibn Qays ibn Rabāḥ - could not find his bio
90. Hārūn ibn Sa‘d al-‘Ijlī – Majhūl
91. Hāshim ibn al-Barīd – Majhūl
92. Hubayrah ibn Buraym al-Ḥimyarī – Majhūl
93. Hishām ibn Ziyād – could not find his bio
94. Hishām ibn ‘Ammār – could not find his bio
95. Hushaym ibn Bashīr – could not find his bio
96. Wakī ibn al-Jarrāḥ - Theres only mention of a Wakī whose narration appears in the Tafsīr of al-Qummī
97. Yaḥyā ibn al-Jazār al-‘Uranī – could not find his bio
98. Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān – Majhūl
99. Yazīd ibn Abī Ziyād – Majhūl
100. Abū ‘Abd Allah al-Jadalī – Majhūl

We learn from this list that the narrators that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn listed are not the prominent Shī‘ah narrators appearing in the books of the Twelver Shī‘ah; with the exception of a few most of these narrators have no grade in the books of the Twelver Shī‘ah. It further confirms the division spelled out by the great Muḥaddith, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, that the early usage of the term Shī‘ah did not apply to the Rāfiḍah, who later became the dominant strain of Shī‘ah in the form of the Twelvers.

The narrations cited from Shī‘ah sources can therefore, not be said to be acceptable by Sunnīs without scrutiny merely because Sunnīs have relied on some Shī‘ah narrators in their books as has been repeatedly discussed.

Letter 17

Thul-Hijjah 3, 1329 A.H.

I. Appreciating the debater's sentiments

II. Admitting There is no Objection if Ahl ul-Sunnah Rely on Shi'a Authorities

III. His belief in the Miracles of Ahl al-Bayt

IV. Dilemma at Compromising the Above with what Ahl Al-Qibla do

1. I swear by your eyes that I have never seen anyone more good-hearted, faster in dealing with the topic, more attentive, deeper in vision, stronger in argument, clearer in proof, than you. Your letters have come like a flowing waterfall, and your arguments have taken control over all my senses and sentiments. Your latest letter twists the necks of men, smashes the head of falsehood.
2. The Sunni no longer has any excuse for not relying on his Shi'a brother if the latter is trustworthy. Your view in this regard is the clear truth, and that of your opponents is nothing more than fanaticism and intolerance. Their argument that it is wrong to rely on the Shi'as contradicts their actual deeds, and their deeds in fact contradict their arguments. Their arguments and deeds do not race with each other in the arena, nor do they pursue the same goal, due to the clash between them which causes them to clash.

For this reason, their argument has been proven faulty, while yours remains invincible. During such a short time, you have produced what I would consider a dissertation for which a title like "Shi'a Authorities in Support of Sunni Authorities" may be appropriate. The objective is not to defend this sect or that or win an argument; rather, I hope it will, if Allah so wills, bring a glorious reform to the Islamic world.

3. We believe in all Allah's miracles, in those of our Master the Commander of the Faithful, and in those of Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them, more than what you indicate.
4. The question now is why have the people of the qibla turned away from following the path of the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ? Why didn't they worship Allah through their own concepts of *usul* and *furu'*? Why have they not taken their word as the final word in the matter in which they differed? Why have the nation's scholars not been researching their views?

Why have they instead opposed them ideologically? The nation's scholars have always been, from sons to fathers, referring to those besides Ahl al-Bayt without denying doing so. If the Book's verses and the Sunnah's texts are as you indicate, Ahl al-Qibla would not have turned away from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, nor would they have accepted any alternative to them. But they did not understand of the Book and the Sunnah other than the praise of Ahl al-Bayt, and the necessity of loving and respecting them. The ancestors are closer to the truth and more familiar with the meanings of the Sunnah and the Book

(“and follow their own guidance (Qur'an, 6:90),”

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 18

Thul-Hijjah 4, 1329

I. Sentiments Reciprocated

II. Debater's Error in Generalizing Regarding Ahl al-Qibla

III. The Nation's Politicians are the Ones Who Turned Away from Ahl al-Bayt

IV. The Imams of Ahl al-Bayt are not Inferior to others

V. Which Fair Court Judges Calling Their Followers "Strayers"?

1. Thank you for thinking so highly of me, the unworthy that I am, and I appreciate your compliments as well as the contents of my letters; therefore, I look humbly to such gracefulness, and I bow down before such kindness to honour its greatness and prestige.
2. But I request you to reconsider what you have stated regarding those who turned away from Ahl al-Bayt, generalizing them about all Ahl al-Qibla. I remind you that half of Ahl al-Qibla are the Shi'as of Muhammad ﷺ who have not turned away nor shall ever turn away from the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt in as far as the origins and branches of the faith are concerned.

It is their view that following their sect, peace be upon them, is one of the strict commandments of the Book and the Sunnah; therefore, they worship Allah Almighty thus in every time and place. This is the way of their good ancestors as well as that of their posterity since the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away.

3. Those who have turned away from the beliefs of Ahl al-Bayt in as far as the roots and branches of the creed are concerned are the nation's politicians, the ones who control its destiny, due to their turning away from the

succession (to the Prophet), affecting such a succession by elections, although they knew for sure that it was assigned for the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

They saw that the Arabs would not tolerate such a succession if restricted to one dynasty; therefore, they started interpreting its texts, assuming power through elections so that every suburb of theirs may enjoy it sooner or later. So, it was here and it was there. They sacrificed their means and might to keep it that way and support that principle, eradicating all contrary views and trends. Necessity forced them to turn away from the school of thought of Ahl al-Bayt.

They started interpreting the texts of the Book or the Sunnah to mean the necessity of following such a concept. Had they yielded to the clear proofs, and referred the elite and the commoners to them in matters relevant to the roots and branches of religion, they would have found no alternative to adhering to their principle. They would have then become among the greatest callers to Ahl al-Bayt. But this did not agree with their ambition, scheme and politics.

Whoever looks carefully in these matters will find out that turning away from the imams of Ahl al-Bayt in his sect is but turning away from their leadership, which was next only to that of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and that interpreting the arguments regarding their special leadership was adopted after interpreting the arguments regarding their general leadership; otherwise, nobody would have turned away from them.

4. Leave their texts and arguments alone, and look at them while overlooking the former; do you then find them, in their knowledge, deeds, or worship, less than Imam al-Ash'ari, or the other four Imams, or any others at all? And if the answer is No, then why should others be followed then? Leadership should be given to the most qualified.

5. Which just arbitrator decides that those who uphold their rope and follow into their footsteps are strayers? Sunnis are above passing such a judgment, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Discussions

Excessive self-praise

The convenience of a forged letter is that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn could praise himself at great lengths with his opponents pen. At the same time he could provide lack-lustre arguments that are built on faulty premises. Naturally these less-than-satisfactory objections provide the platform for ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, from which he is quite free to redress any ‘misconceptions’ and present his own objections without fear of opposition.

The Sunni no longer has an excuse to accept Shīʿī narrations

Our discussions over the previous two sets of correspondence has clarified the Sunnī position in sufficient detail. It is exceedingly hard to believe that the Shaykh al-Azhar would have been oblivious of these elementary principles which are expounded upon in the summarized primers of this discipline, and have been applied in the earliest of primary sources.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s sleight of hand is that he passes of individuals like Zurārah ibn A‘yan, as the trustworthy Shīʿī narrators who deserve to be relied upon. Wheres even the ‘infallible’ Imāms had cursed individuals like Zurārah, accusing them of lying in the names of the Ahl al-Bayt.¹ Incidentally, Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام is on record having said, “No one has brought innovation into Islam as Zurārah has; may Allah curse him!”²

So in essence, the narration of a Shīʿī who is trustworthy, competent, and avoids deception is deserving of acceptance. The problem, however, is that the bulk of the narrations quoted by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn are not by way of those Shīʿah. Unfortunately he primarily relies on those whose reputation is not much different from Zurārah.

1 *Al-Kashshī* p. 147, *Mu‘jam Rijal al-Ḥadīth* vol. 7 pg. 141, *Tanqīh* vol. 1 pg. 443

2 *Al-Kashshī* pg. 149

Would further research forge Sunnī-Shīrī unity?

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn uses the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī to encourage himself to further research the subject of Shīrī narrators in Sunnī Ḥadīth literature. This is seen as potential public-relations strategy which can bring about Sunnī-Shīrī unity. But is that really possible? Would ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn be capable of truly representing the legacy of the Ahl al-Sunnah considering his outright slander of Abū Hurayrah in a book dedicated to the personality of Abū Hurayrah and his capacity as a narrator of the Prophet’s ﷺ Ḥadīth? Would someone like ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn resist the temptation to bend the truth after all the deception he is already found guilty of?

Neglect of the school of Ahl al-Bayt

The objection that is allegedly raised presumes that the Ahl al-Sunnah have neglected the school of Ahl al-Bayt in both the essentials and the secondary issues. The underlying assumptions upon which this objections rests is flawed on many fronts. Who is intended by Ahl al-Bayt? Did the Ahl al-Bayt have a separate ‘school’? Have the Ahl al-Sunnah dispensed with the knowledge transmitted by way of the Ahl al-Bayt?

As far as the Ahl al-Sunnah is concerned, the term Ahl al-Bayt applies firstly to the Prophet’s ﷺ wives, then his relatives who accepted Islam from Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib.

The evidence that supports this is overwhelming and due to this not being the primary discussion we will suffice with a few proofs from the Qur’ān as well as from the Ḥadīth.

يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا
وَأذْكُرَنَّ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا

O wives of the Prophet ﷺ, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah, then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech. And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance. And establish prayer and give zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity, O people of the [Prophet's] household, and to purify you with [extensive] purification. And remember what is recited in your houses of the verses of Allah and wisdom. Indeed, Allah is ever Subtle and Acquainted [with all things].¹

The wives of the Prophet ﷺ are clearly being addressed in these verses. Thus, their inclusion in Ahl al-Bayt is established in the Qur'ān. Below, we will present a number of Aḥādīth which support the fact that the Prophet's ﷺ wives are included in Ahl al-Bayt.

Anas رضي الله عنه relates:

عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال بنى علي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بزینب بنت جحش بخبز ولحم فأرسلت على الطعام داعيا فيجيء قوم فيأكلون ويخرجون ثم يجيء قوم فيأكلون ويخرجون فدعوت حتى ما أجد أحدا أدعو فقلت يا نبي الله ما أجد أحدا أدعوه قال ارفعوا طعامكم وبقي ثلاثة رهط يتحدثون في البيت فخرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فانطلق إلى حجرة عائشة فقال السلام عليكم أهل البيت ورحمة الله فقالت وعليك السلام ورحمة الله كيف وجدت أهلك بارك الله لك فتقرى حجر نسائه كلهن يقول لهن كما يقول لعائشة ويقول له كما قالت عائشة ثم رجع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فإذا ثلاثة من رهط في البيت يتحدثون وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم شديد الحياء فخرج منطلقا نحو حجرة عائشة فما أدري أخبرته أو أخبر أن القوم خرجوا فرجع حتى إذا وضع رجله في أسكفة الباب داخله وأخرى خارجه أرى الستر بيني وبينه وأنزلت آية الحجاب

A *Walīmah* [wedding feast] of bread and meat was held on the occasion of the marriage of the Prophet ﷺ to Zaynab bint Jaḥsh رضي الله عنها. I was sent to invite the people (to the *Walīmah*), and so the people started coming (in groups); They would eat and then leave. Another batch would come, eat and leave. So I kept on inviting the people till I found nobody to invite.

1 Sūrah al-Aḥzāb: 32-34

Then I said, “O Messenger of Allah! I do not find anybody else to invite.”

He said, “Carry away the remaining food.”

Then a group of three people stayed behind in the house chatting.

The Prophet ﷺ left and went towards the home of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and said, “Assalāmu ‘Alaykum Ahl al-Bayt.”

She replied, “Peace and the mercy of Allah be on you too. How did you find your Ahl [wife]? May Allah bless you.”

Then he went to the homes of all his other wives and said to them the same as he said to ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and they said to him the same as she had said to him. Then the Prophet ﷺ returned and found the same group of three persons still in the house chatting. The Prophet ﷺ was a very shy person, so he went out (for the second time) and went towards the home of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. I do not remember whether I informed him that the people have gone away, or he was told of it, so he returned. As soon as he entered he drew the curtain between me and him, and then the Verse of Hijab was revealed.¹

Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā’idī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates:

قالوا يا رسول الله كيف نصلي عليك فقال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وأزواجه وذريته كما صليت على آل إبراهيم وبارك على محمد وأزواجه وذريته كما باركت على آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

They asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ how they were to ask for blessings upon him and he replied that they should say, “*Allāhumma Ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammadin wa Azwājihī wa Dhurriyyatihī, kamā Ṣallayta ‘alā Āli Ibrāhīm, wa Bārik ‘alā Muḥammadin wa Azwājihī wa Dhurriyyatihī, kamā Bārakta ‘alā Āli Ibrāhīm, innaka Hamīdun Majīd.*”

1 *Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth: 4793

O Allah, bless Muḥammad and his wives and his descendants as You blessed the Āl [family] of Ibrāhīm, and give barakah to Muḥammad and his wives and his descendants as You gave barakah to the Āl [family] of Ibrāhīm. You are worthy of Praise and Glorious.¹

Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im رضي الله عنه said:

عن جبير بن مطعم قال مشيت أنا وعثمان بن عفان إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلنا يا رسول الله أعطيت بني المطلب وتركتنا ونحن وهم منك بمنزلة واحدة فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إنما بنو المطلب وبنو هاشم شيء واحد

قال الليث حدثني يونس وزاد قال جبير ولم يقسم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لبني عبد شمس ولا لبني نوفل

When the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم distributed the share for his relatives to Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib, I came to him with ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affan and we said, “O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, how come you have given the share (of al-Khumus from Khaybar) to Banū al-Muṭṭalib and left us, when we both share the same degree of (family) relationship to you.”

The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib are the same.”

So the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not give anything to Banū ‘Abd Shams and Banū Nawfal.²

The narration above shows that Banū Hāshim and Banū al-Muṭṭalib are included in the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم family. The Ahl al-Sunnah narrates from the entire spectrum of Ahl al-Bayt who were known for knowledge. Al-Bukhārī alone narrates from ‘Abbās, ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Umm Hānī’, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, Faḍl ibn ‘Abbās, Kathīr ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Da‘awāt, Ḥadīth 6360

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth 4229

Abī Ṭālib, Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib [ibn al-Ḥanaḥfiyyah], ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn [Zayn al-‘Ābidīn], Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī [al-Bāqir], ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Faḍl, Muḥammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanaḥfiyyah. These are but a few names from the Ahl al-Bayt whose narrations are to be found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.

How could the Ahl al-Sunnah be accused of disregarding the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt when, if the *‘Asharah Mubashsharah*¹ — who are accorded the highest status among the Companions — are considered, then ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه is the one who has the most narrations recorded among them. Abu al-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī has compiled a phenomenal index of all the narrations appearing in the six major collections titled *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf*. He has arranged all the narrations according to the Companion who narrates it from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. It is no surprise that ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه narrations number the highest among them, reaching a total of 332 narrations in the six major primary Ḥadīth collections. He is followed by ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه, whose narrations total 312, and then Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه at 121 narrations.

If we were to widen the scope of the survey and consider some of the other earlier texts, we could include the findings taken from the encyclopedia of Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥajar who used al-Mizzī’s idea and indexed the narrations of eleven other major Ḥadīth collections in a book titled *Ithāf al-Maharah*. The results of surveying this encyclopedia reveals that the narrations from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in these works exceeds the total of any of the other nine. Ahl al-Sunnah have recorded a total of 877 narrations from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in these other Ḥadīth collections, next is ‘Umar رضي الله عنه with 787 narrations.

1 The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم once listed the names of ten of his closest companions رضي الله عنهم promising their entry into Paradise. These ten are referred to as the *‘Asharah Mubashsharah*, translated as the ten who received glad tidings [of Paradise]. They are Abū Bakr ibn Abī Quḥāfah, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh, Zubayr ibn al-Awwām, Sa’d ibn Abī Waaqāṣ, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, Abū ‘Ubaydah ‘Āmir ibn al-Jarrāh, Sa’īd ibn Zayd رضي الله عنهم.

On the other hand, there is not a single narration from Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها in the entire collection of *al-Kāfi* which comprises over 16000 narrations! The number of narrations from the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهما, found in the Ṣaḥīḥayn outnumber the number of narrations in *al-Kāfi*. It appears that the Ahl al-Sunnah have preserved the legacy of the *Ahl al-Kisā'* to a greater extent than those who deem them infallible. The shocker is that al-Ṣadūq ibn Bābawayh acknowledges the fact that very little was passed on from 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn.² The poignant question is that if the Ahl al-Bayt were advocating an alternative approach to the Ahl al-Sunnah in terms of doctrine and practise, where were the Shī'ah receiving instruction from for almost a century as the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt in general, and the *Ahl al-Kisā'* specifically, was preserved to a greater extent by the Ahl al-Sunnah?

Demolishing the straw-man

'Abd al-Ḥusayn's responses are primarily targeted at the strawman objection that he penned in the name of his debater. He flatters him for the sake of convenience and to give some credibility to the exchange. While the details of the correspondence might be counterfeited, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn is playing the role of a social influencer to the innocent, unguarded, educated class of his age. The broad assumptions which cloak the inaccuracies of 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's discourse could not possibly stir a scholar of the stature of Shaykh al-Azhar. The distortion of fact, and a calculated misrepresentation of what a potential Sunnī argument might be serves as the perfect medium for propoganda.

The first misleading detail is the claim that half of the Muslims never turned away from Ahl al-Bayt, and never shall they turn away. We have already demonstrated that nobody turned away from Ahl al-Bayt. On the contrary, a forged ideology was retrospectively conceived in the name of the Ahl al-Bayt and the later Shī'ah

1 The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, his daughter - Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها, his cousin - 'Alī رضي الله عنه, and his two grandsons - Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهما.

2 *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'mah* by al-Ṣadūq, vol.1 pg. 96, al-'A'lamī 1991 edition

had to develop a counter-narrative to accommodate for this. That being said, even if we were to accept that narrative temporarily we find that people like ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn always get caught in their lies. The claim that only fifty-percent of Muslims ‘turned away from Ahl al-Bayt’ is grossly inflated. Let any Shī‘ī scholar name some of the prominent adherents of the ‘path of Ahl al-Bayt’ during that time. Despite the forced conversions during the Safawid reign of terror and recent proselytisation efforts, the Shī‘ah — considering all their factions — barely exceed ten-percent of the world’s Muslim.

Compare that with what has been narrated by al-Kulaynī and ratified by al-Majlisī, from Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir:

“After the Prophet’s ﷺ passing the people turned apostate except for three.”

[The narrator says] I asked who they were.

Abū Ja‘far replied, “Miqdād ibn al-Aswad, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, and Salmān al-Fārisī. May Allah’s mercy and blessings be upon them, for it is them around whom the grinding stone of Islam revolved.”¹

As catastrophic the implications of such a narration might be, it shows that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s cajoling was nothing more than an act for his readers. Furthermore it belies the claim that those who — in keeping with the Shī‘ī narrative — remained on the path of Ahl al-Bayt represented half the Ummah!

The second misleading detail is that ‘the nations politicians’ opted for elections and abandoned the Prophet’s ﷺ *Waṣīyyah* [bequest] for ‘Alī عليه السلام. Worse still that this was to appease the various Arab tribes with the hope of future leadership.

1 *Al-Rawdah min al-Kāfī*, vol. 8 pg. 245; *Mir‘āt al-‘Uqūl* vol. 26 pg. 213

This could not be more inaccurate since those present at Saqīfah Banī Sā'idah, whom 'Abd al-Ḥusayn dubs 'the nations politicians',¹ argued that leadership can only be with the Quraysh.

Al-Ṭabarī describes the incident at Saqīfah thus, from 'Umar رضي الله عنه:

What happened when Allah took his Messenger is that the Anṣār had assembled under the canopy of Banū Sā'idah, whilst 'Alī and Zubayr and those with them were absent from us in the house of Fāṭimah. The Muhājirīn gathered around Abū Bakr and I said, "Let us go to our brothers from the Anṣār."

So we set of heading towards them. On the way two pious men who witnessed Badr met us and said, "Where are you heading, O Muhājirīn?"

1 The 'nations politicians' comprised of the Anṣār and three representatives from the Muhājirīn; Abū Bakr, 'Umar and Abū 'Ubaydah رضي الله عنه.

With regards to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "The person to whom I feel indebted and who has favoured me the greatest with his property and company is Abū Bakr. If I were to take a *Khalīl* (close friend) other than Allah, I would certainly have taken Abū Bakr. It is enough that we share the Islamic bond of brotherhood and friendship." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3654]

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about 'Umar, "There were *Muḥaddathūn* (Divinely inspired people) among the nations before you. If there is any of such person among my followers, it is 'Umar." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3689; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2398]

This is what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about Abū 'Ubaydah رضي الله عنه, "Every nation has an *Amīn* [one entrusted with great affairs]. The *Amīn* of my Ummah is Abū 'Ubaydah." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3744,4382,7255; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2419]

About the Anṣār this is what the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said about them, "I advise you to treat the Anṣār well. They are my family and with them I found shelter. They have acquitted themselves credibly of the responsibility that fell upon them and now there remains what is for them. The believers will increase, but the Anṣār will diminish to the extent that they would be among men as salt is in food. Whoever among you occupies a position of responsibility and is powerful enough to do harm or good to people should fully acknowledge and appreciate the favour that these benefactors have shown, and overlook their faults." [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3799; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 2510]

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also said, "Love for the Anṣār is a sign of *īmān* and hatred for the Anṣār is a sign of *nifāq* [hypocrisy]." [*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 1845]

We said, “We intend meeting our brothers from the Anṣār.”

They said, “Return and discuss your matter amongst yourselves (Muhājirīn).”

We replied, “By Allah! We will go and see them.”

(He said) We went to them and they were gathered at the meeting place of Banū Sāʿidah and amongst them there was a man covered with his shawl.

I said, “Who is this?” and they replied, “Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah.”

I asked, “What is the matter with him?”

They replied, “He is sick.”

Then a man amongst them stood up praised Allah and said, “Indeed we are the Anṣār and the legion of Islam and you are the Quraysh, the kinsmen of our Prophet, and a group of you has come to us ...”

When I realised they intended to leave us without a say and exclude us from the matter... I had prepared an impressive speech in my mind which I intended to present before Abū Bakr in such a manner that it would pacify his anger somewhat (if I spoke out of turn). When I intended to speak he bade me to keep silent and I did not want to disobey him.

Then he stood up and praised Allah, and he was more composed and tolerant than me. He did not omit a single thing I had formulated in my mind that I intended to say if I had to speak except that he expressed it more eloquently.

He said, “O Anṣār! You have not mentioned a single virtue about yourselves except that you are worthy of it. (That being said) the Arabs do not recognise leadership except in this tribe of the Quraysh. They are the greatest of Arabs in terms of residence and lineage. I am pleased with either of these

two men. Pledge your allegiance to either of the two you prefer,” and he grabbed hold of my hand and the hand of Abū ‘Ubaydah.

By Allah, I approved of everything he said besides this statement. For me to be brought forward and have my neck chopped off was easier for me than to be selected as the leader of a community which included Abū Bakr.

When Abū Bakr completed his speech a man amongst them stood up and said, “I am the one with the solution and most deserving of consultation; a leader from amongst you and a leader from amongst us, O Quraysh!”

Then the voices started to rise and the noise started to increase.

I said to Abū Bakr, “Extend your hand so that I can give you the pledge!” and he extended his hand and I gave him my pledge, and the Muhājirīn gave him their pledge, and the Anṣār gave him their pledge...”¹

It is evident from this historic report which describes what happened at Saqīfah Banī Sā‘idah that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s reasoning is substantiated only in his imagination and is without any basis, whether from historical sources or from Ḥadīth literature.

To claim that there was a *Waṣīyyah* for ‘Alī’s عَلِيٌّ leadership is one that is yet to be established. As far as Ahl al-Sunnah is concerned no such *Waṣīyyah* exists, and the narrations found in the Shī‘ī books are clear forgeries. Source evidence aside, the fact that ‘Alī عَلِيٌّ fought Mu‘āwiyah عَنْ at Ṣiffīn demanding that he gives his pledge of allegiance indicates that he considered his own instatement through Shūra a valid instatement. Had he been aware of any bequest from the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ he would have demanded that Mu‘āwiyah عَنْ, and the three Khulafā before him, acknowledge his appointment in light of this text. His comportment throughout is inconsistent with someone whose appointment was by way of bequest.

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 2, p. 234-235

Beyond this, we find that ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ policies and religious practise was not very different from that of his three companions before him رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Does this mean that he succumbed to their ‘schemes and politics’ and even *he* strayed from the way of Ahl al-Bayt? Worse still is the fact that his son, Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, abdicated in favour of Mu‘āwiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; was this because he *too* was influenced?

Imāms are not inferior

The emotional outburst that the Imāms are not inferior to Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal that people leave them. The same can be asked of the Shī‘ah; the Imāms are not inferior to Nāfi‘, Ibn Kathīr, Abū ‘Amr al-Baṣrī, Ibn ‘Āmir al-Dimashqī, ‘Āṣim, Ḥamzah and al-Kisā‘ī that the recitation of Qur’an is taken by way of these and the modes of recitation from the Imāms are ignored.

How does ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn expect the Sunnī’s to adhere to the way of Ahl al-Bayt when the Imāms themselves left behind so little knowledge.¹

The Ahl al-Sunnah love, reveres, honours and respects the Ahl al-Bayt in its entirety. However, being from the Ahl al-Bayt does not automatically render someone a scholar. The Ahl al-Sunnah love Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ibn Mas‘ūd, ‘Ā’ishah, Abū Hurayrah, Anas, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās, and all the Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ much more than they do Abū Ḥanīfah or Shāfi‘ī. The intellectual legacy of the Ṣaḥābah, and those among Ahl al-Bayt who were known for their knowledge, is preserved in the teachings of these four.

The Ahl al-Sunnah does not consider any of these four infallible and free from error; just as they do not consider the Ṣaḥābah individually infallible.

It is true that no arbitrator would consider the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt as deviant. **The real issue is whether or not the Shī‘ah truly are followers of the Ahl al-Bayt.**

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah* by al-Ṣadūq, vol.1 pg. 96, al-A‘lamī 1991 edition

Letter 19

Thul-Hijjah 5, 1329

- I. No Fair Arbitrator Would Call Followers of Ahl al-Bayt Strayers**
- II. Following Their Sects is Carrying out the Responsibility**
- III. It Could be Said that They Have the Priority to Lead**
- IV. Requesting Texts Relevant to the Khilafate**

1. No; any fair arbitrator would never label those who have upheld the rope of Ahl al-Bayt, who follow in their footsteps, as “strayers,” nor are they, by any means, inferior to other Imams.
2. Adherence to their sect obligates them and clears their conscience, just like adhering to any of the four sects; there is no doubt about that.
3. It may be said that your Twelve Imams are even more worthy of being followed than the four Imams or any others, since all of them follow one sect which they have scrutinized and agreed upon by consensus. Contrariwise, the four Imams’ disagreements among themselves exist in all departments of jurisdiction, leaving its sources exclusive, unchecked. It is well known that if one person verifies something, his effort cannot equate that of twelve Imams. This is clear to any fair minded person, and it leaves no argument for any unjust person. Yes, the Nasibis may dispute referring your sect to the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt, and I may, at a later time, ask you to prove their error.
4. For the time being, I request you to go ahead and indicate what you claim to be statements nominating Imam ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as the successor to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Derive your arguments from Sunni references, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 20

Thul-Hijjah 9, 1239

I. A General Reference to the Texts

II. A Reference to the House on the Day of Warning

III. Sunni Reporters of this Hadith

1. Anyone who is acquainted with the biography of the holy Prophet ﷺ, especially researching his conduct while laying the foundations of the Islamic State and its legislative system, the establishment of its bases, the issuing of its codes and the organizing of its affairs on behalf of the Almighty Allah..., will find 'Ali عليه السلام the vizier of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, his supporter against his foes, the custodian of his knowledge, the heir of his government, his vicegerent, and the one in charge after him. Whoever studies the statements and actions of the Prophet ﷺ, while at home or on a journey, will find his statements, peace and blessings of Allah Almighty be upon him and his progeny, sequential in this regard from the beginning of his Call till his demise.
2. Refer to such statements at the dawn of the Call, before Islam was preached in Mecca publicly, when the Almighty revealed unto him the verse

“And warn thy nearest tribe (Qur'an, 26:214).”

He invited them to the house of his uncle Abu Talib. They were forty men, more or less. Among them were his uncles Abu Talib, al-Hamzah, al-'Abbas, and Abu Lahab. The hadith in this regard is sequentially reported by Sunnis. At the conclusion of his statement to them, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, said:

“O descendants of 'Abdul-Muttlib! I swear by God that I know no youth among the Arabs who has brought his people something better than what

I have brought you. I have brought you the best of this life and the life to come, and God has commanded me to call you towards Him. Therefore, who among you shall support me in this matter and be my brother, the executor of my will, and my successor?"

All the listeners, with the exception of 'Ali, who was the youngest among them, kept silent. 'Ali responded by saying: "I, O Messenger of Allah, am willing to be your vizier in this matter." The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then took 'Ali by the neck and said: "This is my brother, executor of my will and vizier; therefore, listen to him and obey him." Those present laughed and kept saying to Abu Talib: "Allah has commanded you to listen to your son, and to obey him!"

3. Many of those who have learned the prophetic legacy by heart have reported the hadith above verbatim as such. Among them are: Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh, Abu Na'im, al-Bayhaqi in his book *Al-Dala'il*, both al-Tha'labi and al-Tabari in their exegeses of Surat al-Shu'ara' in their book *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, in Vol. 2 of al-Tabari's *Tarikh al-Umam wal Muluk*.

Ibn al-Athir has reported it as an undisputed fact in Vol. 2 of his *Al-Kamil* when he mentioned how the Almighty commanded His Messenger to declare his call to the public, Abul-Fida in Vol. of his *Tarikh* while discussing who was the first to embrace Islam, Imam Abu Ja'far al-Iskafi al-Mu'tazili in his book *Naqd al-Uthmaniyyah* declaring its accuracy,¹ al-Halabi in his chapter on the Prophet's hideout at the house of Arqam in his well-known *Sirah*.²

In this same context, with almost identical wording, has this hadith been reported by many masters of hadith and most reliable Sunni authorities such as al-Tahawi, Diya' al-Maqdisi in his *Mukhtara*, and Sa'id ibn Mansur in his *Sunan*. Refer to what Ibn Hanbal has recorded of 'Ali's hadith on pages 111 and 159 of Vol. 1 of his *Musnad*. He also pointed out at the beginning

of page 331 of Vol. 1 of his Musnad, to a very significant hadith from Ibn ‘Abbas] containing ten characteristics in which ‘Ali has distinguished himself from everyone else. That hadith is published in Nisa’i, too, from Ibn ‘Abbas, on page 6 of his Khasa’is al ‘Alawiyyah, and on page 132, Vol. 3, of Hakim’s Mustadrak. Al-Thahbi has narrated it in his Talkhis], vouching for its authenticity. Refer to Vol. 6 of Kanz al-‘Ummal which contains all the details.³ Refer also to Muntakhabul Kanz which is cited in the footnote of Imam Ahmad’s Musnad; refer to the footnote on pages 41 and 43 of Vol. 5 of the book to find all details. This, we believe, suffices to serve as glorious proof, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. As on page 263, Vol. 3, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abul Hadid, Egyptian edition. As regarding his book Naqd al-‘Uthmaniyya, it is a unique book worthy of the attention of any seeker of the truth. It is on page 257 and its succeeding pages up to page 281, Vol. 3, of the Sharh, at the end the commentary at the conclusion of the “qasi’a” sermon.
2. Refer to the fourth page of that chapter, or to page 381 of the first volume of Al-Sira al-Halabiyya. Ibn Taymiyyah’s wrecklessness is unfair, and his judgment is due to his well-known fanaticism. This hadith is quoted by the Egyptian sociologist Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal; refer to the second column on page five of the supplement to issue 2751 of his newspaper Al-Siyasa dated Thul-Qi’da 12, 1350, and you will find it there explained in detail. If you refer to the fourth column on page six of the supplement to issue 2785 of the same newspaper, you will find the author quoting this hadith from Muslim’s , Ahmad’s musnad, ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad’s Ziyadat

al-Musnad, Ibn Hajar al-Haithami's Jami'ul Fara'id, Ibn Qutaybah's 'Uyun al-Akhbar, Ahmad ibn 'Abd Rabbih's Al-'Iqd al-Farid, 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz in his dissertation on the descendants of Hashim, and Imam Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi's Tafsir. This hadith is also quoted by the British author Georges in his well-known book A Treatise on Islam, translated into the Arabic by an atheist from a Protestant descent calling himself Hashim al-'Arabi. You can also find this hadith on page 79 of the treatise's Arabic version, 6th edition. Due to the fame this hadith enjoys, a few non-Arab writers have included it in their books, especially in French, English and German. In his book Heroes and Hero Worship, Thomas Carlyle quotes it briefly.

3. Refer to hadith 6008 on page 392, and you will find it quoted from Ibn Jarir, while hadith 1045 on page 396 is quoted from Ahmad's Musnad and from al-Dia al-Maqdisi's Al-Mukhtara, and from al-Tahawi. Ibn Jarir has verified it. Also refer to hadith 6056 on page 397 and you will find it quoted from Ibn Ishaq, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abu Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh, Abu Na'im, al-Bayhaqi on the branches of faith, and in the Dala'il, and hadith 6102 on page 401 and you will find it quoted from Ibn Mardawayh, and hadith 6155 on page 408 and you will find it quoted from Ahmad's Musnad and from Ibn Jarir from Al-Diya fil Mukhtara. Whoever researches Kanz al-'Ummal will find this hadith in various places throughout the book. If you look into page 255, Vol. 3, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by the Mu'tazilite Imam Ibn Abul-Hadid, or at the end of the explanation of the "qasi'a sermon" in it, you will find this hadith in its entirety.

Discussions

The Madh-hab of Ahl al-Bayt

The assumptions of the previous round of ‘correspondence’ are upheld here as well. The Shaykh al-Azhar is made to seem accepting of a distinct Madh-hab which is ascribed to the Ahl al-Bayt.

The discussions under Letter 4 deal with this phenomenon in sufficient detail. As such, to address it here would not only be superfluous, but redundant.

General texts

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges that a person who studies the Prophet’s ﷺ Sīrah comprehensively will find that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was his closest aide and adviser. These are meant to be indicators for ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه nomination. The Ahl al-Sunnah do not deny the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. They have compiled exclusive chapters about the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in their ḥadīth collections. Similarly, many of the other Companions of the Prophet ﷺ have virtues and merits.

However, he fails to realise that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the first to accept Islam among the children, whereas Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was the first to accept among the men. He seems to have forgotten who was nearly killed after being beaten up in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām defending the Prophet ﷺ. Who was it that accompanied the Prophet ﷺ on the journey of Hijrah? On the eve of the Battle of Badr it was Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه who reassured the Prophet ﷺ that Allah would not abandon him. It was on Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه counsel that the Prophet ﷺ spared the lives of the captives at Badr. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was appointed as the leader of Ḥajj in the year prior to the Prophet’s ﷺ Ḥajj. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was appointed to lead the Ṣalāh during the Prophet’s ﷺ illness.

Is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn unaware that Allah praised Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه at numerous places in the Qur’ān?

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ
لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

If you do not aid him [i.e. the Prophet ﷺ] — Allah has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Makkah] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he [i.e. Muḥammad ﷺ] said to his Companion, “Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.” And Allah sent down His tranquillity upon him and supported him with soldiers [i.e. angels] you did not see and made the word of those who disbelieved the lowest while the word of Allah — that is the highest. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr relates that he asked ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, “Tell me of the worst thing which the mushrikūn did to the Prophet?”

He said, “While the Prophet ﷺ was praying in the Ḥijr of the Ka’bah; ‘Uqbah ibn Abī Mu‘ayṭ came and put his garment around the Prophet’s neck and throttled him violently. Abū Bakr came and caught him by his shoulder and pushed him away from the Prophet ﷺ and said, ‘Do you want to kill a man just because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah?’”¹

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates:

Some Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia and Abū Bakr also prepared himself for the emigration, but the Prophet ﷺ said (to him), “Wait, for I hope that Allah will allow me also to emigrate.”

Abū Bakr said, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. Do you expect to emigrate (soon)?”

The Prophet said, “Yes.”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Manāqib al-Anṣār, ḥadīth no. 3856.

So Abū Bakr waited to accompany the Prophet ﷺ and fed two she-camels he had on the leaves of an acacia tree regularly for four months. One day while we were sitting in our house at midday, someone said to Abū Bakr, “Here is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, coming with his head and a part of his face covered with a cloth at an hour he never used to come to us.”

Abū Bakr said, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, (O Prophet)! An urgent matter must have brought you here at this hour.”

The Prophet ﷺ came and asked permission to enter, and he was allowed.

The Prophet ﷺ entered and said to Abū Bakr, “Let those who are with you excuse themselves.”

Abū Bakr replied, “There is no stranger; they are your family. Let my father be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah!”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I have been allowed to leave (Makkah).”

Abū Bakr said, “Shall I accompany you, O Messenger of Allah, May my father be sacrificed for you?”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Yes.”

Abū Bakr said, “O Messenger of Allah! May my father be sacrificed for you. Take one of these two she camels of mine.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I will take it only after paying its price.”

So we prepared their baggage and put their journey food in a leather bag; and Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr cut a piece of her girdle and tied the mouth of the leather bag with it. That is why she was called Dhāt al-Niṭāqayn. Then the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr went to a cave in a mountain called Thawr and remained there for three nights. ‘Abd Allah ibn Abī Bakr, who was a young intelligent man, used to stay with them at night and leave before

dawn so that in the morning, he would be with the Quraysh in Makkah as if he had spent the night among them. If he heard of any plot contrived by the Quraysh against the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr, he would understand it and (return to) inform them of it when it became dark. ‘Āmir ibn Fuḥayrah, the freed slave of Abū Bakr used to graze a flock of sheep for them and he used to take those sheep to them a while after the ‘Ishā prayer. They would sleep till ‘Āmir awakened them when it was still dark. He used to do that in each of those three nights...¹

Jābir رضي الله عنه narrates:

The Prophet ﷺ, after his return from the ‘Umrah which commenced at Ji‘irrānah, sent Abū Bakr to lead the Ḥajj. We proceeded until we were close to al-‘Arj when the adhān for Fajr was called out and the sound of the Messenger’s camel was heard and sitting on it was ‘Alī.

Abū Bakr said to him, “Have you been sent as a leader or a messenger?”

He said, “Rather, the Messenger ﷺ sent me with (Sūrat) al-Barā’ah to recite to the people.”

We arrived in Makkah and one day before the Day of Tarwiyah, Abū Bakr came and addressed the people with regards to their rituals. Upon the completion of his address ‘Alī stood up and recited (Sūrat) al-Barā’ah to the people until he completed it. The Day of al-Naḥr passed by in the same manner and the Day of al-Nafr passed by in the same manner.²

During this Ḥajj, Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه proclaimed that no mushrik may perform Ḥajj after that year, and no person may perform ṭawāf in an unclothed state. He commanded his other Companions to do the same. This is supported by what al-Bukhārī narrates from Abū Hurayrah, who said:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Libās, Ḥadīth: 5807.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 8 p. 171.

بعثني أبو بكر في تلك الحجة في مؤذنين يوم النحر نؤذن بمنى أن لا يحج بعد العام مشرك ولا يطوف بالبيت عريان قال حميد بن عبد الرحمن ثم أردف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عليا فأمره أن يؤذن ببراءة قال أبو هريرة فأذن معنا علي في أهل منى يوم النحر لا يحج بعد العام مشرك ولا يطوف بالبيت عريان.

Abū Bakr sent me during that Ḥajj amongst the announcers on the Day of Naḥr at Minā that no mushrik may perform the Ḥajj after that year and no person may perform ṭawāf naked.

Ḥumayd ibn Abd al-Raḥmān says, “Then the Messenger ﷺ seated ‘Alī (on his camel) and instructed him to announce (recite Sūrat) al-Barā’ah (to the people).”

Abū Hurayrah says, “Then ‘Alī announced with us amongst the people in Minā the Day of al-Naḥr (Sūrat) al-Barā’ah and that no mushrik may perform the Ḥajj after that year and that no person may perform ṭawāf naked.”¹

The reason for sending ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was that since the Prophet ﷺ was a leader, it was Arab custom that only he, or someone from his household could convey this instruction.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رضي الله عنه relates:

The Messenger ﷺ was ill and when his illness intensified, He said, “Order Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāh!”

‘Ā’ishah then said, “Indeed, he is a soft-hearted man. When he stands in your place he will be unable to lead the people in ṣalāh.”

She then repeated herself and he said, “Order Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāh! Indeed you are of the women of Yūsuf!”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, vol. 4, Ḥadīth: 4378.

He then came to the Messenger and he led the people in ṣalāh during the life of the Messenger ﷺ.¹

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا narrates:

The Messenger ﷺ said, “Indeed, I was on the verge of calling Abū Bakr and his son, and entrust leadership to him for fear that people might speak or aspire to things. But Allah and the Believers refuse to have anyone but Abū Bakr.”²

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ‘Urwah narrates from ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا:

The Messenger said to me, “Call Abū Bakr and your brother for me so that I may write a letter. Indeed I fear that some aspiring person might say I am more deserving, but Allah and the Believers refuse to have anyone but Abū Bakr.”³

Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

A woman came to the Messenger and he instructed her to return to him later.

She said, “What should I do if I return and I do not find you?” It was as if she was implying death.

He replied, “If you do not find me then go to Abū Bakr.”⁴

To this end the Prophet ﷺ said:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 646.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 6791.

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with the commentary, 15: 2387.

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3459; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with its commentary, The Chapter on the Merits of the Ṣaḥābah, 15: 2386.

No one has done a favour for us except that we have repaid him in full, with the exception of Abū Bakr. Verily his favour upon us is such that Allah will repay him on the Day of Judgement. The wealth of none of you has benefited me as much as the wealth of Abū Bakr. Were I to take a close companion it would have been Abū Bakr; however my Khalīl is Allah.¹

The following narration ought to be accepted by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn since its narrators are from his list of one-hundred.

Abū Mu‘āwiyah – Al-A‘mash – Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī - ‘Alqamah – ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab who narrated:

The Messenger of Allah would stay up at night with Abu Bakr discussing matters concerning the Muslims while I was with them.²

One wonders what Sīrah ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn refers to when it is also reported that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه attested to the fact that Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه were always in the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم company.

Ibn Abī Mulaykah reported:

I heard Ibn ‘Abbās saying, “When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was placed on the bier the people gathered around him. They praised him and supplicated for him before the bier was lifted up, and I was one amongst them. Nothing attracted my attention but a person who gripped my shoulder from behind. I turned towards him and found that it was ‘Alī. He invoked Allah’s mercy upon ‘Umar and said, ‘You have left none behind you (whose) deeds (are so desirable) that I love to meet Allah with them. By Allah, I expected that Allah would keep you and your two companions together. I had often heard Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم as saying, “I came and Abū Bakr and ‘Umar came along; I entered and Abū Bakr and ‘Umar entered with me; I went out

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb al-Manāqib*, Ḥadīth: 3661.

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb al-Ṣalāh*, Ḥadīth 169; *Musnad Aḥmad*, Ḥadīth: 178, 228.

and Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were with,” and I expected – or hoped – that Allah will keep you along with them.”¹

The Ḥadīth of Warning his closest kin

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn deserves to be congratulated for his resourcefulness and creative mind. He was careful to ask himself – with the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī – to provide references from Sunnī sources. He cites a narration and provides references to Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Mardawayh, Abū Nu‘aym, al-Bayhaqī, al-Tha‘labī, al-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī in his work on history, Ibn al-Athīr, Abul Fidā in his book on history, Abū Ja‘far al-Iskāfī, and al-Ḥalabī in his book on Sīrah. This narration is cited as context for the revelation of verse 214 in Sūrah al-Shu‘arā.

The average reader might be led to the assumption that the narration cited is beyond question as it is narrated in so many texts. The truth is that it is a single narration which is repeated with the same chain of transmission throughout all the books. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deception is evidently clear since Ibn Jarīr and al-Ṭabarī are one and the same person. His complete name is Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, and his Kunyah is Abū Ja‘far.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has present a truncated version of this narration. The narration in its complete form reads:

When this verse, “And warn, (O Muḥammad), your closest kindred,” was revealed upon Muḥammad, he called me and said, “O ‘Alī! Allah has instructed me ‘to warn your close relatives,’ but I find that difficult. I know that when I open this discussion with them I will see from them what I dislike. Therefore prepare a meal for them with a leg of lamb and milk. Then gather the sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib for me so that I may speak to them and convey to them what I have been instructed with.”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 3677, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 2389.

Then I did what he instructed me to do and I invited them to come and see him. They were approximately forty on that day and amongst them were his paternal uncles Abū Ṭālib, Ḥamzah, ‘Abbās, and Abū Lahab. When they were all there he summoned me to bring the food I had prepared for them. Then I brought it and when I placed it down the Prophet ﷺ took a chunk of meat and cut into it with his teeth and then spread it out at the corners of the plate.

Then he said, “Take, with the name of Allah!”

The people ate until they were satisfied. I could only see their hands.

Then he said, “Bring the drinks,” and I brought them the milk and they drank until they all were quenched.

When the Prophet ﷺ intended to address them Abū Lahab preceded him in speaking and said, “Indeed, your companion has bewitched you,” and the people left and the Prophet ﷺ did not speak to them.

Then Prophet ﷺ said, “Tomorrow, O ‘Alī! Indeed, this person preceded me to what you heard from him of speech and the people left before I could speak to them. Prepare the food again as you did before. Then gather them by me.”

Then I did that and gathered them and the Prophet ﷺ summoned me to bring the food. I presented the food they ate to their fill as the previous day. Then he said, “Quench them.” and I brought the milk until all of them were quenched.

The Messenger ﷺ then spoke and said, “O Banī ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! By Allah! I do not know of a youth amongst the Arabs who has brought to his people what I am bringing you. I bring to you the best of this world and the next. Indeed, Allah has instructed me to call you to him. Who will assist me with this and he will be my brother, and my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you?”

(‘Alī says) All of them desisted and I said, and I was the youngest amongst them, and the one with the smallest eyes, and the sternest amongst them, and the most zealous amongst them, “Me, O Messenger of Allah! I will be your assistant upon it!”

The Prophet ﷺ took me by the shoulder and said, “This is my brother, and my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you! Therefore, listen to him, and obey him!” The people stood up laughing and saying to Abū Ṭālib, “Indeed, he instructs you to listen to your son and to obey him!”¹

The purport of the narration is problematic for the following reasons:

1. It portrays the Prophet ﷺ reluctant to carry out the command of Allah. In some versions of the narration it says that Jibrīl descended a second time to warn him ﷺ of a repercussions if he does not carry out the command of Allah. Such insinuation is unbecoming of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.
2. In the ḥadīth it tells us that the sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, “Were approximately forty on that day.” However, history tells us that they were not even twenty men in number, let alone forty! Ibn Taymiyyah comments:

Scholars agree that only four of the sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib had sons to perpetuate the family name. They were ‘Abbās, Abū Ṭālib, Ḥārith, and Abū Lahab. As for the uncles and the cousins, Abū Ṭālib had four sons: Ṭālib, ‘Aqīl, Ja‘far, and ‘Alī. As for ‘Abbās all of his sons were minors as none of them were adults when in Makkah. But for argument’s sake, let us assume they were all adult men then they were ‘Abd Allāh, ‘Ubayd Allāh, and Faḍl. As for Qatham, he was born afterwards. The eldest amongst them

1 *Sīrah ibn Ishāq*, pg 126; *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 17 pg. 662 [2003 edition]; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, vol.9 pg. 2826; *Sharḥ Ma‘ānī al-Āthār*, vol. 3 pg. 284-286 & vol. 4 pg 387-388; Abū Nu‘aym in *al-Dalā’il* (331); al-Bayhaqī in *al-Dalā’il*, vol. 2 pg 178-180.

was Faḍl and it was with that name he was called by in his agnomen. As for Ḥārith ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Abū Lahab, their sons were fewer. Ḥārith had two sons: Abū Sufyān and Rabī‘ah, both of them accepted Islam later. They were amongst those who accepted Islam upon the Conquest of Makkah. Similarly, the sons of Abū Lahab, they too accepted Islam upon the Conquest of Makkah. He had three sons, two of whom accepted Islam, ‘Utbah and Mughīth.¹

3. This narration contradicts another which is authentic and well-established. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه who said:

لما نزلت وأنذر عشيرتك الأقربين صعّد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم على الصفا فجعل ينادي يا بني فهر يا بني عدي لبطون قريش حتى اجتمعوا فجعل الرجل إذا لم يستطع أن يخرج أرسل رسولاً لينظر ما هو فاجاء أبو لهب وقريش فقال أرايتكم لو أخبرتكم أن خيلاً بالوادي تريد أن تغير عليكم أكنتم مصدقي قالوا نعم ما جربنا عليك إلا صدقا قال فإني نذير لكم بين يدي عذاب شديد فقال أبو لهب تباً لك سائر اليوم ألهذا جمعتمنا فنزلت تبث يدا أبي لهب وتب ما أغنى عنه ماله وما كسب

When the verse, “And warn, (O Muḥammad), your closest kindred,” was revealed, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ascended al-Ṣafā and started exclaiming, “O sons of Fihr! O sons of ‘Adī!” to all the clans of the Quraysh until all of them were gathered together. Those unable to attend sent a messenger to find out what the commotion was about. Then Abū Lahab and the Quraysh came.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “If I should tell you that there is an army in the valley ready to attack you will you believe me?”

They said, “Yes, we have only experienced truthfulness from you.”

He said, “Then certainly I am a warner unto you before a severe punishment.”

Abū Lahab said, “May you be ruined for the rest of the day! Did you gather us here for this?”

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 7, p. 304-305 with minor adaptation.

Then the following verse was revealed:

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ سَيُّئُلِي نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ وَامْرَأَتُهُ
حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ

May the hands of Abū Lahab be ruined and ruined is he. His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained. He will (enter to) burn in a Fire of (blazing) flame. And his wife (as well)—the carrier of firewood, around her neck is a rope of twisted fibre.¹

4. This narration claims that the Prophet ﷺ said to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, after his people desisted from assisting him, “This is my brother, my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you! Therefore, listen to him, and obey him!” The people stood up laughing and saying to Abū Ṭālib, “Indeed, he instructs you to listen to your son and to obey him!” How could the Prophet ﷺ say to a people who had refused to assist him, rather, they waged war against him, “This is my brother, and my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you! Therefore, listen to him, and obey him”? They did not obey the divinely sent Prophet ﷺ, would they follow a small boy?

The narration as it appears in all these texts is transmitted with one of two common chains

- Muḥammad ibn Ishāq — ‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim — Minhāl ibn ‘Amr — ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥārith — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه
- ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Quddūs — al-A‘mash — al-Minhāl ibn ‘Amr with his chain to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

We have already presented the problems in the text. Let us now examine the problems in the chains of transmission. Appearing in the chain of this narration

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Bāb Wa Andhir ‘Ashīrataka al-‘Aqrabīn, Ḥadīth: 4492.

is a pair of unreliable narrators, namely; ‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Quddūs.

‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim

‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim, Abū Maryam, is *matrūk* (suspected of forgery) and is not proof-worthy. Al-Dhahabī says about him:

He is Abū Maryam al-Anṣārī, a Rāfiḍī. He is not reliable.

‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī said about him, “He fabricates aḥādīth.”

It is also said about him that he is amongst the leaders of the Shī‘ah.

‘Abbās [al-Dūrī] relates from Yaḥyā [ibn Ma‘īn], “He is nothing!”

Al-Bukhārī says, “He is not reliable according to them.”

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says, “When Abū ‘Ubaydah used to relate ḥadīth to us from Abū Maryam the people would become noisy and say, ‘We do not want him (his aḥādīth).’

Aḥmad said, “Abū Maryam used to narrate profanities about ‘Uthmān.”

Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā‘ī among others have said, “Matrūk [suspected of forging Ḥādīth]¹

Ibn Ḥibbān says:

He was amongst those who narrated profanities about ‘Uthmān. He consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication. In addition to that he used to distort information. It is not permissible to cite him as proof. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn suspected him of forgery.²

1 *Mizān al-Itidāl* by al-Dhahabī, vol. 2, p. 640.

2 *Kitāb al-Majrūhīn* by Ibn Ḥibbān, p. 143.

Ibn Kathīr says about him:

He is matrūk, a liar, a Shīʿī. ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī and others accuse him of fabricating ḥādīth, and the expert scholars grade him weak.¹

ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs

As for ʿAbd Allāh ibn Quddūs, al-Dhahabī says about him:

He was a Kūfī, Rāfiḍī. He settled in Ray. He narrates from al-Aʿmash and others.

Ibn ʿAdī says about him, “Most of what he narrates relates to the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt.”

Yaḥyā says, “He is no good (as a transmitter). He is a Rāfiḍī, malicious.”

Al-Nasāʾī and others say, “He is not reliable.”

Al-Dāraquṭnī says, “He is a weak narrator.”

Abū Maʿmar says, “ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs, he was a Rāfiḍī.”²

Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Abār says, “I asked Zanīj, Rāzī’s teacher, about ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs and he said, ‘I have abandoned him (suspected of forgery). I did not write anything from him and he was not pleased with it.’”³

The academic value of references to *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl* have already been discussed.⁴ Suffice to say that the reference to the abridged version of *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl* provided

1 *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, vol. 3, p. 363.

2 *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl*, vol. 2, p. 458.

3 *Al-Ḍuʿafāʾ* by al-ʿUqaylī, vol. 2, p. 279.

4 Refer to pg. 116 of this book.

by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has ‘Alī al-Muttaqī on record clearly pointing out that ‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim is a narrator suspected of forging Ḥadīth.¹ If ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cited this from a later source then his sloppiness can be understood, but if he cited it directly from *Muntakhab Kanz al-‘Ummāl* his deception was deliberate!

The supporting narrations

All that remains under this discussion are the supporting narrations from *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* by al-Nasā’ī, and *al-Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim.

These narrations form the core of the next round of correspondence so we will discuss them there.

1 *Muntakhab al-Kanz*, vol. 5 pg. 41.

Letter 21

Thul-Hijjah 10, 1329

I. Raising Doubts about the Hadith's Authenticity

Your debater strongly doubts the credibility of this hadith. For one thing, both Shaykhs have not included it in their sahih books, nor have the authors of other sahih books. I do not think that this hadith has been narrated by any reliable Sunni traditionist, and I do not think that you yourself consider it authentic, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 22

Thul-Hijjah 1329

I. Proving the Text's Authenticity

II. Why the Shaykhs Have Not Reported it

III. Whoever Knows These Shaykhs Knows Why

1. Have I not ascertained its reliability by Sunnis, I would not have mentioned it to you. Yet Ibn Jarir and Imam Abu Ja'far al-Iskafi have taken its authenticity for granted.¹ Several other critics have also considered it authentic. It is sufficient proof for its authenticity the fact that it is reported by the reliable authorities upon whose accuracy the authors of sahih books rely unhesitatingly. Refer to page 111, Vol. 1, of Ahmad's Musnad, where you will read this hadith as narrated by Aswad ibn 'Amir² from Sharik,³ al-A'mash,⁴ Minhaj,⁵ 'Abbad ibn 'Abdullah al-Asadi,⁶ from 'Ali عليه السلام chronologically.

Each one of these men in the chain of narrators is an authority in his own right, and they all are reliable traditionists according to the testimony of the authors of the sahih books without any dispute. Al-Qaysarani has mentioned them in his book Al-Jami' Bayna Rijal al-Sahihain. There is no doubt that this hadith is authentic, and the narrators report it from various ways each one of which supports the other.

2. The reason why both shaykhs [Bukhari and Muslim], and their likes, have not quoted this hadith is due to the fact that it did not agree with their own personal views regarding the issue of succession. This is why they have rejected a great deal of authentic texts for fear the Shi'as may use them as pretexts; therefore, they hid the truth knowingly.

There are many Sunni shaykhs, may Allah forgive them, who have likewise hidden such texts, and they have in their method of hiding a well known history written down by al-Hafiz ibn Hajar in his Fath Al-Barari. Al-Bukhari has assigned a special chapter for this theme at the conclusion of his chapter on “Al-’ilm,” in Vol. 1, page 25, of his Sahih, subtitled “A Chapter on Those Who Recognized the Knowledge of some People Rather than that of Others.”

3. Whoever knows the way al-Bukhari thought, his own attitudes towards the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, and towards all Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَام, will come to know that Bukhari’s pen falls short of narrating texts regarding them, and his ink dries up before recounting their attributes. He will not be surprised to see him rejecting this particular hadith as well as others similar to it; therefore, we seek refuge with Allah, the Almighty, the Sublime, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. Refer to hadith 6045 of the hadith included in Kanz al-’Ummal, page 396, Vol. 6, where you will find reference made to Ibn Jarir’s verification of this hadith. If you refer to Muntakhab al-Kanz, the beginning of the footnote on page 44, Vol. 5, of Ahmad’s Musnad, you will find reference to Ibn Jarir’s verification of this hadith. As regarding Abu Ja’far al-Iskafi, he has emphatically judged its accuracy in his book Naqd al-’Uthmaniyya; so, refer to the text of page 263, Vol. 3 of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by al-Hadid, Egyptian edition.
2. Both al-Bukhari and Muslim have relied on him in their sahihs. They have both learned hadith from Shu’bah, and Bukhari has learned it from ‘Abdul-

'Aziz ibn Abu Salamah, while Muslim has learned hadith from Zuhayr ibn Mu'awiyah and Hammad ibn Salamah. His hadith is narrated in Bukhari by Muhammad ibn Hatim ibn Bazi'. In Muslim's Sahih he is quoted by Harun ibn 'Abdullah the critic, and by Abu Shaybah and Zuhayr.

3. Muslim has relied on his authority in his Sahih, as we explained when we discussed him in Letter No. 16.
4. Both Bukhari and Muslim rely on his authority in their respective sahihs, as we have stated while discussing him in Letter No. 16.
5. Al-Bukhari has relied on him, as we explained when we mentioned him in Letter No. 16.
6. His full name is 'Abbad ibn 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam al-Qarashi al-Asadi. Al-Bukhari and Muslim rely on his authority in their respective sahihs. He has heard hadith from Asma' and 'Ayesha daughters of Abu Bakr. He is quoted in both sahihs by Ibn Abu Malka, Muhammad ibn Ja'far ibn al-Zubayr, and Hisham ibn 'Umar.

Discussions

Versions of the Ḥadīth

The first Ḥadīth cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, which concludes the lengthy backstory, is narrated by way of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام and is worded as follows:

This is my brother, my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you! So, listen to him, and obey him!

In the previous discussion we have demonstrated that this version of the Ḥadīth is narrated exclusively by way of either ‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim or ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Quddūs, both of whom were severely impugned as narrators due to them being suspected of forging Ḥadīth, and both of whose narrations could not be elevated due to the severity of their weakness.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn then cited other narrations for the purpose of corroboration. The narrations he cited were referenced to the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad vol.1 pgs 111, 159. He also references a narration from Ibn ‘Abbās from *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.1 pg.331, which can also be found in *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī*, and the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim vol. 3 pg. 132. For further reading he cites *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 6 and *Muntakhab al-Kanz*, which is printed in the margin of *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 5 pgs 41, 43.¹

The edition of *Musnad Aḥmad* that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn refers to is the old Maymaniyyah edition which was printed in Egypt in 1313 A.H.

When we referred to the narrations from *Musnad Aḥmad* we found the ‘supporting narrations’ worded differently from the original narration which was cited.

The first narration is the one whose narrators ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn makes sweeping claims about their reliability

1 See previous letter, *al-Murāja’āt* letter 20.

Imām Aḥmad narrates it with the following chain:

Aswad ibn ‘Āmir – Sharīk – al-A‘mash – al-Minhāl - ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Asadī - ‘Alī رضي الله عنه who said:

When the verse “and warn you nearest kin” was revealed the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم gathered some of his family members. Around thirty of them gathered and after they ate and drank the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Who will stand surety for my debts and possessions in my trust, so that he will be with me in Jannah and my successor in my family?”

A man – whom Sharīk did not name – said, “O Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم you are like the ocean [in your endless generosity]; who would be able to fulfill this?”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم then repeated his offer to his family and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said, “I [will take that responsibility].”¹

Before addressing the issues with the chain of transmission—which is one of the primary means of verifying the reliability of any Prophetic tradition—we ought to point out that this narration is worded differently from the first narration cited in letter 20.

While the wording of the narration in letter 20 might have suggested overall authority for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه this narration merely limits his mandate to representing the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم internally, within his family. The inconsistency between both narrations emerges when we consider that the narration in letter 20 puts their number at forty, whereas this narration says they were only thirty in number.

It appears that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn anticipated the possibility of a discerning reader questioning the reliability of the narration cited earlier. In an attempt to put that objection to rest he thought it would be expedient to provide the reference for a different narration altogether.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1 pg. 111 [old edition]; vol 2. Pg. 225 Ḥadīth: 883 [Risālah edition].

Let us now focus our attention on the chain of transmission which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn authenticated. This is also the version which Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī accepts.

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd-Allah al-Qaḍī

Early in the chain we find one **Sharīk ibn ‘Abd-Allah al-Qaḍī**, from Kūfah. He is considered weak, especially in that which he narrated from memory after being assigned a post in the judiciary. The narrations which are accepted from him are those which he narrated prior to his appointment as judge, or when he narrated from his books and not from memory.

Ibn Ḥibbān said about him:

Towards the end he erred regularly and his memory failed him. Therefore, the narrations of those who heard from him in his early days in Wāsiṭ do not have confusion — like Yazīd ibn Harūn, Ishāq al-Azraq — as for those who heard from him later on in Kufah, their narrations have many mistakes.¹

Ibn ‘Adī had this to say:

In general his narrations are acceptable. However, his narrations were affected on account of weakness of memory so he began to narrate contradictory reports. None of his objectionable reports were deliberate.²

Abū Dāwūd said:

Sharīk is truthful, though he errs in his narrations from al-A‘mash.³

Al-Dhahabī states:

1 *al-Thiqāt*, vol. 6 pg. 444.

2 *al-Kāmil*, vol. 5 pg. 36.

3 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 8 pg. 214.

Muslim barely cites the narrations of Sharīk, and that too only for *Mutābaʿāt* [supporting narrations which do not satisfy his criteria]. Al-Bukhārī has only mentioned him in his *Muʿallaqāt* [incomplete chains which often do not satisfy his criteria].¹

ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Asadī

Sharīk is not the only issue in the chain of this narration. The more pressing issue is the narrator **ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Asadī**, whom ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn seems to have confused with another narrator with a similar name. We are prepared to give ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn the benefit of doubt in this instance and consider this an error on his part. One doubts that he would accuse al-Bukhārī of partiality for concealing knowledge and then deliberately deceive his readers by listing the biography of a different narrator.

The narrator of this report is not ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn al-Zubayr al-Asadī al-Madanī since neither ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام is listed as his teacher, nor is al-Minhāl ibn ʿAmr listed among those who took Ḥadīth from him.² On the other hand, there is an ʿAbbād ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Asadī al-Kūfī who narrates from ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and from whom al-Minhāl ibn ʿAmr narrates.³

The latter, the one from Kūfah, is the narrator of the Ḥadīth under discussion since he narrates from ʿAlī عليه السلام and the narrator from him is al-Minhāl.

ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī and al-Bukhārī both classified him as a weak narrator. Al-Dhahabī also pointed out a forged narration that ʿAbbād narrates by way of ʿAlī عليه السلام which suggests that his weakness is significant.⁴

1 *Siyār Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, vol. 8 page 212.

2 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 14 pg.136-138.

3 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Saʿd*, vol.6 pg.179; *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, vol. 6 bio. 1594; *al-Kāmil*, vol. 2 pg. 187; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 14. pg. 138.

4 *Mīzān al-ʿItidāl*, vol. 2 pg. 368.

This narration is definitely problematic in light of the following factors:

1. This narration is at odds with the rigorously authenticated Aḥādīth on the circumstances surrounding the revelation of the said verse.
2. The weakness of Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakhaī.
3. The fact that Aswad ibn ‘Āmir is not recorded among those who received Ḥadīth from Sharīk in the early period.
4. The problems in Sharīk’s narrations from al-A‘mash as alluded to by Abū Dāwūd.
5. The fact that ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Asadī al-Kūfī is unreliable.

This narrations does not fulfill the criteria of basic reliability let alone satisfy the criteria of al-Bukhārī or Muslim.

The second narration from *Musnad Aḥmad* (vol.1 pg. 159) is narrated with the following chain:

‘Affān ibn Muslim — Abū ‘Awānah — ‘Uthmān ibn al-Mughīrah — Abū Ṣādiq — **Rabī‘ah ibn Najidh** — ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه who relates:

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم invited Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib. They were a group of men, each of them ate a *Jadha‘ah*¹ and drank a *Faraq*.² Then he صلى الله عليه وسلم prepared a *mudd*³ of food⁴ and they ate to their fill. The left over food seemed as if they had not even touched it. He then called for a small bowl with something to drink and they drank to their satisfaction, and the leftovers appeared as if they had not touched it. Then he said, “O Banū

1 This term is used to refer to the age of livestock. The age also indicates its size. This term refers to camels which have reached four years of age, or cows and goats which have reached one year of age.

2 A measurement which is equivalent of 9 litres.

3 A measure of volumes which is equivalent to 750 ml.

4 The word Ṭa‘ām is often used in Ḥadīth in reference to food prepared with wheat.

‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, I have been sent to you specifically and the rest of people in general. You are well aware of what this verse entails. **Who of you is prepared to pledge allegiance to me so that he will be my brother and companion?**”

None responded to him, so I stood up to pledge and the Prophet ﷺ told me to sit. He repeated this a second time, and I alone stood and he told me to sit. On the third time he held my hand [and took the pledge].¹

This narration only speaks of a fraternal bond and does not mention anything of successorship, although we acknowledge that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was worthy of being a successor.

Not only does this narration not support ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s theory but the chain is found wanting since **Rabī‘ah ibn Najidh** is an anonymous identity. Al-Dhahabī says that he is barely known. The only person who narrates from him is Abū Ṣādiq. He is known for a baseless narration, “‘Alī is my brother and heir.”²

Al-Nasā’ī narrates this narration with slightly variant wording though with the same chain of transmission.³

The unknown status of Rabī‘ah ibn Najidh excludes this narration from fulfilling the criteria of reliability. It, therefore, is also weak.

Al-Bukhārī’s academic honesty

The last essential issue that requires attention is the allegation that al-Bukhārī was prejudiced and deliberately excluded narrations on the virtue of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه and concealed the narrations which explicitly mention his appointment.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1 pg. 159 (old Egyptian edition), vol. 2 pg. 465 (Risālah edition).

2 *Mīzān al-ʾitidāl*, vol. 2 pg. 45.

3 *Al-Khaṣāʾiṣ*, pg. 83.

Not only is this conjecture, but the chapter heading which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn quoted refers to a statement from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه himself, with a chain whose narrators are all on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of one-hundred!

‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā — Ma‘rūf ibn Kharrabūdh — Abū al-Ṭufayl — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

Narrate to people what they are familiar with. Do you wish that Allah and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم are belied?¹

What is meant by this is that some aspects of knowledge might be counter-productive to people who lack the capacity of correctly understanding it; not that any knowledge should be concealed.

Al-Bukhārī provides an example of this under the same chapter. Anas رضي الله عنه relates:

I was informed that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had said to Mu‘ādh, “Whosoever will meet Allah without associating anything in worship with Him will go to Paradise.”

Mu‘ādh asked the Prophet, “Shall I not inform the people of this good news?”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, “No, I fear they would rely upon it (only and make no effort to practise).”²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-‘Ilm, Ḥadīth: 127.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-‘Ilm, Ḥadīth: 131.

Letter 23

Thul-Hijjah 14, 1329

I. Convinced of the Authenticity of this Hadith

II. Unreliability Based on Non-Sequential Narration

III. Its Reference to Restricted Succession

IV. Its Rebuttal

1. I have, indeed, read this hadith on page 111 of Volume One of Ahmad's Musnad and ascertained the reliability of his sources and found them to be the most reliable authorities. Then I researched his avenues in narrating this hadith, and I found them to be sequential: each one of them supports the other; therefore, I have contented myself to believe in its contents.
2. But you do not rely on an authentic hadith that deals with the issue of succession unless it is sequentially narrated [mutawatir], for succession, according to your Shi'a philosophy, is one of the roots of religion, and this hadith cannot be considered as "mutawatir" (consecutively reported) and, therefore, it cannot be relied upon.
3. It may be said that 'Ali is the successor of the Prophet ﷺ in his own Household alone; so, where is the text that testifies to his succession among the general public?
4. This hadith may even be revoked, since the Prophet has refrained from publicly supporting the gist thereof. Because of this, the companions found no reason why they should not swear the oath of allegiance to the three righteous caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 24

Thul-Hijjah 15, 1329

I. Why Relying on this Hadith

II. Restricted Succession is Unanimously Rejected

III. Revocation is Impossible

1. Sunnis rely on every correct hadith to confirm their concept of succession, be it mutawatir or not. We rely on the authenticity of this hadith in our argument against theirs simply because they themselves testify to its authenticity, thus binding themselves to what they have considered to be binding. Our own proof regarding succession from our viewpoint depends on its tawatur from our own sources, as is obvious to everyone.
2. The claim that 'Ali is the successor of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ only in his household is rejected due to the fact that whoever believes that 'Ali is the successor of the Messenger of Allah in his household also believes that he is his successor among the public as well, and whoever denies his succession over the public also denies his succession among his family. There is no way to separate one from the other; so, why bring up a philosophy which runs contrary to the consensus of all Muslims?
3. I cannot overlook your statement that this hadith is revoked, which contradicts both reason and Shari'a, since in order to abrogate, a statement has to be made before the effect of its precedent becomes manifest, as is clear to everyone. The only pretext for abrogation here is the allegation that the Prophet ﷺ supposedly refrained from [publicly] expounding on the gist of this hadith.

The hadith itself proves that he, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, did not refrain from doing so; rather, texts in this

meaning are consecutive, supporting one another. If we suppose that there is no text in the same meaning after this one, then how can it be proven that the Prophet ﷺ had changed his mind or refrained from its enforcement?

“They follow nothing other than their own whims and desires, after guidance from their Lord has already come unto them (Qur’an, 53:23)”

And peace be with you.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussions

Authenticity of the narrations

In our previous discussion we have demonstrated why the narrations cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn are unreliable. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn seems to have anticipated the possible questions and objections that his readers would have in mind. In order to dispel any doubts about what the narrations meant, his interlocutor had to accept the reliability of these narrations.

Interpreting the narration

The interpretation of the Ḥadīth would only be warranted if it were proven that the Ḥadīth met the criteria of acceptance, which we have already proven not to be the case. The supplementary narrations from *Musnad Ahmad* do not even indicate successorship over the entire Ummah, even if one were to concede their reliability.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has reversed the purport of these narrations saying that there is no basis for separating the major succession (authority over the entire Ummah) from minor succession (authority over the Prophet’s ﷺ blessed family). The entire argument is built on no foundation; there is no textual evidence to prove that ‘Ali رضي الله عنه was nominated for leadership after the Prophet ﷺ and the consensus which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn refers to exists only in his mind. Temporal and restricted leadership has many precedents in the Prophet’s ﷺ *Sīrah*. Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه appointment to lead the Ḥajj demonstrates both temporal and limited leadership. How then could anyone claim that there is *Ijmā’* on this issue, or that there is no record of any minor successorship?

Tawātur

The argument that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn raises — with the pen of his debater — is that mass-transmission [Tawātur] is necessary in order to establish the position of leadership. His counter argument is that the Ahl al-Sunnah believe that Tawātur

is not essential to establish the Khilāfah. This is where he conflates the doctrine of Imāmah with the concept of Khilāfah.

Everyone agrees that the Ummah requires leadership after the Prophet's ﷺ departure. The difference between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Twelver Shī'ah on this issue is whether the decision to nominate the leader after the Prophet's ﷺ demise was the responsibility of the Ummah, or whether there was divine nomination. The Twelver Shī'ah believe that 'Alī's ﷺ appointment after the Prophet ﷺ is a fundamental of faith and that his appointment was by divine decree.¹ The first among the Shī'ah to promote this belief was the Jew, 'Abd Allah ibn Saba'.²

Since the nomination of the leaders is by divine appointment, and Imāmah forms part of the essentials of the Twelver Shī'ī belief structure, it is necessary to provide unquestionable evidence to support any nomination. It appears that the only evidence of why the Imāms are to be accepted as Imāms is because the Imāms 'have said so'. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn would not be able to provide Ḥadīth from the Prophet ﷺ that reaches the level of Tawātur that supports the doctrine of Imāmah; even if he tried.

Abrogation

In order for something to be abrogated it would have to be legislated first. If it cannot be proven that the Prophet ﷺ nominated 'Alī ﷺ to begin with, what use is there in arguing that it had been repealed.

The Ahl al-Sunnah have, however, entertained the argument with the Shī'ah that *even if* the reports were reliable they are inadmissible as evidence for the claim that 'Alī ﷺ was divinely appointed. That is where the argument of *Naskh* [Abrogation] comes in. Instead of arguing with incidents which the Shī'ah might

1 *Fuṣūl al-Muhimmah Fī Uṣūl al-A'immah*, pg. 142.

2 *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, pg. 108-109, *Firaq al-Shī'ah* by al-Nawbakhtī, pg. 22.

object to, it would be more prudent to argue in light of the narrations that they are willing to accept.

Among the famous narrations that they cite is the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr. If the nomination at Ghadīr were to be seen as Prophetic appointment, that undermines the entire argument that has grown out of these narrations. Similarly, if the Prophet ﷺ wanted to write something on the Thursday prior to his demise, often referred to as the *Tragedy of Thursday*, it undermines both the purport of this narration as well as the narration of Ghadīr Khumm.

It is clear for anyone to see the inconsistencies in the line of reasoning the Shī'ah have adopted in interpreting these narrations; ignoring whether they are authentic or not.

As far as the Ahl al-Sunnah is concerned the nomination of their leader after the Prophet's ﷺ demise was the collective responsibility of the Ummah, and that the decision in appointment would lay with the people of counsel. The Prophet ﷺ did, however, suggest whom his preferred candidate was.

Qāsim ibn Muḥammad, the grandfather of Imām al-Bāqir, reports from 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها:

The Messenger ﷺ said, “Indeed, I was on the verge of calling Abū Bakr and his son, and entrust leadership to him for fear that people might speak or aspire to things. But Allah and the Believers refuse to have anyone but Abū Bakr.”¹

'Urwah narrates that 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها said:

The Messenger ﷺ said to me, “Call Abū Bakr and your brother for me so that I may write a letter. Indeed I fear that some aspiring person might

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, The Book of Laws, 6:6791

say I am more deserving, but Allah and the Believers refuse to have anyone but Abū Bakr.”¹

Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im said:

A woman came to the Messenger ﷺ and he instructed her to return to him later. She said, “What should I do if I return and I do not find you?” It was as if she was implying death.

He replied, “If you do not find me then go to Abū Bakr.”²

Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه relates:

The Messenger ﷺ said one day, “Who amongst you had a dream?”

A man replied, “I saw as if a scale descended from the heavens. Then you (the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr were weighed, and you outweighed Abū Bakr. Then Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were weighed, and Abū Bakr outweighed ‘Umar. Then ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān were weighed, and ‘Umar outweighed ‘Uthmān. Then the scale was lifted.”

Abū Bakrah said, “This upset the Messenger ﷺ and he then said, ‘A khilāfah on the pattern of Prophethood, then Allah will give the kingdom to whomever he wills thereafter.’”³

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه forward to lead the people in ṣalāh until he passed away. Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رضي الله عنه relates:

The Messenger ﷺ was ill and when his illness intensified, He said, “Order Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāh!”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with the commentary, 15:2387

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, The Chapter on the Merits of the Ṣaḥābah, 3459; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with its commentary, The Chapter on the Merits of the Ṣaḥābah, 15: 2386.

3 *Sunan Abū Dawūd*, The Chapter on the Sunnah, Ḥadīth: 4635; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, The Chapters of Dreams, Ḥadīth: 2403.

‘Ā’ishah then said, “Indeed, he is a soft-hearted man. When he stands in your place he will be unable to lead the people in ṣalāh.”

She then repeated herself and he said, “Order Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāh! Indeed you are of the women of Yūsuf.”

He then came to the Messenger and he led the people in ṣalāh during the life of the Messenger ﷺ.¹

Why would the Prophet ﷺ appoint Abū Bakr if ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had been appointed already? As a matter of fact, in the Prophet’s ﷺ final moments he appeared pleased with the fact that Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was leading them in ṣalāh, almost as if approving his candidacy for succession. Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه narrates:

Abū Bakr used to lead them in ṣalāh during the illness of the Messenger ﷺ in which he passed away. On Monday while they were standing in their rows, the Messenger ﷺ opened the curtain of the room and stood there gazing at us. As if his face was a page of the Qur’ān. He smiled and we were tempted to break our prayer out of happiness at the sight of the Messenger ﷺ. Abū Bakr stepped backwards to reach the row behind him thinking that the Messenger ﷺ had come out to the prayer. The Prophet ﷺ however, motioned to him to complete the prayer. He then lowered the screen and passed away later that day.²

Most importantly, even ‘Alī رضي الله عنه did not know that he was appointed. If he was previously appointed the following conversation with his uncle ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه would not have transpired:

‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said:

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib came out of the Messenger’s ﷺ home during his fatal illness.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, The Book of Congregation, Ḥadīth: 646.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 648.

The people asked, “O Abū al-Ḥasan, how is the health of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ this morning?”

‘Alī replied, “He has recovered with the Grace of Allah.”

‘Abbās grabbed him by the hand and said to him, “In three days you will be ruled (by somebody else), and by Allah, I feel that Allah’s Messenger will not survive this ailment. I know the look of death on the faces of the offspring of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Let us go to the Messenger ﷺ and ask him who will take over the Khilāfah. If it is given to us we will know, and if it is given to somebody else, we will inform him so that he may tell the new ruler to take care of us.”

‘Alī said, “By Allah, if we asked the Messenger ﷺ for it (the Khilāfah) and he denied us now, the people will never give it to us after that. By Allah, I will not ask Allah’s Messenger ﷺ for it.”¹

After considering all these texts, the argument of Naskh [Abrogation] is not farfetched at all. It would account for the variance between the text. However, since there is no textual evidence to prove that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه had been exclusively appointed, the entire discussion of possible interpretations and Naskh are merely theoretical and redundant as far as textual evidence goes.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth: 4447.

Letter 25

Thul-Hijjah 16, 1329

I. His Belief in the Text

II. Requesting More Texts

1. I have believed in the One Who has caused you to dissipate the darkness [of ignorance], clarify what is ambiguous, and made you one of His signs and a facet of His own manifestations.
2. May Allah bless your father, provide me with more such texts, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 26

Thul-Hijjah 17, 1329

I. Clear Texts Recounting Ten of ‘Ali’s Exclusive Merits

II. II. Why Rely Upon it

1. Suffices you, besides the hadith of the Household, what Imam Ahmad has indicated in Vol. 1 of his book *Al-Mustadrak*, and al-Thahbi in his Concise, who both admit its authenticity, as well as other authors of the sunan from generally accepted avenues. They all quote ‘Umar ibn Maymun saying: “I was sitting once in the company of Ibn ‘Abbas when nine men came to him and said ‘O Ibn ‘Abbas! Either come to debate with us, or tell these folks that you prefer a private debate.’ He had not lost his eye-sight yet. He said: ‘I rather debate with you.’ So they started talking, but I was not sure exactly what they were talking about. Then he stood up and angrily said: ‘They are debating about a man who has ten merits nobody else ever had. They are arguing about a man whom the holy Prophet ﷺ has said, ‘I shall dispatch a man whom Allah shall never humiliate, one who loves Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and who is loved by both,’ so each one of them thought to him such an honour belonged.

The holy Prophet ﷺ inquired about ‘Ali. When the latter came unto him, with his eyes swelling in ailment, he ﷺ blew in his eyes, shook the standard thrice and gave it to him. ‘Ali came back victorious with Safiyya bint Huyay [al-Akhtab] among his captives.” Ibn ‘Abbas proceeded to say, “Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent someone with surat al-Tawbah, but he had to send ‘Ali after him to discharge the responsibility, saying: ‘Nobody can discharge it except a man who is of me, and I am of him.”” Ibn ‘Abbas also said, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, with ‘Ali sitting beside him, asked his cousins once: ‘Who among you elects to be my wali in this life and the life hereafter?’

They all declined, but ‘Ali said: ‘I would like to be your wali in this life and the life to come,’ whereupon he ﷺ responded by saying: ‘You are, indeed, my wali in this life and the life hereafter.’” Ibn ‘Abbas continues to say that ‘Ali was the first person to accept Islam after Khadija, and that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ took his own robe and put it over ‘Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, then recited the verse saying:

“Allah wishes to remove all abomination from you, O Ahl al-Bayt [people of my household] and purify you with a perfect purification (Qur’an, 33:33).”

He has also said: “‘Ali bought his own soul. He put on the Prophet’s garment and slept in his bed when the infidels sought to murder him,” till he says: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ went on Tabuk expedition accompanied by many people. ‘Ali asked him: ‘May I join you?’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ refused, whereupon ‘Ali wept. The Prophet ﷺ then asked him: ‘Does it not please you that your status to me is similar to that of Aaron’s to Moses, except there is no Prophet after me? It is not proper for me to leave this place before assigning you as my vicegerent.’ The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has also said the following to him: ‘You are the wali of every believing man and woman.’”

Ibn ‘Abbas has said: “The Messenger of Allah closed down all doors leading to his mosque except that of ‘Ali who used to enter the mosque on his way out even while in the state of janaba. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has also said: ‘Whoever accepts me as the wali, let him/her take ‘Ali as the wali, too.’”

As a matter of fact, al-Hakim, having counted the sources from which he quoted this hadith, comments by saying, “This is an authentic hadith according to isnad, yet both shaykhs did not narrate it this way.” Al-Thahbi has quoted it in his Talkhis and described it as an authentic hadith.

2. Clear and irrefutable proofs highlight the fact that ‘Ali was the Prophet’s vicegerent. Have you noticed how the Prophet ﷺ has named him wali in this life and the life to come, thus favouring him over all his kin, and how he regarded his status to himself as similar to that of Aaron to Moses, without any exception other than Prophethood, and exception which reflects generality?

You also know that what distinguished Aaron from Moses was mostly his being the vizier of his brother, his de facto participation in his brother’s Message, his vicegerency, and the enforcement by Moses of people’s obedience to Aaron as his statement, to which references is included in the Holy Qur’an (20:29-32), and which clearly says: “And let my brother Aaron, from among my household, be my vizier, to support me and take part in my affair,” and his statement:

“Be my own representative among my people; reform them, and do not follow the path of corrupters (Qur’an 7:142),”

and the Almighty’s response:

“O Moses! Granted is your prayer (Qur’an 20:36).”

According to this text, ‘Ali is the Prophet’s vicegerent among his people, his vizier among his kin, his partner in his undertaking - not in Prophethood - his successor, the best among his people, and the most worthy of their leadership alive or dead. They owed him obedience during the Prophet’s lifetime as the Prophet’s vizier, just as Aaron’s people had to obey Aaron during the lifetime of Moses.

Whoever becomes familiar with the status hadith will immediately consider its deep implications without casting any doubt at the gist of its context. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has made this very clear when he said: “It is not proper for me to leave this place before assigning you as my vicegerent.”

It is a clear text regarding his succession; nay, it even suggests that had the Prophet ﷺ left without doing so, he would have done something he was not supposed to have done. This is so only because he was commanded by the Almighty to assign him as his own successor according to the meaning of the verse saying:

“O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, and if you do not do it, then you have not conveyed His Message at all (Qur’an 5:67).”

Anyone who examines the phrase “then you have not conveyed His Message at all,” then examines the Prophet’s statement: “It is not proper for me to leave this place before assigning you as my vicegerent,” will find them both aiming at the same conclusion, as is quite obvious.

We should also not forget the Prophet’s hadith saying: “You are the wali of every believer after me.” It is a clear reference to the fact that he is the Prophet’s wali and the one who takes his place, as al-Kumait, may Allah have mercy on his soul, has implied when he said: “A great Vicegerent, a fountain-head of piety, an educator!” And peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Discussions

Post-humous correspondence confirmed

It was necessary to wait until this point to reveal the extent of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deceit and expose the entire correspondence as a charade. In letter 20 ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn listed all the references where the versions of the Ḥadīth could be found. Among those references cited was a Ḥadīth narrated in *al-Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim vol. 3 pg. 132.¹ This is interesting since the Shaykh al-Azhar allegedly researched these narrations and confirms their reliability. However, this is not possible.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn could never have cited a reference to al-Ḥākim’s *Mustadrak* with page and volume number in any correspondence dated 1329 A.H; since the book had not yet been published! The earliest printed version of *al-Mustadrak* was published in Hyderabad, India in the year 1340 A.H; over ten years after the alleged correspondence and five years after Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī’s demise! The page and volume numbers cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn match the Hyderabad edition of *al-Mustadrak*. So, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn either found a way to travel to the future to cite the volume and page number from *al-Mustadrak* in his correspondence or Shaykh Salīm communicated to him from beyond the grave!

Issues with the Isnād

Before addressing the issues pertaining to the Isnād it is important that we clarify that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is one of the greatest of the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions and he is his beloved cousin and son-in-law. For us, loving ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is part of our faith and any hatred towards him is considered a sign of hypocrisy.

That being said, our love for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is determined by the Sharī‘ah and not by raw emotions. We accept *all* the virtues that have authentically been reported in respect to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Unfortunately, due to unsanctioned emotional attachment

1 See letter 20 of *al-Murāja‘āt*.

to our master, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, people have falsely attributed words to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ which are meant to elevate the status of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. In all honesty, we believe that these people do not realise the lofty status that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ actually occupies; and they feel that they have to compensate the assumed ‘lack of status’ by inventing Aḥādīth to establish the status they feel he deserves. It is in this light that our investigation of these narrations ought to be viewed.

This narration is found in *Musnad Aḥmad*¹ with the following Isnād:

Yaḥyā ibn Ḥammād — Abū ‘Awānah — **Abū Balj** — ‘Amr ibn Maymūn — Ibn ‘Abbās

The same narration appears in *al-Mustadrak*² with the following Isnād:

Abū Bakr, Aḥmad ibn Ja‘far al-Qaṭī — ‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal — Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal — Yaḥyā ibn Ḥammād — Abū ‘Awānah — **Abū Balj** — ‘Amr ibn Maymūn — Ibn ‘Abbās

We notice that the narration in *al-Mustadrak* is in essence the narration in *Musnad Aḥmad*, and that al-Ḥākim narrates it by way of Imām Aḥmad. Therefore, any problems with the Isnād in *Musnad Aḥmad* applies equally to the Isnād in *al-Mustadrak*.

Abū Nu‘aym, after quoting a phrase from this narration, points out that this narration — with this wording — is only known with this Isnād; by way of **Abū Balj**, from ‘Amr.³

Abū Balj Yaḥyā ibn Sulaym

The narrator in question is Abū Balj; his full name is Yaḥyā ibn Sulaym (or Ibn

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol.1 pg.331 (old Egyptian print); vol.5 pgs.178-181 (Risālah edition).

2 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 132.

3 *Al-Hilyah*, vol. 4 pg. 153.

Abī Sulaym) al-Fazārī al-Kūfī. Opinions varied among the scholars in terms of his reliability as a narrator.¹

Some of the scholars like Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn Saʿd, and al-Nasāʾī were inclined to accepting his narrations. Others, like al-Bukhārī and al-Jūzajānī considered him weak in general. Though, others say that his level is tolerable, his solitary narrations cannot be relied upon.

Imām Ahmad, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn ʿAdī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Dhahabī all agree that the narration of his via ʿAmr ibn Maymūn, from Ibn ʿAbbās wherein he mentions that the Prophet ﷺ instructed the companions — with the exception of ʿAlī — to cover up their doors which led to the Masjid, is an unreliable narration.

This brings us to the authentication of this narration by al-Dhahabī in his abridgement of *al-Mustadrak*. The reality is that al-Dhahabī's abridgement of *al-Mustadrak* was his first academic work, one that he compiled at the beginning of his career in the field of Ḥadīth. *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* is a much later work of his. Therefore, his authentication of this narration is officially retracted.

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī has provided another perspective on this Isnād. He points out that there is a subtle defect in this chain citing Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī ibn Saʿīd al-Azdī of Egypt. He suggests that Abū Balj might have erred in naming the teacher from whom he received this narration; confusing it with another by the name of Maymūn. This teacher of his is Abū ʿAbd Allah Maymūn Mawlā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah, who is considered a weak narrator.

Abū ʿAbd Allah Maymūn Mawlā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah

Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn said Maymūn Mawlā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah is worthless as a narrator.² Furthermore, al-Dhahabī provides a sample of his baseless

1 *Al-Majrūhīn* by Ibn Hibbān, vol. 3 pg. 113, *al-Kāmil* by Ibn ʿAdī, vol. 9 pg. 80, *al-Ḍuʿafā wal-Matrūkīn* by Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 3 pg. 196, *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl*, vol. 4 pg. 384, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* by Ibn Ḥajar, vol. 12 pg. 47.

2 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl*, vol. 4 pg. 235.

narrations and it comes as no surprise that he lists the detail of the Prophet ﷺ instructing that all doors — besides the door of ‘Alī ﷺ — leading into the Masjid be sealed up.¹

To test Ḥāfiẓ ibn Rajab’s theory we listed all the narrations from Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ which have been narrated by ‘Amr ibn Maymūn. Initially we used *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf*² by Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī which is an encyclopedic index of all the narrations found in the six canonical collections. Then it occurred to us to expand the scope of the sources so we referred to *Ithāf al-Maharah*³ by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī wherein he indexed all the narrations appearing in eleven major sources beyond the six canonical collections. These include: *Musnad al-Dārimī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Khuzaymah*, *Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān*, *al-Muntaqā* of Ibn Jārūd, *Mustakhraj Abī ‘Awānah*, *al-Mustadrak*, *Sunan al-Dāraquṭnī*, *al-Muwaṭṭa’*, *Musnad al-Shāfi’ī*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and *Sharḥ Ma‘ānī al-Āthār*.

The findings of this investigation appear to support Ibn Rajab’s theory as the narrations from Ibn ‘Abbās in all seventeen collections from ‘Amr ibn Maymūn is solely by way of Abū Balj. Furthermore, the only narrations which appear in these collections are parts of this lengthy narration. No other details have been narrated by this chain.

This means that all the major students of ‘Amr ibn Maymūn do not corroborate what Abū Balj narrates from ‘Amr ibn Maymūn, which increases the likelihood of this being an undeliberate error on the part of Abū Balj Yaḥyā ibn Sulaym.

The textual inconsistencies with this Ḥadīth

Before addressing the textual inconsistencies with this Ḥadīth it is necessary to point out the extent of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deceit. The author mentions that the

1 Ibid.

2 *Tuḥfat al-Ashrāf*, vol. 4 pg. 649.

3 *Ithāf al-Maharah*, vol. 6 pg. 660-661.

Ḥadīth speaks about ten merits for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه yet he only lists nine. As a matter of fact the Ḥadīth lists more than ten merits as we shall point out shortly.

1. Sahl ibn Sa’d reported that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said on the Day of Khaybar:

I would certainly give this flag to a person at whose hand Allah would grant victory and who loves Allah and His Messenger; and Allah and His Messenger love him also. The people spent the night thinking as to whom it would be given. When it was morning the people hastened to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم all of them hoping that it would be given to him.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Where is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib?”

They replied, “O Messenger of Allah, his eyes are sore.”

He then sent for him and he was brought and the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم applied saliva to his eyes and invoked blessings and he was cured, as if he had no ailment at all. He was then given the flag.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه said, “O Messenger of Allah, shall I fight them until they are like us?”

Thereupon the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “Advance cautiously until you reach their open places, thereafter invite them to Islam and inform them what is obligatory for them from the rights of Allah, for, by Allah, if Allah guides even one person through you that is better for you than to possess the most valuable of the camels.”¹

The general meaning of this element of the narration appears to be corroborated. There are, however, slight variations in the way the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم statement to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is worded.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Jihād, Ḥadīth: 2942; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth: 2406.

2. Jabir رضي الله عنه narrates:

When the Prophet returned from the ‘Umrah of Jī‘irrānah, he sent Abū Bakr to lead the Ḥajj. We departed with him and when he was in al-‘Arj, the Iqāmah for morning prayers was said, and before he could say the Takbīr to commence the prayer he heard the grunting of a camel behind him, and so he paused and said, “This is the grunting of the camel of the Messenger of Allah صلی الله علیه وسلم. Perhaps he will join the Ḥajj [this year], since he is here we will rather pray behind him.”

However, it was ‘Alī رضي الله عنه on his camel. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said to him, “(Have you come) as a leader or as messenger?”

He said, “No, as a messenger sent by the Messenger of Allah صلی الله علیه وسلم with (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah to recite it to the people in the stations of Ḥajj.” And thus we went to Makkah.

One day before the Day of Tarwiyah Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه stood up and addressed the people telling them about their rituals. When he finished, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, stood up and recited the [ultimatum in Sūrah] al-Barā’ah to the people until he finished it. Then we went out with him and on the Day of ‘Arafah. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه stood up and addressed the people, telling them about the rituals. When he finished, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, stood up and recited the [ultimatum in Sūrah] al-Barā’ah to the people until he finished it. Then on the Day of Sacrifice, we departed and when Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه returned, he addressed the people, telling them about their departure (Ifāḍah), sacrifice, and rituals. When he finished, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, stood up and recited the [ultimatum in Sūrah] al-Barā’ah to the people until he finished it. On the first day of Departure (12th of Dhul-Ḥijjah), Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه stood up and addressed the people, telling them how to stone the Jamarāt, and teaching them their rituals. When he had finished, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, stood up and recited the [ultimatum in Sūrah] al-Barā’ah to the people until he finished it.¹

1 Sunan al-Nasā’ī, Kitāb al-Ḥajj, Hadīth: 2993.

We learn from this incident that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه prayed behind Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه throughout the Ḥajj without objection; just as he sat, listening to the sermons of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه throughout this Ḥajj. If this was reason for ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه nomination why did he have to follow Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه? As for the statement that none can convey except a family member of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم it was merely upholding the Arab custom when announcing an ultimatum, especially since the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had pledged sanctuary to many tribes who remained on their old ways.

3. The element wherein the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم offers his relatives to be his Walī in this life and the next is only found in the narrations that we have already discussed in the previous letters. This is the common ground between this narration and the ones in our previous discussion. One might assume that this narration corroborates that which is mentioned in the earlier ones. The question is which version? Each version has unique details that excludes each narration from supporting the other.¹ The meaning of the word Walī will be discussed. The other narration about *Mu’ākhāt* (bonds of brotherhood), “You are my brother in the world and the Hereafter,” is considered baseless. Tirmidhī, Ibn ‘Adī, and Ḥākīm all narrate it from a narrator called Ḥākīm ibn Jubayr — from Jamī ibn ‘Umayr.

Ḥākīm ibn Jubayr is a weak narrator, whilst Jamī ibn ‘Umayr is a known fabricator about whom Ibn Ḥibbān said:

He is a Rāfiḍī who fabricates aḥādīth.

Ibn Numayr said about him:

He was of the most deceitful people.²

1 Refer to pg. 395 of this book.

2 *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* by al-Dhahabī: vol. 1, p. 421, Ḥadīth: 1552.

Ibn Taymiyyah says about the aḥādīth of the mu'ākhāt:

It appears that all of them were fabricated.¹

4. Al-Tirmidhī cites the narration from Abū Balj that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the first to accept Islam. Immediately thereafter he indicates that this narration is narrated with an uncorroborated Isnād, hinting to the fact that it cannot be relied upon independantly.² He goes on to say that the scholars have differed over who was the first person to accept Islam. He attempts to harmonise between conflicting narrations by saying that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the first among the youth to accept Islam and that his age was around 8 at the time. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would be the first adult male to accept Islam. To support this he presents another narration wherein he states that a man from the Anṣār commented that Zayd ibn Arqam said, “The first to accept Islam was ‘Alī.” ‘Amr ibn Murrah said, “I mentioned that to Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī, and he disagreed saying, ‘The first to accept Islam was Abū Bakr.’”³
5. There is no disagreement that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was under the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cloak. This issue has already been discussed in detail under letter 12.⁴
6. The details of the events during the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Hijrah here are not consistent with what has been accurately recorded. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has conveniently abridged the story, deliberately omitting the fact that Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was mentioned as the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ companion on the Hijrah. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deceit aside, this version of events is inaccurate since it gives the impression that Abū Bakr came to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ house looking for him and it was ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who gave him directions. If one considers

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 7, p. 361; Refer also to *al-Silsilat al-Mawḍū‘ah* by al-Albānī, vol. 1, p. 355-366.

2 Al-Tirmidhī, *Abwāb al-Manāqib*, Ḥadīth: 3734.

3 *Ibid.*

4 Refer to pg. 181 of this book.

the detailed preparations that Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه had made it becomes evident that the details mentioned in this version are inaccurate.

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها narrates:

Some Muslims emigrated to Abyssinia and Abū Bakr also prepared himself for the emigration, but the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said (to him), “Wait, for I hope that Allah will allow me also to emigrate.”

Abū Bakr said, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you. Do you expect to emigrate (soon)?”

The Prophet said, “Yes.”

So Abū Bakr waited to accompany the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and fed two she-camels he had on the leaves of an acacia tree regularly for four months. One day while we were sitting in our house at midday, someone said to Abū Bakr, “Here is the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, coming with his head and a part of his face covered with a cloth at an hour he never used to come to us.”

Abū Bakr said, “May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, (O Prophet)! An urgent matter must have brought you here at this hour.”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم came and asked permission to enter, and he was allowed. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم entered and said to Abū Bakr, “Let those who are with you excuse themselves.”

Abū Bakr replied, “There is no stranger; they are your family. Let my father be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah!”

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “I have been allowed to leave (Makkah).”

Abū Bakr said, “Shall I accompany you, O Messenger of Allah, May my father be sacrificed for you?”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Yes,”

Abū Bakr said, “O Messenger of Allah! May my father be sacrificed for you. Take one of these two she camels of mine.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I will take it only after paying its price.”

So we prepared their baggage and put their journey food in a leather bag; and Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr cut a piece of her girdle and tied the mouth of the leather bag with it. That is why she was called Dhāt al-Niṭāqayn.

Then the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr went to a cave in a mountain called Thawr and remained there for three nights. ‘Abd Allah ibn Abī Bakr, who was a young intelligent man, used to stay with them at night and leave before dawn so that in the morning, he would be with the Quraysh in Makkah as if he had spent the night among them. If he heard of any plot contrived by the Quraysh against the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr, he would understand it and (return to) inform them of it when it became dark. ‘Āmir ibn Fuhayrah, the freed slave of Abū Bakr used to graze a flock of sheep for them and he used to take those sheep to them a while after the ‘Ishā prayer. They would sleep till ‘Āmir awakened them when it was still dark. He used to do that in each of those three nights...¹

How would the son of Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه know where to find his father if Abū Bakr رضى الله عنه himself was in the dark as to the Prophet’s ﷺ whereabouts when he left for Hijrah?

The inconsistencies are becoming increasingly evident.

7. The original narration that addresses the Prophet ﷺ leaving ‘Alī رضى الله عنه behind on the expedition of Tabūk has been added to. Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضى الله عنه narrates:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Libās, ḥadīth: 5807.

The Prophet ﷺ left Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib behind for the Battle of Tabūk. He said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you leaving me behind with the women and the children?”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Does it not please you that you are to me, in the position Hārūn was to Mūsā (when he left to speak to his Lord) except that there is no Prophet after me?”¹

The phrases, “It is not proper for me to leave this place before assigning you as my vicegerent,” and “You are the wali of every believing man and woman,” do not exist in the authentic versions. The Prophet ﷺ undertook many journeys and he did not leave ‘Alī رضي الله عنه behind. As a matter of fact when he went for Ḥajj — which was after Tabūk — he did not leave ‘Alī رضي الله عنه behind. Add to this that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was left behind to look after the Prophet’s ﷺ family specifically. He was put in charge of the women and children. How does that give him authority over every believing man and woman? This is further evidence that the details mentioned here do not align with what is mentioned in the rigorously authenticated narrations.

8. The authentic versions mention that it was Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه door which the Prophet ﷺ ordered to be kept open and all others besides it be sealed. Abū Sa’īd Al-Khudrī relates:

The Prophet ﷺ delivered a sermon and said, “Allah gave a choice to one of (His) slaves either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter. He chose the latter.”

Abū Bakr began to weep.

I said to myself, “What is this old man weeping for, if Allah gave a choice to one (of His) slaves either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter and he chose the latter?”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 3503; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 2404.

(However) that slave was Allah’s Messenger ﷺ; he was referring to himself. Abū Bakr was more knowledgeable than us.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Abū Bakr! Do not cry.”

The Prophet ﷺ then added, “Abū Bakr has been my greatest benefactor with his property and company. If I were to take a *Khalīl* (close friend) other than Allah, I would certainly have taken Abū Bakr. It is enough that we share the Islamic bond of brotherhood and friendship. No door leading into the Masjid is to be left open besides the door of Abū Bakr.”¹

A similar narration to this is also recorded from ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*.² As a matter of interest al-Bukhārī has included the wording of the Ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه under the chapter-heading where he cites the Ḥadīth of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه. He is alluding to the fact that the narration which mentions that only the door of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is to be left open is an anomalous version.

9. What is the meaning of *Mawlā*? Ibn Taymiyyah has a thorough discussion on the meaning of this term. He writes:

There is nothing in the statement which clearly indicates that the word (*Mawlā*) means the *khalīfah*. That is because the word *Mawlā* is similar to the word *walī*. Allah says:

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

Your [Walī] ally is none but Allah, and also His Messenger and those who have believed. ³

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Ḥadīth: 3654.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalah, Ḥadīth: 467.

3 *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*: 55

وَأِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ
ظُهُورٌ

But if you support one another against him - then indeed Allah is his [Mawlā] **protector**, as well as Jibrīl and all righteous believers, and the angels, moreover, are [his] assistants.¹

Allah explains that the Messenger ﷺ is the walī (friend) of the believers and that they are his friends as well. In the same manner Allah is the friend of the believers and they are His friends, and likewise the believers are friends of one another, since friendship is the opposite of enmity and it is established from two sides.

If one of the two friends is greater than the other in status then his friendship is a form of goodwill and the friendship of the other is a form of obedience and worship. This is similar to the way Allah loves the believers and they love Him. Friendship is therefore the opposite of enmity, warring, and deception. The disbelievers do not love Allah and (instead) oppose Him and His Messenger and take Him as an enemy.

Allah says:

لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ

Do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies.²

In similar manner Allah says:

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ

If you do not, then be informed of a war (against you) from Allah and His Messenger.³

1 Sūrah al-Taḥrīm: 4

2 Sūrah al-Mumtaḥinah: 1

3 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 279

Allah is the friend of the believers and their Mawlā, removing them from the darkness to the light. If that is the case then the meaning of Allah being the friend of the believers and their Mawlā, and the Messenger ﷺ being their friend and their Mawlā, and ‘Alī (also) being their Mawlā, refers to friendship, good relationship and support.

The believers have pledged to Allah and His Messenger such allegiance that excludes the possibility of enmity. This ruling, however, applies to all believers. ‘Alī is included among the believers, whose description is that they take other believers as their friends and allies and they take him as their friend and ally.

This ḥadīth therefore establishes ‘Alī’s allegiance inwardly and affirms that he is deserving of friendship inwardly and outwardly. This dispels whatever has been said against him by his enemies from the Khawārij and the Nawāṣib.

There is nothing in the ḥadīth to prove that the believers have no other Mawlā besides ‘Alī. How can that be inferred when the Prophet ﷺ had many Mawlās, namely, the pious believers—which includes ‘Alī عليه السلام by way of priority—who took him as their friend? The Prophet ﷺ said that the tribes of Aslam, Ghifār, Muzaynah, Juhaynah, Quraysh, and the Anṣār, had no Mawlā besides Allah and his Messenger¹. Allah made them the Mawlās of the Messenger ﷺ just as He made the pious believers His Mawlās, and Allah and His Messenger ﷺ their Mawlā.

In summary, there is a slight difference between Walī and Mawlā, and a significant difference between these terms and Wālī (governor). The meaning of Wilāyah (the opposite of enmity) is at one end of the spectrum, and the term wilāyah referring to leadership is at the other. The wilāyah spoken of in the ḥadīth refers to the former and not the latter. The Prophet ﷺ did not say, “Whoever I am his wālī (governor) ‘Alī is his wālī.” The word used (in the ḥadīth) is “Whoever’s Mawlā I am, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”

1 Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, Bāb dhikr Aslam, wa Ghifār, wa Muzaynah, wa Juhaynah, wa Ashja’, Ḥadīth: 3321.

The word *Mawlā* cannot refer to *wālī* (governor) since friendship is established mutually. Indeed, the believers are the friends of Allah and He is their *Mawlā* (guardian).

As for the Prophet ﷺ being more worthy of them (the believers) than themselves, this is only established for the Prophet ﷺ as it is a unique feature of his prophethood. If we assume that he instated a *khalīfah* to be the leader after him that would not mean he is more worthy of every believer than himself in the same manner that the Prophet's ﷺ wives will not be his wives. If this meaning was intended then he would have said, "Whoever I am more worthy of him than himself, 'Alī is more worthy of him than himself," but no one has said this and no one has transmitted this, and its meaning is definitely false. The Prophet's ﷺ being more worthy of every believer than himself is an established matter in his life and death.

The *khalīfah* of 'Alī, on the assumption of its existence, only came into being after the Prophet's ﷺ death. It did not exist during the Prophet's ﷺ life. Therefore, it is not possible for 'Alī عليه السلام to have been the *khalīfah* during the era of the Prophet ﷺ and he could not therefore be more worthy of every believer than himself, rather, he could not have been the *Mawlā* of any believer if what is intended is the *khalīfah*. This is amongst the factors which prove that *khalīfah* was not intended. The fact that he is a friend of every believer is established during the era of the Prophet ﷺ, whose implementation was not postponed until the Prophet's demise as opposed to the *khalīfah* which could only come into effect after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, it is known that this (what is mentioned in the *ḥadīth*) is not that which the *Rāfiḍah* intend.

'Alī being the *Mawlā* of every believer is true during the life of the Messenger ﷺ, his death, and even after the death of 'Alī. Even today 'Alī remains the "*Mawlā*" of every believer even though he is not the governor over the people. In a similar manner all the believers are friends of one another living and deceased.¹

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 7 pgs. 322-325.

10. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn has omitted the fact that in this narration Ibn 'Abbās includes the fact that 'Alī رضي الله عنه was present at the Bay'ah al-Riḍwān in which Allah praises all who were present. This is an accolade which includes close to 1500 of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم.
11. The incident of Ḥātib ibn Abī Balta'ah concludes this narration. The point being mentioned here was that 'Alī رضي الله عنه was also present at Badr, as were over 300 of his brothers رضي الله عنهم. Obviously this is counterproductive to 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's mission so he simply omitted it in his correspondence. If the Shaykh al-Azhar had studied the narration he would have raised an objection stronger than ours!

The remaining discussions take shape over the course of the next series of 'correspondence'. It would be best if these issues are addressed comprehensively over the course of the pending discussions.

Letter 27

Thul-Hijjah 18, 1329

I. Raising Doubts About the Status Hadith

The “status hadith” is authentic and well-known, but al-Amidi, who verified and ascertained hadith, and who is considered the master of the science of usul, has doubted its sources and suspected its narrators. Your debater may uphold al-Amidi’s view; so, how can you prove him wrong? And peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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Letter 28

Thul-Hijjah 19, 1329

I. The Status Hadith Stands on Most Solid Grounds

II. Binding Proofs

III. Its Sunni Narrators

IV. Why al-Amidi Suspects It

1. Al-Amidi has done nobody injustice except his own self by casting doubt about the authenticity of this hadith which is one of the most accurate sunan and a most solid legacy.
2. Nobody else has doubted its accuracy, nor did anyone else dare to argue about its grounds. Even al-Thahbi, who is a most prejudiced narrator, has admitted its accuracy in his Talkhis *Al-Mustadrak*¹. Ibn Hajar al-Haithami, in spite of his antagonistic views embedded in his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, has quoted this hadith in his chapter on "Al-Shubuhah," citing statements by the foremost narrators of hadith testifying to its accuracy; so, refer to that book. Had this hadith not been accurate, al-Bukhari would not have included it in his book, in spite of his prejudice when it comes to counting 'Ali's merits and those of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Mu'awiyah was the leader of the oppressive gang. He stood in enmity against the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, fought him, cursed him from Muslims' pulpits and ordered people to do likewise. Yet, in spite of his insolent hostility, he never doubted the status hadith. Nor has Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas exaggerated when he, according to Muslim, was asked by Mu'awiyah why he hesitated to denounce "Abu Turab;" he answered him by saying:² "

I remember three ahadith of the Messenger of Allah which I have personally heard, because of which I shall never curse him. Had I had just one of his exclusive merits, it would have been more precious for me than a herd of the choicest red camels. I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, who was then accompanied by a few people participating in some of his campaigns, saying to 'Ali: 'Are you not pleased that your status to me is similar to that of Aaron to Moses except that there will be no Prophet after me?'"³ Mu'awiyah was dumbfounded, and he could not utter a word or pressure Sa'd.

In addition to all of this, Mu'awiyah himself has narrated the same hadith. Ibn Hajar says in his book *Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqa*:⁴ "Ahmad has said that a man once asked Mu'awiyah a question and his answer was: 'Forward your question to 'Ali because he is more knowledgeable.' Yet the man said: 'Your own answer to this matter is dearer to me than that of 'Ali.'

Mu'awiyah was angry, and he said: 'What a bad statement you have uttered! You hate a man whom the Messenger of Allah used to gorge with knowledge? He even told him that his status to him was like that of Aaron to Moses except that there would be no Prophet after him? Whenever 'Umar was confused about a matter, he sought 'Ali's advice....'"⁵ In short, the status hadith is considered, according to the consensus of all Muslims, regardless of their sects and inclinations, to be authentic.

3. Authors of both Al-Jami' Baynal Sihah Al-Sitta and Al-Jami' Bayna Rijal al-Sahihain have quoted it, and it is included in Bukhari's chapter on the Battle of Tabuk in his Sahih, in Muslim's chapter on 'Ali's merits in his Sahih, in a chapter on the attributes of the Prophet's companions in Ibn Majah's sunan, and in a chapter on 'Ali's merits in Hakim's *Al-Mustadrak*. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal has quoted it in his Musnad from several different reporters. Ibn 'Abbas, Asma' bint 'Amis, Abu Sa'd al-Khudri, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan,⁶ and many other companions have all narrated it as recorded in the musnad.

Al-Tabrani has quoted it as narrated by Asma' bint 'Amis, Umm Salamah, Habis ibn Janadah, Ibn 'Umar, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عليه السلام,⁷ and many others. Al-Bazzaz has included it in his Musnad,⁸ and so has al-Tirmithi in his Sahih⁹ depending on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri. In Al-Isti'ab, in a chapter dealing with 'Ali, the author quotes Ibn 'Abdul Birr narrating it, then he comments thus: "This is one of the most reliable and accurate ahadith narrated about the Prophet by Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas." Sa'd's references are numerous and are enumerated by Ibn Abu Khayth'amah and others. Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Umm Salamah, Asma' bint Amis, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah, and quite a few other traditionists have all narrated it."

As a matter of fact, whoever researches the Battle of Tabuk and refers to books of traditions and biographies will find them mentioning this hadith. Those who have written biographies of 'Ali, among authors of glossaries of ancient as well as modern times, regardless of their inclinations and sectarian preferences, have all quoted this hadith. It is also quoted by anyone who writes about the merits of Ahl al-Bayt, those of the Imams among the companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and by others before or after his time. It is a hadith taken for granted by all past Muslim generations.

4. There is no lesson to learn about the doubt cast by al-Amidi regarding this hadith in his Musnad, since the man knows nothing about the science of traditions, and his knowledge about musnads and narrators is the knowledge of illiterate commoners who do not know the meaning of hadith. In fact, his own extensive knowledge in the science of usul is the reason why he has fallen in such a dilemma. According to the requirements of usul, he saw it to be a correct hadith which he could not get rid of except by suspecting its isnad, thinking that that would be possible. Indeed, that was only his unattainable desire, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
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1. Letter No. 26 contains his admission of its authenticity.
2. This occurs in his section dealing with 'Ali's virtues at the beginning of page 324, Vol. 2, of his Sahih.
3. Al-Hakim, too, quotes it at the beginning of page 109, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, admitting its authenticity due to its being endorsed by Muslim.
4. This occurs in the fifth maqсад of Al-Maqasid when the author discusses verse 14 in Section 11, page 107, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
5. He says that others have quoted it, and that some added to it "Get up; may Allah never allow you to stand up," and his name is omitted from the diwan, to the end of his quotation on page 107 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. This proves that a group of late traditionists besides Ahmad has quoted the status hadith from Mu'awiyah.
6. As we mentioned in the beginning of this Letter, quoting the fifth maqсад of the Maqasid of verse 14 of the verses discussed in Chapter 11, Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 107.
7. As Ibn Hajar describes in the first hadith of the forty ones which he discusses in the second section of chapter 9, page 72, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. Al-Sayyuti has stated the following while discussing 'Ali عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in his chapter on the righteous caliphs: "Al-Tabrani has quoted this hadith from all these men, adding to them Asma' bint Qays."
8. Al-Sayyuti indicates so while discussing 'Ali عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in his chapter on the caliphs on page 65.
9. As attested to by hadith 2504 of the hadith of Kanz al-'Ummal, page 152, Volume 6.

Discussions

Why quote al-Āmidī?

We have already pointed out that the reference to *al-Mustadrak* could only have been possible if the correspondence took place after 1340 A.H. If we commence this discussion keeping in mind that it is nothing more than a tale of fiction, we need to realise the agenda behind citing al-Āmidī; and whether he has been faithfully represented.

Firstly, a novice would know better than to cite al-Āmidī in matters relating to Ḥadīth as this was not his field. It is no different from asking a dentist to perform heart surgery.

Since *al-Murāja'āt* is more about propaganda than academics, it would seem wise to make the opponent look desperate, and his arguments erratic. The earnest reader would let his guard down on the purport of the Ḥadīth since the debater who is meant to represent the Ahl al-Sunnah appears to be grasping at straws to find a way to declare it unreliable. It also gives 'Abd al-Ḥusayn the perfect platform to tutor his opponent on Ḥadīth sciences; giving the reader the impression that he has expert command of the subject.

Accusation of bigotry

The next step are ad hominem outbursts against scholars from the Ahl al-Sunnah. He accuses them of bigotry among other accusations. The facts, however, speak for themselves. None of the scholars that he has mentioned have concealed any of the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt.

The accusation of Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه cursing 'Alī رضي الله عنه has no historical truth.

Al-Qurṭubi writes:

It is farfetched that Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه would openly curse and abuse him on account of what Mu'āwiyah had been described with in terms of

intelligence, religiousness, forbearance, and general good manners. As for what has been narrated of him in this regard most of it is a lie and unfounded.¹

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Kathīr debunked this myth in *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* saying that there is no basis for the accusation of instuting the cursing of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.²

There has been some confusion over what Imām Muslim narrates by way of ‘Āmir ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqaṣ from his father that:

Mu’awiyah called for him [Sa’d] and said: “What prevents you from abusing Abu al-Turāb,” whereupon he said, “It is because of three things which I remember Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم having said about him that I would not abuse him and even if I had one of those three accolades, it would be dearer to me than the red camels. I heard Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم say about ‘Alī as he left him behind in one of his campaigns. ‘Alī said to him, ‘O Messenger of Allah, you leave me behind along with women and children?’ Thereupon Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم said to him, ‘Aren’t you pleased with being unto me what Hārūn was unto Mūsā but with this exception that there is no prophethood after me.’ I (also) heard him say on the Day of Khaybar, ‘I would certainly give this standard to a person who loves Allah and his Messenger, and Allah and his Messenger love him too.’ We had been anxiously waiting for it, when he (the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, ‘Call ‘Alī’, he was called and his eyes were inflamed. He applied saliva to his eyes and handed over the standard to him, and Allah gave him victory. (The third occasion is this) when the (following) verse was revealed, “Let us summon our children and your children.” Allah’s Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم called ‘Alī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn and said, ‘O Allah, they are my family.’”³

People have assumed that Mu’awiyah رضي الله عنه was soliciting people to curse ‘Alī رضي الله عنه but that is incorrect on all levels, and is either a result of prejudice or failure to understand the context of the Ḥadīth.

1 *Al-Mufhim*, vol. 6 pg. 278.

2 *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*, vol. 10 pg. 576.

3 *Ṣāḥih Muslim*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 2404.

If Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه really wanted to curse 'Alī رضي الله عنه he would not have asked of that from Sa'd رضي الله عنه since he stayed out of the conflict. Furthermore, it has been established via authentic narrations that he, Sa'd, prayed against those who cursed 'Alī رضي الله عنه and Allah accepted that supplication.

Al-Dhahabī related an incident of a man who abused 'Alī رضي الله عنه. Sa'd رضي الله عنه rebuked him but the person did not stop, so Sa'd prayed against him and no sooner did he complete his supplication that a camel came and stomped the man until he died.¹ Al-Dhahabī then said, there are many chains of transmission for this incident which have been narrated by Ibn Abī al-Dunyā.

It appears that Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه wanted to know the position of Sa'd رضي الله عنه with regards to 'Alī رضي الله عنه so he asked him the reason that prevented him from criticising, was it out of reverence for him ['Alī] or was it out of fear or piety.

Al-Qurṭubī comments on this:

This was a question about what was holding him back from cursing 'Alī so that he [Sa'd رضي الله عنه] could speak openly about his ['Alī's رضي الله عنه] virtues or the opposition [those who were cursing him] as was clear from his response. Mu'āwiyah's رضي الله عنه silence after hearing this shows his approval and acknowledging the right for what it was.²

Al-Nawawī provides a similar explanation, though he mentions an alternate interpretation as well:

It is as if he is saying, "Have you withheld out of piety, fear, or any other reason? Hence, if it is out of piety and reverence for him then you have adopted the correct policy; and if for any other reason there is a different response." Perhaps Sa'd رضي الله عنه was with a group who used to curse but refrained from cursing and was not in a position to rebuke them so he

1 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 1 pg. 116.

2 *Al-Mufhim*, vol. 6 pg. 276.

asked the question prompting him, and thus providing the opportunity to object to those who were cursing.

Some have said that it has the potential for an alternative interpretation and that it means why did you not object to his Ijtihād and make apparent to the people the correctness of our opinion and Ijtihād?¹

Rationally speaking, Mu‘āwiyah’s ﷺ successful rule which lasted twenty years would not have been possible if he was known for cursing ‘Alī ﷺ; especially after the tension during the period of Fitnah.

This Ḥadīth is from the merits of ‘Alī

This Ḥadīth, among so many others, is from the merits and virtues of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ and is recorded in most of the Sunnī Ḥadīth collections. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s manner might give the impression that Sunnī’s are averse to this Ḥadīth but nothing could be further from the truth.

Why would they want to conceal the merits of ‘Alī ﷺ? His rank is among the highest according to the Ahl al-Sunnah.

The issue that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn — and many like him — have with this Ḥadīth is that the Ahl al-Sunnah understand it in its proper perspective. The most accurate wording is in the version of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ; even ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn attests to that when he cited Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Istī‘āb*.

Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ﷺ narrates:

خلف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على بن أبي طالب في غزوة تبوك فقال يا رسول الله تخلفني في النساء والصبيان فقال أما ترضى أن تكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى غير أنه لا نبي بعدي

The Prophet ﷺ left Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib behind for the Battle of Tabūk. He said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you leaving me behind with the women and the children?”

1 *Sharḥ al-Nawawī ‘alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 15 g. 175.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Does it not please you that you are to me, in the position Hārūn was to Mūsā (when he left to speak to his Lord) except that there is no Prophet after me?”¹

To understand the meaning of the ḥadīth it is necessary that we are aware of the background to it. The Battle of Tabūk was one wherein the Prophet ﷺ did not permit anyone to remain behind. Thus, when he left ‘Alī رضي الله عنه behind, the munāfiqīn spread the rumour that the Prophet ﷺ left him behind because he was displeased with him. Al-Nasā’ī elaborates on this in *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī* from Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه, who said:

When the Prophet ﷺ left for the Battle of Tabūk he left ‘Alī, may Allah brighten his face, behind in Madīnah. They (the munāfiqīn) said concerning him, “He is tired of him and he dislikes his company.” So, ‘Alī followed the Prophet ﷺ until he caught up with him in the road and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Are you leaving me behind with the women and the children and now they are saying, ‘He is tired of him and dislikes his company?’”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “O ‘Alī! I have left you behind to take care of my family that you are to me, in the position Hārūn was to Mūsā (when he left to speak to his Lord) except that there is no Prophet after me?”²

This version of the narration illustrates the reason that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه went to the Prophet ﷺ and said to him what he said. Thereafter, the Prophet ﷺ attempted to console ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and explained to him that remaining behind is not necessarily a shortcoming, since Nabī Mūsā عليه السلام left Nabī Hārūn عليه السلام behind to assume responsibility for his people in his absence. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was satisfied with that explanation and said, “I am pleased, I am pleased,” as it appears in the narration of Ibn al-Musayyab narrated by Aḥmad.³

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 2404; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Faḍā’il, Ḥadīth: 4416.

2 *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī* by al-Nasā’ī, Ḥadīth: 43, the editor says, “Its chain is reliable.”

3 Refer to *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, vol. 7, p. 92.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn gets into the explanation of this Ḥadīth in the forthcoming correspondence. It would be more suitable to discuss the intended meaning behind the Ḥadīth in the associated correspondence. However, the background to the Ḥadīth mentioned in *Khaṣāiṣ* ‘Alī of al-Nasā’ī ought to be kept in mind throughout the discussion.

Letter 29

Thul-Hijjah 20, 1329

I. Believing in Our Arguments Regarding the Hadith's Sanad

II. Doubting its General Application

III. Doubting its being Binding

1. All what you have mentioned regarding the authenticity of the status hadith is indeed beyond any doubt. Al-Amidi has stumbled in a way which has proven his distance from the science of hadith, and from traditionists. I have bothered you with mentioning his views in clarifying what is already clear. This is my mistake for which I invoke your forgiveness, since you are apt to forgive.
2. I have come to know that there are others besides al-Amidi from among your arbitrators who claim that there is no proof that the status hadith has a general application, and that it is restricted to its own context. They support their view by the hadith's text itself, saying that the Prophet's statement is due only to its time context, that is, when he left him in Medina during the Battle of Tabuk.

The Imam, peace be upon him, asked him: "Why do you leave me with women and children?" His answer, peace be upon him and his progeny, was: "Aren't you pleased that your status to me is similar to that of Aaron to Moses, except there will be no Prophet after me?" as if he صلى الله عليه وسلم explained that his position to him is like that of Aaron to Moses when the latter left him to represent him among his people when he left for the Tur Mountain [Mount Sinai]. The gist of the Prophet's statement would be something like: "You are to me, during this Battle of Tabuk, like Aaron to Moses who had to depart to communicate with his Lord."

3. Your arbitrators may even say that this hadith is not a binding proof, even if its implication is general, and a restricted hadith cannot be applied in its general sense, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 30

Thul-Hijjah 22, 1329

I. Arabs Regard it General

II. Disproving Claim of Restriction

III. Disproving its Non-Binding Application

1. We refer their argument that the hadith lacks a general application to Arabs who are very well familiar with their language and grammar. You are the Arabs' authority whose view is invincible and undisputed. Do you see your nation doubting the generality of this status hadith? I do not think so. You are above that. Persons of your prestige do not doubt the generality of the additive gender and its inclusion of all implications.

If you, for example, say: "I have granted you my judicial power," will your power be restricted to a few matters rather than others? Or will your statement be general and inclusive of all implications? Allah be Praised! You do not see it other than general, and its meaning as inclusive! If the Muslims' ruler says to one of his subjects: "I have appointed you my own vicegerent over people," or "granted you my own status, or position, over them, or granted you my own wealth," will it come to mind anything other than the general meaning of such a statement? Or will the speaker wish to select some matters rather than others? If he said to one of his ministers: "You may enjoy during my lifetime the same position 'Umar enjoyed during the lifetime of Abu Bakr, but you are not my friend," would this statement be seen, according to common rules, as implying a few situations rather than all?

I do not see you saying accepting anything other than its general application, and I do not doubt at all that you interpret the statement of the holy Prophet: "Your status to me is like that of Aaron to Moses" except

as indicative of generality of application, following the guidelines of its similar texts in the Arabic language and its norms of speech, especially when he excluded Prophethood, thus making its generality inclusive of everything else quite clear. You are surrounded by Arabs; so, ask them if you wish.

2. As regarding the debater's statement claiming that this hadith is restricted to its context, this claim is rejected on two grounds:

First, the hadith itself is generalizing, as you know. The assumption "If we presume that it is specific" does not exclude it from its general meaning, because whoever makes an assumption does not confine his assumption to only one single possibility. Say, if one person in the state of najasa (impurification) touches Surat al-Kursi [verse of the Throne] for example, and you tell him: "Nobody in the state of najasa should touch the holy Qur'an," will your statement be confined to Surat al-Kursi only, or will it be general regarding the entire text of the holy Qur'an?

I cannot imagine that anyone will understand that it is restricted to Surat al-Kursi in particular. If a physician sees his patient eating dates and forbids him from eating anything sweet, will the prohibition be taken to imply only dates, or will it be general to include everything sweet?

I do not consider the one who claims its meaning to be restricted as one adhering to the common concepts of the basics of language; rather, he will then be distant from its grammar, far from commonsense, a foreigner to our world. So is the one who claims that the status hadith is applied specifically to the Battle of Tabuk alone; there is no difference between both cases.

Second, this hadith was not articulated by the Prophet ﷺ upon leaving 'Ali عليه السلام as his representative in Medina during the Battle of Tabuk; otherwise, the debater will have had the right to claim its restricted

application. Our sahih books are sequential through the Imams among the Prophet's purified progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ proving that it was said on other occasions to which the researcher may refer. Sunni sunan bear witness to this fact, as researchers know. We say that the wording of this hadith testifies to the fact that the claim that it was said only during the Battle of Tabuk is groundless, as is already obvious.

3. Their claim that the specified generalization cannot be binding over the rest is an obvious mistake and a serious error. Nobody would say so except one who approaches matters like someone riding a blind animal in a dark night. We seek refuge with Allah against ignorance, and we thank Him for our sound health.

Specifying the general does not exclude it from being applied as a testimony against the rest as long as the specified matter is not general, especially if it is related to this hadith. If a master tells his servant: "Be generous to everyone who is visiting me today save Zayd." If the servant surrounds only Zayd with generosity, he will not only be disobeying his master and become liable for his error, according to the judgment of all the wise, he will also deserve to be punished a punishment commensurate with his mistake.

No wise man would listen to his excuse if he produces one; nay, even his excuse will seem to them to be even worse than his guilt. This is so only because of its obvious general implication, having been specified, regarding the rest, as is obvious.

You very well know that Muslims have always been accustomed to use as proof the specified generalizations without any exception. The ancestors among the companions and the tabi'in, as well as those who followed the latter, and so on till today, especially the Imams among the progeny of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and all other Imams among the Muslims, do just that. This is a matter which does not need raising any doubts.

Suffices you for proof what the four Imams and other Mujtahids have said in their chapters on being aware of the branches of legislative rules as proofs of their explanations. The wheel of knowledge has been spinning on acting upon generally accepted facts. There is nothing general that does not have room for a specification. If these generalities are dropped, the door of knowledge will be shaken. We seek refuge with Allah, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Discussions

Sunnī interpretation

The lacklustre response from the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī is to be expected since it was the hand of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn holding it; as we have come to learn.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn argues strongly for an organic interpretation, the way the Arabs of old would have understood this Ḥadīth. There can be no understanding that is more accurate and precise than the person to whom these words were said. Did ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ understand the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ words to mean that he had been appointed the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ successor?

Al-Zuhrī related from ‘Abd Allah ibn Ka‘b ibn Mālik — and Ka‘b ibn Mālik was one of the three whom Allah pardoned for their absence at Tabūk — that ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās informed him that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib emerged from the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ home during his final illness:

عن الزهري قال أخبرني عبد الله بن كعب بن مالك الأنصاري وكان كعب بن مالك أحد الثلاثة الذين تيب عليهم أن عبد الله بن عباس أخبره أن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه خرج من عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في وجعه الذي توفي فيه فقال الناس يا أبا حسن كيف أصبح رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال أصبح بحمد الله بارئاً فأخذ بيده عباس بن عبد المطلب فقال له أنت والله بعد ثلاث عبد العصا وإني والله لأرى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سوف يتوفى من وجعه هذا إنني لأعرف وجه بني عبد المطلب عند الموت اذهب بنا إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلنسأله فيمن هذا الأمر إن كان فينا علمنا ذلك وإن كان في غيرنا علمناه فأوصى بنا فقال علي إنا والله لئن سألتها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فمنعناها لا يعطيناها الناس بعده وإني والله لأسألها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

The people said, “O Abu al-Ḥasan; How is the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ this morning?”

He said, “All praise be to Allah, he is well this morning.”

‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him by the hand and said to him, “I swear by Allah, in three days’ time you will be a subject. By Allah, I think that the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ will die of this illness. I recognise the look of death in the faces of the Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib when they are dying. **Let us go to the Messenger of Allah H and ask him who will take charge over this matter (Khilāfah). If it is for us, then we will know that, and if it is for someone other than us, we will know and he can advise him to look after us.**”

‘Alī replied, **“By Allah, if we ask him for it and he refuses us, then the people would never give it to us afterwards. By Allah, I will not ask it from the Messenger of Allah.”**¹

There are three major issues to be learnt from this ḥadīth that are pertinent to our discussion.

1. As far as ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was concerned the Prophet ﷺ had not nominated anyone.
2. He did not consider himself nominated — even though the Ḥadīth likening him to Hārūn عليه السلام was told to him on his face.
3. He understood the position of Khilāfah to be nomination by people; not divine appointment.

This is the undeniable truth and the most clear evidence that the Ḥadīth likening him to Hārūn عليه السلام did not refer to succession.

The next step is to understand *why* the Ḥadīth has been misunderstood, as is the case in the correspondence above.

In letter 26 he writes:

He regarded his status to himself as similar to that of Aaron to Moses, without any exception other than Prophethood, and its exception reflects generality.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth: 4182.

You also know that what distinguished Aaron from Moses was mostly his being the vizier of his brother, his de facto participation in his brother's Message, his vicegerency, and the enforcement by Moses of people's obedience to Aaron as his statement, to which references is included in the Holy Qur'an (20:29-32), and which clearly says:

“And let my brother Aaron, from among my household, be my vizier, to support me and take part in my affair,”

and his statement:

“Be my own representative among my people; reform them, and do not follow the path of corrupters (Qur'an 7:142),”

and the Almighty's response:

“O Moses! Granted is your prayer (Qur'an 20:36).”

According to this text, 'Alī is the Prophet's vicegerent among his people, his vizier among his kin, his partner in his undertaking — not in Prophethood — his successor, the best among his people, and the most worthy of their leadership alive or dead. They owed him obedience during the Prophet's lifetime as the Prophet's vizier, just as Aaron's people had to obey Aaron during the lifetime of Moses.¹

Is the resemblance as striking as 'Abd al-Ḥusayn claims? Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was only Mūsā's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ deputy during his life and not after his death since there is consensus among the scholars that Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ passed away before Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.² If this really was a case of Khilāfah, and the only difference between 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was prophethood; then 'Alī's رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ succession only becomes the exact replica of Hārūn's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ succession of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ when it is restricted to the Prophet's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ life.

1 *Al-Murāja'āt*, letter 26.

2 *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 7, p. 93; *Sharḥ Muslim*, vol. 15, p. 249.

Was Hārūn's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام appointment permanent or was it temporal? If we say it was temporal, then there is no argument for his succession as Khalīfah after the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ return. However, if we say it was permanent how do we account for this verse?

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَى إِلَى قَوْمِهِ غَضْبَانَ أَسِفًا قَالَ بِئْسَمَا خَلَفْتُمُونِي مِنْ بَعْدِي أَعَجَلْتُمْ أَمْرَ رَبِّكُمْ
وَأَلْقَى الْأَلْوَابِحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ قَالَ ابْنَ أُمَّ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّوْنِي وَكَادُوا يَقْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا
تُشْمِتْ لِي الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

And when Mūsā returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, “How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after my [absence]. Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?” And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by [the hair of] his head, pulling him toward him. [Hārūn] said, “O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people.”¹

There's no arguing that Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام is already a prophet, but if he was Mūsā's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام successor until death, what would make Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام rebuke him so harshly?

Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام went alone for communion with Allah, and left the entire Banū Isrā'īl under the care of Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. When the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ left for Tabūk he left with the entire army, and 'Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ remained behind with the frail, women, and children. As a matter of fact 'Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was left in charge of the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ family, and it was Muḥammad ibn Maslamah who was left in charge of the affairs of Madīnah during the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ absence.

Ibn Kathīr writes:

Yūnus ibn Bukayr quoted Ibn Ishāq as stating, “Having made his arrangements, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ decided to set off. When, on a Thursday, he departed, he made camp at Thaniyyat al-Wadā'; with

1 Sūrah al-A'rāf: 150

him there were more than 30 000 men. The enemy of Allah, ‘Abd Allah ibn Ubayy pitched his camp lower down. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ set forth again, ‘Abd Allah ibn Ubayy remained behind, along with a group of the hypocrites and the people of doubt.”

Ibn Hishām stated, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed Muḥammad ibn Maslamah al-Anṣārī, in command of Madīnah. Al-Darāwardī related that it was Sibā’ ibn ‘Urfuṭah whom he left in command at the time of the expedition to Tabūk.”

Ibn Ishāq went on, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ left ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib behind to care for his family, ordering him to stay with them. The hypocrites spread lies about ‘Alī, maintaining that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ found his presence onerous and wished to alleviate this. When they said this, ‘Alī took up his weapons and proceeded forth, catching up with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ while the latter was camped at al-Jurf. ‘Alī told him what people were saying and he responded, “They lie; I left you there to care for those I have left behind. Go back and act on my behalf with my family as well as your own. Are you not content, ‘Alī, to have the same position with me as Hārūn had with Mūsā? There will, however, be no prophet after myself.’ ‘Alī returned and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ departed on his journey.”

Ibn Ishāq went on, “Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Yazīd ibn Rukānah related to me — from Ibrāhīm ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ — from his father Sa’d, (who said) that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ make this comment to ‘Alī.”

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim both related this through Shu’bah — from Sa’d ibn Ibrāhīm — from Ibrāhīm ibn Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ — from his father.¹

It cannot be said that this was specific transfer of succession to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه merely on account of the Prophet ﷺ leaving him in charge of affairs in Madīnah in

1 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 pg. 155.

his absence since ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was tasked with taking care of the Prophet’s immediate family; and the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ appointed someone else, in charge of Madīnah during his absence. Therefore, leaving someone behind to take care of Madīnah does not automatically make the person left in charge a khalīfah.

The only plausible explanation for this Ḥadīth, therefore, is in light of its context. The exhortation to participate in the expedition of Tabūk was so strongly phrased in the Qur’an that no one wanted to remain behind. Allah even praised the crying of those who had no mount, on account of which they were absent. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ felt uneasy about remaining behind and the rumours in Madīnah prompted him to join the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reassured him that his remaining behind was no different from Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام remaining behind when Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام went for private communion with Allah.

This demonstrates the error in the version of the Ḥadīth cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn which states that it was necessary for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to remain behind. The response to this narration, even after we have pointed out the flaws in the Isnād, is that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ appointed many other people over his family, and over the city of Madīnah during his numerous military campaigns. It firstly proves that someone other than ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ could perform this task. Furthermore, to understand ‘Alī’s responsibility as a basis for him being the candidate for Khilāfah, opens the door for all the others before and after him who were appointed by the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to take charge of the affairs of Madīnah.

Being likened to a Prophet is not unique to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ were likened to those prophets who are of the highest rank. ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd relates:

After the Battle of Badr, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ asked his Companions what they thought should be done with the prisoners of war.

Abū Bakr said, “O Messenger of Allah! They are your people and your kinsmen, so spare them and take your time with them. Perhaps Allah will forgive them.”

‘Umar said, “O Messenger of Allah! They expelled you and they rejected you. Bring them forward and smite their necks.”

‘Abd Allah ibn Rawāḥah said, “O Messenger of Allah! Look for a valley filled with dry brush. Make them enter it, then set them a fire.”

‘Abbās said, “You have broken your ties of kinship.”

The Messenger ﷺ went inside without saying anything. The people began saying to each other things like, “He will act upon the opinion of Abū Bakr,” others said, “He will take the opinion of ‘Umar,” and yet others said, “He will accept the opinion of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Rawāḥah.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then came out to them and said, “Allah makes some people’s hearts so gentle that they become gentler than milk, and Allah makes some peoples hearts so hard that they become harder than stone. O Abū Bakr! You are like Ibrāhīm ؑ who said, ‘And whoever follows me is from me, and whoever disobeys me, then You, O Allah, are Forgiving and Merciful.’ And Abū Bakr, you are also like ‘Īsā ؑ who said, ‘If you punish them, then they are indeed Your slaves, and if you forgive them, then indeed you are the Mighty, the Wise.’”

Then he addressed ‘Umar and said, “O ‘Umar! You are like Nūḥ ؑ who said, ‘Do not leave of the unbelievers anyone on Earth!’ And ‘Umar, you are also like Mūsā ؑ who said, ‘O My Lord! Make their hearts harder so they will not believe until they see a painful punishment!’”¹

All that remains to be said is that the Ḥadīth under discussion has been narrated in relation to the expedition of Tabūk. There are no reliable reports which indicate otherwise.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 6 pg. 138, Hadīth: 3632 [Risālah edition].

Letter 31

Thul-Hijjah 22, 1329

I. Requesting Sources of this Hadith

You have not provided any proof testifying to this hadith as being said on any occasion besides that of Tabuk. I am very eager to be acquainted with its pristine sources; so, please take me to its fountain-heads, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 32

Thul-Hijjah 24, 1329

I. Among Its Sources: the Prophet's Visit to Umm Salim

II. The Case of Hamzah's Daughter

III. Leaning on 'Ali

IV. The First Fraternity

V. The Second Fraternity

VI. Closing the Doors

VII. The Prophet Comparing 'Ali and Aaron to the Two Stars

1. One of its sources is the discourse of the Prophet ﷺ with Umm Salim,¹ a woman of lengthy achievements, a woman of wisdom who enjoyed a special prestigious status with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ due to being among the foremost in accepting Islam, and because of her sincerity, contributions, and sacrifices in the cause of Islam.

The Prophet ﷺ used to visit her and talk to her at her own house. One day, he said to her: "O Umm Salim (mother of Salim)! 'Ali's flesh is of mine, and his blood is of my own; he is to me like Aaron to Moses."² It is obvious that this hadith is only an excerpt of his lengthy hadith which is stated for the purpose of conveying the truth and providing advice for the sake of Allah in order to highlight the status of his vicegerent, the one who would take his own place (of responsibility) once he is gone, and it cannot be confined to the Battle of Tabuk.

2. A similar hadith was made in the case of Hamzah's daughter in whose regard 'Ali, Ja'far and Zayd disputed. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said then: "O 'Ali! You are to me like Aaron to Moses, etc."

3. Another incident occurred when Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah were in the company of the Prophet ﷺ who was leaning on ‘Ali. The Prophet ﷺ patted ‘Ali’s shoulder and said: “O ‘Ali! You are the strongest among the believers in faith, the first (man) to embrace Islam, and your status to me is similar to that of Aaron to Moses.”³
4. The ahadith narrated during the First Fraternity also include this text. These were made in Mecca prior to the migration, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ consummated brotherhood among the emigrants in particular.
5. On the occasion of the Second Fraternity, while in Medina, five months after the migration, the Prophet ﷺ made fraternity between the emigrants (Muhajirun) and the supporters (Ansar). In both events, he ﷺ chose ‘Ali as his brother,⁴ thus preferring him over all others, saying to him: “You are to me like Aaron to Moses except there will be no Prophet after me.” Narrations in this regard are consecutively reported. Refer to what others state about the First Fraternity such as the hadith narrated by Zayd ibn Abu ‘Awfah. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal has included it in his book *Manaqib ‘Ali*, Ibn ‘Asakir in his *Tarikh*,⁵ al-Baghwi and al-Tabrani in their *Mujma’s*, al-Barudi in his *Al-Ma’rifa*, by Ibn ‘Adi⁶ and others.

The hadith under discussion is quite lengthy, and it contains guidelines about how to establish brotherhood. It ends with: “‘Ali said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! My soul has expired, and my spine has been broken, having seen what you have done for your companions while leaving me alone. If this is a sign of your anger with me, then I complain only to you and beg your pardon.’ The Messenger of Allah said: ‘I swear by the One Who sent me to convey the truth about Him, I have not spared you except for my own self. You are to me like Aaron to Moses, except there will be no Prophet after me. You are my Brother, heir and companion.’ ‘Ali عليه السلام asked him: ‘What shall I inherit from you?’

He ﷺ answered: 'Whatever Prophets before me left for those who inherited them: the Book of their Lord, and the Sunnah of their Prophet. You will be my companion in my house in Paradise together with my daughter Fatima. You are my Brother and Companion.' Then he, peace be upon him and his progeny, recited the verse: "They are brethren seated conveniently facing each other," referring to the brethren whose hearts Allah has joined in affection who look at each other with sincere compassion.

Refer also to the events of the Second Fraternity. Al-Tabrani, in his Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir, quotes Ibn 'Abbas reporting one hadith stating that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام: "Are you angry because I have established brotherhood between the Ansar and the Muhajirun and have not selected a brother for you from among them? Are you not pleased that your status to me is like that of Aaron to Moses, except there will be no Prophet after me?"⁷

6. The same hadith was also said when the companions' doors overlooking the Prophet's mosque in Medina were ordered closed except that of 'Ali. Jabir ibn 'Abdullah quotes the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "O 'Ali! It is permissible for you to do at this mosque whatever is permissible for me, and you are to me like Aaron to Moses, except there will be no Prophet after me."

Huthayfah ibn 'Asid al-Ghifari has said that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, once delivered a khutba on the occasion of closing those doors in which he said: "There are some men who have disliked that I got them out of the mosque while keeping 'Ali. Allah, the Dear and Mighty, inspired to Moses and his brother to reside with their people in Egypt and make their homes a qibla and say their prayers," till he said: "Ali to me is like Aaron to Moses. He is my Brother, and none of you is allowed to cohabit therein other than he."

The sources of this hadith are numerous, and they cannot all be counted in a brief letter like this, yet I hope that what I have stated here suffices to falsify the claim that the status hadith is confined only to the Battle of Tabuk. How much can such a claim weigh in the light of abundance of sources of this hadith?

7. Anyone who is familiar with the biography of the Prophet ﷺ will find him, peace be upon him and his progeny, describing ‘Ali and Aaron as the two bright stars arranged alike, neither one differing from the other. This by itself is a testimony to the generality of status of this hadith, yet the generality of the status is what comes to mind regardless of any pretext, as we have explained above, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. She is daughter of Milhan ibn Khalid al-Ansari and sister of Haram ibn Milhan. Her father and brother were martyred in the company of the Prophet ﷺ. She possessed a great deal of accomplishment and wisdom. She narrated a few ahadith of the Prophet ﷺ, and she is quoted by her son Anas, in addition to Ibn ‘Abbas, Zayd ibn Thabit, Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abdul-Rahman, and by others.

She is considered to be in the first row of those who accepted and supported the Islamic faith, and she herself was a caller to Islam. During the pre-Islamic period of jahiliyya, she was in love with Malik ibn al-Nadar from whom she conceived her son Anas ibn Malik. At the dawn of Islam, she was among the foremost to embrace it, and she invited her husband Malik to believe in Allah and His Messenger, but he refused; so, she deserted him,

and he in his rage moved to Syria where he died as a kafir. She advised her son, who was then ten years old, to serve the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prophet ﷺ accepted his service in order to please her.

Many Arab men of prestige sought her hand, but she always used to say: “I shall not get married except when Anas reaches manhood;” so, Anas always used to say: “May Allah reward my mother, for she took very good care of me.” Due to her own influence, Abu Talhah al-Ansari became Muslim. He sought her hand when he was still kafir, but she refused to marry him unless he embraced Islam; so, he accepted her invitation to embrace the new faith, and his dowery to her was his own acceptance of Islam.

She conceived a son by him, but the baby fell sick and died; so, she said: “Nobody should mention his death to his father before me.” When her husband came home and inquired about his son, she said: “He is in most content;” so he thought that she meant their son was asleep. She served him his dinner, then she put on her best clothes and perfume, and he went to bed with her. The next day she said to him: “Pray for your son’s soul.”

Abu Talha narrated this story to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who said to him: “Allah blessed you last night.” She continues to say that he ﷺ invoked Allah to provide me with what I wanted and even more. In that same night, she conceived ‘Abdullah ibn Abu Talha upon whom Allah showered His blessings. He is the father of Ishaq ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Abu Talha, the faqih, and his brothers were ten; each one of them was a man of knowledge.

Umm Salim used to participate in the Prophet’s military campaigns. On the Day of Uhud, she had a dagger to stab any infidel who would come near her. She rendered Islam a great service, and I do not know any woman besides her whom the Prophet ﷺ used to visit in her own house and she would offer him a present. She was aware of the status of his progeny, knowledgeable of their rights... May Allah shower His choicest mercy on her.

2. 2. This hadith, I mean Umm Salim's, is number 2554 of the ones numbered in Kanz al-'Ummal as narrated on page 154 of its sixth volume. It also exists in Muntakhab al-Kanz; so, refer to the last line of the footnote on page 31 of Volume 5 of Ahmad's Musnad, where you will find it verbatim.
3. 3. This is quoted by al-Hasan ibn Badr, al-Hakim in his chapter on kunyat, al-Shirazi in his chapter on surnames, volume six, and by Ibn al-Najjar. It is hadith 6029 and also 6032 of the ones numbered in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 395.
4. Discussing the biography of 'Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ in his Isti'ab, Ibn 'Abd al-Birr describes him thus: "He made brotherhood with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, among the immigrants, then between the immigrants and the supporters. In each of these instances, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to 'Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ: 'You are my brother in this life and the life hereafter,' then he made brotherhood between himself and 'Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ." The details are in the books of traditions and history. For the details of the first brotherhood, refer to page 26, Vol. 2, of Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, and in the second brotherhood on page 120, Vol. 2, also of Al-Sira al-Halabiyya, where you will find how the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ favoured 'Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ in both occasions over everyone else. In Al-Sira al-Dahlaniyya, the details of the circumstances of the first brotherhood and those of the second are similar to what is published in Al-Sira al-Halabiyya. The author also stated that the second brotherhood took place five months after the migration.
5. This is quoted from Ahmad and Ibn 'Asakir by a group of trusted authorities such as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi; so, refer to hadith 918 of his Kanz al-'Ummal at the beginning of page 40 of its fifth volume. It is also quoted on page 390, Vol. 6, from Ahmad's book Manaqib 'Ali, numbering it hadith 4972.
6. This is quoted from these Imams by a group of trusted authorities such as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi at the beginning of page 41, Vol. 5, of of his Kanz al-'Ummal, numbering it hadith 919.

7. This is quoted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in his *Kanz al-'Ummal* and *Al-Muntakhab*; so, refer to the *Muntakhab's* footnote on page 31 of its fifth volume regarding Ahmad's *Musnad*, and you will find it verbatim just as we have quoted it here. It is not difficult to sift the gist of the phrase "You have angered 'Ali عَلِيٍّ السَّلَامِ" and comprehend the meanings of companionship, compassion, and the love of a compassionate and kind father to his son. If you wonder how 'Ali had some doubts in the second time he was left behind, although in the first time he had some doubt, too, then he found out that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, had kept him there just for himself, and why he did not consider the second incident in the light of the first. The answer is that the second incident could not be compared with the first one, for the first was regarding the immigrants in particular; so, the comparison did not forbid the prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ from creating brotherhood with 'Ali عَلِيٍّ السَّلَامِ, contrary to the second which was between the immigrants and the supporters. One immigrant in the second instance may be joined in brotherhood to a supporter, and vice versa. Since the prophet and the wasi were both immigrants, the assumption in the second instance was that they should not be brothers; so, 'Ali thought that his brother would be a supporter, just like others by way of comparison. When the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not create brotherhood between him and any of the supporters, some doubt entertained his mind, but Allah and His Messenger insisted on favouring him, and so it was: he and the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ became brothers, contrary to the common norm of practice among all the immigrants and supporters at that time and place.

Discussions

Versions of the Ḥadīth

One of the greatest advantages of a single-sided debate is that one can always call the opponents bluff. This is precisely what unfolds in this round of debate. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn asks the question using the pen of his opponent; and replies in a half-truth which will resonate well with his reading audience.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has presented a number of occasions wherein it is alleged that the Prophet ﷺ announced the fact that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was to him as Hārūn عليه السلام was to Mūsā عليه السلام; attempting to discredit the claim that this was not limited to the occasion of Tabūk. However, he fails to address the fact that Hārūn عليه السلام did not succeed Mūsā عليه السلام. This has been the crux of our previous discussion.

Our task, then, is to investigate whether or not ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has been honest in his citations; whether the Prophet ﷺ said this at any other occasion than the expedition of Tabūk.

The first narration

The first narration cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is said to be the narration of Umm Sulaym.¹ He correctly ascribed this narration to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* and its abridgment. He painstakingly pointed out which line the narration could be found in as well; a sign of erudition no doubt.

Conveniently, he fails to mention the fact that the author of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, ‘Alī al-Muttaqī, ascribed this narration to Abū Ja‘far al-‘Uqaylī, the compiler of *al-Ḍu‘afā’* which is an encyclopedia on unreliable and disreputable narrators. It is expedient to do so when there is no *real* debator.

1 The translation has it as Umm Salīm, which is either an academic error or a typographical error. Our inclination is to give the translator the benefit of the doubt despite certain inaccuracies in the translation at many places.

In his introduction to the abridged version of *al-Kanz*, ‘Alī al-Muttaqī was cautious to point out that it was sufficient to deem unreliable any narration exclusively referenced to al-‘Uqaylī, along with a host of other earlier books.

He writes:

Whatever is ascribed [in this work of mine] to Ibn ‘Adī, al-‘Uqaylī, al-Khaṭīb, Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī in *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, al-Ḥākīm in his *Tārīkh*, Ibn Jārūd in his *Tārīkh*, and al-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws*; is considered weak. Mere reference to any of these works suffices in pointing out the fact that the narrations quoted are unreliable...¹

It is hard to believe that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn went out of his way to point out the exact line in which the narration could be found, yet failed to read the basic principle spelled out by the author in the introduction to his book; where he explains his methods and symbols to be used throughout the book.

Al-‘Uqaylī indeed quotes the narration, identifying it as the solitary narration of Dāhir ibn Yaḥyā al-Rāzī. He was an extreme Rāfiḍī, and his narrations were not corroborated. Al-‘Uqaylī then cites this narration as one of his anomalous narrations:

‘Alī ibn Sa‘īd – ‘Abd Allah ibn Dāhir – Dāhir ibn Yaḥyā al-Rāzī – al-A‘mash – ‘Abāyah al-Asadī – Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ said to Umm Salamah, “O Umm Salamah, indeed ‘Alī’s flesh is from my flesh, his blood is from my blood, and he is to me as Hārūn was to Mūsā except that there is no prophet after me.”²

He goes on to list a number of unsubstantiated narrations by Dāhir; all on the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and he concludes saying:

1 *Muntakhab al-Kanz* vol. 1 pg. 9

2 *Al-Du‘afā al-Kabīr* vol. 2 pg. 47

The narration, “You are to me as Hārūn was to Mūsā,” is authentic through other chains. Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd narrates it from Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyib, from Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, from the Prophet ﷺ; as does ʿĀmir ibn Saʿd, Muṣʿab ibn Saʿd, Ibrāhīm ibn Saʿd, all of them by way of Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه [i.e. the narration at Tabūk]. All the other versions besides these are anmolous and not sound.¹

It is ironic that the source cited by ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn to prove that this narration was repeated on many occasion negates that very fact. It also proves that the early Ḥadīth critics were aware of a number of narrations of this nature but had pointed out that all the other versions were unreliable and contradicted much sounder authority. Furthermore, this narration mentions Umm Salamah, the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم wife, instead of Umm Sulaym.

Ibn ʿAdī lists this narration under the biography of ʿAbd Allah ibn Dāhir; quoting Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn that he was not reliable and severely impugned. Ibn ʿAdī concludes saying:

ʿAbd Allah ibn Dāhir has many other narrations besides these, most of which are about the virtues of ʿAlī. He is suspected of forging many of them.²

Al-Dhahabī flags both father and son for the forging of this narration. Under the biography of Dāhir he describes him as, “A vengeful Rafiḍī whose dreadful narrations are uncorroborated.”³

Under the biography of ʿAbd All ibn Dāhir, al-Dhahabī quotes Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn who criticized him severely, pointing out the fact that he cannot be trusted. In conclusion he states:

Allah سبحانه وتعالى favoured ʿAlī رضي الله عنه in that his merits are well-established, independent of all such fabrications and fairytales.⁴

1 *Al-Ḍuʿafā al-Kabīr* vol. 2 pg. 48

2 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 5 pg. 380

3 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* vol. 2 pg. 2

4 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* vol. 2 pg. 417

The second narration

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn then alludes to the narration which mentions the dispute between Zayd ibn al-Ḥārithah, Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib, and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام over the custody of Ḥamzah’s عليه السلام orphaned daughter.

This Ḥadīth is very famous; though the wording quoted by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is at variance with all the other versions.

The narration appears by way of al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib عليه السلام and is final part of a lengthy narration which describes the incident at Ḥudaybiyyah, the make-up ‘Umrah, and finally the dispute over the custody of Ḥamzah’s عليه السلام daughter. The part of the Ḥadīth which concerns us is as follows:

‘Alī عليه السلام said, “I took her for she is the daughter of my uncle.”

Ja‘far عليه السلام argued, “She is the daughter of my uncle, and her aunt is my wife.”

Zayd عليه السلام said, “She is the daughter of my brother.”

On that, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم gave her to her aunt and said, “The aunt is of the same status as the mother.”

He then said to ‘Alī عليه السلام, “**You are from me, and I am from you,**” and said to Ja‘far عليه السلام, “You resemble me in appearance and character,” and said to Zayd, “You are our brother and our freed slave.”¹

A similar narration is recorded from ‘Alī عليه السلام, himself, without much alteration in the way it is worded. The chain is as follows Ḥajjāj (ibn Muḥammad al-Maṣṣīḥ) – Isrā’īl (ibn Yūnus) – Abū Ishāq (al-Sabīṭ) – Hānī’ ibn Hānī’ and Hubayrah ibn Yarīm – ‘Alī عليه السلام with the wording, “**You are from me, and I am from you.**”²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣullḥ Ḥadīth 2699; al-Tirmidhī cites a sentence from it and alludes to the background story, *Abwāb al-Manāqib*, Ḥadīth 3716

2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 249, Ḥadīth no. 931

The version ascribed to al-Nasā'ī in Khaṣā'īṣ 'Alī رضي الله عنه does not support 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's claim. It is narrated in Khaṣā'īṣ 'Alī رضي الله عنه as follows:

Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb – al-Qāsim ibn Yazīd al-Jarmī – Isrā'īl – Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭ
– Hubayrah ibn Yarīm and Hānī' ibn Hānī' – 'Alī رضي الله عنه

The reference to *Manzilah* in the context of the dispute over the custody of Ḥamzah's رضي الله عنه daughter appears to be an editing error. We have consulted a number of editions and found the ones which have relied on well-preserved manuscripts are phrased, “**You are from me, and I am from you.**”¹

If we were to concede, for argument's sake, that the wording of this narration is as 'Abd al-Ḥusayn claims, then this narration is *munkar*. It stands in variance of not only the highly authenticated version by al-Barā ibn 'Āzīb رضي الله عنه, but all the other narrations by way of Isrā'īl, from Abū Ishāq, from Hānī' ibn Hānī' and Hubayrah ibn Yarīm, from 'Alī رضي الله عنه.

Besides al-Qāsim ibn Yazīd the following narrators all narrate from Isrā'īl and all their narrations only mention the words, “**You are from me, and I am from you.**”

1. Yahyā ibn Ādam – his narration appears in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad², al-Nasā'ī in *Khaṣā'īṣ 'Alī*³
2. Aswad ibn 'Āmir – his narration is found in *Musnad Aḥmad*⁴ though his chain only mentions Hānī' and not Hubayrah.

1 *Khaṣā'īṣ 'Alī* رضي الله عنه, pg. 87, editing by Aḥmad al-Balūshī; *al-Sunan al-Kubrā, Dhikr Khaṣā'īṣ Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* vol. 10 pg. 381 Dār al-Ta'ṣīl edition

2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 160, Ḥadīth no. 770

3 *Khaṣā'īṣ 'Alī* رضي الله عنه, pg. 204, editing by Aḥmad al-Balūshī; *al-Sunan al-Kubrā, Dhikr Khaṣā'īṣ Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* vol. 10 pg. 466 Dār al-Ta'ṣīl edition

4 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 213, Ḥadīth no. 857

3. ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā – al-Ḥākim in *al-Mustadrak*¹ as well as al-Bazzār² though his narration only mentions Hāni’. This, in addition to Ibn Sa’d in *al-Ṭabaqāt*³ and Ibn Ḥibbān⁴; all three of them narrate it with this chain from both Hāni’ and Hubayrah but only mention the virtue of Ja’far.
4. Zakariyyah ibn Abī Zā’idah – his narration appears in the *Sunan* of al-Bayhaqī⁵
5. Ḥajjāj ibn Muḥammad al-Maṣīṣī – his narration appears in *Musnad Aḥmad* as mentioned earlier⁶

It is evident from the wording of all these narrations that there is no mention of the comparison between Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. The narration cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn from *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī*⁷ from al-Qāsim ibn Yazīd matches the remaining narrations in the well-edited editions; and differs in its wording in the editions with less rigorous editing. One could either accept the wording that matches the remaining five versions; or accept the wording which mentions the Manzilah in which case it would contradict five stronger versions with a common chain as well as the well-established version narrated by al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The latter option means that the wording of this Ḥadīth is in stark contrast to the other versions which proves that it is unreliable. Either way, the narration disproves ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s allegation.

A narration worded similar to the one cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is to be found in *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn ‘Asākir⁸ with the following chain:

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 120. He declared this narration authentic and al-Dhahabī concurs with his assesment.

2 *Al-Baḥr al-Zakḥkhār* vol. 2 pg. 316, ḥadīth 744

3 *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d* vol. 4 pg. 36

4 *Al-Iḥsan fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān* vol. 15 pg. 520, Ḥadīth 7046

5 *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* vol. 8 pg. 6

6 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 241, Ḥadīth no. 931

7 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg. 87

8 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 170

‘Abd Allah ibn Shabīb – Ibn Abī Uways – Muḥammad ibn Ismā’īl - ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr – Ismā’īl ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far - ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far

This chain includes ‘Abd Allah ibn Shabīb; whom al-Dhahabī describes as being severely weak. He quotes Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥākim who described him as extremely unreliable. Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he used to attach sound chains on false narrations.¹

Also appearing in this chain is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Mulaykī. Al-Bukhārī describes him saying, “*Dhāhib al-Ḥadīth*.” Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Nasā’ī also agree that his weakness is significant.²

Anyone familiar with the science of Ḥadīth would know that a narration of this nature could not even be elevated even without the existence of a narration to the contrary. What then could be said of a case where the sound narration is worded differently?

There remains the matter of the Prophet’s ﷺ words to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, “You are from me, and I am from you.” No doubt this is a major accolade for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and he is well-deserving of such praise and virtue. The issue, though, is whether it is considered among the unique features of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه; or have others been described as such?

An attentive read of the Prophet’s ﷺ *sīrah* provides numerous examples of him using a similar phrase for other Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم as well. We present two such cases.

Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رضي الله عنه relates that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said:

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 438

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 550

When the people of the Ash‘arī clan run short of provisions during the military campaigns, or the food for their families in Madīnah ran short, they would collect all their remaining food in one sheet and then distribute it among themselves equally using a small vessel. They are from me and I am from them.¹

Abū Barzah relates that the Messenger ﷺ was searching for Julaybīb after one of the battles. When he came across the slain corpse of Julaybīb he realised that Julaybīb had been killed after fighting off seven enemy combatants. Upon seeing this the Prophet ﷺ said, “He is from me; and I am from him.”²

We learn that the Prophet ﷺ spoke these words in respect of more than one person. It is no doubt a great merit for those to whom the Prophet ﷺ said this; but it cannot possibly imply pre-eminence for leadership else many would have been vying for it on that basis.

The third narration

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s resourcefulness is rather endearing. He is correct in ascribing this narration, by means of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, to the sources which they are referenced to. He withholds the fact that these are not within the catchment area of reliable Aḥādīth, and are repositories of all sorts of narrations. The purpose of some of these books is to try and identify unfamiliar names appearing in the chains of obscure narrations.

Conveniently, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn also hides the fact that the compiler of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, ‘Alī al-Muttaqī, mentions this narration at three places in short succession, and not just two. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cites the narrations numbered 6029 and 6032 in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. However, if he turned back just one page³ would have had to quote the common isnād for this narration:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Shirkah, Ḥadīth no. 2483; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no. 2500

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no. 2272

3 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 6 pg. 394, Ḥadīth 6015

Aslam ibn Faḍl ibn Sahl - Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ubayd Allah al-Abzāzī - Ibrāhīm
ibn Sa‘īd al-Jawharī - al-Ma‘mūn - al-Rashīd - al-Mahdī - al-Manṣūr - his
father - ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās

This in addition to the fact that ‘Alī al-Muttaqī concludes this citation saying, “**Al-Abzāzī is a counfounded liar!**”¹

The problem does not end there. The narrators appearing in this chain are all ‘Abbāsīd Khalīfah’s; not known for the transmission of Ḥadīth. Their status as Ḥadīth narrators is a complete mystery and they have not been documented as such.

The father of al-Manṣūr is Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās. His father, ‘Alī, is known to have heard Ḥadīth from his father, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās, and to have narrated Ḥadīth to some of his sons, ‘Isā, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, and ‘Abd al-Ṣamad.² There is no mention of Muḥammad though.

Considering the fact that this chain comprises of a series of ‘Abbāsīd Khulafā’ whose status as Ḥadīth narrators remains unknown, the possible interruption between Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allah, the father of al-Manṣūr, and ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās one would question the narration. However, the appearance of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ubayd Allah al-Abzāzī, a known forger and liar, confirms beyond doubt the baseless nature of this narration.

The fourth narration

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn made vague references to an earlier union of brotherhood between the companions; a matter which is largely contested among Sunnī scholars, and rebounded to a narration by Zayd ibn Abī Awfā. However, he employed the sly tactic of splicing the narration and presenting only the part of which suited his argument; completely ignoring the rest of the narration.

1 Ibid

2 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 5 pg. 252

This anomaly could either be a consequence of ignorance, or a deceitful omission. The fact that he referenced it to multiple sources, and considering that the entire narration being a thorn in his side, compels us to believe that this is a case of dishonesty and deceit rather than ignorance.

What does the narration speak about?

About Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه it says, “Your favours upon me can only be compensated by Allah. Where I to take a Khalīl [other than Allah] it would have been you. Your status to me is like my clothing is to my body.”

With regards to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه it says, “You are the third of three who will be in my company in Jannah.”

The narration goes on to praise ‘Uthmān, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, Ṭalḥāh, Zubayr, Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, and ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir among others رضي الله عنهم. Naturally, this information is counter-productive to the propaganda campaign of *al-Murāja’āt* and was therefore omitted

Whats more interesting is that this narration has correctly been ascribed to *al-Istī’āb* of ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Murāja’āt*. However, it neglects to mention that he discredited this narration and declared it unreliable.¹ If anything, the objectivity of Sunnī scholars is revealed here since it would suit them that such flowery mention is made of the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم senior companions who are all loved and revered by Sunnīs; yet the Sunnī scholars deem this narration unreliable.

The narration is found in numerous collections² although they eventually converge upon a common narrator and the rest of the chain is relatively the

1 *Al-Istī’ab* vol. 2 pg. 537

2 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* by Imām Aḥmad vol. 2 pg. 638 and 666, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* vol. 5 pg. 220 Ḥadīth 5146, *al-Kāmil* vol. 4. 160, *Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 3 pg. 1191, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 21 pg. 414 and vol. 42 pg. 51, *al-’Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 214

same; with the exception of an unnamed narrator who belongs to the tribe of Quraysh as some versions mention him whereas others omit him. Let us examine the chain of transmission with its common chain

‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn ‘Abbād – Yazīd ibn Ma‘n - ‘Abd Allah ibn Shuraḥbīl
– a man from Quraysh – Zayd ibn Abī Awfā

It would be best if we began from the Ṣaḥābī narrating this Ḥadīth and work our way backwards,

1. Zayd ibn Abī Awfā

Al-Bukhārī said, “He was not corroborated,”¹ meaning that this was the only chain leading to Zayd ibn Abī Awfā. This is to be understood from another statement of his, “This is an unknown chain which is not supported in addition to the fact that it is not known whether some of them have heard from others [above them in the chain].”²

Ibn ‘Adī says:

Zayd ibn Abī Awfā is known only for this Ḥadīth, on fraternal bonds, with this chain. All those who we have mentioned [in this book of ours] who were known to be Companions of the Prophet ﷺ have only come under al-Bukhārī’s scrutiny because of the chain that leads to them; a chain which is unsupported and anomalous. It is not that he discredited the Companion to him the narration is described as they are beyond scrutiny.³

Considered carefully, the statement of Ibn ‘Adī above reveals that there is interruption in the chain along with the anonymity of some of the narrators. All of these are factors which discredit the narration.

1 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 386

2 *Al-Tārīkh al-Ṣaḥīḥ* vol. 1 pg. 217

3 *Al-Kāmil fī Du‘afā al-Rijāl* vol. 4 pg. 164

2. A man from Quraysh

This addition appears in some versions of the narration and in others it is made to appear as if ‘Abd Allah ibn Shuraḥbīl heard it from Zayd directly. The approach of the Muḥaddithīn is to treat these two versions as conflicting, then to ascertain which version appears to be a more accurate account of how this narration was transmitted. The experts are inclined towards the version which includes the anonymous man from Quraysh as this not only comes with additional information, but ‘Abd Allāh ibn Shuraḥbīl is known mainly to have narrated from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Azhar. It is not entirely clear if he narrates from ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.¹ These are the only two names among the Companions whom the early scholars have considered him to have narrated from. As such, it lends support to those who consider the correct version the one which includes the anonymous narrator from Quraysh.

3. Yazīd ibn Ma‘n

There are two main narrators who are known to narrate from ‘Abd Allah ibn Shuraḥbīl; ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī and Sa‘d ibn Ibrāhīm.² There is no mention of Yazīd ibn Ma‘n. As a matter of fact we have not been able to find a biography from Yazīd ibn Ma‘n. this anonymity of this narrator raises further questions.

4. ‘Abd al-Mu‘min ibn ‘Abbād

Al-Bukhārī considers his narrations unsubstantiated and ibn Abī Ḥātim said that he is unreliable.³ Ibn Ḥajar points out that al-Sājī and Ibn Jārūd have both included him in their compilations of weak narrators.⁴

1 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 5 pg. 117, *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol. 5 pg. 81

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol.2 pg.670

4 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 5 pg.283

Also consider what the great experts of Ḥadīth, Ḥāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī and Ḥafiz Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī, have said about the first bond of brotherhood. Al-Dhahabī states that the correct version of events mentions only fraternal bonds between the Muhājirīn and Anṣār, not the Muhājirīn among themselves. As a matter of fact, he considers this narration a complete forgery.¹ Ḥafiz al-‘Irāqī was more softer in his tone. He said, “Whatever has been narrated about the bonds of brotherhood between the Prophet ﷺ and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is all weak; none of it is reliable.”²

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is so cautious in his citations so that he cannot appear to have been dishonest. This trick would only have worked in a debate with an untrained individual. If any scholar were to examine his references he would be made out as a huge fraud.

He referenced his narration to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, vol 5 page 40, at the top of the page. If anyone bothered to check the reference they would find that in the very next narration ‘Alī al-Muttaqī provided the complete chain for it; concluding that it is an unknown chain which is not supported, in addition to the fact that it is not known whether some of them have heard from others above them in the chain.³

The fifth narration

He mentioned the narration from Ibn ‘Abbās in al-Ṭabarānī.

This narration is found in both *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*⁴ and *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*.⁵ Both narrations are found with the same chain:

Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad al-Marwazī - Ḥāmid ibn Ādam al-Marwazī -
Jarīr - Layth - Mujāhid - ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

1 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 1 pg. 142-143

2 *Al-Mughnī fī Ḥaml al-Asfār*, vol. 2 pg. 190

3 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 5 pg. 41

4 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 75, Ḥadīth 11092

5 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* vol. 8 pg. 39, Ḥadīth 7894

In this chain is **Ḥāmid ibn Ādam al-Marwazī**. Ibn Maʿīn said, “[He is] a confounded liar. Allah’s curse be upon him!” Ibn ‘Adī confirms that he was known to be a liar.¹

This fact is not restricted to the earlier books. Later books, ones to which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn had access, like *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id*² by al-Haythamī also point out the fact that **Ḥāmid ibn Ādam al-Marwazī** was a liar.

The sixth narration

The narration of Jābir is found in history books and that is exactly where ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn found the narration; in the books of al-Akḥṭab al-Khawārizmī, a Shīʿī historian and literateur. This fact has conveniently been excluded from the English translation; though it appears in the Arabic editions of *al-Murāja‘āt*.³

After pouring over a number of primary and secondary sources we discovered that this narration has been narrated exclusively by way of

Ḥarām ibn ‘Uthmān - ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Muḥammad the sons of Jābir -
Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Anṣārī

Under his biography al-Dhahabī says:

Mālik and Yaḥyā both consider him unreliable

Aḥmad said that they abandoned his narration [on suspicion of forgery]

Al-Shāfi‘ī said that narrating from Ḥarām is Ḥarām [forbidden]!

Ibn Ḥibbān said that he adopted an extreme brand of Tashayyū‘ and was known for mixing up his chains.

1 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 3 pg. 409

2 *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id* vol. 9 pg. 111

3 See pg 144 of the Arabic edition published by Mu’assasat al-Wafā’

Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn reciprocated the sentiments of al-Shāfiʿī as did al-Jawzajānī

Al-Dhahabī went on to cite this narration as an example of his baseless narrations.¹ Ibn Ḥajar concurred with him in every detail.²

The seventh narration

This narration appears only in *Yanābīʿ al-Mawaddah*³ of al-Akḥṭab al-Khawārizmī, the Shīʿī about whom Ibn Taymiyyah writes:

Those who have the slightest knowledge regarding hadith, let alone one who is a specialist in this field, will be able to tell that his narrations are fabricated. Akḥṭab is neither a scholar of hadith, nor is he amongst those who are referred to regarding the subject.⁴

It is now clear that the bold claim of *Ḥadīth al-Manzilah* being mentioned at repeated intervals during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime is based on nothing but forged and spurious narrations.

The only sound version of this Ḥadīth is the one said at the time of Tabūk, and the context in which it was said to 'Alī رضي الله عنه is not only consistent with its text, but with the entire narrative of the Sīrah as well.

1 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 468-469

2 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 3 pg. 6

3 pg 100

4 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 3 pg. 101

Letter 33

Thul-Hijjah 25, 1329

I. When was 'Ali and Aaron Described as the Two Stars?

It has not been clarified yet what you claim that he, peace be upon him and his progeny, used to describe 'Ali and Aaron as the two stars which are alike; when did he do that?

Sincerely,

S

Letter 34

Thul-Hijjah 27, 1329

I. The Occasion of Shabar Shubayr and Mushbir

II. The Occasion of Fraternity

III. The Occasion of Closing the Doors

Research the biography of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, and you will find him describing 'Ali and Aaron as two bright stars in the heart of the skies, the eyes positioned in the face, neither of them is distinguished in his nation from the other.

1. Have you noticed how he, peace be upon him and his progeny, had insisted that 'Ali should name his sons just like Aaron did, calling them Hasan, Husayn, and Muhsin? He ﷺ has said: "I have named them after Aaron's sons, Shabar, Shubayr, and Mushbir,"¹ intending thereby to emphasize the similarity between himself and Aaron, and generalizing such a similarity in all areas and aspects.
2. For the same reason, 'Ali has cherished his brother and favoured him over all others, thus achieving the goal of generalizing the similarity of both Aarons to their respective brothers, making sure that there must be no difference between them.

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, created brotherhood among his companions, as stated above, making, in the first incident, Abu Bakr brother of 'Umar, and 'Uthman brother of 'Abdul-Rahman ibn 'Awf. In the Second Fraternity, Abu Bakr became brother of Kharijah ibn Zayd, and 'Umar was made brother of 'Atban ibn Malik. Yet on both occasions, 'Ali was made brother of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as you have come to know.

There is no room here to quote all verified texts citing Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar, Zayd ibn Arqam, Zayd ibn Abu ‘Awfah, Anas ibn Malik, Huthayfah ibn al-Yemani, Makhduj ibn Yazid, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib, ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, and others narrating this hadith as such. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has also said to ‘Ali: “You are my Brother in this life and the life hereafter.”²

In Letter No. 20, we stated how he ﷺ took ‘Ali by the neck, saying: “This is my Brother, vicegerent and successor among you; therefore, listen to him and obey him.”

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, came out to meet his companions with a broad smile on his face. ‘Abdul-Rahman ibn ‘Awf asked him what pleased him so much. He answered: “It is due to a piece of good news which I have just received from my Lord regarding my brother and cousin, and also regarding my daughter. The Almighty has chosen ‘Ali a husband of Fatima.”

When the Mistress of all women of the world was wed to the master of the Prophet’s progeny ﷺ, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: “O Umm Ayman! Bring me my brother.” Umm Ayman asked: “He is your brother, and you still marry him to your daughter?!” He said: “Yes, indeed, Umm Ayman.” She called ‘Ali in.³

Quite often, the Prophet ﷺ used to point to ‘Ali and say: “This is my brother, cousin, son-in-law, and father of my descendants.”⁴

Once he spoke to him and said: “You are my brother and companion.” In another occasion, he said to him: “You are my brother, friend, and companion in Paradise.” He once addressed him in a matter that was between him, his brother Ja’far, and Zayd ibn Harithah, saying: “O ‘Ali! You are, indeed, my brother and the father of my descendants. You are of me and for me.”⁵

He made a covenant with him once saying: “You are my brother and vizier; you complete my religion, fulfill my promise, pay my debts on my behalf, and clear my conscience.”⁶

When death approached him, may both my parents be sacrificed for him, he said: “Fetch me my brother.” They called ‘Ali in. He said to him: “Come close to me.” ‘Ali عَلِيٍّ السَّلَامِ did. He kept whispering in his ears till his pure soul departed from his body. ‘Ali even caught some of the Prophet’s saliva.⁷

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has also said: “It is written on the gate of Paradise: ‘There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, ‘Ali is the Brother of the Messenger of Allah.’”⁸

The Almighty, when the Prophet left ‘Ali sleeping in his bed while the enemies were outside plotting to murder him, addressed Gabriel and Michael thus: “I have created brotherhood between both of you and let the life-span of one of you be longer than that of the other. Which one of you wishes to have the life of the other be longer than his own?” Each held his own life dearer. The Almighty said: “Why can’t you be like ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib between whom and Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ I have created brotherhood, and he has chosen to sleep in Muhammad’s bed, offering to sacrifice his own life for his brother? Go down to earth and protect him from his foes.” They both came down. Gabriel stood at ‘Ali’s head while Michael stood at his feet. Gabriel cried: “Congratulations! Congratulations! Who can be like you, O son of Abu Talib? Even Allah brags about you to His angels!” Regarding that incident, the verse “And there are among men those who trade their own lives for the Pleasure of Allah (Qur’an, 2:207)” was revealed.⁹

‘Ali himself is quoted saying: “I am the servant of Allah and the Brother of His Messenger. I am the strongest in believing in the Prophet. Nobody else can say so except a liar.”¹⁰

He has also said: “By Allah! I am his Brother and wali, his cousin and the inheritor of his knowledge; who else is more worthy of it than me?”¹¹

On the Day of Shura, he said to ‘Uthman, ‘Abdul-Rahman, Sa’d, and al-Zubayr: “Do you know of anyone among the Muslims other than myself with whom the Messenger of Allah established Brotherhood?” They answered: “We bear witness, no.”¹²

When ‘Ali stood to duel with al-Walid during the Battle of Badr, the latter asked him: “Who are you?” ‘Ali answered: “I am the servant of Allah and the brother of His Messenger.”¹³

When ‘Umar was caliph, ‘Ali asked him:¹⁴ “Suppose some Israelites come to you and one of them told you that he was cousin of Moses, would he receive a preferred treatment than the others?” ‘Umar answered: “Yes, indeed.” ‘Ali said: “I, by Allah, am the brother of the Messenger of Allah and his cousin.” ‘Umar took off his mantle and spread it for ‘Ali to sit on, saying: “By Allah, you will sit nowhere else other than on my own mantle till each one of us goes his way.” ‘Ali did so while ‘Umar was pleased by that gesture of respect for the brother and cousin of the Messenger of Allah as long as he was in his company.

3. ‘Well, I seem to have lost control over my pen. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered the doors of his companions’ houses overlooking the mosque to be closed for good, as a measure to protect the mosque’s sanctity against janaba or najasa, but he allowed ‘Ali’s door to remain open, permitting him to cross the mosque’s courtyard even while being in the state of janaba, just as Aaron was permitted to do, thus providing another proof for the similarity of positions of both men, peace be upon them, in their respective creeds and nations.

Ibn ‘Abbas has said: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered all the doors of his companions closed except that of ‘Ali

who used to enter even while in the state of janaba, having no other way out.”¹⁵

‘Umar ibn al-Khattab has narrated an authentic hadith which has been reproduced in both sahih books wherein he says:¹⁶ “

‘Ali ibn Abu Talib was granted three tokens of prestige; had I had one of them, it would have been dearer to me than all red camels [of Arabia]: his wife Fatima daughter of the Messenger of Allah, his residence at the mosque neighbouring the Messenger of Allah and feeling at home therein, and the standard during the Battle of Khaybar.”

Sa’id ibn Malik, as quoted in an authentic hadith, once mentioned a few unique merits of ‘Ali and said: “The Messenger of Allah turned out everyone from the mosque, including his uncle al-‘Abbas and others. Al-‘Abbas asked him: ‘Why do you turn us out and keep ‘Ali?’ He, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered: ‘It is not I who has turned you out and kept ‘Ali. It is Allah who has turned you out while keeping him.’”¹⁷

Zayd ibn Arqam has said: “A few companions of the Messenger of Allah H used to have the doors of their houses overlooking the mosque. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, then said: ‘Close down all these doors except ‘Ali’s.’

Some people did not like it, and they talked about it. So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, stood one day, praised the Almighty then said: ‘I have ordered these doors to be closed save ‘Ali’s, and some of you have disliked that. I have not closed down a door nor opened it, nor gave any order, except after being commanded by my Lord to do so.’”¹⁸

Quoting Ibn ‘Abbas, Al-Tabrani has said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, stood up once and said: “I have not turned

you out acting on my own personal desire, nor have I left a door open out of my own personal preference. I only follow whatever inspiration I receive from my Lord.”¹⁹

And the Messenger of Allah said once to Ali عَلِيٍّ السَّلَام: “O ‘Ali! It is not permissible for anybody other than your own self to be present [in the mosque] while being in the state of janaba.”²⁰

Sa’d ibn Abu Waqqas, al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib, Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Umar, and Huthayfah ibn al-Yemani, have all said: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, came out to the mosque once and said: ‘Allah inspired to his Prophet Moses to build Him a pure mosque in which nobody other than Moses and Aaron would live. Allah has inspired to me to build a sanctified mosque wherein only I and my brother ‘Ali are permitted to sleep.’”²¹

There is no room here to state all the ascertained texts narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Zayd ibn Arqam, a companion from the tribe of Khath’am, Asma’ bint ‘Amis, Umm Salamah, Huthayfah ibn Asid, Sa’d ibn Abu Waqqas, al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib, ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, ‘Umar, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, Abul Tufail, Buraydah al-Aslami, Abu Rafi’, freed slave of the Messenger of Allah, Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah al-Ansari, and others have all narrated the same hadith.

It is also well known that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, invoked the Almighty once saying:

“O Lord! The my brother Moses had prayed you saying: ‘Lord! Remove depression from my chest, untie my tongue’s knot so that people may understand my speech, and let my brother Aaron be my vizier from among my household to support me in my undertaking and participate therein,’ and you, Lord, responded with: ‘We shall support you through your brother and bestow upon you a great authority (Qur’an, 28:35).’

Lord! I am your servant Muhammad; therefore, I invoke you to remove depression from my chest, to make my undertaking easier to carry out, and to let 'Ali be my brother from among my household.”²²

Al-Bazzaz has likewise indicated that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, took 'Ali's hand and said: “Moses had prayed his Lord to purify His mosque through Aaron, and I have prayed my Lord to purify mine through you.” He then sent a messenger to Abu Bakr ordering him to close down his door which overlooked the mosque, and Abu Bakr responded expressing his desire to honour the Prophet's command.

Then he sent another messenger to 'Umar to do likewise, and another to al-'Abbas for the same purpose. Then he, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: “It is not I who has closed down your doors, nor have I kept 'Ali's door open out of my own accord; rather, it is Allah Who has opened his door and closed yours.”

This much suffices to prove the similarity between 'Ali and Aaron in all circumstances and conditions, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. This is quoted by the traditionists according to their own authentic sources of the traditions of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. Refer to pages 265 and 168, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*, and you will find the text of this hadith described as authentic according to the endorsement of both Shaykhs. Imam Ahmad has also quoted it from 'Ali's hadith on page 98, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad*. Ibn 'Abdel-Birr, too, quotes the

biography of the grandson of the Prophet al-Hasan عليه السلام from Isti'ab, and even al-Thahbi quotes it in his Talkhis, taking its authenticity for granted, in spite of his fanaticism and deviation from this nation's Aaron, and from its Shabar and Shubayr. It is also quoted by al-Baghwi in his Mu'jam, and 'Abdul-Ghani from his Idah, as is recorded on page 115 of Al-Sawaiq al-Muhriqa, from Salman whose text is almost similar, and also from Ibn 'Asakir.

2. Al-Hakim has quoted it on page 14, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak* as narrated by Ibn 'Umar from two authentic sources and endorsed by both Shaykhs. Al-Thahbi has also quoted it in his Talkhis, taking its authenticity for granted. Al-Tirmithi, too, quotes it as cited by Ibn Hajar on page 72 of his *Al-Sawa'iqa al-Muhriqa*; so, refer to the seventh hadith of the ones included in Section 2 of Chapter 9 of *Al-Sawa'iqa al-Muhriqa*. All those who have discussed the brotherhood hadith among writers of traditions and chronicles have accepted it without any argument.
3. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 159, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*. Al-Thahbi, too, has quoted it in his Talkhis, admitting its authenticity. Ibn Hajar copies it in Chapter 11 of his *Al-Sawa'iqa al-Muhriqa*. All those who wrote about the wedding of al-Zahra' S have, without any exception, mentioned it.
4. This is included by al-Shirazi in his chapter on surnames, and by Ibn al-Najjar who quotes Ibn 'Umar. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi has transmitted it in his *Kanz al-'Ummal* and *Al-Muntakhab* which he attaches to the footnote of his *Musnad*; so, refer to the second line of the footnote on page 32 of its fifth volume.
5. Al-Hakim quotes it on page 217, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*, the authenticity of whose narrators is endorsed by Muslim. Al-Thahbi has admitted the same in his own Talkhis.

6. Al-Tabrani has quoted it in his *Al-Kabir* from Ibn ‘Umar, and it is transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in his *Kanz al-’Ummal* as well as *Al-Muntakhab*; so, refer to *Al-Muntakhab* to see the inclusion of the footnote on page 32, Vol. 5, of the *Musnad*.
7. This is quoted by Ibn Sa’d on page 51, Part Two, Vol. 2, of his *Tabaqat*, and also on page 55, Vol. 4, of *Kanz al-’Ummal*.
8. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his *Al-Awsat*, by al-Khatib in his *Al-Muttafaq wal-Muftaraq*, and it is transmitted by the author of *Kanz al-’Ummal*; so, refer to *Al-Muntakhab* and see the inclusion of a footnote on page 35, Vol. 5, of Ahmad’s *Musnad*. It is also transmitted by Ibn ‘Asakir in his footnote on page 46.
9. This is quoted by authors of books of traditions in their respective works, and it is briefly referred to by Imam Fakhrul-Din al-Razi as he interprets this verse of Surat al-Baqara, on page 189, Vol. 2, of his *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*.
10. This is quoted by al-Nisa’i in *Al-Khasa’is al-’Alawiyya*, and by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 112, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, by Abu Shaybah and Ibn Abu ‘Asim in *Al-Sunnah*, and by Abu Na’im in *Al-Ma’rifa*. It is also transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in *Kanz al-’Ummal* and *Muntakhab al-Kanz*. Refer to *Al-Muntakhab* and read what Ahmad has included in the footnote on page 40, Vol. 5, of his *Musnad*.
11. Refer to page 126, Vol. 3, of the *Al-Mustadrak*. It is quoted by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis*, where the author does not dispute its authenticity at all.
12. This is quoted by Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr in ‘Ali’s biography in the *Isti’ab*, in addition to many other trusted authorities.
13. This is quoted by Ibn Sa’d while discussing Badr’s military campaign in his *Tabaqat*, page 15, part One, Vol. 2.

14. As Dar Qutni quotes in the fifth maqsad of the Maqasid of the verse enjoining kindness to the Prophet's kin, and it is verse 14 of the ones counted by Ibn Hajar in Part 11 of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*; so, refer to page 107 of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*.
15. This hadith is quite lengthy, and it contains ten exclusive merits of 'Ali, and we have quoted it Letter No. 26.
16. It exists on page 125, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*. It is quoted by Abu Ya'li, as stated in Part 3, Chapter 9, of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*; so, refer to page 76 of this book. It is also quoted in this meaning in almost similar wording by Ahmad ibn Hanbal while quoting ahadith by 'Umar and his son 'Abdullah, and by many other trusted traditionists through various avenues.
17. As stated at the beginning of page 17, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*. This hadith is included in Sunni books of traditions, and it is quoted by many trusted Sunni authorities.
18. As quoted about him by Ahmad on page 369, Vol. 4, of the *Musnad*. It is also quoted by al-Diya as stated in *Kanz al-'Ummal* and its *Muntakhab*; so, refer to *Al-Muntakhab* to see what is included in the footnote for page 29 of the fifth volume of the *Musnad*.
19. As he is quoted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi at the end of the footnote on the page referred to above.
20. As quoted by al-Tirmithi in his *Sahih* and quoted from him by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi as we have stated when referring to his *Muntakhab*. It is also quoted by al-Bazzaz from Sa'd, as stated in hadith 13 of the ahadith which Ibn Hajar quotes in Section 2, Chapter 9, of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*; so, refer to page 73 of the same.

21. As they are quoted by 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Khatib, the Shafi'i faqih who is better known as Ibn al-Maghazli, in his book *Al-Manaqib* from various sources, and transmitted by the trusted researcher al-Balkhi in Chapter 17 of his *Yanabi' al-Mawaddah*.

22. This is quoted by Imam Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi from Abu Tharr al-Ghifari in his interpretation of the following verse of Surat al-Ma'ida: "Verily, your wali are: Allah, His Messenger, and the Believers," in his *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, similar to which is transmitted from Imam Ahmad's *Musnad* by the Balkhi researcher.

Discussions

Jewish Influence

There is no mistaking the Jewish influence of ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ in the development of Shī‘ī thought. The entire concept of Waṣiyyah for the Khilāfah of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is an adaptaion of the Waṣiyyah for Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام by Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. This is something attested to my the scholars of the Shī‘ah. Al-Nawbakhtī writes:

A group of scholars aligned to ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, have concluded that ‘Abd Allah ibn Saba’ was a Jew, who embraced Islam and expressed love for ‘Alī. He was known for propagating the idea that Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn was the one to whom leadership was bequeathed after Mūsā. After embracing Islam he promoted the same idea about ‘Alī; that leadership was bequethed to him upon the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise. He was the first person to propagate the doctrine which declared the necessity of accepting the Imāmah of ‘Alī, and disassociating one’s self from his enemies and adopting a hostile attitude towards them.¹

The progression of this idea subconsciously resonates in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s arguments. He argues along similar lines for the pre-eminence of ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ immediate succession. The parallel to the Jewish tradition is again misplaced since Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام did not succeed Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Notwithstanding this, our arguments have very little to do with the nuanced Jewish similarities.

The dilemma

Not only was it that circumstances prompted the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to console ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; but Hārūn’s عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام position with regards to Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was temporal. Even if Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام were to be alive at the time of the demise of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام he would not have been his successor since he was already a prophet with a mission. He

1 *Firaq al-Shī‘ah* pg. 44

would be continuing the mission with which he was mandated to perform by Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى.

Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was also the biological brother of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ; so arguing that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ resembled Hārūn in every aspect besides prophethood is simply not possible in this respect. The hermanuetic principle dictates that a general text which has been restricted, ceases to be absolute and is subject to further restriction. Proving the pre-eminence of ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ succession in light of the *Ḥadīth al-Manzilah* is not merely speculative but downright whimsical.

To argue that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was first in line for succession because of *Waṣīyyah* becomes increasingly problematic since Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did not succeed Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. It is thus imperative that we look to another candidate to be the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ successor. Consider that Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ companion on the Hijrah journey, just as Yūsha‘ ibn Nūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ was the companion of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ on their journey to meet al-Khidr. Similarly, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was nominated to lead the people in prayer – even though ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was present – seems to indicate the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ preference for succession. To the disappointment of many detractors, it was only the door of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ which led into the Masjid that the Prophet demanded be kept open when he instructed that all other such doors be sealed shut.¹ It is not farfetched to establish the similarities between them.

The narrations

Considering the delicate foundation upon which this argument rests, it is imperative that it be supported by other forms of evidence. To this end ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has cited over two dozen narrations; most of which are fabricated or seriously flawed, the exception being a few over which the scholars have differed.

We present our study of these narrations below:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt, Ḥadīth 466; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth 2382

1. The names of Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Muḥassin and Shabbar, Shabīr, Mushabbir

Even if this narration was accepted, all it indicates is a similarity between Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ and ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. It does nothing to support the idea of ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ immediate succession. It also calls into question the Rāfiḍī version of events after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise which holds ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ responsible for Fāṭimah’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ miscarriage; an invented tale.

This narration is transmitted with variant wordings via different chains:

- a. Isrā’īl – Abū Ishāq – **Hāni’ ibn Hāni’** – ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.¹ All those who narrate it with this chain mention Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Muḥassin and Shabbar, Shabīr, Mushabbir as well as the fact that these were the names of the children of Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, with the exception of al-Bazzār who names them Jabr, Jubayr, Mujabbir.

It is interesting to know that after ascribing this narration to al-Ḥākim in his *Mustadrak*, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn quotes him as grading this narration authentic according to the criteria of both al-Bukhārī and Muslim whereas al-Ḥākim merely accepted it without ascribing to it the criteria of neither al-Bukhārī nor Muslim.

- b. Yūsuf ibn Ishāq – Abū Ishāq – **Hāni’ ibn Hāni’** – ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.² This version mentions nothing about Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.
- c. Qays ibn al-Rabī – Abū Ishāq – **Hāni’ ibn Hāni’** – ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.³ This version only mentions two names and does not make any reference to Hārūn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg 159 Ḥadīth 769; vol. 2 pg. 264 Ḥadīth 953; *al-Adab al-Mufrad* (823); *al-Bazzār* vol.2 pg.314 Ḥadīth 742, *al-Iḥsān fī Taqrīb Ṣaḥīḥ ibn Ḥibbān* vol. 15 pg. 409 Ḥadīth 6958; *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 96 Ḥadīth 2773; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 165

2 *Al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* vol.3 pg. 97 Ḥadīth 2776

3 *Musnad al-Tayālīsī* (129); *al-Bazzār* vol.2 pg.315 Ḥadīth 743

d. ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth – Bardha‘ah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – Abū al-Khalīl – Salmān al-Fārisī رضي الله عنه.¹ This version only mentions two sons.

e. Al-A‘mash – Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d – ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.²

f. Al-A‘mash – Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d – Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.³

The first three chains are all by way of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī, from Hāni’ ibn Hāni’, from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. The astute reader will notice the inconsistency in the wording between the three versions. This could be attributed to the fact that the memory of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī was not as strong towards the end of his life.⁴

Earlier we touched on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s deception vis-à-vis al-Ḥākīm’s grading. Let us elaborate on why this could not be on the criteria of al-Bukhārī or Muslim, let alone them both.

The narrator, Hāni’ ibn Hāni’, is relatively unknown. The only person to narrate from him is Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī. His narrations do not appear in any of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*; instead they are found in *Abū Dāwūd*, *al-Tirmidhī* and *Ibn Mājah*.⁵ Ibn Ḥajar describes him as one whose narrations would not be independently relied upon, but have the capacity of being elevated when there is supporting evidence.⁶ Naturally, this would apply when there is nothing to contradict it. However, if the inconsistencies in the wordings are considered it might be reason for scholars not to accept this narration as has been the case with some scholars. Others might not deem it too contradictory, and accept the narration on the lowest level of acceptance.

1 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 2 pg. 147; *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 97

2 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 97 Ḥadīth 2777

3 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol.2 pg. 774 Ḥadīth 1367

4 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 22 pg. 102

5 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 5938; *al-Taqrīb* bio. 7264

6 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 7264

The narration by way of Salmān رضي الله عنه includes two problematic narrators whose weakness renders his version incapable of providing support to others. Appearing the chain of this narration is ‘Amr ibn Ḥurayth, whose status as a narrator remains unknown.¹ Worse still is Bardha‘ah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān who is severely criticized and known for spurious narrations; this one in particular²

The remaining two versions have interrupted chains, Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d did not meet ‘Alī رضي الله عنه let alone the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

The problem does not end here. There is another narration which describes different circumstances for the naming of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهما. In the narrations above, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is said to have named each of his sons Ḥarb, which means war. Each time the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم changed the name and in some versions mentioned the resemblance to Hārūn عليه السلام.

Imām Aḥmad narrates from Zakariyyā ibn ‘Adī — from ‘Ubayd Allah ibn ‘Amr — from ‘Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Aqīl — from Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī³ — from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه who said that when Ḥasan was born he first named him Ḥamzah (after his uncle) and when Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه was first born he named him Ja‘far (after his brother); however the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم indicated that he wished to change their names. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه said that Allah and His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم know best. So, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم changed the names to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.⁴

It is increasingly difficult to decide which of the narrations is the most accurate. Needless to say that this narration is not known to have been criticized by the scholars of Ḥadīth. In any case, if the Shī‘ah accept the narration presented by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn then it is necessary to retract all allegations of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه kicking in the door of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and causing Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها to lose the child with which she was pregnant.

1 *Lisān a-Mizān* vol. 7 pg. 198

2 *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 303, *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 2 pg. 270

3 Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyah, the son of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

4 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol 2. Pg. 464-465, Ḥadīth 1370; A similar narration appears in *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* (498) and *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 98 Ḥadīth 2780.

2. You are my brother in this life and the next

- a. **Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr – Jumay‘ ibn ‘Umayr** – ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه¹
- b. **Ishāq ibn Bishr al-Kāhili** – Muḥāmmad ibn Fuḍayl – Sālīm ibn Abī Ḥafṣah – **Jumay‘ ibn ‘Umayr** – ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.²
- c. **Kathīr al-Nawā’** – **Jumay‘ ibn ‘Umayr** – ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.³

The common narrator in all the variant chains is Jumay‘ ibn ‘Umayr. Before discussing his status as a narrator let us investigate the other problematic narrators who appear in each chain.

Hakīm ibn Jubayr has been criticized by a number scholars including Shu‘bah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Nasā‘ī and al-Dāraquṭnī. Some of them have criticized him with very harsh terms.⁴

Appearing in the second chain is **Ishāq ibn Bishr al-Kāhili**, a narrator of Ḥadīth in Kūfah who is suspected of forging narrations. Muṭayyin said that the only person he heard Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah call a liar was Ishāq ibn Bishr. He was also suspected of fabricating Ḥadīth by Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī, ‘Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Fallās and al-Nasā‘ī.⁵ Al-Dhahabī criticizes him harshly in *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*.⁶

Kathīr al-Nawā’ was a hardline Shī‘ī, considered weak by Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, al-Nasā‘ī, ibn ‘Adī and al-Dhahabī among many others.⁷

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib Ḥadīth 3720; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 14; *al-Kāmil* vol. 2 pg. 166

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 14

3 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 2 pg. 166

4 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 584; *al-Kāshif* bio. 1197; *al-Taqrīb* bio. 1468

5 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 187

6 *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 14

7 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 402

Jumay' ibn 'Umayr

Jumay' ibn 'Umayr is the common narrator in this Ḥadīth. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn claimed that al-Dhahabī ratified this narration as being sound. The reality, however, is very different. Al-Dhahabī suspects him of forging this narration in *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*!¹

Al-Bukhārī described him with the term, “*Fīhi Naẓar*,” a term used mostly for a narrator whose weakness is severe. Ibn Ḥibbān described him as a hardline Shī'ī who forged Ḥadīth; whereas Ibn 'Adī said that his narrations are largely unsupported.²

None of the chains can be elevated due to the severity of the weakness of this narration.

3. This is my brother, my executor, and my khalīfah amongst you! Therefore, listen to him, and obey him!

We have already discussed this narration in significant detail under Letter 20. Please refer there for the detailed response, especially the inconsistencies in the text. Our brief comment in this narration will follow.³

All the references quote this narration with one of two common chains

- a. Muḥammad ibn Ishāq - 'Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim – Minhāl ibn 'Amr - 'Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥārith – ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه - 'Alī رضي الله عنه
- b. 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Quddūs – al-A'mash – al-Minhāl ibn 'Amr with his chain to 'Alī رضي الله عنه

1 *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 14

2 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 422

3 Refer to pg. 388 of this book.

‘Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim, Abū Maryam, is *matrūk* (suspected of forgery) and is not reliable on any level.¹

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Quddūs was considered weak and a known Rāfiḍī. Ibn ‘Adī said most of what he narrates is about the Ahl al-Bayt, and al-Nasā’ī and al-Dāraquṭnī emphatically conclude that he was weak.²

4. Good news which has just reached me from my Lord...

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has not provided a reference for this narration. We managed to trace it to *Tārīkh Baghdād* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. It is a lengthy narration with a lengthy chain. Al-Khaṭīb, after citing this narration, states, “All the narrators appearing in this chain from ‘Umar ibn Muḥammad until Bilāl [ibn Ḥamāmah] – this amounts to seven narrators – are all *Majhūl*.”³ This means that there are seven consecutive narrators whose identities, and status as transmitters of Ḥadīth, remains a mystery. What is not a mystery is why ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn relied on this Ḥadīth.

5. On the night of Fāṭimah’s ﷺ wedding the Prophet ﷺ said, “ O Umm Ayman, call my brother.” She responded, “Is he is your brother yet you marry him to your daughter?”

- a. Ḥātim ibn Wardān – Ayyūb – **Abū Yazīd al-Madanī** – Asmā’ bint ‘Umays ﷺ who said, “I was present at the wedding of Fāṭimah ﷺ...”⁴
- b. Ma‘mar – Ayyūb – **Abū Yazīd** & ‘Ikrimah or one of them – that Asmā’ bint ‘Umays ﷺ...(Mursal)⁵

1 *Mizān al-I’tidāl* by al-Dhahabī, vol. 2, p. 640.

2 *Mizān al-I’tidāl*, vol. 2, p. 458

3 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 4 pg. 210

4 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol.2 pg. 762 Ḥadīth 1342, *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg 137 Ḥadīth 124, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* vol. 24 pg. 136, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 159

5 *Muṣannaf ‘Abd al-Razzāq* vol. 5 pg. 485, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 578 Ḥadīth 958, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* vol. 24 pg. 137

c. Ḥammād ibn Zayd – Ayyūb – **Abū Yazīd** that Asmā' bint 'Umays رضي الله عنها
(Mursal)¹

d. **Muḥammad ibn Sawā'** – Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah – Ayyūb - 'Ikrimah – ibn
'Abbās رضي الله عنه²

The variations in this chain might hold little value, if any, to the untrained eye. However, expert critics examined the subtle changes in the way a narration was transmitted.

The reader will notice that Ayyūb is the common narrator in all chains, however those who narrate it from Ayyūb differ in the manner in which they narrate it from him.

Three versions have Ayyūb with a chain to Asmā' bint 'Umays, whereas one chain goes via Ibn 'Abbās.

The chain that mentions Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah cites 'Ikrimah, from Ibn 'Abbās, a common chain. It is to be noted that while Sa'īd ibn Abī 'Arūbah was a highly reliable narrator, his memory failed him at the end of his life as a result of which he erred in his narrations. The scholars accept the narrations of those who narrate from him prior to the lapse in memory, 145 A.H. Those who narrate from him after this date have been found to have errors in their narrations.³

Muḥammad ibn Sawā', despite being a reliable narrator,⁴ is among those who narrate from him after his lapse in memory;⁵ and the evidence to that can be seen in this narration as he cites the common chain from 'Ikrimah.

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg 133, *ʿIlal al-Dāraḥiṭ* vol 14. Pg. 243

2 *Khaṣā'is 'Alī* pg. 138 Ḥadīth 125

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 11 pg. 5; *al-Thiqāt* by ibn Ḥibbān vol. 6 pg. 360

4 *Al-Kashif* bio. 4892, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 5939

5 *Al-Kawākib al-Nayyirāt* pg. 111-112

Abū Yazīd al-Madanī, while it is correct that he is among the narrators found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, has only been cited by him once in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹ This narration happens to be a Mawqūf narration. While scholars like Yahyā ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal were inclined to accept his narration; that was only on account of Ayyūb narrating from him. Imām Mālik appears not to have known him. Perhaps this is the reason that Ibn Ḥajar grades him on the bare minimum, Maqḅūl.²

In the remaining three versions, two of them have interrupted chains and one of the chains is transmitted in way that can be assumed continuous. All three versions mention Ayyūb. Fortunately, the expert in the science of *ʿilal* [subtle anomalies], Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāraqṭnī, has offered his insight by pointing out that the interrupted version is the correct narration.³

Contrary to what ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn deceitfully ascribes to al-Dhahabī in *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak*, we find that al-Dhahabī has acknowledged that this narration is incorrect, *Ghalaṭ*.⁴ We have come to accept this as deceit since neither the *Talkhīs*, nor the *Mustadrak* was printed during the period in which this correspondence is meant to have taken place.⁵

The error is further confirmed by historical inaccuracies in the text. Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا could not have been present at the wedding of Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا as she was still in Abyssinia. She only arrived in Madīnah with her husband, Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, in the seventh year of the Hijrah; around the time of the Khaybar expedition.

6. This is my brother, cousin, son-in-law and the father of my descendents.

There is nothing objectionable in the wording of this narration. The only question is whether this was said by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the manner described.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Manāqib al-Anṣār, al-Qasāmah fī al-Jāhiliyyah, Ḥadīth3845

2 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 8542

3 *ʿIlal al-Dāraqṭnī* vol. 12 pg. 243

4 *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak* vol.3 pg. 159

5 Refer to pg. 430 of this book.

The narration could be traced with the following chain:

Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Ars – Muḥammad ibn Sahl al-Māzinī – **Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā al-Tamīmī** - ‘Ubayd Allah ibn ‘Umar – Nāfi‘ - ibn ‘Umar...¹

Al-Ṭabarānī states after narrating it, “This narration is only known from Ibn ‘Umar except by way of Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā al-Tamīmī; and the only one to narrate it from him is Muḥammad ibn Sahl al-Māzinī.”²

Ismā‘īl ibn Yaḥyā al-Tamīmī is known for forging Ḥadīth. He has been described as a liar, and a cornerstone of forgery.³As such, this narration cannot be relied upon.

7. You are my brother and my companion.

Like the narration before it, there is nothing objectionable in the text. The issue is whether this narration can correctly be traced back to the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the manner described. The correct wording appears in the narration of al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib.⁴

It is narrated by way of **Ḥajjāj [ibn Arṭāt]** – al-Ḥakam – Miqṣam – ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا...⁵

Ḥajjāj ibn Arṭāt is known as a *Mudallis*, which means that if he often omits the person from whom he received the Ḥadīth and assigns its reference to someone higher up the chain. The problem with Ḥajjāj is that he was known for omitting spurious narrators and ascribing the narration to a reliable narrator higher up the chain. As such, the scholars are reluctant to accept his narrations unless he

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* vol. 6 pg. 300; *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 316

2 *Ibid*

3 *Al-Kāmil* vol.1 pg. 491, *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol 1. pg. 253

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* Ḥadīth 4251

5 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 3 pg. 480; *al-Istī‘āb* vol. 3 pg. 1098

expressly indicates whom he received it from.¹ In this case he used the word “an” which is an ambiguous term.

In addition to this there is the interruption between al-Ḥakam and Miqsam. Shu‘bah ibn Ḥajjāj stated that al-Ḥakam only heard five narrations from Miqsam;² this is not one of them.

8. You are my brother, my friend, and companion in paradise.

What has been said for the previous two narrations applies here as well in terms of the meaning. The narration has correctly been ascribed to *Tārikh Baghdād*.³

The end of the chain is as follows:

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn – his father – ‘Alī رضي الله عنه...

Firstly, this is an interrupted chain since ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn does not narrate from his grandfather, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

The major problem, however; is the presence of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qurashī al-Waqfāqī in this chain. He is suspected of forging Ḥadīth.⁴

9. Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه came to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم asking him who was the most beloved...

It is narrated by way of Muḥammad ibn Salamah – **Muḥammad ibn Ishāq** – Yazīd ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Qusayṭ – Muḥammad ibn Usāmah – Usāmah...⁵

1 *Ta’rīf Ahl al-Taqdīs* pg 164

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Jumu‘ah, Ḥadīth 527

3 *Tārikh Baghdād* vol. 12 pg. 268

4 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 4525

5 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 36 pg. 110 Ḥadīth 21777; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 217

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Yasār is considered acceptable if he expressly states the person from whom he received the Ḥadīth. In this case he used the ambiguous term “an” which raises a red flag.

The Ḥadīth is found to contradict the more authentic version narrated by both al-Barā' ibn 'Āzib¹ and 'Alī رضي الله عنه,² both in the wording and circumstance. We have already discussed the variant versions of this Ḥadīth.³

10. You are my brother, my adviser...

This narration appears by way of Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah – Muḥammad ibn Yazīd – 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭahwī – Layth [ibn Abī Sulaym] – Mujāhid – 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه...⁴

After citing this narration al-Haythamī said, “Al-Ṭabarānī narrates it; though there are names which I do not recognize in it [the chain].”⁵ Perhaps he is referring to 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭahwī who does not have any biographical data on him; which means that his anonymity alone is enough to dismiss this narration.

The chain suffers from further problems in that Layth ibn Abī Sulaym was considered a weak narrator. Al-Dhahabī has cited quotations from Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Nasā'ī, all of them discrediting his narrations. Al-Dhahabī further lists a number of narrations, including some by way of Mujāhid, for which Layth has been criticized and found wanting in terms of his memory.⁶

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī Ḥadīth 4251; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Jihād Ḥadīth 1783

2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 160 Ḥadīth 770

3 Refer to pg. 484 of this book.

4 *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* vol. 12 pg. 420;

5 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 9 pg. 121

6 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 420

11. The Prophet ﷺ called for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه on his deathbed

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn ascribed this narration, via the agency of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*,¹ to Ibn Sa’d in his *Ṭabaqāt*. Although; he conveniently omitted the fact that after referencing this narration, ‘Alī al-Muttaqī says that the chain is weak!

We present the chain as it appears in *Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d*:²

Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar [al-Wāqidī] - ‘Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib – from his father [Muḥammad] – from his grandfather...

To begin with the chain is interrupted. Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib did not meet ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. As such there is a missing link between him and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.³ It might be argued that the pronoun in this chain refers not to the grandfather of Muḥammad, but that of his son, ‘Abd Allah; meaning that Muḥammad narrates it from his own father. If this is the case the narration remains Mursal since ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib is a Ṭābiī and his narration from the Prophet ﷺ directly is also interrupted.

‘Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad has been graded the bare minimum by Ibn Ḥajar, *Maqbūl*.⁴ Ibn Ḥajar has divided narrators into twelve categories. Six categories of narrators whose narrations are within the realm of acceptance, and the remaining six describe the weak narrators with increasing degrees of unreliability. The term *Maqbūl* is used for narrators on the lowest end of the spectrum. This term applies to someone who does not narrate in abundance, whose narrations don't deserve to be discarded completely. Such a narrator is one whose solitary narrations would be considered on the higher end of weak, whilst they may be elevated to acceptable if supported by others.⁵

1 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* Ḥadīth 18790

2 *Al-Ṭabaqāt* vol. 2 pg. 263

3 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 8 pg. 107

4 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 3595

5 *Muqaddimah al-Taqrīb* pg. 111, Dār al-Yusr, 1430 A.H

The major problem in this chain is the presence of al-Wāqidī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar. He was considered extremely unreliable, even suspected of falsifying narrations. When it came to matters of Sīrah and military expeditions they would mention his views alongside others due to the vast number of narrations he collected in that genre. The scholars are unanimous in rejecting those aḥādīth which he alone narrates.¹

The authentic narrations place the Prophet’s ﷺ wife, ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا at his side during his final moments.

Al-Aswad ibn Yazīd relates:

It was said in ‘Ā’ishah’s رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا presence that ‘Alī was appointed (by the Prophet ﷺ before he died), and she responded, “When did he [the Prophet ﷺ] do the Waṣiyah? [In his final moments] He ﷺ was resting against my bosom, or in my lap, and he called for a basin, then he became limp in my lap and passed away, and I did not realize it. So when did he ﷺ appoint him?”²

The combination of those three defects in the chain with the contradictory narrative is enough to consider the narration in the *Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa’d a fabrication, as some have pointed out.

12. It is written on the doors of Paradise...

This narration has been transmitted by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah – **Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā** – **Yaḥyā ibn Sālim** – **Ash’ath** – Mis’ar – **‘Aṭīyyah** – Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allah ...³

1 *Mizān al-‘itidāl* vol 3. Pg. 662-666, *al-Ta’rīf wal-Ikhhbār bi Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Ikhtiyār* vol. 1 pg 246

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā, Ḥadīth 2741; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Waṣīyah, Ḥadīth 1636

3 *Al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* Hadīth 5498; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol. 7 pg. 256; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol.7 pg. 387; *al-Dua’afā’ al-Kabīr* by al-‘Uqaylī vol. 1 pg. 33

Zakariyyah ibn Yaḥyā al-Kisā'ī has been described by Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn as an evil person who narrated false narrations. Al-Nasā'ī and al-Dāraquṭnī claim that the scholars suspected him of forgery so they abandoned his narrations.¹

Yaḥyā ibn Sālim al-Asadī al-Kūfī was considered a weak narrator by al-Dāraquṭnī. Al-'Uqaylī put him in the same category as his teacher, Ash'ath. Ibn al-Jawzī upheld the opinion of al-Dāraquṭnī, as did al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar.²

Ash'ath, the cousin of Ḥasan ibn Šāliḥ, is described by al-Dhahabī has an extremist Shī'ī. Abū Ja'far al-'Uqaylī discredits him saying that he did not preserve his narrations. He then goes on to cite this narration as an example of his spurious narrations.³ Al-'Uqaylī goes on to state that the previous two narrators, Yaḥyā ibn Sālim al-Asadī and Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Kisā'ī, are no better than Ash'ath.⁴

'Aṭīyyah al-'Awfī is considered weak notwithstanding his Shī'ī leanings. He is also on 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's list of 100 and we have pointed out that the scholars of Ḥadīth do not rely on his narrations independently.⁵ Al-Dhahabī documents the fact that the all the scholars agree that he is weak.⁶

A further reference to *Kanz al-'Ummāl* reveals a similar narration recorded by Ibn 'Asākir.⁷ This narration is found with the following chain:

Sulaymān ibn al-Rabī' – Kādiḥ ibn Raḥmah – Mis'ar ibn Kidām – 'Aṭīyyah al-'Awfī – Jābir رضي الله عنه.⁸

1 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 75

2 *Al-Ḍu'afā wal-Matrūkīn* by al-Dāraquṭnī pg. 218, 395; *al-Ḍu'afā al-Kabīr* vol. 1 pg. 33; *al-Ḍu'afā' wal-Matrūkīn* by ibn al-Jawzī vol. 3 pg. 195; *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 377; *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 8 pg. 442

3 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 270, *al-Ḍu'afā al-Kabīr* vol. 1 pg. 33

4 *Al-Ḍu'afā al-Kabīr* vol. 1 pg. 33

5 Refer to his bio in letter 16 on pg. 357 of this book.

6 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 80, *al-Mughnī fi al-Ḍu'afā* bio.4139, *al-Kāshif* bio.3820, *Taqrib al-Tahdhīb* bio. 4616

7 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 56 pg. 72

8 *Faḍā'il al-Šaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 665; *al-Kāmil fi al-Ḍu'afā'* vol. 7 pg. 228; *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* vol. 7 pg. 256

It is clear from this chain of transmission that this is simply another version of the narration that we are discussing. The link from Mis‘ar – **Aṭīyyah al-‘Awfī** – Jābir رضي الله عنه is common; unreliable independently. What can about the rest of the chain is that it is even more problematic than the previous one due to the severity of the weakness of both **Sulaymān ibn Rabī** and **Kādiḥ ibn Raḥmah**.

Ibn Ḥibbān writes:

Kādiḥ ibn Raḥmah, the Ascetic. He was from Kūfah and narrates from al-Thawrī and Mis‘ar; and Sulaymān ibn Rabī al-Nahdī narrates from him. He’s known for grafting weak narrations onto strong chains. I have a niggling feeling that this was deliberate; although it is possible that these were inadvertent in which case his narrations were poorly preserved which resulted in huge blunders on account of which he deserved to be abandoned.¹

To demonstrate the spurious narrations which have been transmitted by way of Kādiḥ, ibn Ḥibbān cites this very narration as an example. He says:

It is he who narrates from Mis‘ar ibn Kidām — from ‘Aṭīyyah — from Jābir that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “I saw written on the door of Paradise, ‘There is none worthy of worship besides Allah, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, ‘Alī is the brother of the Messenger of Allah.’”²

Al-Dhahabī quotes al-Azdī, claiming that Kādiḥ was a forger.³ He also confirms that this narration is a forgery and establishes that the narrator from Kādiḥ, Sulaymān ibn Rabī, is suspected of forgery as well.⁴

These fabrications were well-known and recorded by the scholars very early on. The fact that anyone would think that these narrations would pass by unnoticed in a scholarly exchange is sufficient to prove that it was one-sided.

1 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 230

2 *Ibid*

3 *Al-Mughnī fil-Ḍu‘afā’* vol. 2 pg. 529

4 *Mīzān al-Itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 399

13. The night that ‘Alī slept in the Prophet’s ﷺ bed Allah revealed to Jibrīl and Mīkā’īl that He had made them brothers...

Contrary to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s claim, no such narration exists in the Sunan works! To cover his bases he added *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī as a secondary reference; whereas al-Rāzī does not cite this narration verbatim in his *tafsīr*.¹

Under the discussion on the verse in Sūrah al-Baqarah:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

*And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking means to the approval of Allah .
And Allah is kind to [His] servants.*²

Before we proceed it ought to be noted that the great scholar, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, was an expert in the rational sciences, especially in the disciplines of *‘ilm al-Kalām*, and *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*. Ḥadīth, however, was not his speciality and his opinion on Ḥadīth related matters doesn’t receive much consideration. That being said; al-Rāzī opens this discussion citing three possible scenarios which serve as the circumstance for the revelation of this verse neither of which he has cited any original reference.

The first context that he provides describes a number of individuals whose sacrifices in Makkah were notable. Specific mention is made of Suhayb al-Rūmī who struck a bargain with the Quraysh; all his wealth in exchange for unhindered passage allowing him to migrate to Madīnah where he would join the Prophet ﷺ. This scenario is correct and is supported by a sound narration which al-Ḥākim has vouched is authentic and is approved by al-Dhahabī.³

The second possibility is that it was revealed about an unnamed man who endured hardship in the way of enjoining good and forbidding evil.

1 *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* vol. 5 pg. 221

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 207

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 398-400

The third context was that of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه sleeping on the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم bed on the night of Hijrah. The issue is that al-Rāzī did not provide any reference for any of the scenarios which he had described. Furthermore, the version about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is worded very differently from the one cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

So, considering the lack of any mention of this narration in Sunnī Ḥadīth literature and the absence of any Isnād there is no way of reliably ascribing this version of events to the Prophetic period. However, an analysis of the text reveals that this narration – not the fact that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه slept in the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم bed – is inconsistent with Prophetic aḥādīth and considering this in addition to the previous problems some have no reservations in declaring this a forgery.

14. I am the slave of Allah and the brother of His Messenger. I am the greatest believer; only a liar shall claim this after me.

This narration appears by way of al-Minhāl ibn ‘Amr – ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abd Allah – ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.¹

We have already pointed out that ‘Abbād ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Kūfī is an unreliable narrator, as well as the opinions of al-Bukhārī and ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī on the extent of his weakness.²

Commenting on this narration, al-Ḥākim graded it sound. However, al-Dhahabī pointed out that this was an oversight and that the narration was baseless.³

Ibn al-Jawzī included this narration on his collection of fabricated aḥādīth, *al-Mawḍū‘āt*.⁴

1 *Sunan ibn Mājah* vol. 1 pg. 87 ḥadīth no. 120, *al-Sunan al-Kubra* of al-Nasā’ī ḥadīth no. 8340, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 111-112.

2 See discussions on Letter 22

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 111-112

4 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* vol. 1 pg. 341

15. By Allah! I am his brother, his Walī, his cousin and the inheritor of his knowledge; who then can be more deserving of him me?

This is narrated by way of ‘**Amr ibn Ṭalḥah al-Qannād – Asbāṭ ibn Naṣr** – Simāk ibn Ḥarb – ‘Ikrimah – ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه¹

Asbāṭ ibn Naṣr, even though his narrations appear in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, he does not meet the criteria of credibility by Imām Muslim. Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī objected to Muslim’s inclusion of narrators like Asbāṭ. Muslim justified his inclusion saying that he did not include him on the basis of accepting his narrations independently. Instead, he had acquired narrations by way of Asbāṭ with a higher chain than that of the sound narrators of his time.. Since these narrations of Asbāṭ are known to be correct, partly through the supplementary chains and partly by the fact that he only selected that which the reliable narrators have recorded from him, he included them with his shorter chain.²

When asked about Asbāṭ, Abū Zur‘ah claimed that some of his narrations were reliable whilst others were suspicious.³ Although, Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā’ī and Abū Nu‘aym – one of those on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100 – considered Asbāṭ weak and unreliable.⁴ Al-Sājī has pointed out that Asbāṭ narrated many flawed narrations from Simāk ibn Ḥarb which could not be corroborated.⁵

Simāk ibn Ḥarb was a moderately reliable narrator in general, his memory did affect his narrations towards the end of his life though. Ibn Ma‘īn, Abū Ḥātim and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal all accepted his narrations in general. However, when asked about the reason for his criticism Ibn Ma‘īn responded that often times Simāk was found narrating a complete chain where others had narrated the

1 *Tafsīr ibn Abī Ḥātim* vol. 3 pg. 777; *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg. 82 Ḥadīth 65 ; *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol.1 pg. 64; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 126, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 56

2 *Su‘ālāt al-Bardha’ī* pg. 676

3 *Su‘ālāt al-Bardha’ī* pg. 464

4 *Ibid*

5 *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 2 pg. 64, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1 pg. 109

same report with an interrupted chain. Hishām ibn ‘Ammār acknowledges that Simāk erred in his narrations somewhat, and the narrators from him differed, suggesting inconsistency.

‘Alī ibn al-Maḍīnī and Ya‘qūb ibn Shaybah al-Sadūsī have identified the problem area in Simāk’s narrations; when he narrated from ‘Ikrimah. He was particular inconsistent with what he narrated from ‘Ikrimah, and would revert to that chain due to the abundance of what he narrated via it, even when the narration was transmitted with a different chain.¹

So, while Simāk is reliable in general, his narrations from ‘Ikrimah specifically are problematic.

If we combine the problems found with ‘Simāk from ‘Ikrimah’ with the weakness of Asbāṭ ibn Naṣr it is quite easy to see why this narration is flawed.

Al-Dhahabī has pointed out that this narration is baseless adding to the previous problems that of ‘Amr ibn Ḥammad ibn Ṭalḥāh al-Qannād. He concludes that although ‘Amr is within the acceptable range of narrators, he is known to have narrated baseless narrations and cited this particular narration as an example of such narrations.²

16. On the Day of Shura, he said to ‘Uthmān, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Sa‘d, and al-Zubayr: “Do you know of anyone other than myself with whom the Messenger of Allah established Brotherhood?”...

In the footnotes this narration is correctly referenced to *al-Istī‘āb* of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr was the unrivaled expert of Ḥadīth in al-Andalus in the fifth century. His book, *al-Istī‘āb*, is one of the earliest encyclopedias on the biographies of the Companions رضي الله عنهم.

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 232-234, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 2 pg. 115

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 255

The narration appears thus in *al-Istī'āb*:

‘Abd al-Wārith – Qāsim – Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr - ‘**Amr ibn Ḥammād al-Qannād** – Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Azdī – Ma‘rūf ibn Kharrabūdh – **Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir** – Sa‘īd ibn Muḥammad al-Azdī – Abū al-Ṭufayl¹

The comments on ‘**Amr ibn Ḥammād al-Qannād** have been discussed in the previous narration.

The more obvious issue in the chain of this narration is **Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir**; to whom the extremist Jārūdiyyah branch of the Zaydī Shī‘ah is ascribed.

He is Abū al-Jārūd, Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir al-Hamadānī [some say al-Nahdī]. Al-Shahrestānī quotes al-Bāqir calling Ziyād a blind devil.² Yaḥyā al-Naysāpūrī, al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ma‘īn have all agreed to the severity of his weakness and to the fact that he cannot be trusted.

Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī refers to him as having adopted a wayward doctrine, famed for narrating false narrations about the virtues of ‘Alī عليه السلام.³

Some of the students of Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn have him on record declaring Ziyād a liar. This opinion is upheld by many of the critics; including Ibn Ḥibbān, who said that he was a Rāfiḍī known for forging narrations which paint the Ṣaḥābah in negative light, in addition to his narration of baseless aḥādīth about the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt.⁴

Even ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, from whom ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn sourced this narration, considers Ziyād ibn al-Mundhir extremely unreliable.⁵ This confirms that ibn ‘Abd al-Barr did not rely on this narration himself. He probably included it in *al-Istī'āb* for the purpose of collected whatever had been written about ‘Alī عليه السلام.

1 *Al-Istī'āb* vol. 3 pg. 1098

2 *Ikmāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 5 pg. 112

3 *Ibid*

4 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1 pg. 654

5 *Ibid*

17. ‘Alī’s statement to al-Walīd at the Battle of Badr, “I am the slave of Allah, and the brother of His Messenger ﷺ...”

This has been ascribed correctly to Ibn Sa’d in his *Ṭabaqāt*. While there is nothing objectionable in the text of this narration it does appear to suffer from problems in terms of the chain of transmission. The narration appears in *al-Ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Sa’d with the following chain:

Khalaf ibn al-Walīd al-Azdī – Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyyā ibn Abī Za’idah – Ismā’īl
ibn Abī Khālid – **al-Bahiyy** [‘Abd Allah ibn Yasār]¹

This narration ends with al-Bahiyy, whose name is ‘Abd Allah. Despite being from the generation of the Tābi‘īn, he only met the younger Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنه and did not meet ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. This means that this chain is interrupted and cannot be relied upon.

Abū Ḥātim expressed reservations about his narrations whereas others accepted him as honest. Therefore Ibn Ḥajar says that although he is trustworthy he has erred in some of his narrations.²

Both these factors affect the reliability of the chain.

18. Conversation with ‘Umar

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has given a spin to this incident that it is barely recognizable from the one mentioned in *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Muḥriqah*. Also, the reference to *al-Dāraqutnī* could not be verified.

The narration as it appears in **al-Ṣawā’iq** demonstrates that ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه asked about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and he was told that he was working his fields. So ‘Umar رضي الله عنه went with those who were with him to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه providing assistance

1 *Al-Ṭabaqāt* vol. 2 pg. 23

2 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 3723

with his work. After a while they took a rest and in the conversation ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn! If a cousin of Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ were to come to you would he receive special treatment from you?” ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied in the affirmative. So ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked, “Is it because I am the cousin of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his brother [that you came personally to assist be with manual labour]?” So ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ removed his own shawl and spread it down ushering ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to sit on his shawl, telling him that none shall have the privilege of being seated on it whilst they were present.

Al-Haytamī mentioned this incident without a chain. Despite the lack of credibility in the narration, it shows that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn was deceptive. Even a weak narration had to be tailored to suit his agenda!

19. Instruction to close all doors besides the door of ‘Alī

We have discussed this narration in a fair amount of detail under Letter 26.¹ The summarized version is that while some of the experts have declared it a forgery, others have considered it a weak narration which has been contradicted by an authentic narration, thus significantly unreliable.

The correct version of the Ḥadīth is the one narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, wherein the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ instructed that all doors leading into the Masjid besides Abū Bakr’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ be sealed shut.²

We might add here that al-Nasā‘ī has suggested where the confusion might have arisen which resulted in the erroneous version of the Ḥadīth. He cites a narration by way of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “We were seated with the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and there was a group of people around him. Then ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ entered; in turn they got up and left. After they left, the began blaming each other for leaving saying, ‘By Allah, he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not instruct us to leave or him (‘Alī) to enter!’ When

1 Refer to pg. 430 of this book.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Manaḥib al-Anṣār, Ḥadīth no. 3904

they returned the Prophet ﷺ commented, ‘It was not I who made you leave or him (‘Alī) to enter, instead it was Allah who made you leave and caused him to enter.’”¹

Al-Nasā’ī cited this narration immediately after the narration which mentions closing all the doors except ‘Alī’s ﷺ door. He commented on it saying, “This appears to be more accurate.”²

He follows that up with a weak narration which is worded slightly differently. The weaker version states that the Prophet ﷺ announced one evening that everyone ought to vacate the masjid besides the Prophet’s ﷺ own family, and the family of ‘Alī ﷺ. The next morning one of his uncles expressed his disappointment when he asked the Prophet ﷺ why his companions and uncles were made to leave for a youngster; to which the Prophet ﷺ allegedly responds, “It was not I who took you out and brought him in, rather it is Allah who took you out and brought him in.”³

It is clear that the underlying premise in the second version is somewhat altered from the first. The first version merely states that those who were seated around the Prophet ﷺ left from their own misunderstanding of a situation. The second, and weaker, version seems to imply that this was a divine directive. There is a variation of the second version, and in this variation the questioner is named as ‘Abbās. He is alleged to have said, “O Prophet of Allah, you have closed all our doors [told us to leave] and opened the door of ‘Alī [permitted him to stay]?” the response was, “I have neither opened them, nor closed them.”⁴

The details of each version become increasingly elaborate. It comes as no surprise when there are numerous weak versions of the report calling for the closing of all doors except ‘Alī’s ﷺ. And Allah Knows Best.

1 *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī* pg. 61 Ḥadīth 39

2 *Ibid*

3 *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī* pg62. Ḥadīth 40

4 *Ibid*

Our apologies to the esteemed reader. Since ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s correspondence was not really responded to he repeatedly employs the same flawed evidence without worry. However, it is our duty to point these out periodically.

20. ‘Umar said that ‘Alī had been granted three things...

The translation of *al-Murāja‘āt* gives the impression that this narration appears in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, whereas the original Arabic merely states that this is on the criteria of the *Shaykhayn* [al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. In the footnotes he references it to *al-Mustadrak*, *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* and he points to a supporting version in *Musnad Aḥmad*.

While the narration does appear in *al-Mustadrak*¹, al-Ḥākim merely stated that the chain was authentic – though al-Ḥākim is known for his leniency in authenticating reports. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn took the liberty of elevating the grading to the level of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*!

Al-Dhahabī expressed his disagreement with al-Ḥākim in his abridgment. He pointed out that there was a narrator in the chain, **‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far**, whose weakness is agreed upon. ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far is the father of the legendary ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Madīnī, al-Bukhārī’s famous teacher and mentor. ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī’s objectivity is remarkable; when asked about his father he first avoided the question, but when asked again he confirmed that his father was weak in Ḥadīth.

Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā‘ī suggest that the extent of the weakness was significant.²

Al-Haythamī has pointed out that that the narration in *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* is transmitted with the same chain; by way of ‘Abd Allah ibn Ja‘far ibn Najīḥ. Al-Haythamī says about him, “Matrūk.”³

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 125

2 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 401

3 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 121

In the footnote he makes a vague reference to *Musnad Aḥmad*. The narration, as it appears in *Musnad Aḥmad* is as follows:

Wakī - **Hishām ibn Sa’d** - ‘Umar ibn Usayd - ibn ‘Umar

We used to say during the Prophet’s ﷺ time, “After him the best of this Ummah was Abū Bakr ﷺ, then ‘Umar ﷺ,” and ‘Alī ﷺ was given three virtues, had I been granted even one of them it would have been better for me than red camels. The Prophet ﷺ got him married to his own daughter, Fāṭimah ﷺ and she bore him children, the doors to the Masjid were closed besides his door, and he was granted the standard on the Day of Khaybar.”¹

A similar narration is found in *Musnad Abī Ya’lā*² by way of Naṣr ibn ‘Alī - ‘Abd Allah ibn Dāwūd - **Hishām ibn Sa’d** with the same chain to Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ.

Also, by al-Ṭaḥāwī³ by way of Fahd ibn Sulaymān - Abū Nu’aym - **Hishām ibn Sa’d** with the same chain to Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ.

Its quite evident that this narration has four primary elements: Abū Bakr and ‘Umar ﷺ being the best of this Ummah, ‘Alī’s ﷺ marriage to Fāṭimah ﷺ, the standard on the Day of Khaybar and the closing of all doors leading to the Masjid besides the door of ‘Alī ﷺ.

The question is whether ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn accepts this narration in its entirety. The elements besides the matter of closing the doors to the Masjid are corroborated in sound reports. It is this matter which is contradicted by other narrations.

This brings us to the chain of transmission. The common narrator in all versions is **Hishām ibn Sa’d**.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol 8. Pg. 416 Ḥadīth 4797

2 *Musnad Abī Ya’lā* Ḥadīth 5601

3 *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār* Ḥadīth 3560

‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī said of him, “Not very strong.” Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was also critical of him as a narrator of Ḥadīth. Ibn Ma‘īn and al-Nasā‘ī shared the same sentiments of him being not that reliable. Ibn ‘Adī considered him weak, though not weak enough for his narrations to be discarded. Ibn Sa‘d noted Shī‘ī tendencies as well.¹ These factors account for the erroneous addition in this narration.²

21. The narration of Sa‘d ibn Mālik [Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ]

He ascribed this narration to *al-Ḥākim*, claiming that this is among the most authentic narrations. This is nothing more than his own deception since al-Ḥākim did not even consider this narration sound.³ What is more strange is that al-Dhahabī points this out on the very same page! To the contrary, al-Dhahabī mentions the problematic narrator, Muslim al-A‘war; he calls him ‘*Matrūk*’, suspected of forgery!

The narration of Sa‘d is the one which we used to demonstrate the development of the idea that the instruction was given for all doors leading to the Masjid to be sealed besides the door of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. There are a few versions of this narration:

- a. Ibn Fuḍayl – Muslim al-A‘war al-Malā‘ī – Khaythamah ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān – Sa‘d
- b. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān [Luwayn] – ibn ‘Uyayanah – ‘Amr ibn Dīnār – Mūhammad ibn ‘Alī [al-Bāqir] – Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ – Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ:

We were seated with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and there was a group of people around him. Then ‘Alī رضي الله عنه entered; in turn they got up and left. After they left, they began blaming each other for leaving saying, ‘By Allah, he صلى الله عليه وسلم

1 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 7 pg. 109, *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 299 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2 pg. 15

2 Refer to the discussions on letters 14 (pg. 231) and 16 (pg. 341) for more details on the narrations of an innovator.

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 117

did not instruct us to leave or him (‘Alī) to enter!’When they returned the Prophet ﷺ commented, ‘It was not I who made you leave or him (‘Alī) to enter, instead it was Allah who made you leave and caused him to enter.’”¹

This is al-Nasā’ī’s preferred version. This chain is sound, and it is also a chain in which Abū Ja‘far, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn, also known as al-Bāqir عليه السلام appears.

c. ‘Alī ibn Qādim – Isrā’īl – ‘Abd Allah ibn Sharīk – al-Ḥārith ibn Mālīk – Sa‘d.²

d. Fiṭr – ‘Abd Allah ibn Sharīk – ‘Abd Allah ibn Ruqaym – Sa‘d.³

Versions C and D mention closing of the doors. Both of these versions are declared weak by al-Nasā’ī; firstly due to the weakness of the common narrator, ‘Abd Allah ibn Sharīk, and secondly because both his teachers, al-Ḥārith and ‘Abd Allah ibn Ruqaym, are considered *Majhūl*.⁴

22. The narration of Zayd ibn Arqam

Appearing in the common chain of this narration is **Maymūn, Abū ‘Abd Allah.**

Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn said Maymūn Mawlā ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Samurah is worthless as a narrator.⁵ Furthermore, al-Dhahabī cites this narration as a specimen of his baseless narrations.⁶ We have discussed this in detail under Letter 26.⁷

1 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg. 61 Ḥadīth 39

2 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg. 62 Ḥadīth 40

3 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* pg. 62 Ḥadīth 41

4 *Ibid*

5 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol.4 pg.235

6 *Ibid*

7 Refer to pg. 430 of this book.

23. The narration of Ibn ‘Abbās

This narration is referenced to *al-Ṭabarānī* by way of the abridged version of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. The narration appears in *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* with the following chain:

‘Abd Allah ibn Zaydān al-Bajalī – Muḥammad ibn Ḥammād ibn ‘Amr al-Azdī
– Ḥusayn al-Ashqar – Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mas‘ūdī – Kathīr al-Nawā’
– Maymūn Abū ‘Abd Allah – Ibn ‘Abbās.¹

Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Ashqar has been discredited by al-Bukharī, Abū Zur‘ah – who considered him completely unreliable – and Abū Ḥātim. Al-Jūzajānī calls him an extremist Shī‘ī accused of cursing the companions. Ibn ‘Adī has pointed out the fact that he was known to have narrated many baseless narrations.²

Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥman, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Mas‘ūdī, is considered weak. Abū Ja‘far al-‘Uqaylī said that his narrations were problematic.³

Kathīr ibn Ismā‘īl al-Nawā’ is extremely unreliable. Al-Dhahabī says, “A Shī‘ī die hard. Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā‘ī deem him incompetent and weak.”⁴

Maymūn, Abū ‘Abd Allah is considerably weak. His biography appears briefly in the previous narration.

This narration is extremely unreliable; it comprises of a chain with four unreliable narrators in succession.

24. Entering the Masjid in the state of Janābah

There are two narrations cited. The narration in *al-Bazzār* and the narration of Abū Sa‘īd in *al-Tirmidhī*. One wonders why he insists on calling al-Tirmidhī’s *Jāmi‘*

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 12 pg. 147

2 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol.1 pg. 531

3 *Al-Ḍu‘ā‘afā’ al-Kabīr* vol. 2 pg. 275

4 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 402

as *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The two terms commonly attributed to al-Tirmidhī's work, both of which suggest a particular chapter arrangement, are *Sunan* and *Jāmi'*. The preferred name is the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī, whilst *Sunan al-Tirmidhī* is also an acceptable term in academic circles.

The narration in *Musnad al-Bazzār* appears by way of **Ḥasan ibn Zayd – Khārijah ibn Sa'd** – from his father. After narrating it al-Bazzār states, “We do not know of this narration from Sa'd except by this chain. Khārijah ibn Sa'd [is only known to] narrate one [other] Ḥadīth, also with this chain. We are not aware of anyone who narrates from Khārijah besides Ḥasan ibn Zayd.”¹

Al-Haythamī listed this very narration in *Majma' al-Zawā'id* and then commented, “I do not recognize Khārijah.”²

Khārijah appears to be *Majhūl* [anonymous narrator]. Neither al-Bukhārī, nor Ibn Abī Ḥātim list him in their anthologies of Ḥadīth narrators. His absence in these anthologies, as well as al-Bazzār's confirmation that the only narrator was Ḥasan ibn Zayd is a textbook definition of *Majhūl*.

Ḥasan ibn Zayd was a scholar in Madīnah. Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn regarded him weak, whereas others have accepted his narration. Ibn Ḥajar said that he was trustworthy, but known for some errors. He passed away in 168 A.H.³

The second narration, which appears in *al-Tirmidhī*, is narrated by way of 'Alī ibn al-Mundhir – Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl – **Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah** – **ʿAṭīyah [al-ʿAwfi]** – Abū Sa'īd...⁴

Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah is described by al-Dhahabī as, “... a Shīʿī whose narrations cannot be relied upon. He died around 140 A.H.”⁵ Ibn Ḥajar describes him as being

1 *Al-Baḥr al-Zakhkhār* vol.4 pg. 33

2 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 9 pg. 115

3 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 1242

4 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth 4061

5 *Al-Kashif*, bio. 1767

extreme in his Tashayyu‘, almost hinting that when he narrates something that might support his ideology it could be compromised by prejudice.¹

‘Aṭīyyah al-‘Awfī is not only weak in terms of his memory, but he narrates from one of his teachers – al-Kalbī – referring to him as Abū Sa‘īd. This was perceived as a problem by many of the early experts since al-Kalbī was a known forger.

Ibn Ḥajar states in his *Tahdhīb*:

Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj said about ‘Aṭīyyah al-‘Awfī that “His narrations are unreliable.” Thereafter he said, “I have been made aware that ‘Aṭīyyah would visit al-Kalbī asking him about tafsīr. He had conferred on him the title Abū Sa‘īd which was his unique way of referring to him. Thereafter, he would narrate to people saying, “Abu Sa‘īd said”.

Hushaym considered his narrations to be *da‘īf* (weak). Al-Jūzajānī said, “He was inclined towards Shī‘ism.” Al-Nasā‘ī said, “He is weak.” Ibn ‘Adī included him among the Shī‘ah of Kūfah.

Ibn Ḥibbān says, “He (‘Aṭīyyah) had given him (al-Kalbī) the title Abū Sa‘īd. Later he would narrate in such a way that he gave the impression that he was narrating from Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, whereas he was actually referring to his codename for al-Kalbī. It is not permissible to write his narrations except to note down their peculiarities.” He adds that Abū Bakr al-Bazzār considered him from the Shī‘ah.²

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn tries desperately to establish similarities between the Prophet ﷺ and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, and Mūsā عليه السلام and Hārūn عليه السلام, based on blood relations. While we have already disproved the prospect of successorship in previous discussions, we have consistently demonstrated that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has conjured his theory from unreliable narrations. However, even, if it were conceded for

1 *Al-Taqrīb*, bio. 2173

2 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 7 pg. 225

the sake of argument that this narration was acceptable by the standards of the Ḥadīth scholars, it would be of no avail to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

Anyone remotely familiar with the location of the Prophet’s ﷺ house, specifically the house of ‘Ā’ishah in which he lays buried, in relation to his Masjid, would know that the house enters into the Masjid. The home of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها was located directly behind the Prophet’s ﷺ home, and is today part of the enclosed area, separated from the greater Masjid. The door of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه also led directly into the Masjid. Since there was no other door to both the Prophet’s ﷺ house and ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه house, necessity dictated that they would have to pass through the Masjid for their comings and goings. It was in the *geographical location* of their houses, in relation to the Masjid, that would have determined this concession if the narration were proven correct; not blood relations between the Prophet ﷺ and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

Furthermore, if this narration were furnished to support the previous ones it would only reinforce the fact that this was not a matter of distinction but of necessity based on the location of both homes in relation to the Prophet’s ﷺ Masjid.

25. Allah inspired Mūsā عليه السلام to build a pure Masjid...

This narration is referenced to *al-Manāqib* by Ibn al-Maghāzilī, citing *Yanābī al-Mawaddah*.

Yanābī al-Mawaddah is for all intents and purposes a melting pot of unreliable narrations. The author, Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Balkhī al-Qunduzī, is a Shī‘ī portraying himself as a Sunnī. He quotes extensively from the radical Shī‘ī sources, which are filled with known fabrications. This, in addition to his advocating the belief of only twelve Imām’s after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise, that the Mahdī is the son of Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and the doctrine of Ghaybah. All of these beliefs are foreign to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jamā‘ah.

The source that he cites, the *Manāqib*, by Ibn al-Maghāzilī is no better. Ibn Taymiyyah had identified it as a source for fabricated reports and baseless narrations.¹

This narration has been identified as a forgery by Ibn al-Jawzī.²

26. The Prophet's ﷺ supplication

He references it to the *Tafsīr* of al-Tha'labī and Aḥmad, citing al-Balkhī.

We have just discussed al-Balkhī in the previous narration. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's citing him is convenient as it provides an opportunity to demonstrate the type of narrations it comprises of.

This narration, ascribed to Aḥmad is assumed to refer to the *Musnad*. However, it turns out that it is narrated in *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*. It appears with this chain:

'Abd Allah ibn Ghannām - 'Abbād ibn Ya'qūb - **'Alī ibn 'Abbās** – al-Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīrah – al-Qāsim – **a person from the Khath'am tribe** – Asmā' bint 'Umays³

'Alī ibn 'Abbās al-Azraq was described by Yahyā ibn Ma'īn as “worthless” while al-Jūzajānī, al-Nasā'ī and al-Azdī merely said that he was weak. However, Ibn Ḥibbān went on to say, “... Abundant in error to the extent that his narrations deserve to be discarded.”⁴

The anonymity of the person from the Khath'am tribe compounds the weakness of this narration.

1 *Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Sunnah* pg. 420

2 *Al-Mawḍū'āt* vol. 1 pg. 179

3 *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 678

4 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 134

Ibn ‘Adī cites another version by way of Aḥmad ibn al-Mufaḍḍal – **Ja‘far al-Aḥmar** – ‘**Imrān ibn Sulaymān** - **Ḥuṣayn al-Tha‘labī** – Asmā’ bint ‘Umays¹

Ja‘far ibn Ziyād al-Aḥmar was considered slightly weak, with Shī‘ī leanings. Ibn ‘Adī points out that he narrates unreliable narrations regarding the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt, citing this as one of them.²

‘**Imrān ibn Sulaymān** is described as one who – at times – narrates that which can be corroborated, whilst other times his narrations are severely flawed.³ Such a narrator is never independently relied upon.

Ḥuṣayn al-Tha‘labī is described by al-Bukhārī with the term, “*Fīhi Naḥar.*”⁴ Oftentimes al-Bukhārī uses this term to describe someone with significant weakness; such narrations could never support others.⁵

The remaining narration is from the *Tafsīr* of al-Tha‘labī from Abū Dharr.⁶ This narration will form part of the discussion on *Āyat al-Wilāyah* in the forthcoming correspondence. Suffice to say that the greatest Ḥadīth scholar of the 9th century, al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī has said that the chain of this narration is worthless.⁷

27. The narration from al-Bazzār

This is a variation of the narration appearing at no. 25. This narration comes by way of ‘Alī عليه السلام and appears in *Musnad al-Bazzār* with the following chain:

1 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 2 pg. 377

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-‘Itidāl* vol.3 pg. 238

4 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg. 6

5 *Al-Raf‘ wa al-Takmil* pg. 141

6 *Al-Kashf wal-Bayān* vol. 4 pg. 81

7 *Al-Kāf al-Shāf‘ bi Takhrīj Aḥādīth al-Kashshāf* vol. 4 pg. 56-57

Layth ibn Ḥātim - ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā – **Abū Maymūnah** - ‘**Īsā al-Madanī** - ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn – his father - ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib...¹

After narrating it al-Bazzār goes on to explain why it is significantly weak. He points out two errors:

- a. **Abū Maymūnah** is Majhūl. None, besides ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā narrates from him
- b. This narration is only known by way of ‘Īsā al-Madanī, also known as Malā’ī.

Al-Bazzār goes on to say that this narration is not known from the Prophet ﷺ; the only reason for mentioning it was to point out its errors.²

‘**Īsā al-Malā’ī** is considered severely weak, suspected of narrating fabrications.³

This is the final narration that forms part of this round of correspondence. The short of it is that the narrations cited are found to be unreliable by the standards of the early Ḥadīth critics.

Many of the narrations, even if presumed to be correct, indicate a meaning very different from the twisted meanings ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn attempts to provide.

1 *Al-Baḥr al-Zakḥkhār* vol. 2 pg. 144

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 328

Letter 35

Thul-Hijjah 27, 1329 A.H.

I. Requesting other texts

1. May Allah reward your father! How eloquent your arguments and how convincing! Please oblige and go ahead to state the rest of the clear consecutively reported (mutawatir) texts, Wassalamo Alaikom.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 36

Thul-Hijjah 29, 1329

I. Ḥadith by ibn ‘Abbas

II. ‘Umran’s Hadith

III. Buraydah’s Hadith

IV. Hadith Recounting Ten Exclusive Attributes [of ‘Ali]

V. ‘Ali’s Hadith

VI. Wahab’s Hadith

VII. Ibn Abu ‘Asim’s Hadith

1. Refer to what Abu Dawud al-Tayalisi has reported, as stated in a chapter discussing ‘Ali in Isti‘ab through the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas who is quoted saying: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said to ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib: ‘You are next to me alone as the wali of every believer.’”¹
2. Another authentic hadith is narrated by ‘Umran ibn Hasin who says: “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, deployed an army division under the command of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib who chose, as his share of the khums, a slave-girl for himself, and people criticized him. Four men vowed to complain against him to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

When they came to the Prophet, one of them stood up and said: ‘O Messenger of Allah! Have you seen how ‘Ali has done such and such?’ The Prophet ﷺ turned his face away from him. The second stood up and spoke likewise, and the Prophet ﷺ ignored him, too. The third stood up and repeated what his fellows had previously stated, and he, too, was

ignored. The fourth one stood up and stated exactly as had been stated by his fellows.

It was then that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, turned to them with anger in his eyes and said: ‘What do you want of ‘Ali? ‘Ali is of me and I am of him, and only after me is he the mawla of all believers.’“²

3. Also refer to Buraydah’s hadith quoted verbatim on page 356 of Vol. 5 of Ahmad’s Musnad. He says: “The Messenger of Allah sent two armies to Yemen. One of them was led by ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلِيٌّ ابْنُ أَبِي تَالِبٍ, and the other by Khalid ibn al-Walid. He instructed them thus: ‘When you combine your forces, let ‘Ali be the overall leader.’“³

But if you disperse, then each one of you is the leader over his own troops.’ We then battled Banu Zubayda, and ‘Ali selected one of the captives, a slave-girl, for himself; so, Khalid and I wrote to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, to inform him of the incident. When I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and the letter was read for him, I noticed anger in his eyes; therefore, I pleaded to him by saying: ‘This is the place for those who seek refuge; you have sent me with a commander and ordered me to obey him, and I have done just that.’ The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: ‘Do not ever plot against ‘Ali, for he is of me and I am of him, and he is your wali after me.’“⁴

Al-Nisa’i has quoted the following words of the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ verbatim on page 17 of his Al-Khasa’is al-‘Alawiyah: “O Buraydah! Do not try to make me dislike ‘Ali, for ‘Ali is of me, and I am of him, and he is your wali after me.” Jarir, too, quotes Buraydah’s statement verbatim thus: “The Prophet’s face became red with anger, and he said: ‘To whomsoever I have been mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla;’ therefore, I forgot my own anger against ‘Ali and said that I would never speak ill of ‘Ali again.’“⁵

Al-Tabrani, too, has quoted this hadith in detail. Among what he narrates is that when Buraydah came from Yemen and entered the mosque, he found a crowd standing by the room of the Prophet ﷺ. Upon seeing him, they stood up to greet him and ask him what news he had brought them. He said: “Good news. Allah has rendered victory upon the Muslims.” They asked him: “Then what brought you here?” He answered: “An incident regarding a slave-girl whom ‘Ali chose as his share of the khums, and I have come here to inform the Prophet about it.”

They said: “Inform him of it, do inform him, so that he may change his heart about ‘Ali,” while the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, was standing overhearing their conversation from within. He, thereupon, came out angrily and said: “What is the matter with those who bear grudge against ‘Ali? Whoever hates ‘Ali hates me, too, and whoever abandons ‘Ali abandons me. ‘Ali is of me and I am of him; he has been created of my own mould, and my own mould is Ibrahim’s (Abraham’s), and I am even superior to Ibrahim,⁶ one progeny descending from another, and Allah is all-Hearing, all-Knowing. O Buraydah! Have you not come to know that ‘Ali’s share is a lot more than the slave-girl he took, and that he is your wali after me?”⁷ - There is no doubt about the authenticity of this hadith, and its narrators are quite numerous, and they are all reliable.

4. Similar to this narration is what al-Hakim has narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas who cites a particular hadith of weight and significance. In it he counts ten exclusive attributes of ‘Ali, and he quotes the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, addressing ‘Ali thus: “You are the wali of every believer after me.”⁸
5. Likewise, in another hadith, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said, “O ‘Ali! I have prayed Allah to grant me five wishes concerning you, and He granted me four and denied the fifth.” He continues to say: “He has granted me that you are the wali of the believers after me.”⁹

6. A similar hadith is transmitted by Ibn al-Sakan from Wahab ibn Hamzah and is quoted in Wahab's biography in Isti'ab thus: "I travelled once with 'Ali and found him to be cold towards me; therefore, I decided to complain about him to the Prophet upon returning.

So I mentioned him to the Messenger of Allah and I spoke ill of him, whereupon he ﷺ said: 'Do not say so about 'Ali, for he is your wali after me.'" Al-Tabrani, in his book Al-Mujma' al-Kabir, cites Wahab's statement with a minor alteration in its wording thus: "Do not say this about 'Ali, for he is the most worthy of being your leader after me."¹⁰

7. Ibn Abu 'Asim has quoted 'Ali's hadith from the Prophet through a chain of narrators thus: "Do I not have more authority over the believers than they themselves have?" People answered in the affirmative. The Prophet ﷺ then said: "To whomsoever I have been wali, 'Ali is his wali;"¹¹ and our sahih books in this regard are mutawatir from the Imams of the Purified Progeny ﷺ.

This much should suffice to prove our point, although ayat al-wilayat alone suffices to support our claim, and praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, Wassalamo Alaikom.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. This is quoted by Abu Dawud and other authors of books of traditions from Abu 'Awanah al-Waddah ibn 'Abdullah al-Yashkuri through a chain of narrators: Abu Balj Yahya ibn Salim al-Fizari, 'Amr ibn Maymun al-'Awdi, ending with Ibn 'Abbas. The men who have quoted this tradition are all authorities in their own right, and they are relied upon by both Shaykhs

in their respective sahihs with the exception of Yahya ibn Salim whom they do not quote, yet even the pioneers of criticism and verification have all declared his trustworthiness, and that he used to mention the name of Allah most frequently. Al-Thahbi, while stating his biography in his *Al-Mizan*, quotes Ibn Ma'in, al-Nisa'i, Dar Qutni, Muhammad ibn Sa'id, Abu Hatim, and many others all testifying to the fact that the man is a trusted authority.

2. This is quoted by many authors of books of traditions such as Imam al-Nisa'i in his *Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya*, Ahmad ibn Hanbal (when quoting 'Umran's hadith at the beginning of page 438, Vol. 4, of his *Musnad*), al-Hakim on page 111, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*, admitting its authenticity due to its endorsement by Muslim. It is quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah and Ibn Jarir, and the hadith both men quote from him has been verified by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi at the beginning of page 400, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*. It is also quoted by al-Tirmithi from reliable sources as mentioned by al-'Asqalani while discussing 'Ali's biography in his *Al-Isabah*. The Mu'tazilite scholar has quoted it on page 450, Vol. 2, of *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah*, commenting: "This is narrated by Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] in his *Musnad* in more than one place." He also narrates it in his book *Fada'il 'Ali* ['Ali's virtues], and it is narrated by most traditionists.
3. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as long as he lived, never required anyone to issue orders to 'Ali; on the contrary, he vested upon him the responsibility of issuing orders to others. He was his standard-bearer in every campaign, unlike many others. Abu Bakr and 'Umar were both ordinary soldiers in Usamah's troops, serving under the standard tied for him by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who ordered him to take charge of the Mu'ta expedition. He personally enlisted both men, according to the consensus of chroniclers, and he also made them soldiers of Ibn al-'As. These facts are stated by al-Hakim on page 43, Vol. 3, of his

Al-Mustadrak, and they are cited by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*, admitting the authenticity of the hadith. As regarding ‘Ali himself, he was never to receive orders, nor to be the subject of anyone other than the Prophet himself since the inception of his mission and till his demise, peace be upon him and his progeny.

4. This is quoted by Ahmad on page 356 from ‘Abdullah ibn Buraydah who quotes his father. On page 347, Vol. 5, of his *Musnad*, relying on a chain of narrators including Sa’id ibn Jubayr and Ibn ‘Abbas, he quotes Buraydah saying: “I participated in ‘Ali’s campaign against Yemen, and I felt that his attitude towards me was cool. When I came to the Messenger of Allah and mentioned ‘Ali, I belittled him. Having done so, I saw the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ change colour, and he said to me: ‘O Buraydah! Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers have over their own selves?’ I answered: ‘Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah.’ He said: ‘To whomsoever I am a mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla.’” This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 110, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, in addition to many traditionists. It is, as you see, quite clear in its gist, for when he starts with the question “Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers have over their own selves?” he bears testimony to the meaning of “mawla” in this hadith to be “the one who is awla, i.e. most worthy of ruling” them, as is quite obvious. Similar to this hadith is what has been quoted by many traditionists such as Imam Ahmad at the end of page 483, Vol. 3, of his *Musnad*, from ‘Amr ibn Shas al-Aslami, one of those who were present at Hdaybiya, who quotes the same adding: “I accompanied ‘Ali to Yemen, and he was cool to me during the trip, so much so that I concealed some feelings against him. When I came back, I complained about him at the mosque till the news reached the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I entered the mosque one afternoon, and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, was present there accompanied by many of his companions. As soon as he saw me, he stared at me till I sat down. He said to me: ‘O ‘Amr! By Allah you have hurt me.’ I said: ‘I seek refuge with Allah

against hurting you, O Messenger of Allah!' He said: 'Yes; whoever hurts 'Ali hurts me, too.'"

5. As he is quoted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi on page 398, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*. He is also quoted in *Muntakhab al-Kanz*.
6. When he was told that 'Ali was created of his own mould, peace be upon him and his progeny, thus by necessity becoming superior to this man, he said: "And I am created of Ibrahim's mould," mistakingly thinking that Ibrahim (Abraham) is superior to him, peace be upon him and his progeny, which contradicts the truth of the matter.
7. Ibn Jarir has quoted this hadith from al-Tabrani who includes it on page 103 of his book *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* while discussing the second maqsad of verse 14 of the ones which he discusses in Chapter 11 of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*. But when he comes to the statement "Have you not come to know that 'Ali's share is more than a slave-girl?" his pen halts, and he cannot finish the hadith in its entirety! This is not strange, coming from him and his likes; and praise be to Allah for our good health.
8. This is quoted by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 134, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*, al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*, admitting its authenticity, al-Nisa'i on page 6 of his *Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya*, and Imam Ahmad on page 331, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad*. We have quoted it verbatim at the beginning of Letter No. 26.
9. This hadith is number 6048 among the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 396, Vol. 6.
10. This hadith is numbered 2579 among the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 155, Vol. 6.
11. This is transmitted by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi from Ibn Abu 'Asim on page 397, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.

Discussions

There is no harm in summarizing the general approach towards the narrations about Sayyidunā ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. There are abundant sound narrations about the virtues and merits of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه; all these we accept.

On the other hand, there are even more narrations about him which are either complete forgeries, significantly unreliable or adapted versions of the sound narrations.

It might be asked, “If you accept the sound narrations, why is it that you reject what the Shī‘ah say? After all these narrations, by your own admission, are correctly attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.” The simple response is that we understand these in their *proper context*.

Stripped of their context, these narrations could be adapted to suit any preconceived ideology. Further still, if the narrations about the other Companions are completely dismissed there is no chance that the narrations about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه will ever be understood in context.

The correspondence does have the tendency of becoming tedious especially since ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn employs the same evidence repeatedly. The Shaykh al-Azhar does not appear to even notice this fault. We cannot blame him though; he didn’t even see these letters!

In this exchange, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has requested himself to furnish unambiguous *Mutawātir* texts. The motive behind this specific request is to present an opportunity to design a foundation upon which doctrine may be built. While there is a debate among Sunnī’s about the role of a solitary narration in matters of ‘Aqīdah, there is no arguing with evidence which is absolute in what it denotes and uncontestable in the manner it is establishment.

Narrations which are *Mutawātir* [mass-transmitted] are presumed, under ordinary circumstances, to eliminate the possibility of conspiracy to misrepresent. It would follow that such evidence is beyond contest [Qaṭʿī].

ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn overlooks the fact that those who consider a *Mutawātir* narration beyond contest also stipulate that it has to be mass-transmitted at all stages of the isnād before it is exempt of scrutiny.

In his attempt to establish *Tawātur* [mass-transmission], ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn has cited seven narrations. We shall discuss all these narrations and compare different versions of them to establish the veracity of ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn’s

The Narrations

1. The narration of Ibn ʿAbbās¹

This is the exact narration that appeared in Letter 26 and reappeared in Letter 34. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn cunningly references it to Abū Dāwūd, creating the impression that it is a different narration. What he failed to realize was that Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, the compiler of the *Musnad* where this narration is found, is not Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Ashʿath from Sijistān, the compiler of the famous *Sunan*.

While we refer the esteemed reader to the detailed discussion under Letter 26,² it would be prudent to summarize some of those discussions here since ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn is going to repeat this Ḥadīth at narration no. 4.

The narration is only known by way of a single common chain:

Abū Balj - ʿAmr ibn Maymūn - Ibn ʿAbbās

1 *Musnad Abī Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī* vol. 4 pg. 369 Ḥadīth no. 2875, *Musnad Aḥmad* vol.5 pgs.178-181 Ḥadīth 3061, *al-Mustadrak* vol.3 pg.132

2 Refer to pg. 430 of this book.

The problematic narrator is Abū Balj. We find the academic integrity in *al-Murāja'āt* is such that he quotes *Mizān al-I'tidāl* to produce the opinions of five Ḥadīth critics, all appearing to ratify Abū Balj, Yaḥyā ibn Sulaym. Conveniently he ignored the fact that al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Jūzajānī and al-Dhahabī, the author of *Mizān al-I'tidāl*, have all pointed out that he narrates baseless narrations!¹

Ibn Ma'īn is also on record for having criticized him; his acceptance as mentioned in *Mizān al-I'tidāl* is thus qualified to specific narrations. One could also add to the list of those who criticized Abū Balj: al-Azdī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Ḥajar.² As a matter of fact, even al-Tirmidhī³, 'Abd al-Ghanī ibn Sa'īd al-Miṣrī,⁴ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī,⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah,⁶ and al-Haythamī⁷ confirm that he is weak on some levels.

If it came down to sheer numbers, those who consider him weak outnumber those who accept his narrations. Furthermore, they have provided reasons for their assessment; he is known to have narrated baseless narrations. The general principle that applies to a narrator where the evaluations vary is to see who provides details for their evaluation. Based on that principle alone, Abū Balj would be considered unreliable.

The method of reconciliation between the conflicting opinions is to recognize that he has erred in a fair number of narrations, whilst the extent of his error is not so severe that it warrants his narrations to be discarded altogether. That is to say that where Abū Balj is supported by other narrators his narrations are to be accepted. However, this narration, in particular, has been specifically criticized.

1 *Mizān al-I'tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 384

2 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol 12. Pg. 47

3 *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth 3732

4 *Sharḥ 'Ilal al-Tirmidhī* vol. 2 pg. 687-688

5 *Ibid*

6 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 5 pg. 34

7 *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 9. Pg 120

Ibn Rajab has also provided another perspective which also maintains that the error is ascribed to Abū Balj. He quotes ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Miṣrī saying that Abū Balj erred in the name of his teacher. Instead of Abū ‘Abd Allāh Maymūn he named him ‘Amr ibn Maymūn.¹

2. The narration of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn²

The common chain for the narration of ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn is as follows:

Ja‘far ibn Sulaymān al-Ḍubā‘ī – Yazīd al-Rishk – Muṭarrif ibn ‘Abd Allāh - ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn رضي الله عنه.

Al-Tirmidhī stated that this narration is only known by way of Ja‘far ibn Sulaymān; indicating that there is no alternate chain to ‘Imrān ibn al-Ḥuṣayn.

Al-Ḥākim declared this *Isnād* authentic. ‘Abd al-Ḥuṣayn lied about al-Dhahabī agreeing with al-Ḥākim; he remained silent on this narration.³

3. The narration of Buraydah

The narration cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥuṣayn appears with this common chain:

Ajlaḥ al-Kindī - ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buraydah – his father, Buraydah رضي الله عنه⁴

Both of these narrations refer to the same incident, hence it is more practical to study both narrations together.

The version of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn states that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم dispatched an army and he put ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه in charge of it. After the expedition he consummated a union with a slave girl. So four of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم disapproved of this, and they made a pact

1 *Sharḥ ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhī* vol 2. Pg. 688

2 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* vol. 17 pg. 130 Ḥadīth no. 32784, *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 33 pg. 154 Ḥadīth no. 19928, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb al-Manāqib*, Ḥadīth 3712, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 110-111

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 110-111

4 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 38 pg. 117-118, *Khaṣā‘iṣ ‘Alī* Ḥadīth no. 90

saying: “[If] we meet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ we will inform him of what ‘Alī did.” When the Muslims returned from any journey, they would first meet with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then they would go to their homes. So when they met the Prophet ﷺ one of the four stood saying, “O Messenger of Allah! Do you see that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib did such and such.” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ turned away from him. Then the second one stood and raised the same complaint, and he turned away from him. Then the third stood before him, and complained as well, and he turned away from him. Then the fourth stood and said as they had said. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ faced him, visibly angry, and said, “What do you want from ‘Alī? What do you want from ‘Alī? **‘Alī is from me, and I am from him, and he is the *Walī* of every believer after me.**”

The version of Buraydah states that the Prophet ﷺ dispatched two battalions to Yemen, one led by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and the other led by Khālid ibn al-Walīd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The Prophet ﷺ informed them that when they were together, ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was in charge, and when they were separate, each leader was responsible for their own battalion. In Yemen they fought Banū Zayd,¹ and the Muslims were victorious. We killed many of their fighters and captured many of their women and children, and ‘Alī chose a woman for himself. Buraydah said that Khālid sent him with a written message to the Prophet ﷺ. He says, “When the message was read to him, I could see the signs of anger in the Prophet’s ﷺ face so I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah. This is where I seek refuge. You have sent me under the leadership of a man and instructed me to obey him. I have only done as tasked.’ The reply was, **‘Do not be unfriendly towards ‘Alī since he is from me and I from him; and he is your *Walī* after me. He is from me and I from him; and he is your *Walī* after me.’**”

At this point it is necessary to draw the esteemed readers attention to a particular aspect of narrator criticism. We have previously established that there are, broadly speaking, three views when it comes to accepting the narrations of innovators – where the narrators are proven to be honest and competent.

1 Some versions have it as Banū Zubayd

The fringe view holds that the narrations ascribed to anyone with heterodox beliefs ought to be discarded. The second opinion – and this is the popular view – holds that it is necessary to differentiate between those who were staunch promoters of their heterodox beliefs, especially when they narrate something that might support their views.

If this view is applied rigidly, all narrations which might be seen to support an innovated belief would be rejected. However, we find isolated narrations in the rigorously authenticated collections, from well-known innovators, which appear to favour their heterodox inclinations. These narrations only *appear* to favour their unorthodox views, whereas in reality there are perfectly acceptable explanations for these.

If this is the case, how does one account for the second opinion? The short answer is that, in principle, a reliable narrator with heterodox beliefs, because of prejudice, might inadvertently convey the Ḥadīth in a manner that supports his belief. The experts who were capable of textual scrutiny, beyond narrator criticism, would accept only those narrations that were free of anomalies; hence a third view. Those whose Ḥadīth criticism featured mainly in narrator criticism applied the principle rigidly.

It would be fair to ask how is it that we know these experts were able to differentiate between the accepted versions and the anomalous versions. This is where the above narrations enter the scene.

Both narrations describe a single event, an event which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn will later come to reinvent.

Background

Prior to Ḥajj the Prophet ﷺ sent ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to Yemen to distribute the spoils after Khālīd ibn al-Walīd’s رضي الله عنه military campaign in Yemen. There were some people who were displeased with ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and complained to the Prophet ﷺ about him. These people felt that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was not entirely fair in his distribution

and had treated them harshly. The Prophet ﷺ realized that there had been a misunderstanding and that there was some bitterness towards ‘Alī رضي الله عنه from those who had complained about him. Having realized this, and finding a suitable opportunity to address the matter, the Prophet ﷺ stopped at a place called Ghadīr Khum, which served as a rest stop for travellers with water and shade. On his return to Madīnah, after the Farewell Ḥajj, the Prophet ﷺ stopped here to rest and pray. He addressed the entire gathering and said, ‘Whoever considers me his Mawlā, then ‘Alī is also his Mawlā.’

Rawḥ ibn ‘Ubādah - ‘Alī ibn Suwayd - ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buraydah relates from his father:

The Prophet ﷺ sent ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to Khālid to collect the *Khumus* [one-fifth share of the spoils of war]. I was already averse to ‘Alī, so when he took a bath¹ I said to Khālid, “Do you see this?”

When we met the Prophet ﷺ we spoke of this to him and he replied, “O Buraydah; do you dislike ‘Alī?” I replied in the affirmative and he commented, “Do not be unfriendly towards him; his share of the *Khumus* is more than that.”²

Abū Mu‘āwiyah – al-A‘mash – Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubaydah – [‘Abd Allāh] ibn Buraydah – his father

The Messenger ﷺ dispatched us and appointed ‘Alī (as the leader) over us. When we returned he asked us, “How did you find your companion’s (i.e. Alī’s) company?” Either I was going to complain about him or someone else was going to complain about him. I raised my head, even though I was a person whose gaze was usually lowered, and I saw the Prophet’s ﷺ face was red. He said, “**Whoever considers me his Walī, ‘Alī is his Walī!**”³

There is a similar narration with the chain from al-A‘mash.

1 After relations with a beautiful slave girl.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth no. 4350, *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 38 pg. 144 Ḥadīth 23036

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol 38. Pg. 58 Ḥadīth: 22961, Aḥmad in *al-Faḍā’il*, Ḥadīth: 947; *Khaṣā’iṣ Amīr al-Mu’minīn*, Ḥadīth: 77

Wakī – al-A‘mash – Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubaydah – [‘Abd Allāh] ibn Buraydah who relates that his father [Buraydah رضي الله عنه] passed a group of people and overheard them speaking ill of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه so he stopped them immediately and said:

There was time when I also held a grudge against ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Khālid ibn al-Walīd رضي الله عنه shared my sentiments. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent me with a small army led by ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and we had taken women as captive [as spoils of war]; and from his own share of the *Khumus* he had taken a slave-girl for himself. Khālid said to me, “[Look] there!” When we joined up with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم I related to him what transpired and complained about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه [taking the slave-girl for himself]. Buraydah said, “It was my nature to lower my gaze [in his presence], but this time I looked up and made eye-contact with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and I noticed the signs of anger on his face صلى الله عليه وسلم.” He remarked, “**Whoever considers me his Walī, ‘Alī is his Walī!**”¹

Wakī ibn al-Jarrāḥ and Sulaymān ibn Mihrān al-A‘mash both appear in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100 narrators.

There is yet another version of the same narration, this one by way of Sa‘d ibn Jubayr, from Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

Abū Nu‘aym al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn – Ibn Abī Ghunayyah – al-Ḥakam – Sa‘d ibn Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbās from Buraydah, who said:

I went out with ‘Alī to Yemen and noticed some harshness about him. I went to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and complained about ‘Alī and criticised him. Then the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم face started to change (and he said), “Buraydah! Do I not have more right over the believers than they have over themselves?” I said, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah!” He said, “**Whoever considers me his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.**”²

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 38 pg. 133 Ḥadīth: 23028, in *al-Faḍā’il*, Ḥadīth: 947, 1177

2 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* vol 17. Pg. 136 Ḥadīth:32795, *Musnad Aḥmad* vol 38. Pg. 32 Ḥadīth: 22945, *Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥābah* by Aḥmad, Ḥadīth: 989; *al-Sunan al-Kubra lil-Nasā’ī* Ḥadīth 8145 (Risālah edition), *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* Ḥadīth: 82

‘Adī ibn Thābit relates the same narration from Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr with the same chain going to Buraydah.¹ ‘Adī ibn Thābit is a well known Shī‘ī narrator. He appears in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100, as does al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Utaybah and Abū Nu‘aym al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn.

Finally the version of Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd – ‘Abd al-Jalīl – ‘Abd Allāh ibn Buraydah – Buraydah:

There was a time when I used to detest ‘Alī عليه السلام such that there was none more disliked to me than he. I had a companion who shared my sentiments, on account of which I kept his company. This companion of mine was sent on an expedition, and I joined his party only because of our mutual dislike for ‘Alī.²

[Due to our victory] there were women and children captives. He sent message to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for someone to distribute the spoils.³ He صلى الله عليه وسلم sent ‘Alī for that task. Among the captives was a most beautiful slave girl. After allocating the shares, we saw him come out and his hair was wet [from ceremonial bath]. We asked him, “O Abū al-Ḥasan! What is this?” He responded, “Did you not see the slave girl? She was part of the *Khumus* of the Ahl al-Bayt, and she formed part of the share of the family of ‘Alī so I consummated with her.”

So this man wrote to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and I requested to be sent along to confirm the details of the report. I read the complaint that was written to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and repeatedly confirmed the details as I read. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم took hold of my hand and the document that I was reading, then asked me, “Do you dislike ‘Alī?” I replied in the affirmative so he responded, “Do not have an unpleasant disposition towards him, and

1 *Al-Sunnah* by ibn Abī ‘Āṣim Ḥadīth: 2359, al-Bazzār (*Kashf al-Astār*: 2534)

2 This probably refers to the time when both ‘Alī and Khālīd had been mandated with their respective tasks.

3 Including the women and children captives who had now become slaves

if you have any love for him then let that increase. I swear by He in whose hands lays the the life of Muḥammad, the share of the family of ‘Alī from the *Khumus* is greater than the slave girl!”

After hearing those words from the Prophet ﷺ there was no person more beloved to me than ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.¹

‘Abd Allāh ibn Buraydah said, “I swear by He besides whom there is none worthy of worship; in this Ḥadīth there is no one between myself and the Prophet ﷺ besides my father, Buraydah.”²

Al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib رضي الله عنه relates:

We returned with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from the farewell Ḥajj, and we stopped at some point on the road. He instructed that prayer should be performed in congregation, then he took the hand of ‘Alī and said, “Do I not have a greater right over the believers than their own selves?” They said, “Yes, indeed.” He said, “Do I not have a greater right over every believer than his own self?” They said, “Yes, indeed.” He said, “**This man is the Walī of those whom I am there Mawlā. O Allah, take as friends those who take him as a friend, and take as enemies those who take him as an enemy.**”³

All these narrations – the narration of ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn, the narration of Buraydah and the narration of al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib رضي الله عنه – refer to the same incident, and are consistent with the fact that some of the companions complained about ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه distribution of the spoils of war. When these complaints reached the Prophet ﷺ he addressed the companions رضي الله عنه invoking their own love of him رضي الله عنه.

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 38 pg. 65 Ḥadīth 22967, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* Ḥadīth: 1180, *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* Ḥadīth: 97

2 *Ibid*

3 *Ibn Mājah*, *Kitāb al-Sunnah*, Ḥadīth 116; *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* by al-Nasa’ī Ḥadīth: 8473

We know that Ja‘far ibn Sulaymān al-Ḍubaī is a fairly reliable narrator, as a matter of fact his narrations even appear in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*. However, he was not considered on the highest grade. How does this tie in with the introduction about the narration of an innovator?

While there seems to be a general sense of accepting his narrations, some of the experts, like Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd, preferred not to transmit what he narrates citing slight weakness. After quoting Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd, Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn offered his own view; that was of acceptance. Al-Bukhārī pointed out that Ja‘far was known to have been contradicted by greater authority on a number of narrations. Ibn Sa‘īd summed up the status of Ja‘far most succinctly, “He is a reliable narrator with slight weakness¹ and known for Shī‘ī inclinations.”² Ibn Ḥajar suggests that the overall grade was slightly lower when he graded him with the term, “*Sadūq* [Trustworthy],”³ often used when there are minor issues with a narrators precision and accuracy. Al-Dhahabī paraphrases both al-Bukhārī and Ibn Sa‘īd’s assessment,⁴ and cites this narration as one of those where he erred and contradicted the majority.⁵

We learn from this case study that a narrator’s prejudice has the potential to affect the accuracy of what he narrates. Since Ja‘far ibn Sulaymān al-Ḍubaī was a committed Shī‘ī, his own notions of *Waṣīyyah* were projected on his narration which bears the additional phrase, “the *Walī* of every believer **after me**.” He clearly understood the term *Walī*, to mean successor and narrated it in a manner consistent with his own belief system.

The debate about the meaning of the word *Walī* will feature prominently in the upcoming discussions. Let us suffice to point out here that this narration is *Munkar* [severely flawed] as it is not only inconsistent with the other versions in how it

1 Suggesting that he has a few well-known anomalous narrations

2 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 409

3 *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 942

4 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 792

5 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 411

is worded, but its wording affects the meaning of the narration significantly. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the *Walī* of all the believers prior to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ departure from this world and he continues to be the *Walī* of all believers.

These elements are present in the version of Ajlaḥ al-Kindī as well. It is evident that his narration bears the same features as Ja‘far’s. Even though Ibn Ma‘īn, Ibn ‘Adī and al-‘Ijlī accord him a very low status within the acceptable spectrum, he was considered weak by all of Abū Ḥātim, al-Nasā‘ī and al-Qaṭṭān.¹

The additional phrase, “the *Walī* of every believer after me,” does not feature in the narration ascribed to Ibn Jarīr by way of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. The narration cited there² is consistent with the sound narrations which we have listed above.

The scholars who have documented the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ history have also indicated that the versions of Ja‘far and Ajlaḥ are inconsistent with what is narrated regarding this incident;³ including the supporting narration in al-Ṭabarānī’s *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*.⁴ ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s reference to the narration in *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* does very little to alleviate the problem with the cited narrations since it is extremely weak or even fabricated according to some. The likes of **Ḥusayn al-Ashqar** have already been discussed earlier.⁵

The claim that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was never under someone else’s authority is inaccurate. In the year prior to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Ḥajj he was under the authority of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Al-Ṭabarī, Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah in his *Musnad*, Nasā‘ī, Dārimī, Ibn Khuzaymah, and Ibn Ḥibbān all narrate by way of Ibn Jurayj, who says, “‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Khaytham narrated to us—from Abū Zubayr—from Jābir who said:

1 *Mīzān al-‘I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 78

2 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* Ḥadīth: 36425

3 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* vol 3 pg. 131-132, *Tārīkh al-Islām* vol. 1 pg. 690, *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 343

4 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 127

5 Refer to pg. 142 of this book.

The Prophet ﷺ, after his return from the ‘Umrah which commenced at Jī‘irrah, sent Abū Bakr to lead the Ḥajj. We proceeded until we were close to al-‘Arj when the adhān for Fajr was called out and the sound of the Messenger’s camel was heard and sitting on it was ‘Alī. Abū Bakr said to him, “Have you been sent as a leader or a messenger?” He said, “Rather, the Messenger ﷺ sent me with (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah to recite to the people.” We arrived in Makkah and one day before the Day of Tarwiyah, Abū Bakr came and addressed the people with regards to their rituals. Upon the completion of his address ‘Alī stood up and recited (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah to the people until he completed it. The Day of al-Naḥr passed by in the same manner and the Day of al-Nafr passed by in the same manner.¹

‘Alī’s ﷺ own statement clarifies that he was under the authority of Abū Bakr ﷺ; he prayed behind him and sat quietly listening to Abū Bakr’s ﷺ sermons during Ḥajj. Furthermore, Abū Bakr ﷺ was not part of the battalion of Usāmah ﷺ as the Prophet ﷺ had instructed him to lead the people in prayer.

4. The ten accolades of ‘Alī is exclusively narrated by a chain to Ibn ‘Abbās

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is pulling a juvenile stunt by repeatedly using the narration that appeared as no. 1 in this series of correspondence. All that he has done this time is to reference it to *al-Mustadrak*. The poor chap does not realize that the narration in *al-Mustadrak* is the very narration in *Musnad Aḥmad*; it is transmitted with the same chain via al-Qaṭī‘ - ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad – Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Although, he cannot be blamed for not knowing this, how was he to access *al-Mustadrak* in 1329 A.H when the book was only published for the first time in 1341 A.H? Is it not obvious that these letters were penned a long time after the death of the said interlocuter?

5. The narration of ‘Alī

The narration was referenced to al-Kanz but conveniently omitted the reference provided in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, “Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-Wāhiyāt*.”² This refers to Ibn

1 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 8 p. 171

2 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* Ḥadīth : 36411

al-Jawzī's compilation on severely weak narrations, also known as *al-'Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Wāhiyah*.¹

The original source for this narration is al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tārīkh Baghdād* by way of Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḍurays - 'Īsā ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib - 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar - his father - his grandfather 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ...²

'Īsā ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Umar ibn 'Alī is accused of forging this narration. Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Nu'aym and Al-Dhahabī all said that he narrated fabricated reports by way of his father, from his grandfathers.³

6. The narration of Wahb ibn Ḥamzah

This narration is referenced to *al-Iṣābah* of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī. While the narration does appear in *al-Iṣābah*, Ibn Ḥajar states that the narrator, Wahb, cannot be proven to be a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ since the narration which is used to prove this - the narration under discussion - appears with a weak chain.⁴

In addition to the fact that Wahb cannot be objectively proven to be a Ṣaḥābī - which means the rules of *Jarḥ* and *Ta'dīl* apply to him - there is very little detail about his status as a narrator.

Furthermore, 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Mūsā, despite being a reliable narrator, was known for having transmitted uncorroborated narrations about the virtues of 'Alī عليه السلام and the Ahl al-Bayt in general. It was on account of this that his status as a narrator was called into question by some of the experts like Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Sa'd expressed similar concerns about his uncorroborated narrations.⁵

1 *Al-'Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* Ḥadīth 394

2 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 556

3 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol 2 pg 121, *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol 3. Pg. 315

4 *Al-Iṣābah* vol. 3 pg. 604

5 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 19 pg. 164

Dukayn is another narrator in this chain. All that is known of him is that he was from Kūfah. He was mentioned without comment by Ibn Abī Ḥātim, suggesting that he is *Majhūl*.¹

This narration appears with a similar chain in *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī

Aḥmad ibn ʿAmr al-Bazzār and Aḥmad ibn Zuhayr al-Tustarī – Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān ibn Karāmah - **ʿUbayd Allah ibn Mūsā** – Yūsuf ibn Ṣuhayb – **Dukayn** – **Wahb ibn Ḥamzah**...

The wording is somewhat different since it is worded, “Do not say this since he is the closest of people to you after me.”²

The textual implication of this narration is thus ambiguous. Even if the narration was accepted, it amounts to no more than identifying ʿAlī رضي الله عنه as a distinguished member of the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم family. May Allah increase our love for the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم family.

7. The narration from ibn Abī ʿĀṣim

The wording of this narration supports the claim that we have been making all along; the addition of ‘after me’ does not appear in the sound narrations. The issue is not with this narration, but how it is understood. That is the topic of the next series of correspondence.

1 *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* vol 3 pg. 439

2 *Al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* vol. 22 pg. 135

Letter 37

Thul-Hijjah 29, 1329 A.H.

I. “Wali” is a Linguistic Denominator; so Where is the Text?

1. The word “wali” is a common denominator between the supporter and the friend, the loved one and the brother-in-law, the follower, the ally, and the neighbour. Whoever takes charge of a matter is its “wali.” The ahadith you have quoted may simply mean: ‘Ali is your supporter, or friend, or loved one, after the Prophet; so, where is the text which you claim?

Sincerely,

S

Letter 38

Thul-Hijjah 29, 1329

I. Explaining the Implications of “Wali”

II. Proving its Connotation

1. You have indicated, while explicating the meanings of “wali,” that whoever takes charge of anyone becomes the latter’s wali. This, indeed, is the connotation of “wali” in as far as those ahadith are concerned. It is the same that comes to mind. Its meaning is similar to saying “The minor has had for his wali both his father and his paternal grandfather, then he was put in the custody of either of them, then in the custody of the legal administrator.” This implies that these persons are the ones who are in charge of looking after him and administer his affairs on his own behalf.
2. The proofs testifying to the meaning connoted in the word concealed from the discreet. His statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “And he is your wali after me” clearly restricts “wilayat” to him and only him. This mandates that we should underscore the meaning which we have just attached to this word, a meaning which does not agree with that of any other interpretation.

Support, love, friendship, and the like are not confined to one single person, and the believers, men and women, are walis of one another. What merit, other than what we have just indicated, could the Prophet ﷺ have emphasized in this hadith regarding his brother and wali if we say that the meaning of the word wali is something else that differs from what we have indicated above? What a hidden matter has the Prophet ﷺ decided to unveil through the medium of such ahadith had the meaning of “wali” been the supporter, the loved one, or the like?

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, is above clarifying what is already clear, or pointing out what is already taken for granted. His wisdom is vast, his infallibility is incumbent, his Message is conclusive and is more than what some people think. Yet these ahadith are quite clear in stating that wilayat is assigned for 'Ali after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

This, too, requires applying the same meaning which we have suggested. It simply is not conducive to the meanings of supporter, loved one, etc., since there is no doubt that 'Ali is known to have been supported, loved, and befriended by Muslims due to his being raised in the lap of prophethood, to his contributions to the promotion of its message, till he, peace be upon him, passed away. Supporting, loving and befriending the Muslims, therefore, are not confined to 'Ali alone after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as is quite obvious.

Suffices you for a testimony to this meaning what Imam Ahmad has stated on page 347 of Vol. 5 of his Musnad through the correct path of narrators who cite Sa'id ibn Jubayr quoting Ibn 'Abbas citing Buraydah saying: "I participated in 'Ali's invasion of Yemen, and I found him to be cool to me; so, when I came to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, I mentioned 'Ali and belittled him; thereupon, I saw the Messenger's face changing colour, and he asked me: 'O Buraydah! Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers have over their own selves?' I answered: 'Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah'. He صلى الله عليه وسلم then said: 'To whomsoever I have been mawla, 'Ali, too, is his mawla.'"

This hadith is also quoted by al-Hakim on page 110, Vol. 3, of his Mustadrak, where he considers it authentic relying on the authority of Muslim. Al-Thahbi has quoted it in his Talkhis, taking its authenticity for granted for the same reason that be Muslim, too, considers it authentic. You yourself know the implication the introductory question "Do I not have

more authority over the believers than they themselves have?" carries, a meaning that supports what we have suggested. Anyone who scrutinizes these ahadith, as well as all matters relevant to them, will have no doubt in what we have stated, and praise be to Allah.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussions

After ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s undertaking to provide unmistakable evidence proving ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ pre-eminence to the position of leadership; all that he could offer were ambiguous narrations stating ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to be the *Walī* of the believers.

To give credence to his claim he must now prove that the term *Walī*, or *Mawlā*, meant leadership and authority. At the same time he must discredit any alternate meaning of this term. It is worrisome that such an integral matter of faith be decided upon by debate of the correct meaning of a particular term or phrase. Considering that the nomination of the Khalīfah is understood to be a cardinal matter within the Shīṭī paradigm one would expect the evidence to be self-evident; not subject to interpretation.

While the meanings of the term *Walī* which are ascribed to the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī are consistent with the lexical meanings of this term, his apparent lack of confidence is yet another tell when the question of the fictitious nature of the correspondence is brought up. There is one major flaw in the reasoning ascribed to the Shaykh al-Azhar though; his conceding to the anomalous version of this narration.

In the opening lines of his response ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn rightfully concedes to the array of possible meanings of the term *Walī*. It would be absurd on his part to challenge the notion that this term potentially applies to the said spectrum of meanings. The experts on language have provided similar meanings.

Al-Rāzī says in *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*:

Mawlā means *mu’tiq* (the one who sets free a slave), and *mu’taq* (the freed slave), and *Ibn al-‘Amm* (cousin), and *nāṣir* (helper), and *jār* (neighbour), and *Ḥalīf* (ally)...*Muwālāt* (friendship) is the opposite of *mu’ādāt* (enmity)... *Wilāyah* (guardianship) with a *kasrah* means *suḷṭān* (power/authority) and *wilāyah* or *walāyah* with a *kasrah* or a *fathḥah* means *nuṣrah* (assistance).¹

1 *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, pg. 306-307

Al-Fayrūzābādī says in al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ:

Al-Walyū is from *qurb* (closeness)... *Walī* (guardian) is the noun derived from it and it means *muḥibb* (the one who loves), *ṣadīq* (friend), *naṣīr* (helper). (It is used in the following ways) *waliya al-shay* means he took responsibility for the thing. *alayh al-wilāyah* or *walāyah* (It is his responsibility). With the kasrah it means *khiṭṭāh* (a plan), *imārah* (leadership), *sulṭān* (authority). (The word *Mawlā*) means *mālik* (owner), *‘abd* (slave), *mu’tiq* (one who sets free a slave), *mu’taq* (the freed slave), *ṣāḥib* (companion), *ibn* (son), *‘amm* (uncle), *nazīl* (guest), *sharīk* (partner), *ibn al-ukht* (sister’s son), and *walī*, and *Lord* (owner), and *nāṣir* (helper), and *mun‘im* (generous), and *mun‘am‘alayh* (favoured), *muḥibb*, and *tābiṭ* (follower), and *ṣihr* (in-law).¹

In conceding that the term is *Mushtarak* [homonym] he immediately ignores all hermanuetic principles and states that the intended meaning is authority. He attempts to make his case stating that it is the first meaning that comes to mind and provides an example of a statement that supports that meaning.

In doing this he has ignored the fact that a word which is *Mushtarak* cannot be said to mean any of the possible meanings at first instance; it is coined having equal potential to mean any of the possible meanings. The context of the sentence, or paragraph, will determine the intended meaning. So ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s example was an exercise in futility since he had already given context to the word in the sentence. Instead of it being an argument in his favour, he has unwittingly exposed his own error. Furthermore, it requires stretching the term *Mawlā* for it to mean *Wāl* (governor).

He goes on to charm the reader into agreeing with him; suggesting that such subtelties are easily perceived by people of high intelligence. Not only is his reliance on the wording, “of every believer after me,” problematic as we have

1 *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, p. 1732

demonstrated in the discussions on the previous letter¹ but so is his premise that this term is meant for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه exclusively [Ḥaṣr] and is limited to him [Qaṣr].

He hasn’t realized that in his goal of excluding the three Khulafā’ before ‘Alī رضي الله عنه from being potential candidates, he has also excluded the sons and grandsons of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه from a position authority. If only ‘Alī is the *Walī* or *Mawlā*; where does it leave the rest of the 11 Imāms? If someone other than ‘Alī could be understood to be a *Walī* or *Mawlā*, what is there to prevent Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه from being included as well? It stands to reason that since this premise is severely flawed, and the resultant argument of it being only plausible to mean ‘leader’ or ‘authority’ falls away along with it.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s admits in this letter, when he cited the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās from Buraydah, that it is authentic. This is consistent with the many authentic versions that we have quoted earlier, which are all phrased, “Whomsoever, I am his *Mawlā*, ‘Alī is his *Mawlā*.” This means that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was the *Mawlā* of every believer during the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم life and after.

The complaints, and unfriendly attitude of some of the companions towards ‘Alī رضي الله عنه clearly indicate the context for this Ḥadīth. Once context is established we can unreservedly determine the intended meaning; friendship, love and loyalty.

The Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم is not merely saying that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه deserves to be loved. He is admonishing all those who were upset with him, instructing them to be friendly, loyal and develop love for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. The Prophet is advocating that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is deserving of all of this from all believers.

Buraydah رضي الله عنه acknowledges that he disliked ‘Alī رضي الله عنه initially. After the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم address he clarifies that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه became the most beloved of people to him.

¹ Refer to pg. 553 of this book.

Why else would ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ say, “By He who split the seed and created the living soul, it is the covenant of the unlettered Prophet to me than none shall love me except a believer and none shall hate me besides a hypocrite.”¹

The most preposterous suggestion is that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ inferred the transfer of authority to ‘Alī with his statement, “Do I not have more authority over the believers than they themselves have?” While the words *Mawlā* and *Awlā* rhyme, they do not share any meaning.

As a matter of fact, ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not understand the term *Mawlā* or *Walī* to mean succession or leadership. Al-Bukhārī narrates from Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا:

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ emerged from the [home of the] Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ during his final illness and the people said, “O Abu al-Ḥasan; How is the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ this morning?” He said, “All praise be to Allah, he is well this morning.”

‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him by the hand and said to him, “I swear by Allah, in three days’ time you will be a subject. By Allah, I think that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ will die of this illness. I recognize the look of death in the faces of the Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib when they are dying. Let us go to the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and ask him who will take charge over this matter (Khilāfah). If it is for us, then we will know that, and if it is for someone other than us, we will know and he can advise him to look after us.”

‘Alī replied, “**By Allah, if we ask him for it and he refuses us, then the people would never give it to us afterwards. By Allah, I will not ask it from the Messenger of Allah.**”²

If ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was nominated by the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ explicitly, why would ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ even bother to ask the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ about Khilāfah since it ought to be

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth: 78

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, ḥadīth: 4447

known that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was appointed? Furthermore, why did ‘Alī not correct ‘Abbās and acknowledge that he was appointed? Why did ‘Alī fear the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ not granting him the Khilāfah if he was already appointed? The reaction of ‘Alī clearly indicates that his understanding of the term Walī or Mawlā is consistent with what we have mentioned.

Ibn Taymiyyah disproves the inference that the term Mawlā refers to leadership saying:

There is nothing in the ḥadīth to prove that the believers have no other Mawlā besides ‘Alī. How can that be inferred when the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had many Mawlās, namely, the pious believers – which includes ‘Alī by way of priority - who took him as their friend? The Prophet said that the tribes of Aslam, Ghifār, Muzaynah, Juhaynah, Quraysh, and the Anṣār, had no Mawlā besides Allah and his Messenger¹. Allah made them the Mawlās of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ just as He made the pious believers his Mawlās, and Allah and his Messenger their Mawlā.

In summary, there is a slight difference between Walī and Mawlā, and a significant difference between these terms and Wālī (governor). The meaning of Wilāyah (the opposite of enmity) is at one end of the spectrum, and the term walāyah referring to leadership is at the other. The wilāyah spoken of in the ḥadīth refers to the former and not the latter. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did **not** say, “Whoever I am his wālī (governor) ‘Alī is his wālī.” The word used (in the ḥadīth) is “whoever I am his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”

The word Mawlā cannot refer to wālī (governor) since friendship is established mutually. Indeed, the believers are the friends of Allah and He is their Mawlā (guardian)...

The khilāfah of ‘Alī, on the assumption of its existence, only came into being after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ death. It did not exist during the Prophet’s

1 Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, Bāb dhikr Aslam, wa Ghifār, wa Muzaynah, wa Juhaynah, wa Ashja’, ḥadīth no. 3321

ﷺ life. Therefore, it is not possible for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to have been the khalīfah during the era of Prophet ﷺ and he could not therefore be more worthy of every believer than himself, rather, he could not have been the Mawlā of any believer if what is intended is the khilāfah. This is one of the factors that prove khilāfah was not intended. The fact that he is a friend of every believer is established during the era of the Prophet, whose implementation was not postponed until the Prophet’s demise as opposed to the khilāfah which could only come into effect after the demise of the Prophet ﷺ. Therefore, it is known that this (what is mentioned in the ḥadīth) is not that which the Rāfiḍah intend.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه being the Mawlā of every believer is true during the life of the Messenger ﷺ, his death, and even after the death of ‘Alī. Even today ‘Alī رضي الله عنه remains the “Mawlā” of every believer even though he is not the governor over the people. In similar manner all the believers are friends of one another living and deceased.¹

Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan, the grandson of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was asked whether the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whomsoever, I am his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.” He responded:

Certainly! By Allah, if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ intended by it governance and authority he would have stated it unequivocally. The Messenger ﷺ was most eloquent, and most sincere to all Muslims. He would have stated [emphatically], “O people! This is the one in authority and the one deputed to carry out your affairs, so listen to him and obey.”

By Allah, if Allah and His Messenger ﷺ chose ‘Alī for this matter [succession after the Prophet ﷺ] and appointed him to implement it for the Muslims after him, then ‘Alī disregards the command of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, he would be the first one responsible for disregarding the Allah’s and His Messengers instruction.²

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 7 pgs. 322-325

2 *Al-I’tiqād* by al-Bayhaqī pg. 232

He is stating that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه conducted himself as a follower of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه during his *Khilāfah*. To suggest that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه would bide his time in *Taqiyyah* is an indictment on ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. The Ḥadīth is sound, but it does not mean what the Shī‘ah desire it to mean.

Letter 39

Thul-Hijjah 30, 1329

I. Requesting the Wilayat Verse

1. I testify that you are firm in your beliefs, sincere in your campaign, forceful and unmatched in facing your debater, invincible in the field. I am a believer in the ahadith according to the way which you have suggested. Had I not been obliged to believe in the sahabah, I would have accepted your judgement, but taking the word's meaning in the way those sahabah have taken it is a must, following in the footsteps of the good ancestors, may Allah be pleased with all of them.

But you have not acquainted us with the verse which you claim, at the conclusion of Letter No. 36, that supports your view regarding the interpretation of these ahadith. Recite it for us so that we may comprehend its meaning by the Will of Allah Almighty, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 40

Muharram 2, 1320

I. The Verse of Wilayat and its Revelation in 'Ali's Honour

II. Why it was Revealed

III. Why Using it as a Testimonial

1. Yes, indeed, I would like to recite unto you one of the perfect verses of Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, in His great Book which distinguishes right from wrong. It is one of the verses of Surat al Ma'ida (Table of Viands):¹

Only Allah is your wali and His Messenger and those who believe, those who say their prayers and offer zakat (even) while prostrating (in prayers). And whoever takes for wali Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, they, indeed, are the party of Allah; they are the ones who shall achieve victory. (Qur'an, 5:55-56)

Nobody doubts the fact that these verses were revealed in honour of 'Ali who offered his own ring in the way of Allah while engaged in performing the prayers.

2. The sahih books consecutively report, through the authority of the Imams from among the Purified Progeny, stating that it was revealed in honour of 'Ali when he, out of charity, offered his ring while prostrating in prayers. Refer to what has been said in this regard by others such as Ibn Salam who quotes hadith from the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny. Refer to it as published in Nisa'i's Sahih, or in Al-Jami Bayna al-Sihah al-Sittah, in a chapter dealing with the interpretation of Surat al Ma'ida.

Likewise, refer to the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas who explains the meanings of these verses in imam al-Wahidi's book Asbab al-Nuzul. Al-Khatib has

included it in Al-Muttafaq.² Also refer to 'Ali's hadith in the musnads of Ibn Mardawayh and Abul-Shaykh. If you wish, refer to it in Kanz al-'Ummal.

Its revelation to honour 'Ali is a matter of consensus among scholars of the exegesis of the Holy Qur'an. Such consensus is attested to by many Sunni scholars like Imam al-Qawshaji in his chapter on imamate in Sharh al Tajrid. Chapter 18 of Ghayat al-Maram includes one hadith narrated through the Sunnis testifying to our claim.

Had I not aspired to be brief, in addition to the fact that this issue is as clear as the sun in midday, I would have quoted for you many comments thereupon in authentic chronicles, but, praise to Allah, it is a matter which does not entertain any doubt. Despite that, we do not like to let this letter be without a few ahadith narrated by the majority of Muslims.

Suffices us what Imam Abu Ishaq Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Nisaburi al-Tha'labi³ has stated in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir. When the writer comes to this verse, he quotes Abu Tharr al-Ghifari saying:

“I have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, with these ears - may I be deaf if I tell a lie - and saw him with these eyes - may I be blinded if I lie - saying: 'Ali is the leader of the pious, the annihilator of infidels; whoever supports him is supported by Allah, and whoever abandons him is abandoned by Allah.' I have, indeed, said my prayers once in the company of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, when a beggar came to the mosque and nobody gave him anything. 'Ali was in the state of ceremonial prostration when he beckoned to him to take his ring. The beggar came and took it from 'Ali's finger, whereupon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, invoked Allah, the Almighty, the Omniscient, and prayed Him on behalf of 'Ali saying: 'Lord! My Brother Moses had prayed to you saying:

Lord! Remove the distress from my bosom, render my mission easy for me, and untie my tongue's knot so that people may understand me, and

let me have a vizier from my own kin, my brother Aaron, to support my endeavour and participate in my undertaking, so that we may both praise you a great deal and mention your Name a great deal; You have been most Kind unto us (Qur'an, 20:25-35)

Thereupon, You inspired to him:

Verily, your prayer has been granted, O Moses! (Qur'an, 20:36).

Lord! I am Your servant and Prophet; therefore, remove my distress, render my mission easy for me, and grant me a vizier from my kin, 'Ali, to support my endeavour'. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, had hardly finished his supplication before Gabriel, the trusted one, brought him this verse:

'Only Allah is your wali and His Messenger and those who believe, those who say their prayers and offer zakat (even) while prostrating (in prayers). And whoever takes for wali Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, they, indeed, are the party of Allah; they are the ones who shall achieve victory (Qur'an, 5:55-56).'"

3. You, may Allah support righteousness through your own person, know that the meaning of the word "wali" in such a context is "one who has the top priority in faring with one's affairs." We say "Such and such is the minor's wali." Lexicographers have made it clear that whoever takes charge of someone's affairs is the latter's wali.

The meaning of the verse, therefore, is as though Allah says that "the ones who take charge of your affairs and have priority even over your own lives in faring with the latter are: Allah, the Almighty and Omniscient, His Messenger, and 'Ali," for in 'Ali alone have all these qualities been combined: faith, saying the prayers, and offering zakat even while prostrating in prayers, and for whom these verses were thus revealed.

The Almighty has in these verses reserved wilayat for Himself and for both His Messenger and wasi in the same manner. The wilayat of Allah, the Almighty and Omniscient, is general and inclusive. So is the wilayat of the Prophet as well as his wali; it carries the same meaning. It is not possible to apply to it in this context the meanings of “supporter, loved one, etc.,” since such a restriction [of application] is groundless, as is quite obvious. I believe this is a quite clear matter, and praise to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. This is why people in Syria call a Shi’ah “mutawali,” due to his taking for mawla Allah, His Messenger, and those who have truly believed, that is, those in whose honour the same verse was revealed. Linguistically, the “mutawali” is singular, and the “mutawla” are the Shi’ahs. They are so-called because they accepted the wilayat of ‘Ali and Ahl al-Bayt S.
2. It is hadith number 5991 of the ones cited in Kanz al-’Ummal on page 391, Vol. 6.
3. He died in 337. Ibn Khallikan mentions him in his Wafiyyat al-A’yan saying: “He was the unique authority of his time in the science of exegesis; he wrote Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, which surpassed all other books of tafsir,” and he goes on to say: “He is mentioned by ‘Abdul-Ghafir ibn Isma’il al-Farisi in his book Siyaq Nisabur, where the author lauds him and describes him as ‘accurate in transmitting, trustworthy.’”

Discussions

The insistence on citing this verse, referred to as *Āyat al-Wilāyah*, as evidence for ‘Alī’s ﷺ immediate succession is peculiar. Firstly, there’s nothing in the verse to suggest ‘Alī ﷺ. If this verse is evidence for ‘Alī’s ﷺ divine appointment it is overly vague and ambiguous. There is nothing to suggest that he is intended specifically. The only indication of ‘Alī ﷺ being intended is what is found in the Ḥadīth; not the verse.

Authenticity of the Ḥadīth

The Ḥadīth is thus subject to scrutiny. We refer the reader to the lengthy discussion on the authenticity of this narration in the response to letter 12.¹ To summarize, the narration was transmitted by way of the following companions, ‘Alī, ‘Ammār, Abū Rāfi‘, ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās. All the narrations were found to be extremely weak and significantly flawed.

We might add here that the narration ascribed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib ﷺ can be found in both *Ma’rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, by al-Ḥākim al-Naysapūrī, and *Tārīkh Dimashq*, by Ibn ‘Asākir.

The narration appears with a common chain in both collections by way of Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Ḍurays - **‘Īsā ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb** – his father – grandfather - ‘Alī ﷺ²

‘Īsā ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī is accused of forging this narration. Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Nu‘aym and Al-Dhahabī all said that he narrated fabricated reports by way of his father, from his grandfathers.³

1 Refer to pg. 181 of this book.

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol 42/356; *Ma’rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* pg. 350

3 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol 2 pg 121, *Mizān al-ʾitidāl* vol 3. Pg. 315

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn introduced the version from *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī* by way of Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه, pinning his argument to this narration. The narration appears in his *Tafsīr* with the following chain of transmission:

Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Aḥmad – Abū Muḥammad
‘Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad al-Sha‘rānī – Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Razī – **al-
Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī** – **al-Sindī ibn ‘Alī al-Warrāq** – **Yaḥyā
ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamid a-Ḥammānī** – **Qays ibn al-Rabī** – al-A‘mash - ‘**Abāyah
ibn Ribī** - ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās – Abū Dharr¹

‘**Abāyah ibn Ribī** was a fanatic Shī‘ī, known for narrating baseless reports. Mūsā ibn Ṭarīf, another fanatic Rāfiḍī was the primary narrator from him.

Al-A‘mash heard from Mūsā but never transmitted. Once, people were heard narrating from Al-A‘mash from Mūsā, from ‘Abāyah, so the scholars asked him about this. He responded saying that he was mocking ‘Abāyah and demonstrating some of his ridiculous narrations and people must have assumed that he was narrating from him.²

We learn from this the interruption between al-A‘mash and ‘Abāyah.

Qays ibn al-Rabī was considered weak in terms of his memory. The difference of opinion among the scholars is how serious that was. It is believed that in his old age his son corrupted his books by adding narrations to them, when he would narrate from his books he did not realize that he transmitted baseless narrations. He was also known for being a Shī‘ī, which could have influenced the way he narrates the Faḍā’il of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Despite his weakness, he was held to be trustworthy by some of the scholars.³

1 *Al-Kashf wal-Bayān*, Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 55

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 388, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 417

3 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 4600, *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 393, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 5573

Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī, despite his comprehensive knowledge, was accused of *Sariqat al-Ḥadīth*; he would graft his own isnād on another Ḥadīth. Ibn Numayr and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal called him a liar.¹

Sindī ibn ‘Alī al-Warrāq. Despite comprehensive searching we could not find a biography for any narrator with this name.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī does mention a Sindī ibn Abān who narrates from Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī.² He remains *Majhūl*.

There is another Sindī al-Warrāq al-Baghdādī, he worked as a scribe for Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī. This Sindī was known to forge narrations into the books of Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm, this was confirmed by Ḥammād ibn Ishāq.³ If this is the narrator he would be a forger.

Al-Muẓaffar ibn al-Ḥasan al-Anṣārī is considered *Majhūl*. There is no biographical entry for him in the books of Rijāl. The same can be said for the teacher of al-Tha‘labī, **Abu al-Ḥasan, Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Aḥmad**, he has not been mentioned with credit or discredit.

This Isnād is riddled with flaws. One can see how desperate the Shī‘ah are to prove the Imāmah of ‘Alī if they base their entire doctrine on narrations such as this. Without this narration, the Shī‘ah have no argument that can be proven from the verse in *Sūrāh al-Mā‘idah*.

Narrations from the Imāms

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn reassures the readers that the narrations from the infallible Imāms are in such abundance they reach the level of Mutawātir. Why does he not volunteer some of these narrations then?

1 *Al-Du‘afā wal-Matrūkīn* by Ibn al-Jawzī vol. 3 pg. 197

2 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 10 pg. 234

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 196

The truth is that if his bluff were called he would be left with egg on his face since the fifth Imām, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, was asked about this verse and he had this to say, “The ones intended by it are the Prophet’s ﷺ Companions.” ‘Abd al-Malik says, “I then said to him that people say it refers to ‘Alī?’” He responded, “Well, ‘Alī ﷺ is included among them (the Companions).”¹

It appears al-Bāqir was either unaware of the context of the revelation of this verse, or that the alleged context was an outright forgery!

Proper context

Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī narrates by way of Hannād ibn Sarī — Yūnus ibn Bukayr — Muḥammad ibn Ishāq — Ishāq ibn Yasār — ‘Ubādah ibn al-Walīd ibn ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣamit who said

When the Jewish tribe of Banū Qaynuqā‘ decided to fight the Prophet ﷺ, ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣamit ﷺ – from Banū ‘Awf from the Khazraj who had alliances with the Banū Qaynuqā‘ - went to the Prophet ﷺ and announced that there remained no fealty between him and Banū Qaynuqā‘. He pledged his loyalty to Allah and His Messenger ﷺ and disassociated with all the disbelievers. It was in this regard that the verse was revealed...²

The verses preceding this all relate to the theme of loyalty to Islam and Muslims, not taking the disbelievers as allies, promising continuity of the religion even if people renegade. The verse after it prohibits taking the People of the Book and other disbelievers as allies, pledging loyalty to them.

When all the previous verses refer to the Walī as a helper, friend, supporter, ally; and the verses after also use the term in the same context; why should it mean something different in verse 55?

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol.3 pg.185

2 *Jāmi’ al-Bayān* vol. 8 pg. 529

Problems with applying it to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ specifically with the meaning of authority

If the term Walī meant authority or inferred governing, it would imply that Allah and the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ share the same authority with ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The only interpretation of the term Walī, where its application could simultaneously apply to Allah, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the believers, or ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ specifically, is when it is said to mean helper, friend, ally etc.

It would also mean that ‘Alī held this authority during the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ life independently of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Is it logical that he and the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ share this authority simultaneously?

If this meant that leadership was conferred exclusively for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ because of giving the ring in charity, it follows that none of the remaining ‘eleven infallibles’ are deserving of Imāmah. They fall short of the criteria of giving charity whilst in Rukū’. If it is argued that their appointment is determined by other texts it would undermine the very argument made by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn; that the verse applies exclusively to ‘Alī! ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has created his own conundrum.

There are other inaccuracies in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s interpretation of this verse. He has brought up these issues in the ensuing correspondence, it is there where we shall address some of these issues with Allah’s permission.

Letter 41

Muharram 3, 1330

I. “Mumins” is Plural; Why Apply it to the Singular?

It may be said in rebutting your objection that the phrase “the Mu’mins who say their prayers and offer zakat (even) while prostrating (in prayers)” is applied to the plural; so, why should it be applied to the Imam, may Allah glorify his countenance, who is singular? What is your answer if you are asked thus?

Sincerely,

S

Letter 42

Muharram 4, 1330

I. Arabs Address the Singular Using the Plural Form

II. Testimonials

III. Quoting Imam al-Tibrisi

IV. Quoting al-Zamakhshari

V. What I have Stated

1. The answer to your question is that Arabs apply the plural expression while addressing an individual due to the nice effect it produces [i.e. respect].
2. A testimony to this fact is what the Almighty says in Surat Al-i-'Imran:

Those to whom some people said: "A large army has been raised against you; so, fear them," yet it only increased their faith, and they said: "Allah suffices us, and He is the One upon Whom we depend most." (Qur'an, 3:173)

The person implied in these verses of Al-i-'Imran is none other than Na'im ibn Mas'ud al-Ashja'i, according to the consensus of scholars of exegesis, traditionists, and chroniclers. Yet Allah Almighty has applied to him, the singular person that he is, the plural form just to express respect for those who did not listen to his statements nor heeded his dissuading calls.

Abu Sufyan had given him ten camels in order to demoralize and frighten the Muslims regarding the strength of the polytheists, and he did just that. Among his statements then was: "People have gathered a mighty force to attack you; so, fear for your own lives."

Many Muslims disliked the idea of fighting that force just because of his statement, but the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, came out accompanied by seventy cavaliers to meet them, and they all returned from the battle-field safely, whereupon this verse was revealed praising the seventy believers who came out with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, heedless to the dissuasion of those who wished to demoralize them.

In applying the word “people” for just one individual, a nice and divine point is made which is complimenting the seventy men who came out with the Prophet. This surely sounds more eloquent when used as such; it is better than saying: “Those to whom a man said that a large army had been raised..., etc.,” as is obvious. There are numerous verses in the Holy Qur’an similar to this one, as well as in the Arabic language as a whole. The Almighty Allah says: “O you who believe! Remember Allah’s blessing unto you when some folks intended to lay their (evil) hands upon you, and He protected you against their harm.”

In fact, the person who intended to lay his evil hands upon them and hurt them was a man from the tribe of Muharib named Ghawrath - others say it was ‘Amr ibn Jahsh of Banu al Nadir - who unsheathed his sword and shook it intending to strike the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but Allah, the Almighty and the Glorified, foiled his attempt, according to the narration of the incident as recorded by traditionists, authors of chronicles, and scholars of exegesis, and as transmitted by Ibn Hisham in the campaign of That al Riqā’ in Vol. 3 of his book titled Sirah. Allah has applied the collective plural “people” for this lone man just to express His blessings, the Dear One, the Omnipotent, upon the Muslim masses manifested in the safety of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny.

In the Mubahala verse, He has applied both the singular and the plural forms to the “sons,” “women,” and “selves” to both the Hasanain, Fatima,

and 'Ali in particular, just to honour to their lofty status, may Allah be pleased with them. Examples for the application of the plural form for the individual wherever necessary are innumerable and beyond recounting, and they all prove the license to use the plural form while talking about one individual whenever there is a nice eloquent effect thereto.

3. In his interpretation of this verse, in *Mujma'ul Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Imam al-Tibrisi comments on the usage of the plural form to refer to the Commander of the Faithful as a token of respect and veneration, stating that lexicographers describe the singular using the plural form to show respect and veneration. He says: "Such an application is too well known in their language to require proofs."
4. In his *Kashshaf*, al-Zamakhshari mentions another nice point when he says: "If you wonder how it can be accurate to use the plural with 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, I will tell you that he is addressed in the plural form, although he is only one man, so that people may follow his example and earn rewards like his, and so that Allah may point out the fact that a believer's attitude should be like 'Ali's, that is, being eager to do deeds of righteousness and goodwill by looking after the poor, so much so that even the performance of something which does not permit any delay, such as saying the prayers, should not make them postpone it till they are through."
5. I personally have a nice and more precise point. When the Almighty applied the plural rather than the singular form, as many do, then those who hated 'Ali as well as all those who were envious of and in competition with Banu Hashim would not be able to tolerate hearing it in the singular form, for they would then be unable to hide the truth or water it down. Because of their desperation, they might even do something quite harmful to Islam. It is quite possible that it was for this reason that the verse was revealed in the plural form though applied to the singular: in order to avoid the harm resulting from disgracing those folks.

The verses after that particular one vary in form and status, gradually preparing them for wilayat, till Allah perfected His religion and completed His blessing, as was his usual habit, peace be upon him and his progeny, and that of the wise in attaining what otherwise is quite difficult to attain. Had the verse come in the singular form, those folks would have then put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their own clothes and become stubborn, arrogant, and haughty.

This is a sublime wisdom manifested in all the verses of the Holy Qur'an which were revealed to highlight the attributes of the Commander of the Faithful and those among his purified household, as is quite obvious. We have explained these statements and brought irrefutable proofs and obvious testimonies in our books Sabil al-Muminin and Tanzil al-Ayat, and praise be to Allah for His Guidance and Support, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Discussions

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has identified one of the less significant issues with arguing the Imāmah of ‘Alī عليه السلام from Āyat al-Wilāyah and responds to it in unnecessary detail. With the letter ascribed to the Shaykh al-Azhar he creates the impression that the entire objection with using Āyat al-Wilāyah for proving the Imāmah of ‘Alī عليه السلام is based on pronouns, a strawman argument.

The gist of the reply is that in the Arabic language it is not uncommon to use the plural pronoun when referring to a single person; he quotes verses from the Quran to support this. He goes on to cite passages from the tafsīrs of the Shīrī al-Ṭabarī, and the Mu‘tazilī al-Zamakhsharī; both confirming that it not beyond convention that a plural pronouns is used in reference to a single person. Finally, he offers his own insight on why the plural was used instead of being specific; the detractors would have retaliated had ‘Alī عليه السلام been mentioned specifically.

Plural referring to specific

While we do not contest the fact that it is not beyond the convention of the Arabic language for the plural pronoun to be used in reference to an individual; there is, however, always an indication to it by way of context. The context is absent in this case as the narration used to create it is an outright forgery. That being said, let us briefly examine the examples cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Those to whom the people said, “Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.” But it [merely] increased them in faith, and they said, “Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs.”¹

The scholars of tafsīr are not unanimous that this verse in Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān applies Nu‘aym ibn Mas‘ūd al-Ashja‘ī. On the contrary, the reference to “people” in the verse refers to the delegation of Banū ‘Abd al-Qays.²

1 Sūrah Āl-‘Imrān: 173

2 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 6 pg. 248-253, Ibn Hishām vol. 3 pg. 616-617.

After the Battle of Uḥud, the Prophet ﷺ set off with those who were present at the battle to pursue the army of Quraysh. He camped at a place called Ḥamrā al-Asad. Abū Sufyān encountered a trading party from Banū ‘Abd al-Qays on their way towards Madīnah to collect supplies. He offered to supply them with as much raisins as they could load on their mounts at the ‘Ukāz fair if they carried a message to the Prophet ﷺ informing him that the Quraysh had considered returning to wipe out the Muslims once and for all. It was in this regard the verse was revealed. The term ‘people’ clearly applies to the entire trading party; not Nu‘aym ibn Mas‘ūd.

Nu‘aym ibn Mas‘ūd played a positive role for the Muslims by causing confusion among the disbelievers on the occasion of Aḥzāb two years later. However, that is unrelated to this verse in Āl ‘Imrān.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn gives the impression that only members of the Prophet’s ﷺ family were present at Ḥamrā al-Asad.

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا related to her nephew, ‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr, about whom the verse, “Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them...”¹ was revealed:

Nephew, your fathers were among these, Zubayr and Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ suffered his losses at Uḥud and the polytheists withdrew, he was concerned that they might return. And so he asked, “Who will pursue them?” Seventy of his men volunteered, including Abū Bakr and Zubayr.²

As for the incident with Ghawrath referenced to the verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

1 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 172

2 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth no. 4077

*O you who have believed, remember the favour of Allah upon you when a people determined to extend their hands [in aggression] against you, but He withheld their hands from you; and fear Allah . And upon Allah let the believers rely.*¹

The usage of plural here is consistent since he had been sent by his people to harm the Prophet ﷺ. So his actions reflected the intention of his people. This is confirmed by the version related by Qatādah.²

The episode involving the bedouin drawing the Prophet's ﷺ sword is well-known, and accepted by the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah. However, they differ whether this verse was revealed in that context, or whether the early scholars have applied the meaning of this verse to the incident under discussion. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī considers this verse to be revealed in the context of the Jewish plot to assassinate the Prophet ﷺ, and has cited a number of narrations that support this view. The reason for his preference is that the Qur'an makes repeated references to the Jewish people before and after this verse. Following this reasoning, the term, "... a people," refers to the Jewish tribe of Banū al-Nadhīr in the context of its revelation; while it could be understood to be correct in a general sense in reference to the incident with the bedouin. Either way, the example relied upon by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn does not support his argument.

The citations from both al-Ṭabarsī and al-Zamakhsharī, even though they are from non-Sunnī sources, would only be taken seriously if they did not rely on the narration of 'Alī رضي الله عنه giving his ring away. Stripped of that backstory, the verse is not remotely connected to 'Alī رضي الله عنه. The discussion on the forged nature of the said narration has already been dealt with.³

Problem with plural pronoun in this verse

We have already established that while it is acceptable to use the plural pronoun for a single subject in the Arabic language. This usually seeks to fulfill a purpose

1 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 11

2 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 8 pg. 232

3 Refer to pg. 215 of this book.

and is evident from the subtext. Since the narration has been ruled out, there is nothing else to suggest its application to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

We then have to consider the consequences of applying the plural to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The suggestion, that the use of the plural pronoun seeks to aggrandize ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, is distasteful in the Arabic language. Why would ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ be aggrandized in this way and not the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. It simply does not fit the subtext.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s rationalization that departure from convention is that this was to disguise ‘Alī’s identity from his detractors appears to be rather absurd instead of appealing to reason. Why would the Companions endure difficulties and hardships for the sake of the Prophethood of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ; yet be unwilling to pledge allegiance to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ? Why did they pledge allegiance to him later on? Is it conceivable that the Companions would object to the mention of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the immediate and only legitimate successor to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ; whereas they were prepared to end the lives of their own family members because of what the Qur’an emphatically states?

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ كَتَبَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَأَيَّدَهُم بِرُوحٍ مِّنْهُ وَيُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فِيهَا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ أُولَئِكَ حِزْبُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ
حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

*You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred. Those - He has decreed within their hearts faith and supported them with spirit from Him. And We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him - those are the party of Allah . Unquestionably, the party of Allah - they are the successful.*¹

Could any sensible, thinking mind possibly agree with his line of reasoning?

1 Sūrah al-Mujādilah: 22

Letter 43

Muharram 4, 1330

I. Context Denotes “the Loved one” or the Like

May Allah bless your father! You have, indeed, dispelled my doubts and thus overcome my suspicion, so much so that truth has become manifest. Nothing remains to say other than the fact that the context of the said verse denotes the prohibition of taking the infidels for walis.

The verses which precede and succeed it testify to this fact, and this supports the claim that the connotation of the word “wali” in this verse is the supporter, loved one, friend, or the like; so, what would your answer be? Kindly state it, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 44

Muharram 5, 1330

I. Context is not Indicative of “Supporter” or the Like

II. Context does not Outweigh the Proofs

1. Here is my answer: This verse, if one were to scrutinize it, overlooking the verses which precede it and which prohibit taking the infidels for walis, does not connote praising the Commander of the Faithful or recommending him for leadership and imamate by threatening dissidents with his might or by warning them against being punished by him. This is so because in the preceding verse, if and when scrutinized independently, Allah Almighty states:

“O ye who believe! If anyone of you relinquishes his religion, then Allah will raise a people whom He loves and who love Him, soft-hearted with the believers, mighty against the unbelievers, struggling in His Path, not fearing anyone while doing so. This, indeed, is Allah’s favour; He grants it to whomsoever He pleases, and Allah is vast in knowledge (Qur’an, 5:54).”¹

This verse is revealed on behalf of the Commander of the Faithful S, warning others of his might and that of his followers, as the Commander of the Faithful has himself stated on the Battle of the Camel and is stated by Imams al-Baqir and al-Sadiq.

The same meaning is applied by al-Tha’labi in his Tafsir al-Qur’an. It is also narrated by the author of Muj’maul Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur’an from ‘Ammar, Huthayfah, and Ibn ‘Abbas. It is interpreted in this way according to the consensus of Shi’as who narrate it consecutively from the Imams of the Purified Progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام.

The verse of the wilayat will thus come after hinting to his wilayat and referring to the necessity of accepting his imamate. Its context would

then be an explanation of that hint, and an elaboration on the hint that preceded it which suggests his government; so, how can it be said that this verse was revealed in the context of prohibiting taking the infidels for walis?

2. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has himself equated the status of the Imams among his descendants to that of the Holy Qur'an, indicating that they both shall never separate from each other, and that they are equal in significance to the Book (Qur'an) itself; through them can right be distinguished from wrong. To them, taking this verse as a proof is consecutively reported. The meaning they have always applied to the word "wali" in such a context is identical to the one which I have applied above; therefore, context does not bear any weight if you take it to contradict their texts,² for all Muslims are in consensus regarding the application of context as a proper argument.

When context and proof collide with one another, they abandon the connotation of the context and yield to the judgement of the proof. This is so due to the fact that the connotation of this verse's context is not relied upon, since the Glorious Book itself is not arranged in the order of its compilation, according to the consensus of all Muslim scholars, but according to the sequence of the revelation of its verses.

As such, there are quite a few verses which give a meaning that contradicts their context. Take, for example, the Verse of Purification. The fact that the chapter where it exists deals with women is quite clear in restricting its connotation to the five individuals [men and women] who were covered with the mantle. Generally speaking, to interpret a verse in a way which contradicts its context does not in any way violate its miraculous aspect, it does not harm its eloquence, and it does not hurt to resort to it whenever irrefutable proofs demand it, Wassalamo Alaikom.

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes

1. This is similar in meaning to the hadith of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “You, folks of Quraysh, shall never cease feuding till Allah sends you a man the sincerity of whose faith He has tested to strike your necks with his sword, while you run away in fear like frightened cattle.” Abu Bakr asked: “Is it I, O Messenger of Allah?” He answered: “No.” ‘Umar asked: “Is it I, O Messenger of Allah?” He answered: “No; but it is he that mends the sandal.”

The narrator continues to say: “‘Ali then had in his hand the Prophet’s sandal which he was mending for the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.” This hadith has been recorded by many authors of books of traditions, and it is hadith number 610 at the beginning of page 393, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-‘Ummal*.

Also similar to it is his saying, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Among you is a man who shall fight for the implementation of the Qur’an just as I have fought for its revelation.” Abu Bakr asked: “Am I the one?” He answered: “No.” ‘Umar asked likewise, and the Prophet H answered: “No, but it is the man who is inside mending the sandal,” whereupon ‘Ali came out of the room carrying the Prophet’s sandal after having finished mending it.

This hadith is quoted by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his *Musnad* as transmitted by Abu Sa’id, and it is narrated by al-Hakim in his *Al-Mustadrak*, Abu Ya’li in his *Musnad*, and by many authors of books of traditions. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi quotes it from them on page 155 of the sixth volume of his book.

2. What weight can a superficial interpretation have if it contradicts the spirit of the entire text?

Discussions

Considering that we have maintained objectivity throughout these discussions, the reader might appreciate this slight departure from character as we pause to express our amusement at the level of discourse in this round of ‘correspondence’. The confusion in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s reasoning appears to have outwitted even the translator. His folly has only drawn him further into the quagmire of his sunken arguments.

Qur’ānic cohesion

The primary level of meaning in any text exists at the word level, it is then expounded on at the sentence level, whilst the preceding and succeeding passages of a larger body of text provide the context.

Structure is a naturally occurring system of meaning in almost every language. Interpreting the verse dubbed, *Āyat al-Wilāyah*, as categorical nomination of ‘Alī عليه السلام is neither supported at a word level, nor sentence level. Furthermore, it appears misplaced if the preceding and succeeding verses are considered. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn realizes this and seeks to remedy the situation.

Firstly, he acknowledges that it does not conform to the general structure and flow of the passage as a whole. Secondly, he seeks out a similar occurrence elsewhere by citing *Āyat al-Taḥīr* in *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*. Thirdly, he attempts to soften the blow by connecting the previous verse in *Sūrah al-Mā’idah* with the current verse.

To begin with, let us always keep in mind that he acknowledges that proving the concept of *‘Iṣmah* [Infallibility] and *Imāmah* from both *Āyat al-Taḥīr* and *Ayat al-Wilāyah* respectively, cannot be achieved by way of the Qur’ānic verses alone. Furthermore, he acknowledges that both verses do not conform to the general context in which they are placed. It stands to reason that the actual evidence for these doctrines lie beyond the words, textual implications, or context of the verses themselves.

We have demonstrated, in detail, under the discussions on Letter 12 that the mention of purification was not exclusive to the Ahl al-Bayt, and that the term Ahl is used for a person's wives. The change in pronoun in *Āyat al-Taḥhīr* was to accommodate for the inclusion of the Prophet ﷺ. We demonstrated that interpreting such did not compromise the integrity of the passages structure, nor did it depart from the textual implications of the verse. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's acknowledgement of the fact that the Shī'ī interpretation of the verse is inconsistent with the context only reinforces our position.

The cohesion in the structure of Qur'ānic passages is a positive consequence of the Angel Jibrīl's عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام final rendition of the Qur'ān, when he revised it twice with the Prophet ﷺ in his final Ramaḍān. Had there been no integrity in the context, the rearrangement of verses would have been futile. The arrangement is thus understood to be deliberate; and the cohesion and structure of the verses intended and meaningful.

Attempt to create context

With the aim of establishing order within his chaos 'Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges that the verse before *Āyat al-Wilāyah* is also inconsistent with the verses preceding it, and is the first subtle hint that 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is the focal point of reference.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٌ عَلَى
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
 يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O you who have believed, whoever of you should revert from his religion - Allah will bring forth [in place of them] a people He will love and who will love Him [who are] humble toward the believers, powerful against the disbelievers; they strive in the cause of Allah and do not fear the blame of a critic. That is the favor of Allah; He bestows it upon whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.¹

1 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 54

To support his claim he provides the following as evidence; the narrations about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه mending the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم sandal, a citation for *Tafsīr al-Tha‘labī*, citations from the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarsī, and finally the alleged consensus of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Why this verse does not refer to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه specifically

We shall now demonstrate why it does not support the view that considers ‘Alī رضي الله عنه intended, specifically, by these verses. We have already demonstrated that the statements of the Imām’s are not proof in of themselves, they have to be supported by evidence. The claim of Ijmā‘ is refuted by the Imāms themselves since they consider those whom ‘Alī رضي الله عنه fought during his Khilāfah believers.

To begin with let us examine the narrations cited. There are two narrations that speak about the one who was repairing the strap on the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم sandal.

The first narration mentions it on the occasion of Ḥudaybiyyah and it appears with the common chain:

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Nakha‘ī — Mu‘tamir — Rib‘ī ibn Ḥirāsh — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه¹

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Qaḍī, Abū ‘Abd Allāh, the Qaḍī of Kūfah, is considered weak, especially in that which he narrated from memory after being assigned a post in the judiciary.²

This narration refers to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم warning the Quraysh that he will send a man whose faith of heart had been tested by Allah. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه first asks if he is intended and the response is negative, then ‘Umar رضي الله عنه asks and

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 448 Ḥadōth no: 1336, *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3715, Khaṣā‘iṣ Amīr al-Mu‘minīn by al-Nasā‘ī Ḥadīth no: 31, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 4 pg. 298

2 *Al-Thiqāt* of ibn Ḥibbān vol. 6 pg. 444, *Al-Kāmil* of Ibn ‘Adī vol.4 pg.22.

receives a negative response and it is then that the Prophet ﷺ said, “It is the one who is mending the sandal,” and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was mending the Prophet’s ﷺ sandal.

This narration is an example of those narrations in which he erred since it has been narrated with significant differences with the same chain from Mu‘tamir.

Abān ibn Ṣāliḥ — Mu‘tamir — Ribī — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

Some slaves (of the unbelievers) went out to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the Day of al-Ḥudaybiyyah before the treaty. Their masters wrote to him saying, “O Muḥammad, they have not gone out to you with any interest in your religion, but they have gone out to escape from slavery.”

Some people said, “They have spoken the truth, O Messenger of Allah, send them back to them.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ became angry and said, “I do not see you restraining yourself from this action, O assembly of Quraysh, but that Allah would send someone to you who would strike your necks [i.e. fight you].”

He then refused to return them, and said, “They are emancipated slaves of Allah.”¹

Furthermore, the narration by way of Sharīk stated that the Prophet ﷺ asked Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما, whereas the authentic versions of the incident of al-Ḥudaybiyyah describe the vocal reaction of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه when the Prophet ﷺ agreed for the son of Sahl ibn ‘Amr to be returned after he escaped to the Muslim camp and he was still in his shackles.

There is another version by way of Abū Dhar رضي الله عنه, except in that version the Prophet was warning the Yemeni tribe, Banū Walī‘ah. In that version, ‘Umar asks

1 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Jihād, Ḥadīth: 2700

Abū Dhar who is intended; and Abū Dhar responds saying, “It is not you nor is it your companion; it is the one who is mending the sandal.” He went on to say that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was mending the sandal.¹

The problem with this version is that the scholars differed over its chain, whether or not it was interrupted, as there are versions with an interrupted chain.²

As we can see there are significant inconsistencies between both the versions attributed to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and those attributed to Abū Dhar. The one references Quraysh, whilst the other addresses Banū Walī‘ah. One version has the Shaykhayn present, whereas the other version infers that they were absent when the Prophet صلی الله علیه وسلم said this. The likelihood of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه mending the Prophet’s صلی الله علیه وسلم sandals at both instances is very rare.

The second narration is narrated by way of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه and appears with a common chain:

Ismā‘īl ibn Rajā’ ibn Rabī‘ah — his father, Rajā’ — Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī³

There will be some from you who will fight people over the interpretation of the Qur’ān just as I have fought over its revelation. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه asked if it would be him and the Prophet صلی الله علیه وسلم replied in the negative, then ‘Umar رضي الله عنه asked and again the reply was in the negative. The Prophet صلی الله علیه وسلم then responded saying that it would be the person mending the sandal; referring to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, who was mending the Prophet’s صلی الله علیه وسلم sandals.

1 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* vol. 17 pg. 138 Ḥadīth no: 32800, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā lil-Nasā’ī* vol. 7 pg. 434 Ḥadīth 8403

2 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg. 23 Ḥadīth 966

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 17 pg. 360 Ḥadīth no:11258, vol.17 pg. 390 Ḥadīth no. 11289 vol. 18 pg. 295 Ḥadīth no: 11773, vol. 18 pg. 299 Ḥadīth no: 11775, *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* vol. 17 pg. 105 Ḥadīth no: 32745, *Musnad Abī Ya’lā* vol. 2 pg. 341, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā lil-Nasā’ī* vol. 7 pg. 466 Ḥadīth no: 8489, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 122

This is an authentic narration, there are no issues with the Isnād and the text is from the signs of Prophethood. The Prophet ﷺ predicted that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه would deliberately fight the Khawarij, who are believers in the broad sense, based on their flawed interpretation of the Quran; and he would be justified in doing so. Similarly the Prophet ﷺ fought the polytheists deliberately over the revelation of the Qur’ān by Allah’s instruction.

Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The [final] Hour shall not come until two groups fight each other; their call being one.”¹

Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه related that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “A faction will renegade at a time when there is division among the Muslims; and the party, among two parties, which is closer to the truth will fight them.”²

The narration of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه is a prediction of what was to occur between ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and Mu’āwiyah رضي الله عنه; and the narration of Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه is a prediction that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه would raise arms against the Khawārij. There is no doubt that in the matter between ‘Alī and Mu’āwiyah رضي الله عنه, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was closer to the truth.

The verse in al-Mā’idah refers to those who would fight the apostates. The Ḥadīth of Abū Sa’īd refers to fighting the Khawārij and not the apostates. As such, this narration supports the view that states that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was not referred to in the verse of Sūrah al-Mā’idah specifically.

In fact, it is not known that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه ever fought the apostates. During his Khilāfah, the battles which he fought were against those whom he considered believers. The first major battle was at Jamal against the army of Ṭalḥāh, Zubayr, and ‘Āi’shah رضي الله عنها. The second encounter was at Ṣiffīn against the army of Mu’āwiyah. The third major battle was against the Khawārij at Nahrawān. The

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3608

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Zakāt, Ḥadīth no: 1065

only apostates that he dealt with were the followers of Ibn Saba', who deified him. He had them burnt at the stake.

Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī states, “Alī عليه السلام took responsibility for fighting the people who rebelled; and he narrated from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم regarding them all that he narrates. Despite that he called them believers, and dealt with them as believers, as did ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir.”¹

He then narrates by way of Ishāq — Abū Nu‘aym — Sufyān — Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad — from his father who said:

On the day of Jamal or the day of Ṣiffīn ‘Alī عليه السلام heard a person exceeding the bounds in what he was saying [against the opposing party] so he said, “Do not say anything except that which is good. All that they are is a people who claim that we have rebelled against them, and we say that they have rebelled against us; and on that we have fought them.”²

He relates another narration by way of Ishāq — Wakī — Mis‘ar — ‘Āmir ibn Shaqīq — Abū Wā’il — who said — a man said:

“Who called to the grey mule on the day the polytheists were fought?”

so ‘Alī عليه السلام said, “It was polytheism from which they fled.”

Then it was said, “Hypocrites?” and he responded, “Hypocrites do not remember Allah, except a little.”

Then it was asked what they were and he replied, “A group of people who rebelled against us and we fought them and were victorious against them.”³

1 *Ta‘zīm Qadr al-Ṣalah* pgs. 543-547

2 *Ibid*

3 *Ibid*

He narrates yet again by way of Qays ibn Muslim from Ṭāriq ibn Shihāb, who said:

I was with ‘Alī عليه السلام when the fighting ended at Nahrawān and it was said to him, “Are they polytheists?”, to which he replied, “It was polytheism from which they fled.”

Then it was said, “Hypocrites?” and he responded, “Hypocrites do not remember Allah, except a little.”

Then it was asked what they were and he replied, “A group of people who rebelled against us and we fought them.”¹

He brings yet another narration by way of Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā — Aḥmad ibn Khālid — ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Salamah — ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn [Abī] ‘Awn, who said:

‘Alī عليه السلام passed by the martyrs at Ṣiffīn while leaning on al-Ashtar and he found Ḥābis al-Yamānī slain to which al-Ashtar claimed, “Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn, Ḥābis al-Yamānī is with them, O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, he has the sign of Mu‘āwiyah. By Allah, I always assumed him to be a believer!” to which ‘Alī عليه السلام replied, “and now he is still a believer. Ḥābis was from the people of Yemen, people of piety and exertion in worship.”²

Muḥammad ibn Naṣr narrates with his chain of transmission from ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir that man said that the people of al-Shām had committed disbelief and ‘Ammār responded: “Do not say that; our Qiblah is one, our Prophet is one. However, they are a people who have been affected by fitnah and it is our duty to fight them to bring them upon the right.”³

1 Ibid

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

He also narrates with his chain of transmission to Muḥammad al-Bāqir who confirmed that they were indeed believers.¹

All these narrations prove that ‘Alī عليه السلام did not consider those he fought to be apostates or even hypocrites. His view was shared by both ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and Muḥammad al-Bāqir. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn considers the statements of the Imām’s equivalent to the Qur’ān, so these narrations are unequivocal evidence that those whom ‘Alī عليه السلام fought were believers. How could this apply to the verse which speaks about fighting the apostates?

Among the four rightly-guided Khulafā we know that the major portion of the Khilāfah of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was spent fighting the tribes that renegaded and become apostate. What is stranger still, is that al-Tha’labī is on record citing ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and Qatādah who all understood this verse to mean Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه,² and it is in this context that the narration referred to as the Ḥadīth of the Pond was mentioned.³ Not only is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s argument debunked, but it is from the very sources which he has cited!

Consider the profoundness in Qatādah’s explanation:

Allah revealed this verse knowing that many people would apostasize. When the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم departed from this world, many Arab tribes became apostate... Abū Bakr was asked to show leniency on this matter but he did not relent.⁴

If one considers the greater plan, the next verse has a subtle connection with those who refrained from discharging their Zakāh.

1 Ibid

2 *Al-Kashf wal-Bayān* vol.11 pg. 383

3 *Al-Kashf wal-Bayān* vol.11 pg. 387

4 Paraphrased from *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 8 pg. 521

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رُكْعُونَ

Your Walī is none but Allah and [therefore] His Messenger and those who have believed - those who establish prayer and give zakah, and they bow [in submission]¹

The mention of Rukū‘ is symbolic of submission and surrendering oneself to Allah. This is a subtle reference to those who, after the Prophet ﷺ departed from this world were characterised by these features. Those who prayed, and discharged their Zakāh willingly. In Qatādah’s narration above, he also points out that only three regions continued to discharge their Zakāh after the Prophet’s ﷺ passing; Makkah, Madīnah and Baḥrayn [the tribe of ‘Abd al-Qays]. Many of the other beduoin tribes continued to pray but refused to discharge Zakāh. This faction was also dealt with by Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and he was victorious over them as well.

Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reported:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه، قال: لما توفي رسول الله، وكان أبو بكر، رضي الله عنه، وكفر من كفر من العرب، فقال عمر رضي الله عنه: كيف يقاتل الناس وقد قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ”أمرت أن أقاتل الناس حتى يقولوا لا إله إلا الله، فمن قالها، فقد عصم مني ماله ونفسه إلا بحقه وحسابه على الله“؟! فقال أبو بكر: والله لأقاتلن من فرق بين الصلاة والزكاة، فإن الزكاة حق المال. والله لو منعوني عقال كانوا يؤدونه إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، لقاتلتهم على منعه، قال: عمر رضي الله عنه: فوالله ما هو إلا أن رأيت الله قد شرح صدر أبي بكر للقتال، فعرفت أنه الحق

When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was appointed as his successor. Amongst the Arabs some men apostatized. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ resolved to fight them.

‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to Abū Bakr, “How can you fight them when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has declared, ‘I have been commanded to fight people till they testify *Lā ilāha illā Allah* (there is no true god except

1 Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 55

Allah); and if they do it, their blood (life) and property are secured except when justified by law, and it is for Allah to call them to account.?”

Upon this Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “By Allah, I would definitely fight him who makes distinction between Salāh and Zakāh because it is an obligation upon the rich to pay Zakāh. By Allah, I will fight them even to secure the piece of rope which they used to give to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم!”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, “I realized that Allah opened the heart of Abū Bakr for fighting those who refused to pay Zakāh, and I fully recognized that to be correct.”¹

While we have not exhausted all the possible responses, what has been mentioned thus far ought to suffice.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-‘iṭiṣām bil-Kitāb wal-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 7285; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth no:20

Letter 45

6 Muharram, 1330

I. Resorting to Interpretation Following in the Footsteps of the Predecessors is Unavoidable

Had it not been for the caliphate of the Righteous Caliphs, which is correct beyond any doubt, we would not have had any choice other than accepting your view and interpreting this verse and others according to your own judgement, but to cast doubts about the soundness of their caliphate, may Allah be pleased with them, is out of the question. Resorting to interpretation, then, is unavoidable, since we have believed in them as well as in those who swore the oath of allegiance to them, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 46

Muharram 6, 1330

I. Believing in the Ancestors does not Require Interpretation

II. Interpretation is Impossible

The three righteous caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them, are, indeed, the subject of the study and debate; to use such caliphate, however, to rebut our arguments is totally rejected.

1. To believe in those caliphs, as well as in those who swore allegiance to them, does not require interpreting the arguments. In justifying their caliphate, you yourselves resort to interpretation, as we will clarify if necessary.
2. Interpreting the texts which we have stated to you is impossible; so is the case with what we have not stated yet, such as the Ghadir's hadith and that of the Will, particularly when backed by irrefutable traditions which support one another, the latter being sufficient by themselves to require reference to manifest texts. Whoever acquaints himself with the latter will find them irrefutable testimonials and unequivocal verdicts, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussions

The premise of the argument attributed to the Shaykh al-Azhar is problematic. It proceeds under the notion that all the evidence furnished by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is reliable; whereas much of it has no academic value.

The evidence for ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ pre-eminence can be divided into two categories; evidence that is explicit in declaring ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ immediate succession, and evidence that mentions his virtues but is silent on his immediate succession. The former was always found wanting in terms of reliability, whereas the latter is often times found to be fairly reliable.

The classical position of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa l-Jamā‘ah is that the choice of leadership is left to the *Ummah*, but prior to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passing he gave strong hints on his preferred candidate. Similarly, he predicted that Khilāfah on the Prophetic model would last thirty years.

Safīnah relates that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “The Khilāfah will remain in my Ummah for thirty years, then it will become a monarchy after that.” Safīnah said, “Count. Abū Bakr’s Khilāfah was 2 years, ‘Umar’s was 10 years, ‘Uthmān’s was 12 years, and ‘Alī’s was 6 years.”¹

Similarly, Abū Wa’il, Shaqīq ibn Salamah relates

It was said to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, “Will you not appoint a successor for us?”

He responded, “The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not appoint a successor that I should do so. However, if Allah wishes good for the people he will unite them behind the best of them, just as he united the Ummah after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passing behind the best of them.”²

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 36 pg. 248 Ḥadīth no: 21919; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth no: 2226; Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 4646

2 *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah* vol. 7 pg. 223

The problem is when the ambiguous narrations about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه are given a spin it becomes necessary to point out their correct interpretation. Worse still, all the narrations which mention the virtues of the other companions, especially Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, are ignored and treated as if they don’t exist.

Thus the subject of debate is not the Khilāfah of the three who preceded ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Instead, it is the Imāmah of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s promise of irrefutable proof remain as bold as all his previous claims. That is all they are; claims.

Letter 47

Muharram 7, 1330 A.H.

I. Requesting testimonial traditions

1. I wish you had stated those traditions supporting such texts and thereby complemented your research, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 48

Muharram 8, 1330

I. Forty Ahadith supporting the texts

Consider forty such supporting ahadith:

1. Consider the statement of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, while holding 'Ali's neck, "This is the Imam of the righteous, the slayer of the debauchees; victorious is whoever supports him, forsaken (by Allah) is whoever abandons him." He ﷺ raised his voice while saying the last phrase. This is included by al-Hakim as narrated by Jabir on page 129, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*,¹ where the author comments saying: "This is one hadith the authenticity of which is attested to by its own chain of narrators, though both authors (of sahih books) did not record it."
2. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "It has been revealed to me that 'Ali has three exclusive merits: that he is the chief of the Muslims, the Imam of the righteous, and the leader of those whose foreheads radiate with the mark of faith."

It is included by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 138, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*² where the author comments: "This is one hadith the accuracy of which is attested to by its own chain of narrators, though both authors (of the sahih books) did not record it."

3. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "It has been revealed to me that 'Ali is the chief of the Muslims, the wali of the pious, and the leader of those whose foreheads radiate with the mark of faith." It is recorded by Ibn al-Najjar³ and many other authors of books of traditions.

4. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, to 'Ali: "Welcome, chief of the Muslims, Imam of the pious!" It is included by Abu Na'im in Hilyat al-Awliya'.⁴
5. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "The first to enter through this door is the Imam of the pious, the chief of Muslims, the head of the religion, the seal of the wasis, and the leader of those whose foreheads radiate with the mark of faith," whereupon 'Ali entered and he, peace be upon him and his progeny, stood up happily excited, hugged him and wiped his sweat saying: "You shall fulfill my covenant, convey my message, and after me clarify whatever seems to be ambiguous."⁵
6. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "Allah has promised me that 'Ali is the standard of guidance, the Imam of whoever accepts my wilayat, the light for whoever obeys me, and the word which I have mandated unto the pious."⁶

As you see, these six ahadith contain obvious texts regarding his imamate and the obligation to obey him, peace be upon him.

7. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, pointing to 'Ali, "This is the first to have believed in me, the first to shake hands with me on the Day of Resurrection; he is the foremost friend, and he is the faruq of this nation who distinguishes between right and wrong; he is the chief of the believers."⁷
8. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "O you group of the Ansars! Shall I lead you to that which, as long as you adhere to it, you shall never go astray? It is 'Ali; love him as you love me, and respect him as you respect me, for Gabriel has commanded me to say so to you on behalf of Allah, the Almighty, the Omniscient."⁸
9. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "I am the city of knowledge, and 'Ali is its gate; whoever aspires to attain knowledge, let him approach through the gate."⁹

10. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “I am the house of wisdom and ‘Ali is its gate.”¹⁰
11. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “‘Ali is the gateway of my knowledge, the one who is to explain to my nation after me what I have been sent with; loving him is a mark of genuine faith, and hating him is hypocrisy.”¹¹
12. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, to ‘Ali: “You shall clarify to my nation all matters wherein they differ.” This is recorded by al-Hakim on page 122, Vol. 3, of his Mustadrak¹² as reported by Anas. The author then comments: “This is an authentic hadith according to the endorsement of both Shaykhs [Bukhari and Muslim], although they did not quote it themselves.”

In fact, whoever scrutinizes this hadith and others similar to it will come to know that ‘Ali’s status with relevance to the Messenger of Allah is similar to that of the Messenger of Allah to the Almighty Himself, for Allah says to His Messenger: “We have sent you Our revelations only so that you may clarify for them all the matters in which they dispute, and as guidance and mercy unto those who believe;” while in this hadith the Messenger of Allah ﷺ tells ‘Ali: “You shall clarify to my nation all matters wherein they differ after me.”

13. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, as recorded by Ibn al-Sammak from Abu Bakr, “‘Ali’s status to me is similar unto that of mine to my Lord.”¹³
14. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, as recorded by al-Dar Qutni in Al-Afrad where the author quotes Ibn ‘Abbas citing the Prophet saying: “‘Ali ibn Abu Talib is (like) the gate of salvation to the Israelites; whoever enters through it becomes a true believer [mu’min], and whoever gets out of it becomes infidel.”¹⁴

15. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, on the day of ‘Arafat during Hijjatul Wada’ [the farewell pilgrimage]: “‘Ali is of me, and I am of ‘Ali, and nobody pays my debts other than I or ‘Ali.”¹⁵

“It is the statement of a glorious Messenger empowered by the One Who manifests the Throne, Able, Obeyed: how trustworthy He is! Nay! Your fellow is not possessed at all.” (Qur’an, 81:19-22)

“He does not speak out of his own personal inclination; it is but a revealed inspiration.” (Qur’an, 53:3-4)

So, whither are you going? And what shall you say about these clear arguments and explicit texts?

If you carefully scrutinize this much, examine the wisdom behind making such an announcement during the supreme pilgrimage in front of the witnesses, truth will then appear to you most manifestly. And if you examine his words how few, and their meaning how encompassing, you will then have a great reverence for him, for he has learned a great deal and digested and researched what he has learned.

None other than ‘Ali remains to be worthy of discharging any responsibility. No wonder, then, that he, and only he, executes the Prophet’s own will, taking his own position of leadership as vicegerent and vizier; praise be to Allah Who has guided us to all this, for without Allah’s guidance, we would not have been thus guided.

16. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever obeys me obeys Allah, and whoever disobeys me disobeys Him; and whoever obeys ‘Ali obeys me, too; and whoever disobeys ‘Ali also disobeys me.” This is recorded by al-Hakim on page 121, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*, and by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis*. Both authors have relied on the authority of both Shaykhs to endorse this hadith.

17. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O ‘Ali! Whoever abandons me abandons Allah; and whoever abandons you abandons me, too.” This is recorded by al-Hakim on page 124, Vol. 3, of his *Sahih*, where he comments saying: “This hadith is authentic through isnad, though the Shaykhs did not record it.”
18. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, as quoted by Umm Salamah, “Whoever denounces ‘Ali denounces me, too,” which is recorded by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 121, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak* as ascertained by both Shaykhs, and it is narrated by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis* where the author testifies to its authenticity.

It is recorded by Ahmad among the ahadith narrated by Umm Salamah on page 323, Vol. 6, of his *Musnad*, and by al-Nisa’i on page 17 of *Al-Khasa’is al-Alawiyya*, in addition to many other traditionists. So is the statement of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, as included among the ahadith narrated by ‘Amr ibn Shash thus: “Whoever harms ‘Ali harms me, too.”¹⁶

19. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever loves ‘Ali loves me, too; and whoever despises ‘Ali despises me, too.” This hadith is recorded by al-Hakim who describes it as authentic on page 130, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*, and it is narrated by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis* where he admits reference to its authenticity for the same reason. Such is the case of ‘Ali’s statement:¹⁷ “I swear by the One Who has cleft the seed [so that a plant may grow therefrom] and created the breeze from nothing, the Ummi Prophet ﷺ has promised me that nobody loves me except a true believer (mu’min), and nobody hates me except a hypocrite.”¹
20. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O ‘Ali! You are a leader in this life and the life hereafter; whoever loves you loves me, too, and whoever loves me is loved by Allah; your foe is my foe, and my foe is Allah’s foe; woe unto whoever despises you after me.”¹⁹ This is recorded

by al-Hakim at the beginning of page 128, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*, and its authenticity is ascertained by both Shaykhs.²⁰

21. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O ‘Ali! Glad tidings to whoever loves and believes in you, and woe unto whoever hates you and tells lies about you.” This is recorded by al-Hakim on page 135, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, where he comments saying: “This hadith is authentic by way of its being consecutively reported (through isnad, consecutive reporting). Neither shaykh records it.”
22. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever wishes to live the way that I have lived and die the way that I shall die and reside in the Eternal Garden, which is promised to me by my Lord, let him accept ‘Ali as his/her wali, for surely he never gets you out of guidance, nor will he ever hurl you into misguidance.”
23. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “I enjoin whoever believes and trusts in me to be mindful of the wilayat of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, for whoever accepts him as the wali accepts me as such, and whoever accepts me as the wali has indeed accepted Allah as such; and whoever loves him loves me, and whoever loves me loves Allah; and whoever hates him hates me, too, and whoever hates me hates Allah, the Almighty, the Omniscient.”
24. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever is pleased to live my life and die my death, and then reside in the Garden of Eden, planted for me by my Lord, then let him take ‘Ali as the wali after me, and let him accept the authority of whoever ‘Ali places in charge, and let him follow the examples of my progeny after me, for they are my offspring: they are created out of my own mould and blessed with my understanding and knowledge; therefore, woe unto those who deny their favours from among my nation, who cut their ties with them; may Allah never grant them my intercession.”

25. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever loves to live my life and die my death and enter the Garden my Lord has promised me, the Garden of Eternity, then let him take ‘Ali and his descendants after him as his walis, for they shall never take you out of guidance, nor shall they ever drag you into misguidance.”²¹
26. At the beginning of page 156, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*, al-Daylami quotes Ammar citing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ telling ‘Ammar the following: “O ‘Ammar! If you see ‘Ali walking on one path while other people walk on another, walk with ‘Ali and leave the people, for he shall never lead you to destruction, nor shall he ever take you out of right guidance.”
27. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, according to one hadith narrated by Abu Bakr, “My hand and ‘Ali’s are equal when it comes to justice.” This is hadith 2539 recorded on page 153, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.
28. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O Fatima! Are you not pleased that Allah, the Unique, the Sublime, has looked unto the inhabitants of the earth and chose from among them two men: one of them is your father and the other is your husband?”²²
29. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “I am the Warner, and ‘Ali is the Guide; through you, O ‘Ali, shall guidance be attained after me.” This is recorded by al-Daylami who quotes Ibn ‘Abbas, and it is hadith 2631 on page 157, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.
30. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O ‘Ali! Nobody is permitted to remain in the state of janaba other than I and you.”²³ Likewise is the hadith recorded by al-Tabrani as quoted by Ibn Hajar in his *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* as narrated by Umm Salamah, al-Bazzar, and Sa’d; so, refer to hadith 13 of *Al-Arba’in al-Nawawiyya* which he quotes in Chapter 9. The latter quotes the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him

and his progeny, saying: “Nobody is permitted to be in the state of janaba in this mosque except I and ‘Ali.”

31. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “I and this (meaning ‘Ali) are the Proofs unto my nation on the Day of Judgement.” This is recorded by al-Khatib as narrated by Anas. How could the father of al-Hassan عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام be Proof just like the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was, had he not been his vicegerent and successor?
32. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “It is written on the gate of Paradise: ‘There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, ‘Ali is the Brother of the Messenger of Allah.’”²⁴
33. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “It is written on the Throne’s leg: ‘There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, I (God) have supported him (Muhammad) through ‘Ali, and I have aided him through ‘Ali.’”
34. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Whoever wishes to discern Noah’s determination, Adam’s knowledge, Ibrahim’s clemency, Moses’ discretion, Christ’s asceticism, then let him look unto ‘Ali.” This is recorded by al-Bayhaqi in his Sahih and by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his Musnad.²⁵
35. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O ‘Ali! There is a resemblance in you to Jesus عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام who was hated by the Jews to the extent that the latter even cast doubts about his mother’s honour, and loved by the Christians to the extent that they attributed to him a status which is not his.”
36. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “The foremost (among believers) are three: Joshua son of Nun [of the tribe of Ephraim - tr.] who was the foremost to believe in Moses, the believer implied in

Surat Yasin [Chapter 36 of the Holy Qur'an] who was the foremost to believe in Jesus, and 'Ali ibn Abu Talib who was the foremost in believing in Muhammad ﷺ."26

37. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "The foremost in testifying (to the Prophets' truth) are three: Habib al-Najjar, the believer implied in Surat Yasin, who said: 'O my people! Follow the Messengers (of God);' Izekeil [whose name means "Strength of God" - tr.], the believer from the family of Pharaoh, who said: 'Do you intend to kill a man just for saying that his Lord is Allah?;' and 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, who is superior to all of them."27

38. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, to 'Ali: "The nation will turn treacherous to you; you shall live adhering to my faith and will be murdered for safeguarding it; whoever loves you loves me, too, and whoever hates you hates me, too, and this ('Ali's beard) will be drenched with blood from this ('Ali's head)."28 'Ali عليه السلام himself has said: "One of the Prophet's predictions is that the nation will be treacherous to me after his demise."

Ibn Abbas has quoted the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, telling 'Ali, "You will certainly encounter a great deal of hardship after me;"29 'Ali inquired: "Shall I be able to keep my faith intact?" and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered him in the affirmative.

39. Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, "Among you is one who will fight for its (Qur'an's) interpretation just as I fought for its revelation." The audience was very excited. Among them were Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Abu Bakr asked: "Am I the one?" and the Prophet's answer was negative. 'Umar inquired: "Is it I?" and the Prophet ﷺ answered: "No; but it is the one who is mending the shoes," meaning thereby 'Ali; therefore, we visited 'Ali to convey the good news to him, but he did not

even raise his head, as if he had already heard it from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.”³⁰

Similar narrative is the hadith narrated by Abu Ayyub al-Ansari during ‘Umar’s caliphate. According to al-Hakim, who relies on two references which he indicates on page 139 and the page that follows it, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*, ‘Umar has said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered those who reneged from their faith, and who dissented, to be fought. Ibn ‘Asakir, as indicated in hadith 2588 on page 155, Vol. 6 of *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, states that ‘Ammar ibn Yasir has said that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said, “O ‘Ali!

The oppressive gang will fight you; but you are on the right track; whoever refrains from supporting you is not of me.” Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, as al-Daylami is quoted at the close of page 155, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, has quoted the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “I swear by the One in whose hands my life is placed that among you is a man who shall fight after me for the interpretation of the Qur’an just as I fought the polytheists for its revelation.”

Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaydullah ibn Abu Rafi’, as indicated by al-Tabrani in his *Mujma’ al-Kabir* and indicated on page 155, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-‘Ummal*, has quoted his father and grandfather Abu Rafi’ saying that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has addressed him thus: “O Abu Rafi’! A group of people shall fight ‘Ali after me; Allah has made mandated that they should be fought. Whoever is unable to fight them with his hands, let him fight them with his tongue; if he still is unable to do so, then by his heart.” Al-Akhdar al-Ansari³¹ has quoted the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “I fight for the revelation of the Qur’an, while ‘Ali fights for its interpretation.”

40. He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “O ‘Ali! I am superior to you due to my being a Prophet, while you are superior to all other

people due to seven merits: You are the foremost among them to believe in Allah, the most just in fulfilling Allah's Promise, the most obedient to the Commandments of Allah, the most equitable, the most fair in dealing with the public, the most far-sighted in all issues, and the one who enjoys the highest status in the sight of Allah."

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri quotes the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "O 'Ali! You possess seven qualities about which nobody can dispute with you: You are the first to truly believe in Allah, the most just in fulfilling Allah's Promise, the most obedient to Allah's Commandments, the most compassionate to the public, the most informed of all issues, and the highest among them in status."³²

There is no room here to quote all such traditions which, as a whole, support one another and are all indicative of one meaning, and that is: 'Ali is second only to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, in faring with this nation, and that he is next only to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, in leading it. These traditions convey such a meaning, even if their texts are not consecutively reported, and this much should suffice as an irrefutable proof, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. This is hadith number 2527 of the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 153, Vol. 6, and it is quoted by al-Tha'labi from Abu Tharr when the author attempts to interpret the verse of wilayat in his book *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*.
2. It is also quoted by al-Barudi, Ibn Qani', Abu Na'im, and al-Bazzar. It is hadith 2628 of the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 157, Vol. 6.

3. It is hadith 2630 of the ones cited in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 157, Vol. 6.
4. It is news item number 11 of the ones Ibn Abul Hadid states on page 450, Vol. 2, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah, and it is hadith number 2627 of the ones cited in Kanz al-'Ummal, page 157, Vol. 6.
5. This is quoted by Abu Na'im in his Hilyat al-Awliya' from Anas and transmitted in detail by Ibn Abul Hadid on page 450, Vol. 2, of his Sharh Nahjul Balaghah; so, refer to news item 9 on that page.
6. This is quoted by Abu Na'im in his Hilyat al-Awliya' from one hadith narrated by Abu Barzah al-Aslami and Anas ibn Malik, and it is transmitted by the Mu'tazilite scholar on page 449, Vol. 2, of his Sharh Nahjul Balaghah; so, refer to the third news item on that page.
7. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Kabir from the ahadith narrated by Salman and Abu Tharr. It is quoted by al-Bayhaqi in his Sunan, and by Ibn 'Uday in his Al-Kamil; it also is hadith number 2608 of the ones included in Kanz al-'Ummal, Vol. 6, page 156.
8. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Kabir, and it is hadith number 2625 of the ones included in Kanz al-'Ummal, Vol. 6, page 157, and the tenth on page 450, Vol. 2, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abul Hadid; so, look and see how he has made their right guidance conditional upon upholding 'Ali; thus, those who do not do so would certainly stray. See how he has commanded them to love him just as they love the Prophet ﷺ, and to respect him in the same way they respect the Prophet ﷺ. This is so only because of his being his successor, the one to take charge after him. If you consider the verse "Gabriel has commanded me to tell you so," then truth becomes manifest to you.
9. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his Kabir from Ibn 'Abbas as stated on page 107 of Al-Jami' al-Saghir by Sayyuti. It is also quoted by al-Hakim in

Manaqib 'Ali, page 226, Vol. 3 of his authentic Mustadrak from two sources: one of them is Ibn 'Abbas from yet two authentic sources, and the other from Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari. He has brought forth irrefutable proofs for its authenticity. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal ibn al-Siddiq al-Magharibi, of Cairo, has dedicated an entire book only to prove the authenticity of this hadith, and he has crammed it with information and titled it Fath al-Malak al-'Ali Bisihhati Hadith Babul 'Ilm 'Ali, printed in Egypt at the Islamic Press.

It is worthy of the attention of researchers, for it contains invaluable information. Views of the Nasibis and their likes are worthless vis-a-vis this hadith that is as commonly used as a popular proverb by both the elite and the common residents of the urban districts and the countryside. We have even considered their criticism, and we have found it to be sheer submission to sentiment, lacking in proof, full of extreme fanaticism, as declared by al-Hafiz Salahud-Din al-'Ala'i when he quoted the false allegation of al-Thahbi and others who charge that it is incorrect. He comments saying: "These have not produced any proof for their claim except its being a fabrication so that it may not indict them."

10. This is quoted by al-Tirmithi in his Sahih, in addition to Ibn Jarir, and from them it is quoted by several authorities such as al-Muttaqi al-Hindi on page 401, Vol. 6, of his Kanz al-'Ummal, where he quotes Ibn Jarir saying: "This is a tradition of whose authenticity we are quite sure." It is also quoted from al-Tirmithi by Jalalud-Din al-Sayyuti while discussing the "hamza" in language in his Jami' al-Jawami' and Al-Jami' al-Saghir; so, refer to page 170, Vol. 1, of Al-Jami' al-Saghir.
11. This is quoted by al-Daylami from Abu Tharr's hadith as stated on page 156, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal
12. Ibid.

13. This is quoted by Ibn Hajar in the fifth maqsad of the maqasid of chapter 14 of the ones discussed in Chapter 11 of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*; so, refer to page 106 of the same.
14. This hadith is number 2528 among the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 153, Vol. 6.
15. This is quoted by Ibn Majah in his chapter on the virtues of the Prophet's companions on page 92, Vol. 1, of his *Sunan*, by al-Tirmithi and al-Nisa'i in their respective sahihs, and it is hadith number 2531 among the ones cited in *Kanz al-'Ummal*, page 153, Vol. 6. It is also quoted by Imam Ahmad on page 164, Vol. 4, of his *Musnad* from hadith narrated from various authentic sources by Janadah.

Suffices you the fact that it is quoted from a chain of narrators which includes: Yahya ibn Adam, Isra'il ibn Yunus and his grandfather Abu Ishaq al-Subay'i who quotes Habashi. All of these men are authorities relied upon by both Shaykhs in their respective sahihs. Whoever studies this hadith in Ahmad's *Musnad* will come to know that it was said during the Farewell Pilgrimage which shortly preceded the departure of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, from this vanishing world. Prior to that, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, had sent Abu Bakr to recite ten verses of Surat Bara'a to the residents of Mecca, then he, according to Imam Ahmad on page 151, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad*, said to him: "Go see Abu Bakr before he discharges his mission, and as soon as you meet him, take the message from him, then carry it yourself to the people of Mecca and read it to them."

'Ali met Abu Bakr at the Juhfa and took the tablets from him. Abu Bakr went back to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, and asked him: "O Messenger of Allah! Have you received any message from Allah against me?" He answered: "No, but Gabriel has come to me and told me that nobody conveys Allah's Message except I or a man of my own family."

Another narration, recorded by Ahmad on page 510, Vol. 1, of his Musnad from ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ, says that when the Prophet dispatched him with Surat Bara’a, he said to him: “Either I should carry it, or you.” ‘Ali said: “If it cannot be avoided at all, then I will go.” He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: “Then proceed, for Allah will make your tongue firm, and He will guide your heart.”

16. You have come to know by now the hadith narrated by ‘Amr ibn Shash with our commentary in Letter 36.
17. As quoted by Muslim in his chapter on iman, page 46, Vol. 1, of his Sahih. Ibn ‘Abd al-Birr explains its gist while narrating ‘Ali’s biography in the Isti’ab from a group of companions. Buraydah’s hadith has been quoted in Letter No. 36 above. His hadith, peace be upon him and his progeny, “O Allah! Befriend whoever befriends ‘Ali, and be the enemy of whoever sets himself as the enemy of ‘Ali” is consecutively reported (mutawatir), as admitted by the author of Al-Fatawa al-Hamidiyya in his treatise titled “Al-Salat al-Fakhira fil Ahadith al-Mutawatira].”
18. Narrated, through al-Azhar, by ‘Abdul-Razzaq, Mu’ammar, al-Zuhri, ‘Ubaydullah, and Ibn ‘Abbas, each from the other, and all are reliable authorities. For this reason, al-Hakim, having labelled the hadith as “sahih” because of its endorsement by both Shaykhs, says: “Abul-Azhar, according to their consensus view, is trustworthy, and if authorities unanimously agree on the authenticity of one hadith, then it has to be held authentic,” then he continues to say: “I have heard Abu ‘Abdullah al-Qarashi saying that he heard Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Halwani saying: ‘When Abul-Azhar came from San’a and started narrating this hadith to the people in Baghdad, Yahya ibn Ma’in rejected it. When he opened his place to the public, as usual, he inquired about the Nisaburi writer who quotes ‘Abdul-Razzaq stating such ahadith, Abul-Azhar stood up and said that it was he. Yahya ibn Ma’in laughed at his statement, stood up, and brought him to sit closer to him and inquired of him about how I personally came

to be the only one who heard such hadith from ‘Abdul-Razzaq. I told him that I had just come from San’a, and when I bade him farewell, he told me that he owed me a unique hadith which nobody else had ever heard, and by Allah it was this hadith verbatim. Yahya ibn Ma’in then believed him and apologized to him.”

19. We have quoted this hadith in Letter No. 10 above.
20. We have quoted this hadith, too, in Letter No. 10; so, refer to our commentary about it and about the one that precedes it.
21. Refer to our comment on this hadith and the one that precedes it in our Letter No. 10.
22. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 129, Vol. 3, of his authentic *Al-Mustadrak*, and it is narrated by quite a few authors of books and traditions, all testifying to its authenticity.
23. Refer to our comment on this hadith in Letter No. 34, and also scrutinize the books of traditions to which we have referred.
24. This is quoted by al-Tabrani in his *Awsat*, and by al-Khatib in his *Al-Muttafaq wal-Muftaraq*, as stated at the beginning of page 159, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-’Ummal*. We have quoted it in Letter No. 34 and commented on it in a way which hopefully benefits the researcher.
25. This is transmitted from both of them by Abul-Hadid in the fourth news item of his news to which he has referred on page 449, Vol. 2, of *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah*. It is also quoted by Imam al-Razi while discussing the meaning of the verse of Mubahala in his *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, p. 288, Vol. 2, taking for granted the authenticity of this hadith according to the views of those who act upon it as well as those who do not. This hadith is also quoted by Ibn Battah from Ibn ‘Abbas’s hadith, as stated on page 34 of

Fath al-Malik al-'Ali Bisihhati Babil 'Ilm 'Ali by Imam Ahmad ibn al-Sadiq al-Hasani al-Magharibi of Cairo. Among those who have admitted that 'Ali is the one who is acquainted with the secrets of all prophets combined is the Shaykh of all men of knowledge, namely Muhiyud-Din ibn al-'Arabi, as quoted by the learned al-Sha'rani in Section 32 of his book *Al-Yawaqit wal-Jawahir*, page 172.

26. This is quoted by al-Tabrani and Ibn Mardawayh who rely on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas. It is also quoted by al-Daylami from 'Ayesha, and it is one of the lengthy traditions.
27. This is quoted by Abu Na'im and Ibn 'Asakir from Abu Layla, and quoted also by al-Najjar from Ibn 'Abbas; so, refer to ahadith 30 and 31 of the forty ahadith cited by Ibn Hajar in Part Two, Section 9, of his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, at the conclusion of page 74 and the page following it.
28. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 122, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak* where the author admits its authenticity. Al-Thahbi quotes it in his own *Talkhis*, admitting its authenticity.
29. This hadith and the one succeeding it, i.e. Ibn 'Abbas's hadith, are quoted by al-Hakim on page 140, Vol. 3, of his *Mustadrak*, and al-Thahbi quotes him in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*. Both authors admit the authenticity of this hadith due to its endorsement by both Shaykhs.
30. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 122, Vol. 3, of *Al-Mustadrak*, saying that it is an authentic hadith according to its endorsement by both Shaykhs who have not included it in their books. Al-Thahbi has admitted its authenticity for the same reason when he quoted it in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*. Imam Ahmad has produced it from Abu Sa'id on pages 82 and 33, Vol. 3, of his *Musnad*, and al-Bayhaqi has quoted it in *Shu'ab al-Iman*. Imam Ahmad has included Abu Sa'id's hadith on pages 82 and 33, Vol. 3, of his *Musnad*, and al-Bayhaqi quotes it in his *Shu'ab al-Iman*, Sa'id ibn Mansur in his *Sunan*,

Abu Na'im in his Hilyat al-Awliya', and Abu Ya'li in his Sunan numbering it 2585, page 155, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal.

31. His name is Ibn Abul-Akhdar. Ibn al-Sakan mentions him and quotes this hadith in his regard from al-Harith ibn Hasirah from Jabir al-Ju'fi from Imam al-Baqir from his father Zaynul-'Abidin, peace be upon them, from al-Akhdar from the Prophet ﷺ. Ibn al-Sakan says: "He is not quite famous among the Prophet's companions, and his traditions ought to be verified." This is quoted by al-Asqalani in his biography of al-Akhdar in Al-Isabah. Al-Dar Qutni has produced this hadith in his Ifrad, saying: "This hadith is narrated only by Jabir al-Ju'fi, who is a Rafizi."
32. Abu Na'im has quoted it among the traditions reported by Ma'ath, as well as the hadith succeeding it, that is, that of Abu Sa'id, in his Hilyat al-Awliya', and they are on page 156, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal.

Discussions

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has brought forty narrations which he claims proves the Imāmah of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. While many of these narrations are forgeries or extremely unreliable, there are some narrations which are in fact sound. We will point out the weakness in the flawed narrations and provide an explanation for the sound narrations as these are vague and ambiguous.

1. The narration attributed to Jābir رضي الله عنه

This narration appears in *al-Mustadrak* by way of **Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd** — ‘Abd al-Razzāq — al-Thawrī — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Khuthaym — ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Bahmān — Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه¹

It is interesting that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn quoted the exact page number for this narration. He usually quotes al-Dhahabī as well. This time he chose not to do so, and for a good reason. Al-Dhahabī says about this narration, “By Allah, it is a forgery! **Aḥmad (ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd) is a confounded liar!**”² ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn knew full well that the scholars of Ḥadīth consider this narration a forgery yet he quotes it as if it were reliable.

This narration has also been narrated by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī with the same chain, from Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd.³ Immediately after narrating it he says, no one narrates it from ‘Abd al-Razzāq besides this Aḥmad; and it is the most objectionable of all his narrations He then cites his chain to Ibn ‘Adī who said that **Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd used to fabricate narrations in Sāmarrā**. He goes on to cite his chain to al-Dāraquṭnī who says that he, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd, used to graft narrations using the chain from ‘Abd al-Razzāq.⁴

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3. Pg. 129

2 *Ibid*

3 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 358

4 *Ibid*

This is clearly one of his forgeries.

Furthermore, the narration in the footnote, from Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه, is none other than the narration about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه giving his ring in charity while praying. The details of it have already been dealt with under the discussion on Letter 40.

2. The narration attributed to As‘ad ibn Zurārah رضي الله عنه

This narration is known by the following chain:

‘Amr ibn al-Ḥuṣayn — Yaḥyā ibn al-‘Alā al-Rāzī — Hilāl ibn Abī Ḥumayd
— ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad ibn Zurārah — his father, As‘ad ibn Zurārah¹

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī narrates it with numerous variations of this chain, each one interrupted, and some which place a narrator between Hilāl ibn Ḥumayd and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sa‘d.² Further still, the name given to ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad is altered in some versions. These irreconcilable variations not only creates confusion about the identity of ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad ibn Zurārah, but shows the chain to be questionable.

After discussing the identity of ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad ibn Zurārah, Ibn Ḥajar says, “Most of the narrators appearing in this chain are weak, and the text is erroneous.”³

‘Abd al-Ḥuṣayn conveniently omitted to mention that this narration has been declared a forgery by three major Ḥadīth experts. The tragedy is that it is mentioned in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, the source from where ‘Abd al-Ḥuṣayn found this narration. ‘Alī al-Muttaqī has quoted Ibn ‘Imād, al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar, all declaring this narration baseless.⁴

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg.138, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42. Pg 303

2 *Al-Mūḍīḥ* vol. 1. Pgs 189- 191

3 *Al-Iṣābah* vol. 4 pg. 6

4 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 5 pg. 157 (old edition)

As a matter of fact, al-Dhahabī, states in his abridgement of *al-Mustadrak*, that this narration is a forgery, and that ‘**Amr ibn al-Ḥuṣayn** and his teacher **Yaḥyā ibn al-‘Alā** are suspected of forgery.¹

Abū Ḥātim, Abū Zur‘ah and al-Dāraquṭnī all agree that ‘**Amr ibn al-Ḥuṣayn** is severely impugned. Ibn ‘Adī states that he is known for attributing baseless narrations to reliable narrators.²

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn both state that **Yaḥyā ibn al-‘Alā** is weak; whereas al-Dāraquṭnī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal suggest that he might have forged Ḥadīth.³

3. The narration attributed to **As‘ad ibn Zurārah** رضي الله عنه in the addendum to *Tārīkh Baghdād* by Ibn al-Najjār.

This is the exact narration appearing in no. 2 above. He merely tried to deceive the readers by adding another reference. In any case, it suffers with the same problem of interruption, and the anonymity of ‘Abd Allāh ibn As‘ad ibn Zurārah. Ibn Sa‘d says that As‘ad ibn Zurārah left no male offspring, his brother Sa‘d ibn Zurārah left behind male off-spring.⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah has pointed out that the text describes ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in a way that is only appropriate for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم; this is further evidence of the problematic nature of this narration.⁵

4. The narration attributed to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

This narration has been related by Abū Nu‘aym al-Asfahānī by way of ‘**Alī ibn ‘Abbās al-Bajalī** — **Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā** — **Ḥasan ibn Ḥuṣayn** — **Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf ibn Abī Ishāq** — his father — al-Sha‘bī — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه⁶

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 138

2 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 252

3 *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 397

4 *Al-Ṭabaqāt* vol. 3 pg. 608

5 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 7 pg. 386-387

6 *Al-Ḥilyah* vol. 1 pg. 66

The problems with this narration are too many to count. Firstly, there is an interruption between al-Sha'bī and 'Alī رضي الله عنه. Al-Sha'bī is only known to have narrated one Ḥadīth from 'Alī رضي الله عنه; the Ḥadīth of stoning the adulter; Ibn Ḥajar quotes al-Dāraḩunī on this without objection.¹

Secondly, according to al-Dhahabī there is an interruption in the chain between **Ibrāhīm ibn Yūsuf** and his father.² This is in addition to his weak memory. His narrations are only accepted when corroborated, and he was known to err in his ḥadīth.³

Thirdly, **Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-'Uranī** is seriously compromised as a narrator. Ibn Abī Ḥātim said that he was not trustworthy, a leading figure among the Shī'ah. Ibn 'Adī says that his narrations are contrary to what others narrate. Ibn Ḥibbān commented that he attributed baseless narrations to reliable narrators.⁴

Finally, notwithstanding the objectionable implication of the narration's wording, 'Alī ibn 'Abbās al-Bajalī and his teacher **Aḥmad ibn Yaḩyā** are considered *Majhūl* (unknown). Very little biographical information is available on them.

5. The narration attributed to Anas رضي الله عنه

This narration has been recorded by Abū Nu'aym — and from him ibn 'Asākir — by way of **Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah** — **Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maymūn** — 'Alī ibn 'Ābis — **Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīrah** — **Qāsim ibn Jundub** — Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه⁵

1 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 5 pg. 68

2 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 77

3 *Ibid*

4 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 482

5 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* vol. 1 pg. 63; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 386

The scholars are divided about **Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah**.¹ Some accuse him of forging Ḥadīth for the Shī‘ah, whereas others consider him reliable. Considering the level of controversy on his grade as a narrator, let us look beyond him.

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maymūn is included among the weak narrators according to al-Dhahabī.² Ibn Ḥajar quotes al-Azdī describing him as extremely weak.³ In both references they cite this narration of his as a specimen of the baseless narrations he was known to have transmitted.⁴

‘Alī ibn ‘Ābis is no better; the scholars are in unanimity that he is weak and unreliable.

Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn says, “‘Alī ibn ‘Ābis is not a good transmitter.”⁵

Al-Jūzajānī, al-Nasā‘ī and al-Azdī say, “He is weak.”

Ibn Ḥibbān says, “His mistakes are dreadful, to the extent that deserves to be abandoned (as a narrator).”⁶

Ibn Ḥajar says: “He is a weak narrator.”⁷

Qāsim ibn Jundub is considered Majhūl, without biographical data.

This narration has been included in the works on *Mawḍū‘āt* [fabricated ḥadīth] by Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī, al-Suyūṭī, ibn ‘Arrāq, al-Shawkānī among many others.⁸

1 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 642-643

2 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol.1 pg. 64

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 356

4 *Ibid*

5 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* by Ibn al-Jowzī, vol. 1, p. 376-377.

6 *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 3, p. 134-135,

7 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 1, p. 697.

8 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* vol. 2 pg. 376, *Talkhīṣ Al-Mawḍū‘āt* (125), *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 64, *al-La‘ālī’ al-Maṣnū‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 329, *Tanzīh al-Sharī‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 357, *al-Fawā‘id al-Majmū‘ah* (322)

While it might be assumed that since the narrations from 2 – 5 appear similar in the way they are worded they might support each other, the extent of the weakness in all versions render them unsupportable. In all likelihood, the unscrupulous narrators in most versions have grafted their own isnād on a forged text. The anomalous wording of the narration supports the view of those who consider this a forgery. Taken literally, the narration would infer that the Prophet's ﷺ only task in this world was to preach the Imāmah of 'Alī ﷺ!

6. The narration attributed to Abū Barzah al-Aslamī

This narration has been found with two chains

- Abū Nu'aym and Ibn 'Asākir narrate by way of **‘Abbād ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Abbād al-Ju'fī** — **Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Abī Bahlūl** — **Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī al-Aswad** — **Abū al-Muṭahhir al-Rāzī** — al-A'shā al-Thaqafī — **Salām al-Ju'fī** — Abū Barzah ﷺ¹
- Ibn 'Adī and Abū Nu'aym narrate by way of Lāhiz ibn 'Abd Allāh — Mu'tamir ibn Sulaymān — his father — Hishām ibn 'Urwah — his father — Anas — Abū Barzah ﷺ²

In the first chain, all the narrators placed in bold, with the exception of Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī al-Aswad, are considered *Majhūl* (unknown) and are without biographic data. As for Ṣāliḥ, ibn 'Adī said that he was not well-known and his narrations were inconsistent with what his peers narrated, in addition to some serious flaws found in them.³ Al-Dhahabī and ibn Ḥajar declared him significantly weak.⁴

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* vol. 1 pg. 66, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 291

2 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 7 pg. 141, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā'* vol. 1 pg. 66

3 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 1 pg. 200

4 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 288, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 280

Under the biography of ‘Abbād ibn Sa‘īd, al-Dhahabī provides no data besides this chain and then states, “This is absolutely baseless! The chain is [filled] with darkness!”¹ Ibn al-Jawzī also declared this narration a forgery.²

The problem in the second chain in **Lāhiz ibn ‘Abd Allāh**. Ibn ‘Adī says:

This narration is baseless. Not only baseless in the chain, but in the text as well as I do not know of any narration with the Isnad from Sulaymān al-Taymī [father of Mu‘tamir] — from Hishām ibn ‘Urwah — from his father [‘Urwah ibn al-Zubayr] — from Anas besides this narration here. Lāhiz is *Majhūl*, unknown. The blunder is his, and I do not know of any other narration of his besides this one.³

Al-Dhahabī comments on this narration saying that it is one of the most blatant forgeries.⁴ Ibn al-Jawzī includes it in his book on forged Aḥādīth.⁵

These six narrations which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges are explicit and ‘obvious’ in proving the *Imāmah* of ‘Alī عليه السلام, are anything but reliable. They are well-known forgeries! The scholars have diligently identified the narrators responsible for transmitting these false reports, with Allah is their reward.

7. The narration, “Verily, this is the first to believe in me...”

This narration has been attributed to three of the companions; Abū Dharr, Salmān and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

1 *Mīzān al-ʾitidāl* vol. 2 pg. 366

2 *Al-ʾilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 236

3 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 7 pg. 141

4 *Mīzān al-ʾitidāl* vol. 4 pg. 356

5 *Al-Mawḍūʾāt* vol. 1 pg. 388

• **The narration attributed to Abū Dharr** رضي الله عنه

This narration has been transmitted by al-Bazzār by way of ‘Abbād ibn Ya‘qūb al-Rawājīnī — ‘Alī ibn Hāshim — **Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘** — his father — his grandfather — Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه.¹

Al-Bukhārī states that the scholars considered **Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘** significantly weak. Abū Ḥātim is on record saying that he is severely criticised as a narrator. Al-Dhahabī concurs with this assessment and ends off his biographical note with a statement from Ibn ‘Adī who said that he is considered among the Shī‘ah of Kūfah.²

While ‘Abbād ibn Ya‘qūb is generally considered a truthful narrator, his prejudice may have prevailed here. He was a committed Shī‘ī.³

• **The narration attributed to both Abū Dharr and Salmān** رضي الله عنهما

This narration appears in al-Ṭabarānī’s collection, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, by way of ‘Alī ibn Ishāq ibn al-Wazīr — **Ismā‘īl ibn Mūsā al-Suddī** — **‘Umar ibn Sa‘īd (Sa‘d)** — **Fuḍayl ibn Marzūq** — **Abū Sakhīlah** — Abū Dharr and Salmān رضي الله عنهما.⁴

Abū Sakhīlah al-Kūfī is considered Majhūl by Ibn Ḥajar.⁵

Fuḍayl ibn Marzūq is a narrator found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, though the scholars are divided on him. The summary is that he is a fair

1 *Al-Baḥr al-Zakḥkhār* vol. 9 pg. 342, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 23 pg. 79

2 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3pg. 634-635

3 See discussion on letter 16

4 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 6 pg. 269

5 *Al-Taqrīb* bio (8115)

narrator who is known for serious errors as well. Where he is found in conformity with the reliable narrators, and he narrates from a reliable narrator, he will be accepted. However, his level of competency is not strong enough that his solitary narrations would be relied upon in a matter such as this, especially when one considers his Shīṭ leanings.¹ Ibn Ḥibbān says of him, “He is among those whom I do *Istikhārah* before accepting their narrations.”² In this narration he is narrating from someone who is considered Majhūl, which is problematic.

‘Umar ibn Sa’d has been criticised by al-Bukhārī among others.³

Ismā’īl ibn Mūsā was a committed Shīṭ. the scholars graded him fairly as a narrator, but they pointed out that despite being an honest narrator he erred at many places.⁴

This narration has been declared significantly weak by a number of scholars.⁵

• **The narration attributed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās** رضي الله عنه

Ibn ‘Adī narrates it by way of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Dāhir — his father — al-A‘mash — ‘Abāyah — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

Ibn ‘Adī lists this narration under the biography of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Dāhir; quoting Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn that he was unreliable and severely

1 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl* vol. 7 pg. 75, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 7 pg. 122, *Su’ālāt al-Sijzī* pg. 44, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 23 pg. 305,

2 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol.2 pg. 210

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl* vol. 6 pg. 112, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 6 pg. 158, *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 6 pg. 105

4 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 1 pg. 528, *al-Ḍu‘afā* by ibn al-Jawzī vol.1 pg. 122, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol 2. Pg. 210,

5 *Jāmi‘ al-Masānīd* by Ibn Kathīr vol.3. pg 527

impugned. Ibn ‘Adī concludes saying, “‘Abd Allāh ibn Dāhīr has many other narrations besides these, most of which are about the virtues of ‘Alī. He is suspected of forging many of them.”¹

Dāhīr ibn Yaḥyā al-Rāzī was an extreme Rāfiḍī, and his narrations were not corroborated. Al-‘Uqaylī then cites this narration as one of his anomalous narrations.² Al-Dhahabī flags both father and son for the forging of Ḥadīth. Under the biography of Dāhīr he describes him as, “A vengeful Rafiḍī whose dreadful narrations are uncorroborated.”³

8. The narration attributed to al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

This narration appears in both *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī and *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* of Abū Nu‘aym by way of **Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah** — **Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Ṣīnī** — **Qays ibn al-Rabī’** — **Layth ibn Abī Sulaym** — Abū Laylā — Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.⁴

We have already pointed out the divergent views on Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah under Narration no. 4.

Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Ṣīnī is considered *Matrūk* (suspected of forgery), and it is on account of him the Ḥadīth is considered severely weak.⁵

Qays ibn al-Rabī was truthful but weak in memory. This, in addition having Shī‘ī leanings. When Imām Aḥmad was asked why some of the Muḥaddithūn abandoned his narrations he responded saying, “He had

1 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 5 pg. 380

2 *Al-Du‘afā al-Kabīr* vol. 2 pg. 47

3 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 2

4 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 3 pg88, *al-Ḥilyah* vol. 1 pg. 63

5 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol.9 pg 132, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 236

Shīṭ inclinations, but mostly because of his abundant errors and the baseless narrations he was known to have narrated. Wakī and ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī considered him weak.”¹ Ibn Ḥibbān adds to this saying that he had a devilish son who would falsely include narrations into his books and he would not realize they had been corrupted.²

Layth ibn Abī Sulaym ibn Zunaym, is considered weak.

‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad, relates from his father, “... irreconcilable inconsistency in what he narrates, however some have narrated from him”³

Ibn Ma‘īn said of him, “Weak. Although, his narrations may be recorded.”⁴

Yaḥya ibn Sa‘īd did not narrate from him, and Ibn ‘Uyaynah considered weak the narrations of Layth ibn Abī Sulaym.

Ibn Abī Ḥātim said, “I heard my father and Abū Zur‘ah saying, ‘Layth ibn Abī Sulaym is fairly weak, his narrations are not independently authoritative according to the scholars of Ḥadīth.”⁵

Ibn Sa‘d has said, “He has a man of righteousness and worship, he was weak as a narrator. It is said he would ask ‘Aṭā, Tāwūs and Mujāhid about something and they would differ. However, he would – unintentionally – narrate it as though they were in agreement.”⁶

Al-Tirmidhī said, “Muḥammad said that Aḥmad would say of Layth that his narrations were not pleasing. Muḥammad said that Layth is truthful, but makes mistakes”⁷

1 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 393

2 *Ibid*

3 *Al-Ḍu‘afā al-Kabīr* vol.4 pg16

4 *Tārīkh ibn Ma‘īn* narration of al-Dūrī vol. 1 pg. 158

5 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol.7 pg.178

6 *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* vol. 6 pg.349

7 *Al-īlal al-Kabīr* (293), *al-Tahdhīb* vol.8 pg.418

All these factors considered, the narration is significantly weak. Some have tried to bring corroborating narrations but those suffer from the same weakness, or are even more discredited than this.

9. The narration attributed to ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

Ibn al-Jawzī has listed this narration in his book *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* and after a thorough examination of all of its variant narrations concluded that it is false.¹

Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī mentioned it in his book *Tadhkirat al-Mawḍū‘āt* and said:

(Appearing) in its (chain) is Abū al-Ṣalt. His name is ‘Abd al-Salām. Also (appearing) in its (chain) is ‘Uthmān ibn Khālid, and Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf, all of whom are liars.²

‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī, Abū al-Ṣalt, was known to be a committed Shī‘ī. with the exception of Ibn Ma‘īn all the experts on narrators are in agreement that his narrations are substantially weak. They include, but are not limited to, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī, al-Nasā‘ī, Ibn ‘Adī, Abū Ja‘far al-‘Uqaylī, al-Dāraquṭnī, and Ibn Ḥibbān among others. Ibn Ma‘īn seems to have mixed views about him and therefore it cannot be established with certainty what he thought of Abū al-Ṣalt’s narrations.³

The editor of al-Shawkānī’s *al-Fawā’id al-Majmū‘ah*, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu‘allimī, provides a detailed discussion on this narration wherein he demonstrates that it is flawed by all counts.⁴

1 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* by Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 1, p. 349-354.

2 *Tadhkirat al-Mawḍū‘āt* p. 33

3 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 151; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 11 pg. 46-51; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 18 pg 73-82; *Sīyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 11 pg. 446; *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 616

4 *Al-Fawā’id al-Majmū‘ah* p. 348

Ibn Kathīr mentions it in *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* and says:

This ḥadīth is known by way of Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī. Aḥmad ibn Salamah among others who comprise a group of unreliable transmitters got it from him, then fraudulently ascribed it to themselves.

He goes on to say:

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Miḥraz relates from Ibn Maʿīn who said, “Ibn Ayman narrated to me that Abū Muʿāwiyah narrated this ḥadīth initially but then refrained from it. He says, ‘Abū al-Ṣalt was a wealthy man who used to honour the scholars who would narrate these aḥādīth to him.’”

Ibn ʿAsākir records this ḥadīth with an unreliable chain reaching the Prophet ﷺ, by way of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq — from his father — from his grandfather — from Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh; He also narrates it from a different chain, from Jābir. Ibn ʿAdī said that this version is also fabricated. Abū al-Faṭḥ al-Awdī says, “There is no authentic ḥadīth like this.”¹

Aside from the problems in the chain, the wording of this narration suggests that it is problematic as well. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is an ocean of knowledge. It is inconceivable that the knowledge of the Final Messenger ﷺ is only accessible via one door.

It is well-known that knowledge has been transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ by other than ʿAlī. Knowledge was spread in the different regions and cities based on whichever of the Companions had settled there. Much of ʿAlī’s knowledge was spread in Kūfah. Despite that, the people of Kūfah began learning the Qurʾān and the Sunnah even before ʿUthmān’s era.

When ʿAlī arrived in Kūfah, Shurayḥ was already appointed the judge. He and ʿAbīdah al-Salmānī learnt from others before ʿAlī. Therefore, Islamic knowledge preceded ʿAlī’s arrival in Kūfah.

1 *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* vol. 11 pg. 97 (al-Hajr edition)

Overlooking the weakness of this narration, there is nothing in it that proves ‘Alī’s ﷺ pre-eminence for succession. At most it could be said that he is a leader in terms of knowledge.

10. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī ﷺ

This narration is an adaptation of the narration before it. It appears in the *Jāmi‘* of al-Tirmidhī with the following chain:

Ismā‘īl ibn Mūsā — **Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rūmī** — **Sharīk** — Salamah ibn Kuhayl — Suwayd ibn Ghafлах — al-Ṣunābiḥī — ‘Alī ﷺ¹

After relating it al-Tirmidhī points out that it is severely weak saying, “This narration is *Gharīb Munkar*. Some have narrated this Ḥadīth from Sharīk without including al-Ṣunābiḥī [as a link in the chain]. We are not aware of this Ḥadīth being narrated by any other reliable narrators; only this version from Sharīk. There is a similar narration from Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ.²

Al-Dhahabī appears to grade this narration as a forgery. When discussing the biography of **Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rūmī**, one of the unreliable narrators appearing in this chain, he quotes Abū Zur‘ah and Abū Dāwūd both declaring him weak. He goes on to say that al-Bukhārī transmits his narration in his other works; not in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. He then cites the chain of al-Tirmidhī for this narration and concludes, “I am not certain who forged it.”³

Ibn Ḥibbān discusses a narrator, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Rūmī, a narrator of Ḥadīth who transmits from Sharīk. He says that he switches Isnāds, erroneously ascribing the text of a Ḥadīth narrated by weak and unreliable narrators to an Isnād with reliable narrators. He then cites the isnād in *al-Tirmidhī* by way of Sharīk and concludes saying:

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3723

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 668

There is no basis for this narration from the Prophet ﷺ whatsoever, nor is it from the narration of Sharīk, nor Salamah, nor al-Ṣunābiḥī. What appears to be the case is that this narrator heard of the Ḥadīth from the likes of Abū al-Ṣalt, with the chain via Abū Mu‘āwiyah. While he remembered the wording, he confused the isnād and ascribed it to Sharīk with the aforementioned chain.¹

Al-Dhahabī points out that Ibn Ḥibbān confused the names and instead of mentioning this under the biography of Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Rūmī, who is a narrator from Sharīk, he mentioned it under the biography of his father, ‘Umar, who narrates from a generation higher than Sharīk.²

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd-Allah al-Nakha‘ī al-Qaḍī. He is considered weak, especially in that which he narrated from memory after being assigned a post in the judiciary. The narrations which are accepted from him are those which he narrated prior to his appointment as judge, or when he narrated from his books and not from memory.

Ibn Ḥibbān said about him:

Towards the end he erred regularly and his memory failed him. Therefore, those narrations of those who heard from him in his early days in Wāsiṭ do not have confusion — like Yazīd ibn Harūn, Ishāq al-Azraq — as for those who heard from him later on in Kufah, their narrations have many mistakes.³

Ibn ‘Adī said:

In general his narrations is are acceptable. However, his narrations were affected on account of weakness of memory so he began to fairly contradictory reports. None of is objectionable reports were deliberate.⁴

1 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 68

2 *Mīzān al-ʿIṭidāl* vol. 3 pg. 212

3 *Al-Thiqāt* vol. 6 pg. 444

4 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 5 pg. 36

11. The narration ascribed to Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه

This narration is found in *Musnad al-Firdaws* by al-Daylamī at it appears by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh — Aḥmad ibn ‘Ubayd al-Thaqafī — Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Khalaf al-‘Aṭṭār — **Mūsā ibn Ja‘far ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib** — ‘Abd al-Muḥaymin ibn al-‘Abbās — his father — Sahl ibn Sa‘d — Abū Dharr.¹

Appearing in this chain is **Mūsā ibn Ja‘far al-Ja‘farī**. Ibn Ḥajar cites al-‘Uqaylī, agreeing with him, that there are blunders in what Mūsā ibn Ja‘far narrates.²

The other problematic narrator is ‘Abd al-Muḥaymin ibn al-‘Abbās. Al-Bukhārī criticized him severely as a narrator of Ḥadīth saying, “*Munkar al-Ḥadīth*.”³ Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī described him with the same words,⁴ whilst al-Nasā’ī graded him *Matrūk*.⁵ Al-Sajī said that he possessed a manuscript which was filled with baseless reports; he narrated these from his father, from his grandfather.⁶

In the footnotes of *al-Murāja‘āt* this narration was referenced to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, a secondary source. ‘Alī al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, the compiler of *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, has clearly indicated that if he references any Ḥadīth to a specific set of works, that his mere referencing is sufficient to point out the unreliability, and possible forgery, of those narrations.

He writes:

1 *Musnad al-Firdaws* by al-Daylamī vol. 2 pg. 299

2 *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 8 pg. 193

3 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* vol. 6 pg. 137

4 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol. 6 pg. 67

5 *Al-Ḍu‘afā’* Bio: 386

6 *Ikṃāl Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 8 pg. 359

Whatever is ascribed [in this work of mine] to Ibn ‘Adī, al-‘Uqaylī, al-Khaṭīb, Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī in *Nawādir al-Uṣūl*, al-Ḥākīm in his *Tārīkh*, Ibn Jārūd in his *Tārīkh*, and al-Daylamī in *Musnad al-Firdaws*; is considered weak. Mere reference to any of these works suffices in pointing out the fact that the narrations quoted are unreliable.¹

The severity of weakness in this narration means that it is beyond support.

12. The narration attributed to Anas رضي الله عنه

It has been recorded by al-Ḥākīm, by way of **Ḍirār ibn Ṣurad** — Mu‘tamir ibn Sulaymān — his father — al-Ḥasan — Anas رضي الله عنه.²

Al-Dhahabī said in his *Talkhīṣ*, “I believe this to be the forgery of Ḍirār! Ibn Ma‘īn said that he is a liar!”³ Under the biography of Ḍirār, al-Dhahabī states, “Ḍirār is a famous liar. Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn said that there were two famous liars in Kūfāh called Abū Nu‘aym. Ḍirār is one of them.”⁴

Ibn Abī Ḥātim says about Ḍirār that he narrated a report by way of Mu‘tamir — from his father — from al-Ḥasan — from Anas رضي الله عنه, which the scholars of Ḥadīth reject and consider to be baseless.⁵

Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he would attribute the text of an unreliable ḥadīth to reliable narrators.⁶

1 *Muntakhab al-Kanz* vol. 1 pg. 9

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 122

3 *Ibid*

4 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 327

5 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol. 4 pg. 465

6 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 1 pg. 486

13. The narration ascribed to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه

This narration is found in the tenth-century book, *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*, without any chain of transmission, only a reference to Ibn al-Sammān. The absence of these details compounds the skepticism on the veracity of this narration. The general principle employed in Sunnī scholarship is to ignore any narration unless it can be evaluated in terms of its Isnād. The absence of isnād in this case means that this narration is to be set aside.

14. The narration attributed to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه

It is recorded by al-Daylamī by way of Ḥusayn al-Ashqar — Sharīk — al-A'mash — 'Aṭā' — Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه.¹

Ḥusayn ibn Ḥasan al-Ashqar has been discredited by al-Bukharī, Abū Zur'ah—who considered him completely unreliable—and Abū Ḥātim. Al-Jūzajānī calls him an extremist Shī'ī accused of cursing the companions. Ibn 'Adī has pointed out the fact that he was known to have narrated many baseless narrations. Al-Dhahabī cites this very narration as one of the baseless narrations related by Ḥusayn al-Ashqar.²

The weakness of Sharīk was discussed under narration no. 10 above.

15. The narration of Ḥubshī ibn Junādah رضي الله عنه

This narration appears in *Musnad Aḥmad*, *Sunan ibn Mājah* and *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī* among other primary Ḥadīth collections.³

1 *Musnad al-Firdaws* vol. 3 pg. *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr* Ḥadīth no: 5592, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* vol. 4 pg. 356

2 *Mīzān al-'itidāl* vol.1 pg. 531

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 29 pgs. 49-53 Ḥadīth no: 17505, 17506, 17510, 17511, 17512; *Sunan ibn Mājah*, Faḍl 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه, Ḥadīth no: 119; *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3719

There is a divided opinion among the scholars on the reliability of this narration. The famous versions of this Ḥadīth are by way of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī — from al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib¹; and by way of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī — from Hānī’ ibn Hānī’ and Hubayrah ibn Yarīm — from ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.² The fact that the narration from Ḥubshī ibn Junādah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is narrated by way of Sharīk is cause for concern among some scholars, due to the reasons cited earlier. However, Sharīk is not the only narrator of this report, there are supplementary versions where Sharīk is supported by Isrā’īl.³

While we are inclined to accepting the soundness of this narration, our interpretation differs significantly from what ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has written. His version of events is handicapped with oversights.

The first of his claims which ought to be addressed is the claim of multiple chains; this narration is only known by way of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī. The narrations of al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib and ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ only mention the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ statement, “Alī is from me and I from him.” The addition which pertains to conveying on his صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ behalf is only known through this version from Ḥubshī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

Furthermore, these words are not unique for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used similar words for the people of the Ash‘arī tribe⁴, Julaybīb⁵ and even his uncle, al-‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.⁶ We have elaborated on this under the discussions on Letter 32.⁷

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ Ḥadīth 2699; al-Tirmidhī cites a sentence from it and alludes to the background story, *Abwāb al-Manāqib*, Ḥadīth 3716

2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 249, Ḥadīth no. 931

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 29 pgs. 49-53 Ḥadīth no: 17505, 17506, 17510, 17511, 17512

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Shirkah, Ḥadīth no. 2483; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no. 2500

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no. 2272

6 *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Manāqib al-‘Abbās*, Ḥadīth no:3759; *Sunan al-Nasā’ī* vol. 8 pg. 33 Ḥadīth 4775

7 Refer to pg. 481 of this book.

Secondly, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn seems to have misunderstood the meaning of the narrations in *Musnad Aḥmad*. The mention of the Farewell Ḥajj is cited to prove that Ḥubshī رضي الله عنه was a companion of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم; not that he heard this Ḥadīth during the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Farewell Ḥajj!

Due to his oversight, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn goes on to reveal the correct context in which the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said these words. This was the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم instruction that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه recite the verses of Sūrah al-Tawbah which revoked the original amnesty granted by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to the Mushrikīn.

It well-known that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم instated Abū Bakr as the leader of the Ḥajj in the **ninth year** after the Hijrah. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was subsequently sent to join Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه as a follower during that Ḥajj, and to recite the verses of Sūrah al-Tawbah. These were revealed after Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه departure. This disproves ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s claim that Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه departed with Sūrah al-Tawbah, also referred to as Sūrah al-Barā’ah.

Al-Ṭabarī, Ishāq ibn Rāhūyah in his *Musnad*, Nasā’ī, Dārimī, Ibn Khuzaymah, and Ibn Ḥibbān all narrate by way of Jābir رضي الله عنه who said:

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Abū Bakr to lead the Ḥajj after his صلى الله عليه وسلم return from the ‘Umrah which commenced at Ji’irānah, We proceeded until we were close to al-‘Arj when the adhān for Fajr was called out and the sound of Messenger’s صلى الله عليه وسلم camel was heard, and sitting on it was ‘Alī.

Abū Bakr said to him, “Have you been sent as a leader or a messenger?”

He said, “Rather, the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم sent me with (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah to recite to the people.”

We arrived in Makkah and one day before the day of Tarwīyah. Abū Bakr came and addressed the people with regards to their rituals. Upon the completion of his address ‘Alī stood up and recited (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah to

the people until he completed it. The Day of al-Naḥr passed by in the same manner and the Day of al-Nafr passed by in the same manner.¹

During this Ḥajj, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ proclaimed that no mushrik may perform Ḥajj after that year, and no person may perform ṭawāf in an unclothed state. He commanded his other companions to do the same. This is supported by what al-Bukhārī narrates from Abū Hurayrah, who said:

بعثني أبو بكر في تلك الحجة في مؤذنين يوم النحر نؤذنان بمنى أن لا يحج بعد العام مشرك، ولا يطوف بالبيت عريان. قال حميد بن عبد الرحمن ثم أردف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عليا، فأمره أن يؤذن ببراءة قال أبو هريرة فأذن معنا علي في أهل منى يوم النحر لا يحج بعد العام مشرك، ولا يطوف بالبيت عريان.

Abū Bakr sent me during that Ḥajj amongst the announcers on the Day of Naḥr at Minā that no mushrik may perform the Ḥajj after that year and no person may perform ṭawāf naked.

Ḥumayd ibn Abd al-Raḥmān says, “Then the Messenger seated ‘Alī (on his camel) and instructed him to announce (recite Sūrah) al-Barā’ah (to the people).”

Abū Hurayrah says, “Then ‘Alī announced (Sūrah) al-Barā’ah with us amongst the people in Minā on the Day of al-Naḥr, and that no polytheist may perform the Ḥajj after that year, and that no person may perform ṭawāf unclothed.”²

The reason for sending ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was to uphold the customary diplomatic protocol since the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was a leader. The protocol among the Arabs when they discussed matters relating to withdrawing from a pledge, or consenting, or reconciliation, cancelling agreements, that the only persons mandated were the leader or his closest relative. Anyone besides these would not be considered mandated for the task.³

1 *Fath al-Bārī* vol. 8 p. 171

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth no. 4378

3 *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwadhī*, vol. 10, p. 152.

Thus we realize that the Prophet's ﷺ dispatching 'Alī under the command of Abū Bakr ﷺ does not prove 'Alī's right to immediate succession in any way. Instead, it indicates that Abū Bakr ﷺ was the most eligible candidate for the khilāfah as he was appointed by the Prophet ﷺ to lead the Ḥajj. It also provides context for this Ḥadīth.

There is another version of this Ḥadīth by way of Yaḥyā ibn Bukayr with the same isnād from Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī but it is worded, "None shall repay my debts except 'Alī."¹ Whichever version is preferred, neither proves the immediate succession to the Prophet ﷺ. May Allah shower His mercy on 'Alī ﷺ and his beloved family.

16. The narration ascribed to Abū Dharr ﷺ

This narration appears in *al-Mustadrak* by way of 'Alī ibn Sa'īd ibn Bashīr al-Rāzī — Ḥasan ibn Ḥammād al-Ḥaḍramī — Yaḥyā ibn Ya'lā — Bassām al-Ṣayrafī — Ḥasan ibn 'Amr al-Fuḡaymī — Mu'āwiyah ibn Tha'labah — Abū Dharr ﷺ.²

'Abd al-Ḥusayn lied though, when he said that both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabī graded it authentic on the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Al-Ḥākim graded the isnād, Ṣaḥīḥ, and al-Dhahabī remained silent offering no grading. Al-Ḥākim's grading of Ṣaḥīḥ is a farcry from the criteria of either al-Bukhārī or Muslim, let alone their joint-criteria. As a matter of interest, al-Ḥākim's individual grading in *al-Mustadrak* holds very little weight to Ḥadīth scholars as he did not put as much academic rigour into his grading. He was found to have graded spurious narrations authentic, and thus is not relied upon in terms of his grading.

Al-Dāraquṭnī said that 'Alī ibn Sa'īd was known for some Aḥādīth which could not be corroborated, he considered him lacking in terms of reliability.³

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 29 pg. 43 Ḥadīth 17505

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 121

3 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 5 pg. 542

Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī was considered a weak narrator, this in addition to being a Shī‘ī.¹

Mu‘āwiyah ibn Tha‘labah is considered Majhūl.

All these factors considered, this narration is unreliable without question.

17. The narration ascribed to **Abū Dharr** رضي الله عنه

This narration appears by way of **Abū al-Jaḥḥāf Dāwūd ibn Abī ‘Awf** — **Mu‘āwiyah ibn Tha‘labah** — **Abū Dharr** رضي الله عنه²

Al-Dhahabī grades this narration significantly weak.³ It appears that he considers **Abū al-Jaḥḥāf** as the cause. While the scholars do not reject his narrations outright, he is known for being an extreme Shī‘ī and also known for a number of unreliable narrations. This is one of those that are used to demonstrate his problematic narrations.⁴

The problem with this isnād is exacerbated by the anonymity of **Mu‘āwiyah ibn Tha‘labah**.

18. The narration of **Umm Salamah** رضي الله عنها

This narration appears in *Musnad Aḥmad* and *al-Mustadrak* among other works.⁵ The scholars are divided on the authenticity of this narration and those who consider it to be reliable have credible evidence. It is not surprising that there is nothing to suggest succession from this narration. It is no different from the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم statement:

1 *Al-Taqrīb* bio: 7677

2 *Al-Baḥr al-Zakḥkhār* vol. 9 pg. 455; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 123

3 *Al-Talkhīṣ* vol. 3 pg. 124

4 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 3. Pg 544, *Mīzān al-ītidāl* vol. 2 pg. 18

5 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 44 pg. 328 Ḥadīth no: 26748, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 121

لا تسبوا أصحابي فوالذي نفسي بيده لو أن أحدكم أنفق مثل أحد ذهباً ما بلغ مد أحدهم ولا نصيفه

Do not revile my Ṣaḥābah, for I swear by the One Who controls my life, if any of you have to spend gold equal to Mount Uḥūd, it will never equal one *mudd*¹ spent by the Ṣaḥābah, and not even half.²

The translator has taken liberties by translating the Arabic word *Sabb* [revile] as ‘denounce’. This is not the only deception, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges that al-Ḥākīm grades this authentic on the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Al-Ḥākīm only states that the chain is sound. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Bajalī, the narrator from Umm Salamah does not appear in either of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cited the narration of ‘Amr ibn Shās رضي الله عنه to support this narration. It appears in *Musnad Ahmad* by way of Ya‘qūb ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sa‘d — his father — Muḥamad ibn Ishāq ibn Yasār — Abān ibn Ṣāliḥ — **Faḍl ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ma‘qil ibn Sinān** — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Niyār al-Aslamī — ‘Amr ibn Shās.

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq has narrated with ‘*an‘anah* and not with *Samā‘*, this means that he implied but did not explicitly state that he heard the narration from Abān, and Ibn Ishāq is known for Tadrīs.

Faḍl ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ma‘qil ibn Sinān is considered Majhūl.³ This, in addition to the interruption in the chain between ‘Abd Allāh ibn Niyār and ‘Amr ibn Shās. Yahya ibn Ma‘īn indicates that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Niyār narrates via an intermediary who is omitted from this chain.⁴

These factors are sufficient to consider this narration weak and unreliable, even though there is nothing objectionable in the text.

1 A measurement of volume equivalent to approximately 750 ml.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* Ḥadīth no. 3470

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol. 7 pg. 67

4 *Tārīkh ibn Ma‘īn*, Riwayāh of al-Dūrī (504)

There is another narration which—despite its weakness—is in better standing in terms of its narrator. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mughaffal رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

عن عبد الله بن مغفل قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الله الله في أصحابي الله الله في أصحابي لا تتخذوهم غرضا بعدي فمن أحبهم فبحبي أحبهم ومن أبغضهم فببغضي أبغضهم ومن آذاهم فقد آذاني ومن آذاني فقد آذى الله ومن آذى الله فيوشك أن يأخذه قال أبو عيسى هذا حديث حسن غريب لا نعرفه إلا من هذا الوجه

Fear Allah regarding my Companions! Fear Allah regarding my Companions! Do not make them objects of insults after me. Whoever loves them, it is out of love of me that he loves them. And whoever hates them, it is out of hatred for me that he hates them. And whoever harms them, he has harmed me, and whoever harms me, he has offended Allah, and whoever offends Allah, [then] he shall soon be punished.¹

Appearing in this chain is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Ziyād, some have said his name is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Abd Allāh, and others ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Some have considered him Majhūl and others have said that he is slightly weak. As such, it is deemed a weak narration even if its weakness is subtle.

It is evident that the features in the narration cited in *al-Murāja‘āt* are not exclusive for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Despite its weakness it only speaks of his merits and warns against causing harm to him, physically or otherwise. Contrary to what ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn posits they do not indicate immediate succession in any way. May Allah be pleased with ‘Alī.

19. The narration of Salmān رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ

This narration appears in *al-Mustadrak* by way of Aḥmad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Yaḥyā al-Muqrī — Abū Bakr ibn Abī al-‘Awām — Abū Zayd Sa‘īd ibn Aws al-Anṣārī — ‘Awf² — Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī.³

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3862

2 In the original it read ‘Awf ibn Abī ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī which appears to be a typographical error. The editor might have read the word ‘an as bin since the two can easily be confused.

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 130

Al-Ḥākim’s grading it authentic on the criteria of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and al-Dhahabī’s approval appear to be an oversight since Sa’īd ibn Aws al-Anṣārī is not cited in either of the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*.

This narration expresses the meaning of the Ḥadīth, “Whomsoever, I am his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”

Likewise the Ḥadīth, “Indeed it is the covenant of the unlettered prophet to me that none shall love me except a believer and none shall hate me except a hypocrite.”¹

This was also said of the Anṣār. We find the Ḥadīth of al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib رضي الله عنه wherein the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned the Anṣār رضي الله عنهم, “None but the believer loves them, none but the hypocrite hates them. He who loves them loves Allah and he who hates them hates Allah.”²

Despite the narration pertaining to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه being sound, the virtue established therein was shared by the Anṣār and this debunks ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s claim of exclusivity. Furthermore, there is nothing in the narration to suggest leadership. The Ḥadīth speaks about maintaining a loving relationship towards ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and this is part of the belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā’ah.

20. The narration ascribed to ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

This narration appears in *al-Mustadrak*.³ The Ḥadīth expert, al-Dhahabī, criticized this narration severely and considered it unreliable.⁴ In many of his works he pointed out that this narration was unreliable, the error being an oversight from the reliable narrator, ‘Abd al-Razzāq of Ṣan‘ā.⁵ He

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth no. 78

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth no. 75

3 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 128

4 *Ibid – al-Talkhīṣ*

5 *Mīzān al-Itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 82, vol. 2 pg. 613, *Siyar A’lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 9 pg. 574

was not alone in his grading this narration. He was preceded by the Ḥadīth Master, Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn,¹ Ibn ʿAdī,² and Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī.³ The scholars after al-Dhahabī also considered extremely weak; these include al-Suyūṭī⁴ and Ibn ʿArrāq al-Kinānī.⁵

21. The narration attributed to ʿAmmār رضي الله عنه

This narration has been recorded by al-Ḥākim, Abū Yaʿlā, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdaḍī and Ibn ʿAsākir, all with a common chain by way of **Saʿīd ibn Muḥammad al-Warrāq** — **ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥazawwar** — Abū Maryam al-Thaqafī — ʿAmmār رضي الله عنه.⁶

Al-Dhahabī commented on this narration in his *Talkhīṣ*, “Saʿīd and ʿAlī are both Matrūk!”⁷

Saʿīd ibn Muḥammad al-Warrāq was declared weak by a number of critics including Ibn Saʿd, al-Nasāʾī and Ibn ʿAdī; Ibn Maʿīn, al-Dāraquṭnī and al-Dhahabī considered him severely weak.⁸

ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥazawwar was from the Shīʿah of Kūfah, and was suspected of forgery. He was criticised harshly by al-Bukhārī, Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd, Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasāʾī. Ibn ʿAdī cited this narration as an example of his baseless narrations.⁹

1 *Tahthīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1 pg. 10

2 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 6 pg. 539

3 *Al-ʿIlal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 220

4 *Al-Dhayl* vol. 1 pg. 257

5 *Tanzīh al-Sharīʿah* vol. 1 pg. 398

6 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 135; *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā* vol. 3 pg. 178 Ḥadīth no: 1602, *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 10 pg. 102; and *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 281

7 *Al-Talkhīṣ* vol. 3 pg. 135

8 *Mīzān al-ʿItidāl* vol. 2 pg. 152

9 *Mīzān al-ʿItidāl* vol. 3 pg. 118

The problem is compounded since *Abū Maryām al-Thaqafī*, who narrates from ‘Ammār is considered *Majhūl* by al-Dāraquṭnī.¹ Forgers of Ḥadīth were known to invent a narrator from whom they would transmit their forgeries. This was a neat trick to avoid being caught out immediately since the teacher they were citing was an imaginary person and the narration could never be verified from the teacher. It is possible that this is the case here.

22. The narration ascribed to Zayd ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه

This narration has been discussed in detail under the discussions on Letter 10. It is the third narration. This narration is either severely weak or perhaps a fabrication.²

23. The narration ascribed to ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه

This narration has been discussed in detail under the discussions on Letter 10. It is the fourth narration. This narration is extremely unreliable.³

24. The narration ascribed to ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

This narration has been discussed in detail under the discussions on Letter 10. It is the first narration. This narration is either extremely weak or perhaps a fabrication.⁴

25. The narration ascribed to Ziyād ibn Muṭarrif رضي الله عنه

This narration has been discussed in detail under the discussions on Letter 10. It is the second narration. This narration is extremely weak and cannot be relied upon.⁵

1 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 12 pg. 233

2 Refer to pg. 133 of this book - The Third Narration.

3 Refer to pg. 134 of this book - The Fourth Narration.

4 Refer to pg. 130 of this book - The First Narration.

5 Refer to pg. 131 of this book - The Second Narration.

26. The narration ascribed to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه

This narration has been recorded by ibn ‘Asākir by way of **Mu‘allā ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān** — Sharīk — al-A‘mash — Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaī — ‘Alqamah and al-Aswad — Abū Ayyūb رضي الله عنه.¹

The common narrator, **Mu‘allā ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wasiṭī**, is considered a liar and suspected of forging Ḥadīth. This in addition to the fact that he was suspected of being a Rafiḍī as well. Yahyā ibn Ma‘īn was asked about him and he related the final moments in the life of Mu‘allā. He was asked why he did not seek Allah’s forgiveness and he responded, “Should I not hope that I will be forgiven, [afterall] I have fabricated over seventy Aḥādīth about the virtues of ‘Alī.”²

There is no other source for this narration and it can easily be understood to be one of his forgeries.

On the other hand we have many narrations from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم wherein he says about the Anṣār:

عن عبد الله بن زيد بن عاصم، قال لما أفاء الله على رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم حنين قسم في الناس في المؤلفة قلوبهم ولم يعط الأنصار شيئا، فكأنهم وجدوا إذ لم يصبهم ما أصاب الناس فخطبهم فقال يا معشر الأنصار ألم أجدكم ضاللا فهداكم الله بي، وكنتم متفرقين فألفكم الله بي وعالة، فأغناكم الله بي كلما قال شيئا قالوا «الله ورسوله أمن قال ما يمنعكم أن تجيبوا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ قال كلما قال شيئا قالوا الله ورسوله أمن قال لو شئتم قلتم جئنا كذا وكذا أترضون أن يذهب الناس بالشاة والبعير وتذهبون بالنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى رجالكم لولا الهجرة لكنك امرأ من الأنصار ولو سلك الناس واديا وشعبا لسلكت وادي الأنصار وشعبها الأنصار شعار والناس دثار إنكم ستلقون بعدي أثرة فاصبروا حتى تلقوني على الحوض

‘Abd Allāh ibn Zayd ibn ‘Āṣim رضي الله عنه relates that when Allah granted victory to His Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم on the Day of Ḥunayn, he distributed the Fay’

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 472

2 *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 10 pg. 238

[booty] amongst those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Islam), but did not give anything to the Anṣār.

So they seemed to have felt disappointed and sad as they did not get as others had received. The Prophet ﷺ then addressed them, saying, “O assembly of Anṣār, did I not find you astray, and then Allah guided you on the Right Path through me? You were divided into groups, and Allah brought you together through me? You were poor and Allah made you rich through me?”

Whatever the Prophet ﷺ said, they (the Anṣār) said, “Allah and His Messenger have done greater favours [for us].”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “What stops you from answering the Messenger of Allah?”

But whatever he said to them, their response was, “Allah and His Messenger have done greater favours [for us].”

The Prophet ﷺ then said, “The thought might cross your minds, ‘You came to us in such-and-such state (at Madīnah).’ Would it not please you to see the people go away with sheep and camels while you return with the Prophet ﷺ to your homes? Were it not for the Hijrah, I would have been one of the Anṣār. **And if the people took their own paths through a valley or mountain pass, I would select the valley or mountain pass of the Anṣār.** The Anṣār are *Shi’ār* (those clothes which are in direct contact, i.e. inner garments), and the [rest of] people are *Dithār* (those clothes which are not in direct contact with the body, i.e. outer garments). No doubt, you will see other people favoured over you after my passing but you should be patient until you meet me at the Pond [of Kawthar].”¹

Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ related a similar narration:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth no: 4330; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Zakāh, Ḥadīth no: 1061

عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أو قال أبو القاسم صلى الله عليه وسلم لو أن الأنصار سلخوا واديا أو شعبا، لسلكت في وادي الأنصار ولولا الهجرة لكنت امرأ من الأنصار. فقال أبو هريرة ما ظلم بأبي وأمي أووه ونصروه أو كلمة أخرى

The Prophet ﷺ or Abū al-Qāsim said, “If the Anṣār took their way through a valley or a mountain pass, I would take Anṣār’s valley. Were it not for the Hijrah, I would have been one of the Anṣār.”

Abū Hurayrah used to say, “The Prophet ﷺ was not unjust; may my parents be sacrificed for him. Indeed the Anṣār sheltered and helped him.”¹

27. The narration ascribed to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه

The reference given for this narration in *al-Murāja‘āt* is simply a sequential number, volume and page number from *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*. What it conveniently excludes is the actual reference in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl: al-Wāhiyāt* of Ibn al-Jawzī!²

Ibn al-Jawzī compiled a work titled, *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Wāhiyah*, which is an anthology of weak and unreliable narrations. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn disguised the unreliability of this narration with his reference to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*.

The narration appears with a lengthy chain in Ibn al-Jawzī’s work: al-Qazzāz — Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī — **Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah al-Nī‘ālī** — Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shāfi‘ī — **Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Tammār** — Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Wārāh — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Rajā’ — Isrā‘īl — Abū Ishāq — Ḥubshī ibn Junādah — Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رضي الله عنه.³

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Manāqib al-Anṣār, Ḥadīth no: 3779

2 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 6 pg. 153 Ḥadīth no: 2539 (old edition); vol. 11 pg. 604 Ḥadīth no: 32921 (Risālah edition)

3 *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol.1 pg. 213

This narration has been recorded with the same chain of transmission by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and by way of him by Ibn ‘Asākir.¹

Appearing in this chain is **Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah al-Ni‘ālī**, about whom al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says, “He would seek out the false and baseless narrations... he was a Rāfiḍī.”² He was considered unreliable by both al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar.³

The gretaer problem in this chain is **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Tammār**. Ibn ‘Asākir suspects that he is the one who forged it, or popularized the forged report.⁴ Al-Dhahabī endorses that statement saying that he, al-Tammār, transmitted a false Ḥadīth.⁵

Al-Khaṭīb recorded this narration with another chain going to Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.⁶ After narrating it he says, “This is only narrated with chain by way of Qāsīm al-Malaṭī; and he used to forge Ḥadīth!”⁷

Ibn ‘Asākir also narrates it, with the same chain, by way of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī which means that the same problem affects it.⁸

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn truncated the narration in his letter. The original narration speaks about either Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه or Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه observing that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه distributed dates, and the amount of dates that filled his palm was equal to number of dates which filled the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم palm. Nonetheless, the explanation would only be required if the narration were

1 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 6 pg. 180; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 369

2 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 3 pg. 380

3 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 588; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 7 pg. 219

4 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 369

5 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 146

6 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 8 pg. 630

7 *Ibid*

8 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 368

sound. Considering the extent of weakness in it, there is no mystery why Ibn al-Jawzī included it in his work of sufficiently unreliable Aḥādīth.

28. The narration wherein the Prophet ﷺ allegedly said, “O Fāṭimah, does it not please you that Allah has looked at all the people of this world and [from them] chosen for you two men; one of them your father and the other your husband?”

This narration is ascribed to a number of companions; Abū Hurayrah, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī and Ma‘qil ibn Yasār رضي الله عنه.

- a. The narration ascribed to Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه is recorded by al-Ḥākim and appears by way of **Abū Bakr Muḥāmmad ibn Aḥmad ibn Sufyān al-Tirmidhī** — Surayj ibn Yūnus — Abū Ḥafṣ al-Abbar — al-A‘mash — Abū Ṣāliḥ — Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه.¹

Al-Dhahabī objects to al-Ḥākim’s inclusion of such a narration stating, “It appears to be forged [and] attributed to Surayj.”²

Al-Dhahabī says about Abū Bakr Muḥāmmad ibn Aḥmad al-Tirmidhī, “He narrated a fabricated report from Surayj ibn Yūnus for which he is suspected forging.”³

This is not the only problem with this narration. The wording indicates that it might be a forgery. The text of the narrates states that Fāṭimah رضي الله عنها objected to the Prophet ﷺ marrying her off to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه because he was too poor! Surely this would cause inconvenience to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, therefore he decided to reveal only that which suited his agenda.

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 129

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3. Pg. 457

b. The version ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه appears by way of ‘Abd al-Razzāq — Ma‘mar — Ibn Abī Najīh — Muhājīd — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

All these narrators in the chain above are sound narrators. The problem arises when we look at those who transmit this narration from ‘Abd al-Razzāq:

- **Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥajjāj**¹ - Al-Dhahabī claims that he is Majhūl, and that he narrated a baseless report citing this very narration.² Ibn al-Jawzī has also declared this narration significantly flawed.³ Al-Haythamī also alludes to the fact that he is Majhūl.⁴
- **Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī**⁵ - Significantly weak, suspected of lying. He is known specifically for transmitting baseless narrations by way of ‘Abd al-Razzāq.⁶
- **Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Hushaymī**⁷ - is suspected of forgery of Ḥadīth. Al-Dāraquṭnī states that he would narrate many false narrations by way of ‘Abd al-Razzāq.⁸
- **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Ma‘marī**⁹ - the scholars are divided about his status a narrator of Ḥadīth and he is known for having narrated uncorroborated narrations. There were many discrepancies in

1 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 135

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 26

3 *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 220

4 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 112

5 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 94 Ḥadīth no: 11154; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42. Pg 136

6 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 151; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 11 pg. 46-51; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 18 pg 73-82; *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* vol. 11 pg. 446; *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 616

7 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42. Pg 136; *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 353

8 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 109 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 501

9 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 93 Ḥadīth no: 11153

what he narrated when compared against what his peers narrated. His version of this narration is further marred by the fact that he did not receive it from ‘Abd al-Razzāq; rather he narrates it via Abū al-Ṣalt, ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī.¹

- Muḥammad ibn Jābān al-Jindaysāpūrī² is considered Majhūl and no biographical data on him can be found.

All these narrators are problematic, and none of them are from the mainstream narrators from ‘Abd al-Razzāq. The narrators from ‘Abd al-Razzāq are either suspected of forging Ḥadīth or unknown entities. We have previously pointed out that unscrupulous narrators would invent a name and ascribe false narrations to reliable Muḥaddithīn by way of this anonymous, invented narrator. The experts have long suspected this of being a forgery.

- c. The narration ascribed to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه appears by way of a common chain **Qays ibn al-Rabī** — Al-A‘mash — ‘**Abayah ibn Rib‘ī** — Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه.³

Qays ibn al-Rabī⁴ was considered weak in terms of his memory. The difference of opinion among the scholars is how serious that was. It is believed that in his old age his son corrupted his books by adding narrations to them, and when he would narrate from his books he would not realize that they had been tampered with. He was also known for being a Shī‘ī, which could have influenced the way he narrates the Faḍā’il of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Despite his weakness, he was held to be trustworthy by some of the scholars.⁴

1 *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg 505; *Lisān al-Mizān* vol. 3 pg. 71

2 *Ibid*

3 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 4 pg. 171-172

4 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 4600, *Mizān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 393, *Al-Taqrīb* bio. 5573

‘Abāyah ibn Ribī was a fanatic Shīī, known for narrating baseless reports.¹

The narration is interrupted between al-A‘mash and ‘Abāyah ibn Ribī.²

It does not help that both narrators from Qays ibn al-Rabī are problematic:

- **Yaḥyā al-Ḥimmānī** was accused of *Sariqat al-Ḥadīth*; he would graft his own isnād on another Ḥadīth. Ibn Numayr and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal called him a liar.³
- **Ḥusayn al-Ashqar** has been discredited by al-Bukhari, Abū Zur‘ah, and Abū Ḥātim. Abū Zur‘ah considered him completely unreliable. Al-Jūzajānī accused him of being an extremist Shīī suspecting of cursing the Companions. Ibn ‘Adī states that he was known for narrating many baseless narrations.⁴

This narration appears to contradict the earlier ones in terms of its context. The other versions mention this under the circumstances of ‘Alī’s ﷺ proposal and Fāṭimah’s ﷺ reluctance to wed because of ‘Alī’s ﷺ lack of means. The version ascribed to Abū Ayyūb Al-Anṣārī ﷺ places this conversation at the Prophet’s ﷺ deathbed.

- d. The version ascribed to Ma‘qil ibn Yasār ﷺ is worded differently and appears by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Asadī — Khālīd ibn Ṭahmān — Nāfi‘ ibn Abī Nāfi‘ — Ma‘qil ibn Yasār ﷺ.⁵

Khālīd ibn Ṭahmān lost his memory about ten years before he passed away.⁶

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 388, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 417

2 Ibid

3 *Al-Ḍu‘afā wal- Matrūkīn* by ibn al-Jawzī vol. 3 pg. 197

4 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol.1 pg. 531

5 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 33 pg. 422 Ḥadīth no: 20307; *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 20 pg. 229

6 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 633

29. The narration attributed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

The narration can be traced via the *Tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī by way of **Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī** — **Mu‘ādh ibn Muslim** — **al-Harawī** — ‘Aṭā’ ibn al-Sā’ib — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — Ibn ‘Abbās.¹

Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Anṣārī al-‘Uranī is extremely unreliable and considered a Shi‘ī. Ibn ‘Adī says that his narrations are contrary to what others narrate. Ibn Ḥibbān noted that he attributed baseless narrations to reliable narrators. Al-Dhahabī cited this narration as an example of one of the anomalous, uncorroborated, baseless narrations for which he was known.²

Mu‘ādh ibn Muslim is Majhūl.³

Al-Harawī is also Majhūl.⁴

The anonymity of these narrators compounds the problem in this chain, confirming its unreliability. Ibn Kathīr has criticized this narration both in terms of its unreliable chain, and anomalous meaning.⁵

30. The narration about entering the Masjid in the state of Janābah

This narration has been discussed in detail under Letter 34.⁶ The narration was found to be unreliable via both chains. Even if it were reliable there is nothing in it to infer ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه leadership.

1 *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī* vol. 13 pg. 442

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 483

3 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 4 pg. 132

4 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 483

5 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr* vol. 4 pg. 434 (Al-Ṭayyibah edition)

6 Narration no:24

31. The narration attributed to Anas رضي الله عنه

This narration is transmitted with a common chain by way of ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā — **Maṭar ibn Abī Maṭar** — Anas ibn Mālīk رضي الله عنه.¹

Maṭar ibn Abī Maṭar is also known as Maṭar ibn Maymūn al-Muḥāribī. He is described by al-Bukhārī, Abū Ḥātim, and al-Nasā’ī in very harsh terms, “Munkar al-Ḥadīth.”² Ibn al-Jawzī classifies this narration a forgery and suspects that Maṭar was the one responsible for this. Al-Dhahabī agrees with Ibn al-Jawzī’s conclusion and supports the claim by citing other examples of forged, and baseless narrations known by way of Maṭar.³ Ibn ‘Arrāq al-Kinānī also declares this a forgery citing Maṭar as the cause.⁴

Even if this were not a forged narration, it does not support the greater doctrine of Imāmah held by the Twelver Shī‘ah since it excludes the remaining Imāms. ‘Abd al-Husayn did not realise that this forged narration could not possibly support his cause.

32. The narration attributed to Jābir رضي الله عنه

This narration has been discussed in detail under the narrations found in Letter 34. It was proven to be a fabrication.⁵

33. The narration attributed to Abū al-Ḥamrā رضي الله عنه

- a. This narration appears by way of ‘**Ubādah ibn Ziyād al-Asadī** — ‘**Amr ibn Thābit** — **Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī** — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — Abū al-Ḥamrā.⁶

1 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 2 pg 437; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 309

2 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 4 pg 127

3 *Ibid*, *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* vol. 1 pg. 383

4 *Tanzīh al-Sharī‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 360

5 Narration no: 12

6 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 22 pg. 200; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 309

‘**Abādah ibn Ziyād al-Asadī** is a committed Shī‘ī about whom the scholars differ.¹ Due to his below-average rating as a Ḥadīth narrator, and the fact that he is a committed Shī‘ī calls into question the reliability of this Ḥadīth for this reason alone; were there no other factors.

‘**Amr ibn Thābit** is a famous Shī‘ī from Kūfah. Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn said of him that he is worth nothing. Al-Nasā‘ī held him in contempt and said that he is severely impugned. Ibn Ḥibbān accused him of narrating forgeries. Finally, Abū Dāwūd pointed him out as an extremist among the Shī‘ah of Kūfah.²

Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī, also known as Thābit ibn Abī Ṣafiyah is considered weak and unreliable by consensus. He was also known for being a Rāfiḍī.³ Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he erred abundantly and was not relied upon in terms of his narrations.⁴

Al-Haythamī suggests that the major problem in this narration is ‘Amr ibn Thābit and rejects it on account of him.⁵

There is an alternative chain that connects to Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr by way of:

- b. Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Mirdās — **Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Kūfī** — Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Ulayyah — Yūnus ibn ‘Ubayd — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — Abū al-Ḥamrā رضي الله عنه.⁶

This narration could not possibly corroborate the earlier narration due to the severity of weakness in both versions. Appearing in this chain is

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 381; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 399

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 3, pg. 249

3 *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 818

4 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 1 pg. 206

5 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 121

6 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol. 3 pg. 27

Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Kūfi who is suspected of forging narrations and attributing forged narrations to reliable narrators.¹

‘Abdal-Ḥusayn referenced the narration to *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*² but conveniently omitted to mention that it has been ascribed to Ibn al-Jawzī’s anthology of weak and dubious narrations, *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah*.³

The narration is in direct conflict with the verse of the Qur’an wherein Allah confirms His divine assistance to the Prophet ﷺ through the believers; not one believer only.

هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِنَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

*It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers.*⁴

Before it is argued that this refers to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه specifically, the verses that follow prove, beyond a doubt, that the Prophet’s ﷺ Companions in general were intended, and it could not have possibly referred to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in isolation:

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلْفَتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِّضَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ الْأَنْ حَفَفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise. O Prophet, sufficient for you is Allah and

1 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 1 pg.145; *Mizān al-‘itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 90

2 *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* vol. 6 pg. 158 (earlier edition)

3 *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 234

4 *Sūrah al-Anfāl*: 62

for whoever follows you of the believers. O Prophet, urge the believers to battle. If there are among you twenty [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome a thousand of those who have disbelieved because they are a people who do not understand. Now, Allah has lightened [the hardship] for you, and He knows that among you is weakness. So if there are from you one hundred [who are] steadfast, they will overcome two hundred. And if there are among you a thousand, they will overcome two thousand by permission of Allah . And Allah is with the steadfast.¹

34. The narration wherein the Prophet ﷺ allegedly said, “Whoever wishes to Nūḥ in his resolve, Ādam in his knowledge, Ibrāhīm in his forbearance, Mūsā in his discernment, and ʿĪsā in his ascetism; let him look at ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.”

This narration has been referenced in *al-Murājaʿāt* to al-Bayhaqī’s ‘*Ṣaḥīḥ*’ and Aḥmad’s *Musnad*. In the footnotes he has cited Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, the Shīʿī commentator of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, as a secondary reference.

What can be said about the deception and cunning strategies? ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn either misled his audience deliberately, or he relied on the misdirection of Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, whom he tried to pass off as a neutral figure. To begin with, al-Bayhaqī does not have any work that bears the title ‘*Ṣaḥīḥ*’ – denoting higher authenticity – nor has he made that a condition in any of his works. Furthermore, this narration cannot be found in any of al-Bayhaqī’s works, nor in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

It is found in the *Mawḍūʿāt* works, wherein most fabricated material is compiled under a single title.² In this works the narration has been referenced to earlier works, and in most places they mention the chain of

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 63-66

2 *Al-Mawḍūʿāt* of Ibn al-Jawzī vol. 1 pg. 370; *al-Laʿālī al-Maṣnūʿah* of al-Suyūṭī vol. 1 pg. 355, *Tanzīh al-Sharīʿah al-Marfūʿah* by Ibn ʿArrāq al-Kinānī vol. 1 pg. 385

narration by which the Ḥadīth is narrated. This narration is attributed to four of the Prophet's ﷺ Companions: Abū al-Ḥamrā, Anas ibn Mālik, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, and Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه.

a. The version ascribed to Abū al-Ḥamrā رضي الله عنه

- **Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd al-Rāzī** — Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Wārah — ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Mūsā — **Abū ‘Amr al-Azdī/ Abū ‘Umar al-Asadī**¹ — Abū Rāshid al-Ḥubrānī — Abū al-Ḥamrā

Al-Suyūfī ascribes this narration to al-Ḥākim al-Naysāpūrī’s *Tārīkh*. It can also be found with this common chain in *Tārīkh Dimashq* of Ibn ‘Asākir.²

Appearing in this chain is **Abū Ja‘far, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa‘īd al-Rāzī**, whom al-Dhahabī considers Majhūl. Beyond this, al-Dhahabī suspects him of forging a narration of Ḥadīth.³ This means that the only biographical data that we have on him that is of any use in the science of Ḥadīth is the fact that he is suspected of forging a Ḥadīth; this renders his narration severely weak and beyond support.

The narration is put under further scrutiny by the presence of **Abū ‘Amr al-Azdī**, considered Majhūl and without biographical data; or **Abū ‘Umar al-Asadī** who is extremely weak in Ḥadīth as well.⁴

Ibn Kathīr declared this narration severely weak and completely unreliable.⁵

1 The spelling of these two names is very similar in Arabic.

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 313

3 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 457

4 *Tanzīh al-Sharī‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 385

5 *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* vol. 7 pg. 356

- Al-Daylamī — ‘Alī ibn Dukayn al-Qāḍī — ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Yusuf — al-Faḍl al-Kindī — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan — ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn — Muḥammad ibn Abī Hāshim al-Nawfalī — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mūsā — al-‘Alā — Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī — **Abū Dāwūd Nufay’** — Abū al-Ḥamrā.¹

This chain comprises of a series on unknown narrators, without biographical entries. Worse still is the presence of **Nufay’ ibn al-Ḥārith**, Abū Dāwūd, who is suspected of forgery, and severely criticized by Ibn Maʿīn, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī, al-Nasāī and al-Dāraquṭnī.²

b. The version ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

Abū Dharr ibn al-Bāghindī — **his father** — **Misʿar ibn Yaḥyā al-Nahdī** — **Sharīk** — Abū Ishāq al-Sabīī — his father — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.³

After stating that **Misʿar ibn Yaḥyā** is unknown, al-Dhahabī cited this narration as an example of his baseless narrations.⁴

The father of Abū Dharr ibn al-Bāghindī is **Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Bāghindī**. He was criticised for ascribing narrations to his teachers which he had received from his peers; also known as Tadrīs. In his case it was quite severe since he was known to have ascribed narrations to teachers of his while omitting numerous links between himself and the said teacher. Ibn ‘Adī states that he was known to have narrated a number of baseless narrations.⁵

1 *Al-Laʿālī al-Maṣnūʿah* vol. 1 pg. 356

2 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* vol. 4 pg. 272

3 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* vol. 4 pg. 99 with a reference to Ibn Baṭṭāh.

4 *Ibid*

5 *Mīzān al-Iʿtidāl* vol. 4 pg. 26; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 7 pg. 473-475

The details of **Sharīk's** weakness have been discussed under narration 10 above.

Abū Ishāq al-Sabī's father is not known for narrating Ḥadīth; as a matter of fact no biographical entry can be found to establish his status as a narrator. As such, this report comprises of narrators who are Majhūl and those whose memory and accuracy has been comprised.

This narration is flawed severely; it cannot be used to support another narration.

c. The version ascribed to Anas رضي الله عنه

- Abū Muḥammad ibn al-Akfānī — ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Aḥmad — **Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Qirmīsīnī** — ‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Sa‘īd — Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan al-Baghdādī — Muḥammad ibn Qāsim — Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Muthannā — Muḥammad ibn Bakkār — **his father** — Thābit — Anas.¹

After recording this narration Ibn ‘Asākir concludes that it is severely compromised and in cannot possibly attributed to the Prophet صلی الله علیه وسلم.² This narration mentions merits for Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, likening him to Zakariyyā عليه السلام.

Abū Ishāq al-Qirmīsīnī is without discretionary mention. Similarly, **Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan al-Baghdādī**, **Muḥammad ibn Qāsim**, and **Bakkār ibn Rayyān al-Hāshimī** are all considered Majhūl.

‘Umar ibn ‘Alī ibn Sa‘īd is also mentioned with very little biographical data; this narration of his has been identified as false by al-Dhahabī and endorsed by Ibn Ḥajar.³

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 7 pg. 112

2 *Ibid*

3 *Mīzān al-l’tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 214; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 6 pg. 122

- **Abū Aḥmad, ‘Abbās ibn Faḍl ibn Ja‘far al-Makkī — Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Dabarī** — ‘Abd al-Razzāq — Ḥammād ibn Salamah — Thābit — Anas رضي الله عنه.¹

After recording this narration ibn ‘Asākir concludes that it is a baseless report.² Abū Aḥmad al-Makkī is pointed out to be Majhūl; and Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Dabarī is known to have transmitted extremely unreliable reports from ‘Abd al-Razzāq specifically.³

d. The version ascribed to Abū Sa‘īd رضي الله عنه

Ibn Shāhīn — Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Ḥumayd ibn al-Rabī — **Muḥammad ibn ‘Imrān ibn Ḥajjāj** — ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Mūsā — Abū Rashīd al-Ḥimmānī — **Abū Hārūn al-‘Abdī** — Abū Sa‘īd.⁴

Muḥammad ibn ‘Imrān is considered Majhūl; whereas **Abū Hārūn al-‘Abdī** is suspected of forgery.⁵

All these versions are severely compromised and their weakness eliminates any potential of corroboration. In all likelihood someone must have forged it and others copied their forgery.

35. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

This narration has been recorded by ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Nasā‘ī, al-Ḥākim, and Abū Ya‘lā with a common chain by way of **al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Abd al-Malik** — al-Ḥārīṭh ibn Ḥaṣīrah — Abū Ṣādiq — Rabī‘ah ibn Nājīdh — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.⁶

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 288

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 289

3 *Mīzān al-‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 181

4 *Sharḥ Madhāib Ahl al-Sunnah* vol. 1 pg. 151 Ḥadīth no: 107; *al-La‘ālī al-Maṣnū‘ah* vol. 1 pg 356

5 *Mīzān al-‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 173

6 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 469 Ḥadīth no:1376,1377; *Khaṣā‘īs ‘Alī* Ḥadīth no: 103, *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 123, *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* vol. 1 pg. 404 Ḥadīth no: 534

Al-Ḥākim graded it sound but al-Dhahabī pointed out the fact that he overlooked the weakness of **al-Ḥakam ibn ‘Abd al-Malik**,¹ a common narrator in all these books.

On different occasions Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn said about al-Ḥakam, “Weak”, “Unreliable”, “Not worth anything”.

Ibn Abī Khaythamah said, “His narrations are worthless!”

Abū Ḥātim, Abū Zur‘ah and al-Nasā’ī stated that he is not a reliable narrator.

Abū Dāwūd said, “Munkar” indicating the veracity of his weakness.

Ibn Ḥibbān stated that he would narrate – by way of reliable narrators – that which could not be corroborated; he did this quite often.²

If we ignore the weakness of this Ḥadīth for a moment and consider its wording, we will find that it fits very well. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is said to resemble عَلِيُّ السَّلَامُ in terms of the polar ends of extremism. Those who hated him accused his mother of indecency; and those who loved him exceeded his limits and attribute to him a status that was not his. The same can be said for ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; he is a person of immense virtue but the Nawāṣib and the Khawārij are blind to it. On the other hand, the Shī‘ah have exaggerated his virtues such that they have elevated him to being infallible. The consequence of this extreme position was that they stripped the other رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ of all their virtues and accused them of being renegades and apostates!

The path of moderation is the way of Ahl al-Sunnah: We love ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and believe in whatever has authentically been mentioned about him, his virtues and merits. We also acknowledge the virtues and merits of all the رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

1 *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 123

2 *Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl* vol. 1 pg. 73 *al-Ḍu‘afā wal-Matrūkīn* pg. 190, *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 1 pg. 302, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 7 pg. 110

36. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṭabarānī by way of Ḥusayn ibn Ishāq al-Tustarī — Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Sarī al-‘Asqalānī — Ḥusayn al-Ashqar — Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah — ibn Abī Najīḥ — Mujāhid — Ibn ‘Abbās.¹

Ḥusayn al-Ashqar has appeared repeatedly in our discussions and we have demonstrated that he is unreliable and known to relate false narrations.²

Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Sarī al-‘Asqalānī has been called a liar by his brother and his nephew, the seekers of Ḥadīth were cautioned by them from taking Ḥadīth from him. Abū Dāwūd also declared him unreliable. Al-Dhahabī listed this narration of his as an example of the baseless narrations transmitted by Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Sarī al-‘Asqalānī.³

Ibn Kathīr and al-Munāwī have emphatically declared this narration completely unreliable.⁴

37. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā, from his father

This has been recorded by al-Qaṭṭī, Abū Nu‘aym, and Ibn ‘Asākir with a common chain from ‘**Amr ibn Jumay’** — Ibn Abī Laylā — his brother ‘Īsā — ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā — his father.⁵

‘Amr ibn Jumay’ has been accused of forging Ḥadīth by Ibn Ma‘īn, Ibn ‘Adī al-Dāraquṭnī among others. Al-Bukhārī criticized him in very severe terms, “Munkar al-Ḥadīth.”⁶

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 93

2 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol.1 pg. 531

3 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 536

4 *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr* vol. 6 pg. 50; *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* vol. 4 pg. 135

5 *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 2 pg 627 Ḥadīth no: 1072, *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* vol. 1 pg 86-87; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 313

6 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 251

Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Dhahabī have declared this narration baseless.¹

38. The narration attributed to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

- a. This narration has been recorded by al-Ḥākim without a chain, from Ḥayyān al-Asadī who heard ‘Alī رضي الله عنه saying that he heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, “The Ummah will be disloyal to you after me. You will be upon my teachings and fight in accordance with my Sunnah...”²

Fortunately, we can trace the chain for this narration from *Ithāf al-Maharah* of Ibn Ḥajar: Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥāfiẓ — al-Haytham ibn Khalaf — Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn Ḥayyāj — Yaḥyā ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān — **Yūnus ibn Abī Ya‘fūr** — his father — Ḥayyān — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.³

The scholars are divided over Yūnus ibn Abī Ya‘fūr. Some of the early scholars like Ibn Ma‘īn, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Nasā‘ī have considered him weak. Al-Sājī stated that he is weak and he was a committed Shī‘ī. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī considered him truthful; without mention of his competence. Ibn Ḥajar has reconciled all the earlier positions by stating that Yūnus ibn Abī Ya‘fūr is honest, but known for abundance of errors.⁴

A narration with this isnād would not meet the criteria of Ṣaḥīḥ due to the status of Yūnus ibn Abī Ya‘fūr. It has the potential to be sound if it is properly corroborated.

- b. Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn Aḥmad al-Jumaḥī — ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz — ‘Amr ibn ‘Awn — Hushaym — Ismā‘īl ibn Sālim — **Abū Idrīs al-Awdī** — ‘Alī رضي الله عنه who said, “Among that which the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم promised me was that the Ummah will be disloyal to me after he [is gone].”⁵

1 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 7 pg. 225; *al-Muntaqā* pg. 309

2 *al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 142, both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabī said, “Ṣaḥīḥ.”

3 *Ithāf al-Maharah* vol. 11 pg. 297

4 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 32 pg. 559, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* vol. 11 pg. 452; *Al-Taqrīb* bio: 7920

5 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 140, both al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabī said, “Ṣaḥīḥ.”

The issue in this chain is Abū Idrīs al-Awdī. Abū Ḥātim said that he is Majhūl and that his narration from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is interrupted.¹

Again, the chain of this narration is not independently Ṣaḥīḥ due to the interruption between Abū Idrīs and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. Whether each version supports the other is a matter of debate among Ḥadīth scholars.

If the narration of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه² is cited to support the two versions from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه then it also clarifies what is meant. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم warned ‘Alī رضي الله عنه that he would encounter hardships after he صلى الله عليه وسلم was gone. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه asked if this would be at the detriment of his faith and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم comforted him saying that it would not affect his faith in any way.

This narration disproves the theory of Imāmah since ‘Alī رضي الله عنه asked about possible negative effects. A question of this nature unhinges the argument for infallibility firstly. It further dismisses divine appointment since such appointment has no potential for negative consequences to one’s faith. The only plausible circumstance which accomodates for this question is one where ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is appointed by the Ummah and his decisions are governed by Shūrā and Ijtihād.

This prophecy came to pass when ‘Alī رضي الله عنه fought the Khawārij. The members of the Khawārij were initially from the army of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and it was after Ṣiffīn that they broke their allegiance with him on account of which he fought them at Nahrawān. He رضي الله عنه was assassinated at the hands of the Khawārij as well.

This narration could not possibly refer to the period immediately after the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم demise since ‘Alī رضي الله عنه made no claim for the Khilāfah

1 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl* vol. 2 pg 96

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 140

at that time nor was he harmed in any way. If anything, his relationship with the rest of the Ṣaḥābah was cordial and friendly. This is an exchange between ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his companions; it is recorded in one of the classical works of the Shī‘ah:

“O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn! Inform us about your comrades.”

He asked, “About which comrades of mine?”

They said, “About the Ṣaḥābah of Muḥammad.”

He said, “All of the Ṣaḥābah of Muḥammad are my comrades.”¹

If we examine this narration of Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا it appears no different from the aḥādīth wherein the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ warns ‘Uthmān of the treachery that will befall him; and that he should not relinquish the mantle which Allah will clothe him with.

The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ predicted that ‘Uthmān would enter Jannah, and that he would be afflicted by tribulation prior to his death. Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reports:

عن أبي موسى الأشعري رضي الله عنه أنه توطأ في بيته ثم خرج فقال لألزمن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ولأكونن معه يومي هذا فنجاء المسجد، فسأل عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الله عليه وسلم فقالوا وجه ههنا قال فخرجت على أثره أسأل عنه حتى دخل بئر أريس فجلست عند الباب حتى قضى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حاجته وتوطأ فقامت إليه فإذا هو قد جلس على بئر أريس وتوسط قفها وكشف عن ساقيه ودلاهما في البئر فسلمت عليه ثم انصرفت فجلست عند الباب فقلت لأكونن بواب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اليوم فجاء أبو بكر رضي الله عنه فدفع الباب فقلت من هذا فقال أبو بكر فقلت على رسلك، ثم ذهبت فقلت يا رسول الله هذا أبو بكر يستأذن فقال ائذن له وبشره بالجنة فأقبلت حتى قلت لأبي بكر ادخل ورسول الله يبشرك بالجنة فدخل أبو بكر حتى جلس عن يمين النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى الله عليه وسلم معه في القف ودلى رجله في البئر كما صنع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وكشف عن ساقيه ثم رجعت وجلست وقد تركت أخي يتوطأ ويلحقتني فقلت إن يرد الله بفلان يرد أخاه خيراً يأت به فإذا إنسان يحرك الباب فقلت من هذا فقال عمر بن الخطاب فقلت على رسلك ثم جئت إلى

1 Al-Thaqafi: *Al-Ghārāt* vol. 1 p. 177

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فسلمت عليه وقلت هذا عمر يستأذن فقال ائذن له وبشره بالجنة فجمت عمر فقلت أذن وببشرك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالجنة فدخل فجلس مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في القف عن يساره ودلى رجله في البئر ثم رجعت فجلست فقلت إن يرد الله بفلان خيراً يعني أخاه يأتي به فجاء إنسان فحرك الباب. فقلت من هذا فقال عثمان بن عفان فقلت على رسلك وجئت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الله عليه وسلم فأخبرته فقال ائذن له وبشره بالجنة مع بلوى تصيبه فجمت فقلت له ادخل وببشرك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بالجنة مع بلوى تصيبك فدخل فوجد القف قد ملئ فجلس وجاههم من الشق الآخر. قال سعيد بن المسيب فأولتها قبورهم

One day, I performed ablution in my house. When I left home I did so with the idea of staying close to Messenger of Allah ﷺ and spending the entire day with him. I came to the Masjid and enquired about him. The Companions told that he ﷺ had gone off in a particular direction. I continued enquiring about him until I came to Bi'r Arīs (a well in a particular area of al-Madīnah). I sat down at the door until the Prophet ﷺ relieved himself and performed ablution. Then I went to him and saw him sitting at the edge of the well with his shins uncovered and his legs dangling in the well. I greeted him and returned to the door of the garden, thinking to myself, "Today I will be the gatekeeper of the Messenger of Allah." Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came and knocked at the door. I said, "Who is it?" He said, "Abū Bakr." I said, "Wait a moment." Then I went to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Abū Bakr is at the door seeking permission to enter." He said, "Allow him in and give him the glad tidings of Jannah." I returned and said to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, "You may enter and Messenger of Allah ﷺ has given you the glad tidings of Jannah." Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came in, sat down on the right of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at the edge of the well, dangling his legs in the well with his shins exposed, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had done. I returned to the door and sat down. I had left my brother at home while he was performing ablution and anticipated that he would join me. I said to myself, "If Allah intends good for him (i.e., to be blessed to come at this time and receive the glad tidings of entering Jannah), He will bring him here." Someone knocked at the door and I said, "Who is it?" He said, "Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb." I said, "Wait a moment." Then I proceeded towards Messenger of Allah ﷺ. I greeted him and said, "Umar is at the door, seeking permission to enter."

He said, “Allow him in and give him the glad tidings of Jannah.” I went back to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه and said to him, “The Messenger of Allah has given you permission to enter, as well as glad tidings of Jannah.” He entered and sat down with Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم on his left, dangling his feet into the well. I returned to the door and sat down and said to myself, “If Allah intends well for my brother, He will bring him here.” Someone knocked at the door and I said, “Who is it?” He said, “‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān.” I said, “Wait a moment.” I went to Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and informed him about his arrival. He said, “Let him in and give him glad tidings of entering Jannah together with a tribulation which he will have to face.” I came back to him and said, “You may enter; and Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم gives you the glad tidings of entering Jannah together with a tribulation which will afflict you.” He entered and saw that the one side of the well was fully occupied. So he sat on opposite side. Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab – a narrator in the chain – commented: The order in which they sat down indicated the places of their burial.”¹

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also confirmed that ‘Uthmān will be upon guidance at the time of this Fitnah

عن أبي الأشعث الصنعاني أن خطباء قامت بالشام وفيهم رجال من أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقام آخرهم رجل يقال له مرة بن كعب فقال لولا حديث سمعته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما قمت وذكر الفتن فقربها فمر رجل مفتح في ثوب فقال هذا يومئذ على الهدى فقامت إليه فإذا هو عثمان بن عفان قال فأقبلت عليه بوجهه فقلت هذا قال نعم

Abu al-Ash‘ath al-Ṣan‘ānī said that people were delivering sermons in al-Shām, and among them were Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Finally, the last of them, a man called Murrah bin Ka‘b, stood up and said, “Were it not for a ḥadīth which I heard from the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, I would not have stood (to address you). He صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned tribulations, and that they would be coming soon. Then a man, who was concealed by a garment, passed by and he صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “This one will be upon guidance

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, Ḥadīth no: 3674 ; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم, Ḥadīth no. 2403

that day.” So I went towards him, and it was ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. I turned, facing him, and I said: “This one?” He said: “Yes.”¹

This Ḥadīth has been transmitted by more than one chain from Murrah ibn Ka‘b,² and has also been narrated by ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar³ and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥawālah.⁴

In his final days, the Prophet ﷺ summoned ‘Uthmān and consoled him over the difficulty he was to face in the future. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا relates:

عن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم في مرضه وددت أن عندي بعض أصحابي قلنا يا رسول الله ألا ندعو لك أبا بكر فسكت قلنا ألا ندعو لك عمر فسكت قلنا ألا ندعو لك عثمان قال نعم فجاء عثمان فخلا به فجعل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يكلمه ووجه عثمان يتغير قال قيس فحدثني أبو سهلة مولى عثمان أن عثمان بن عفان قال يوم الدار إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عهد إلى عهدا وأنا صائر إليه وقال علي في حديثه وأنا صابر عليه قال قيس فكانوا يرونه ذلك اليوم

When the Messenger of Allah was ill he said, “I wish to have some of my Companions with me.”

We said, “O Messenger of Allah! Shall we call Abū Bakr for you?” But he remained silent so we said, “Shall we call ‘Umar for you?” But he remained silent so we said, “Shall we call ‘Uthmān for you?”

He said, “Yes.”

So ‘Uthmān came and he spoke to him in private. The Prophet ﷺ spoke to him and ‘Uthmān’s expression changed.

A narrator in this chain, Qays ibn Abī Ḥāzim, said, “Abū Sahlah, the freed slave of ‘Uthmān, narrated to me that on the day he was assassinated in

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 29 pg. 609 Ḥadīth no: 18068; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3704
2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 29. Pg. 608 Ḥadīth no: 18067 – his name is either Murrah ibn Ka‘b or Ka‘b ibn Murrah
3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 10. Pg. 169 Ḥadīth no: 5953; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3708
4 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 28. Pg. 213 Ḥadīth no: 17004

his home, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān said, ‘The Messenger of Allah ﷺ told me what would come to pass and now I am coming to that day [Ṣā’ir].” In another narration of the Hadith, it appears, ‘I am going to bear it with patience [Ṣābir].¹ Qays said, “They understood it to refer to the day he was assassinated.”²

In another version she states that the Prophet ﷺ said:

يا عثمان إن ولاك الله هذا الأمر يوماً فأرادك المنافقون أن تخلع قميصك الذي قمصك الله فلا تخلعه

O ‘Uthmān, one day if Allah places you in authority over this matter (Khilāfah) and the hypocrites want to rid you of the garment with which Allah has clothed you (i.e. the Khilāfah,) do not take it off.

He said that three times.³

All these prophecies came to pass. ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was murdered on account of a Fitnah. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was murdered as a consequence of that Fitnah by the Khawārij; the group that defected from his army.

39. The narration of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

We have discussed this narration at length under Letter 44 about ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mending his sandal. By accepting this narration as authentic here, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has inadvertently dealt a blow to his own argument there. We have established that this narration is sound; however, it does not support the idea of his immediate succession in any way. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has mentioned a number of narrations which are meant to clarify what is meant by this Ḥadīth.

1 The script of these two words are the same, the difference is on the dots. As such it can be read in two different ways, even though neither negates the meaning of the other.

2 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 42 pg. 521 Ḥadīth no: 25797; *Ibn Mājah*, Kitāb al-Muqaddimah, ḥadīth no: 113

3 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 41 pg. 113 Ḥadīth 24566 (worded slightly different) ; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3705; *Ibn Mājah*, Kitāb al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth 112

a. The narration attributed to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه

- Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Thaqafī - Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Shabīb — **Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd** — **Salamah ibn al-Faḍl** — **Abū Zayd al-Aḥwal** narrated to me — from **ʿAttāb ibn Thaʿlabah**¹ — Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī رضي الله عنه narrated to me during the era of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb رضي الله عنه, “**The Messenger of Allah** صلى الله عليه وسلم instructed **ʿAlī** رضي الله عنه **with killing those who are disloyal, those who are unjust, and those who defect.**”²

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī is considered significantly weak; known for narrating many a baseless narration. Šāliḥ Jazarah and Yaʿqūb ibn Shaybah al-Sadūsī both indicated the severity of his weakness as did al-Bukhārī and Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī.³

Salamah ibn al-Faḍl al-Abrash is another problematic narrator in this chain. Iṣḥāq ibn Rāhūyah, al-Nasāʿī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī among others have declared him weak. Some have pointed out the fact that he narrates that which cannot be corroborated and has an abundance of errors. Ibn ʿAdī states that while he is weak overall, whatever he narrates from Ibn Iṣḥāq in the genre of Maghāzī, is slightly better than the rest of his narrations as they were found to be uncorroborated and contradictory in many instances.⁴

Abū Zayd al-Aḥwal is considered Majhūl and his narration from ʿAttāb ibn Thaʿlabah has been declared baseless by al-Dhahabī. “Abū Zayd al-Aḥwal has narrated from him the narration of killing those who are disloyal, the chain is appalling and the text is rejected.”⁵

1 In the printed version its written ʿIqāb ibn Thaʿlabah which appears to be a misprint. The correct name can be found in *Mizān al-ʾIʿtidāl* vol. 3 pg. 27

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 139

3 *Mizān al-ʾIʿtidāl* vol. 3 pg. 530

4 *Mizān al-ʾIʿtidāl* vol. 2 pg. 192, *al-Kāshif* bio.2043, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 2505

5 *Mizān al-ʾIʿtidāl* vol. 3 pg. 27

- Abū Bakr ibn Bālawayh — **Muḥammad ibn Yūnus al-Qurashī** — ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Khaṭṭāb — ‘Alī ibn Ghurāb — **‘Alī ibn Abī Fāṭimah** — **Aṣḥbagh ibn Nubātah** — Abū Ayyūb.

In this chain appears **Muḥammad ibn Yūnus al-Qurashi al-Kudaymi al-Baṣrī**, a liar and fabricator. Ibn Ḥibbān said about him, “It is possible that he has fabricated over a thousand narrations!”¹ Ibn ‘Adī said that he has been accused of fabrication.²

‘Alī ibn Abī Fāṭimah is ‘Alī ibn Ḥazawwar. He was from the Shī‘ah of Kūfah, and was suspected of forgery. He was criticized harshly by al-Bukhārī, Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd, Abū Ḥātim and al-Nasā‘ī. Ibn ‘Adī said that he was from the Shī‘ah of Kūfah, extremely weak and the irregularities are evident in his narrations.³

Aṣḥbagh ibn Nubātah is considered extremely weak; Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh said that he was a liar whilst al-Nasā‘ī and Ibn Ḥibbān said that he is Matrūk, which means he was suspected of forgery. Abū Ḥātim said that he is merely weak, and Ibn Ma‘īn used terms to indicate the severity of his weakness. Ibn Ḥibbān said that he was infatuated with his love for ‘Alī that he was found to narrate baseless narrations about the virtues of ‘Alī ﷺ to the extent that he deserved to be abandoned. Al-Dhahabī cited this chain, and this narration specifically, as a sample of the false narrations by way of ‘Alī ibn Ḥazawwar — from Aṣḥbagh — from Abū Ayyūb ﷺ.⁴

b. The narration attributed to ‘Ammār ﷺ is transmitted by way of Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-‘Assāl — Abū Yaḥyā al-Rāzī — **‘Abd**

1 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 313

2 *Al-Kāmil* vol. 6 pg. 292

3 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 3 pg. 118

4 *Al-Du‘afā wal-Matrūkīn* pg. 183, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 3 pg. 308, *Ikmal Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 2 pg. 252

Allāh ibn Ja'far al-Maḳḳisī — Ibn Wahb — ‘**Abd Allāh ibn Lahī'ah** — Abū ‘Ashshānah — ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “O ‘Alī, the rebellious party will fight you and you shall be upon the truth. Whoever fails to aid you on that day is not from me.”¹

This chain is weak due to the presence of ‘**Abd Allāh ibn Ja'far al-Maḳḳisī** who is an unknown entity.²

‘**Abd Allāh ibn Lahī'ah** is another disputed narrator in this chain. He is on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās has discussed his status as a narrator of Ḥadīth at length, as did the editor of *al-Nafḥ al-Shadhī*, the commentary on *al-Tirmidhī* by Ibn Sayyid al-Nās. He concludes after thirty pages of discussion that Ibn Lahī'ah is independently weak, but his narrations have the potential to be elevated if they are corroborated or supported by other narrations. This applies to his narrations prior to his books even getting burnt.³

The text of this narration contradicts what has been authentically related from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم wherein he expressed pity on ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه saying that the rebellious party would kill him.⁴ The narration under discussion is in contradiction with this on two counts. Firstly, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم identified the rebellious party being responsible for killing ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه and that is how we are able to determine without doubt that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was in the right. Secondly, the additional sentence is at variance with the Qur’ān.

Allah says: “If two parties from the believers fight each other; then bring about reconciliation between them...”⁵

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 473

2 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 450

3 *Al-Nafḥ al-Shadhī* vol. 2 pg. 792

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣālāh, Ḥadīth no: 447; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth no: 2916

5 *Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt*: 9

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه relates that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “A faction will renegade at a time when there is division among the Muslims; and the party, among two parties, which is closer to the truth will fight them.”¹

Ibn Taymiyyah said:

Allah says in His book, “If two groups among the believers fight each other then seek to reconcile...” [Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt: 9] so He has referred to them both as believers and brothers despite the fighting and rebelling. It has also been established in the authentic narrations that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “A group will defect which will be fought by the party which is closest to the truth” and he صلى الله عليه وسلم, also said, “Indeed this son of mine is a Sayyid...” and he said to ‘Ammār, “The rebellious party will kill you.” Note that he did not say disbelievers. And these narrations are authentic according to the scholars, and have been narrated by variant chains; none of them taking from the other. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that the two divided parties are both Muslims, and he praised the one who brought about reconciliation among them. He further predicted that a group would dissent and that the closest of the two parties would fight them.”²

In light of the verse and ḥadīth cited above, we can clearly see why this narration, the narration attributed to ‘Ammār رضي الله عنه, is found wanting in both its chain of transmission and its text. It is severely weak, and clearly demonstrates the lack of precision on the part of at least one of the narrators.

- c. The narration attributed to Abū Dharr رضي الله عنه is referenced in *Kanz al-‘Ummāl* to al-Daylamī. We have previously pointed out that such a reference is indicative of the weakness of the said narration. Nonetheless, this narration has been deliberately truncated by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn since the

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Zakāt, Ḥadīth no: 1065

2 *Minhāj al-Sunnah* vol. 4 pg. 449

complete version speaks about fighting those who testify to the oneness of Allah.

There are additional phrases in this narration which could not possibly be corroborated. The absence of the isnād, its reference to al-Daylamī, and the objectionable additional wording indicate that this narration is problematic.

The sound narration is the original Ḥadīth, and its explanation appears in detail under Letter 44. There is nothing in this narration to suggest ‘Alī’s ﷺ immediate succession. It does give a subtle indication that he will take charge of the affairs of the Muslims at some stage; and that came to pass.

40. The narration attributed to Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal ﷺ

This narration is recorded by Abū Nu‘aym, and Ibn ‘Asākir relates it via Abū Nu‘aym, by way of **Khalaf ibn Khālīd al-‘Abdī al-Baṣrī — Bishr ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī** — Thawr ibn Yazīd — Khālīd ibn Mi‘dān — Mu‘ādh ibn Jabal ﷺ.¹

Khalaf ibn Khālīd al-Baṣrī is barely known as a narrator of Ḥadīth yet stands accused of forging Ḥadīth by al-Dāraquṭnī. This narration is provided as an example of his forgeries.²

Bishr ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī is a known fabricator of Ḥadīth; this has been confirmed by Ibn ‘Adī, Ibn Ḥibbān and others. Abū Nu‘aym, himself, states that Bishr would attribute forged narrations to al-Awzā‘ī.³

This narration has been declared a forgery by Ibn ‘Adī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Ḥajar, al-Suyūṭī and Ibn ‘Arrāq.⁴

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol. 1 pg. 65; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 58

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 659; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 3 pg. 368

3 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 311; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 2 pg. 287-290

4 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt* vol. 1 pg. 343; *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 313, 659; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 2 pg. 290, *al-La’ālī al-Maṣnū‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 323, *Tanzīh al-Sharī‘ah* vol. 1 pg. 352

The supplementary narration provided by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is of no avail since it appears by way of ‘Iṣmah ibn Muḥammad — Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Anṣārī — Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyib — Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī.¹

Appearing in this chain is ‘Iṣmah ibn Muḥammad. Abū Ḥātim says that he is weak; whereas Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn calls him a liar and states that he forged Ḥadīth. Al-‘Uqaylī says the he used to attribute false narrations to reliable narrators and al-Dāraquṭnī states that he is severely compromised as a narrator of Ḥadīth.²

Conclusion

Where is the compelling evidence? With over forty narrations—not counting all the supplementary narrations—‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has only managed to produced barely a handful of sound narrations. None of these sound narrations indicate Imāmah in any way whatsoever. They are aḥādīth of virtue and merit for ‘Alī عليه السلام, and he is worthy of merit since loving him is īmān and hating him is a symptom of hypocrisy. We have provided explanations and commented on all the sound narrations.

The remaining thirty-odd narrations are either complete forgeries or extremely weak, not reliable. Many of these narrations suffer from the same lack of clarity on immediate succession. Those narrations which do indicate this were clear fabrications. Where is the claim that there is not enough room to mention all the narrations that support his Imāmah?

In contrast to these forty narrations we have collected forty sound narrations about the virtues of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar عليه السلام, their candidacy for succession, and their lofty rank. These narrations will be presented under the discussions on Letter 52.

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol. 1 pg. 66

2 *Mīzān al-Itidāl* vol. 3. Pg 67; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 5 pg. 438

Letter 49

Muharram 11, 1330

I. Admitting 'Ali's Merits

II. Such Merits do not Necessitate his Caliphate

1. Imam Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad ibn Hanbal has said: "Nobody among the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has possessed as many virtues as 'Ali ibn Abu Talib has."¹ Ibn 'Abbas has said, "No verses of the Book of Allah have descended in honour of any man [besides the Prophet] as much as they have in honour of 'Ali."² On another occasion, he has said, "As many as three hundred verses of the Glorious Book of Allah, the Sublime, have been revealed in praise of 'Ali;" and yet in another instance he has said,³

"Whenever Allah reveals 'O ye who believe...,' 'Ali is implied as their prince and dignitary; and Allah even rebuked the followers of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on several occasions, in His precious Book while always speaking well of 'Ali.'" 'Abdullah ibn Ayyash ibn Abu Rabi'ah has said, "'Ali possessed a very sharp edge in knowledge; he has the seniority in embracing Islam; he is the son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and he is the faqih of his Sunnah, the hope for victory during wartime, and the most generous in giving."⁴

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked once about 'Ali and Mu'awiyah; he said:⁵ "'Ali used to have quite a few enemies. His enemies looked for something whereby they could find fault with him. Having found none, they came to a man [Mu'awiyah] who had fought and killed him, and they praised that man only out of their spite of 'Ali.'" Isma'il the judge, al-Nisa'i, Abu 'Ali al-Nisaburi and many others have said that nobody, among all the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, was praised as much as 'Ali was.⁶

2. There is no argument about your point, yet an argument is raised if you claim that the Prophet ﷺ, during his lifetime, had promised him the caliphate. All these texts are not bound proofs to support such a claim; they simply enumerate the imam's attributes and virtues, and the number of such texts is indeed high.

We believe that he, may Allah glorify his countenance, was worthy of all of them and of even more, and I am sure you have come across several times as many such texts suggesting his nomination for the caliphate. Yet a nomination is not akin to a binding pledge for caliphate, as you know, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S.

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1. Al-Hakim has quoted it on page 107 of his Sahih from Al-Mustadrak. Al-Thahbi did not comment on it in his book Talkhis al-Mustadrak.
 2. Ibn 'Asakir, as well as many other authors of books of traditions, have all quoted it.
 3. From one hadith quoted by al-Tabrani, Ibn Abu Hatim, and many other authors of books of tradition. It is transmitted by Ibn Hajar who also quotes the three ahadith that precede it in Section 3, Chapter 9, page 76, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
 4. This is quoted from Ibn 'Ayyash by chroniclers and authors of sunan, and it exists where Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa has already referred.
 5. As quoted by al-Salafi in his Tayyuriyyat, and it is transmitted by Ibn Hajar where we have indicated a short while ago while referring to Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
 6. This is well-known about them. Ibn Hajar has copied it at the beginning of Section 2, Chapter 9, page 72, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa

Letter 50

Muharram 13, 1330

I. Why interpret text on his behalf as Indicative of his Imamate

Anyone like you, who is deep in thinking, gifted with a far insight, an authority on linguistic sources and derivatives, aware of its meanings and connotations, deriving guidance from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, believing in his wisdom and conclusive prophethood, appreciative of his deeds and statements

(“He does not speak of his own inclinations (Qur’an, 53:3),

“ certainly cannot miss the gist of such texts, nor do their conclusions, which are derived from logic and common sense, remain secret to him. It is not possible that you, the recognized authority on Arabic (i.e. athbat1) that you are, fail to perceive that these texts have all granted ‘Ali a very sublime status, one which Allah Almighty and His Prophets do not grant except to the successors of such Prophets, to the ones they trust most to take charge of their religion, to the custodians of such religion.

If they do not explicitly indicate the caliphate for ‘Ali, they undoubtedly hint to it, leading to such conclusion by necessity. Such an obligation is quite obvious from their precise meaning. The Master of Prophets ﷺ is above granting such a lofty status to anyone other than his successor, his vicegerent.

Yet whoever deeply scrutinizes the texts concerning ‘Ali عليه السلام and very carefully and fairly digests their implications will find their vast majority aiming at endorsing his imamate, indicative of it either through explicit announcements, such as the previously quoted ones, and such as the Covenant of al-Ghadir, or by virtue of necessity, such as the ones stated in Letter No. 48.

Take, for example, his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “‘Ali is with the Qur’an and the Qur’an is with ‘Ali; they both shall never separate from each other till they meet me by the Pool [of Kawthar],”² and his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “‘Ali to me is like the head to the body,”³ and his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, according to a tradition narrated by ‘Abdul Rahman ibn ‘Awf,⁴ “I swear by the One in Who hold my life, you will have to uphold the prayers, pay the zakat, or else I shall send you a man of my own self, or like my own self,” then the Prophet ﷺ took ‘Ali’s hand and said: “This is he;” up to the end of countless such texts. This is an obvious benefit to which I attract the attention of all seekers of the truth, one which unveils what is ambiguous, delves deeply in independent research. He ﷺ has only followed what he himself comprehends of the moral obligations of such sacred texts, without being overtaken by his own personal emotions or inclinations,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

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1. “Athbat” is the plural of “thabat,” and “asnad” is the plural of “sanad,” and the latter means “hujjah,” i.e. proof or authority.
 2. This is quoted by al-Hakim on page 124, Vol. 3, of his *Al-Mustadrak*, as well as by al-Thahbi in his *Talkhis al-Mustadrak*. Both authors testify to its authenticity. It is one of the few elaborate ahadith. Anyone who is ignorant of the fact that ‘Ali is with the Qur’an and the Qur’an is with ‘Ali, after having studied the authentic traditions dealing with the Two Weighty Things, i.e. the Book and the ‘Itrat (Progeny), he should be referred to what we have quoted in this regard in our Letter No. 8 above, and let him recognize the rights of the Imam of the Prophet’s Progeny, and their undisputed and undoubted chief.
 3. This is quoted by al-Khatib in the ahadith narrated by al-Bara’, and by al-Daylami in those narrated by Ibn ‘Abbas. It is transmitted by Ibn Hajar

on page 75 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa; so, refer to hadith number 35 of the forty ahadith which he quotes in Section Two, Chapter 9, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.

4. It is hadith number 6133, page 405, Vol. 6, in Kanz al-'Ummal. Suffices you for a proof that 'Ali's soul is akin to that of the Prophet ﷺ to study the verse of Mubahala according to the explanations stated by al-Razi in his tafsir titled Mafatih al-Ghayb, page 488, Vol. 2, and refer also to what we have mentioned while dealing with this verse.

Discussions

Oversights in the ‘correspondence’ of Shaykh al-Bishrī

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn found it expedient to inflate his arguments under the correspondence ascribed to his debater.

The statement about the abundance of aḥādīth on the exclusive virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is often misunderstood. The narrations about the merits and virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه are of three categories: those which are authentically traced back to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, those in which the narrators erred, and those which were fabricated. If we were to compare that which is authentically transmitted about ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه virtues against that which is unreliable and that which is forged, the outcome would be a small percentage. This means that many people were responsible for fabricating narrations about his virtues, causing confusion and inadvertently detracting from ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه true status; and since they could not see his virtue for what it was they decided it best to invent a persona for him. The statement, from this perspective, is not one of praise.

The other element implied by that statement refers to the abundance of narrators who narrated the same texts about ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه virtues. This was the positive response to the Nawāṣib, those who made injurious comments about him and criticised and abused him verbally. Among the first to do this was Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه.

The statements attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه

There remains the matter of the statements which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه with the pen of the Shaykh al-Azhar. These have been lifted from *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Muḥriqah* of Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī. Its convenient that his eyes only fell on one chapter and ignored the preceding chapters in the book: the virtues of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه, the virtues of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, and the virtues of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

- a. The statement ascribed Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه wherein he allegedly says that the Qur’an has not been revealed in such abundance to anyone besides ‘Alī رضي الله عنه appears in *Tārīkh Dimashq* but the writing in the original manuscript was obscured so there is a missing section in the chain of transmission of this report.¹ The chain is legible upto one Ḥuṣayn, after which the manuscript is blurry and the editors were not able to read it completely. They have pointed out though, that the same chain of transmission has recently appeared where the narrator has been identified as **Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Mukhāriq**.

Due to the missing information we ought to exclude this narration entirely. Insufficient details about the isnād compromises the narration. However, if we were to make an inference then the missing details would be assumed to include **Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Mukhāriq**.

Al-Dhahabī quotes al-Dārquṭnī on Ḥuṣayn ibn al-Mukhāriq, Abū Junādah, that he used to fabricated Ḥadīth.²

Either way, the narration is not sound.

- b. The quote which has it that Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه said that three hundred verses had been revealed about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is recorded by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī³ by way of Abū Ya‘lā Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid — Kūhī ibn Ḥasan al-Fārisī — Aḥmad ibn Qāsim — Muḥammad ibn Ḥibsh al-Ma’mūnī — **Sallām ibn Sulaymān al-Thaqafī** — **Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Madā’inī** — **Juwaybir** — **al-Ḍaḥḥak** — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.⁴

Sallām ibn Sulaymān al-Thaqafī is unreliable. He was known to have narrated many objectionable narrations.⁵

1 *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 363

2 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 1 pg. 554

3 Ibn ‘Asākir narrates with the same chain, by way of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī

4 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 7 pg. 185; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 43 pg. 364

5 *Mīzān al-‘itidāl* vol. 2 pg. 178

Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān is Majhūl, none besides Sallām is known to have narrated from him. He is also known for having only narrated from Juwaybir.¹

Juwaybir ibn Sa'īd al-Azdī is extremely weak. Ibn Ma'īn, al-Jūzajānī, al-Nasā'ī and al-Dāraquṭnī have rated him extremely poorly. He is known for narrating by way of al-Ḍaḥḥāk. Ibn Ma'īn compared him to Jābir al-Ju'fī.²

Al-Ḍaḥḥāk did not narrate from Ibn 'Abbās directly. The narration between him and Ibn 'Abbās is interrupted.³

This narration is severely weak and cannot be relied upon for these four reasons at least.

- c. The narration ascribed to Ibn 'Abbās from *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī is considered weak due to the presence of 'Īsā ibn Rāshid, al-Haythamī declares this narration unreliable on the basis of 'Īsā ibn Rāshid.⁴

Al-Dhahabī points out that 'Īsā ibn Rāshid is Majhūl, and is on record for having related baseless narrations. He also quotes al-Bukhārī on the unreliability of 'Īsā ibn Rāshid. Ibn Ḥajar concurs with this assessment.⁵

We have repeatedly mentioned that 'Alī عليه السلام is worthy of virtue and merit. There are sufficient sound narrations that extol his merits and virtues; both exclusively and shared. The exaggeration to which the Shī'ah resort to—'Abd al-Ḥusayn demonstrating this tendency before us—is a desperate attempt to create grounds for their foreign doctrines. His portrayal of the opponent reflects

1 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 7 pg. 185

2 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 5 pg. 167, *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 427

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 13 pg. 291

4 *Majma' al-Zawa'id* vol. 9 pg. 144

5 *Mīzān al-I'tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 311, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 6 pg. 263

cognitive dissonance on the part of the opponent, Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī. The most probable reason for this is his anticipation of possible questions that might linger in the mind of a Sunnī reader. He is proactive in the fact that he preempts the questions; but that reveals the fictitious nature of the correspondence.

Brazen claims

In his round of ‘correspondence’ ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn makes a number of unsettling remarks; impressing upon the Creator of heaven and earth to carry out specific decisions.

He repeatedly resurrects the argument of *Waṣiyyah*, nomination. Not only have our previous discussions exposed the fallacy in the theory that the Prophet ﷺ nominated his successor, but we have demonstrated the extent of unreliability of the narrations that have been furnished as proof of ‘Alī’s ﷺ immediate succession.

The authentic narrations about ‘Alī ﷺ cannot be connected to immediate succession in any way. The narrations which are explicit in this regard have already been proven unreliable, many even fabricated.

The narrations

1. “‘Alī is with the Qur’an...”

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim. The narration from al-Ṭabarānī is by way of ‘Abbād ibn Sa‘īd al-Ju‘fī — Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Bahlūl — Ṣāliḥ ibn Abī al-Aswad — Hāshim ibn al-Barīd — **Abū Sa‘īd al-Taymī** — **Thābit Mawlā Āl Abī Dharr** — Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها.¹

Al-Ṭabarānī indicates that this is the common chain, by way of Hāshim ibn Al-Barīd.²

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* vol. 5 pg. 135 Ḥadīth no: 4880, *al-Mu‘jam al-ṣaghīr* vol. 2 pg. 28 Ḥadīth no: 720

2 *Ibid*

The version from al-Ḥakīm is by way of ‘Alī ibn Hāshim ibn al-Barīd — his father, **Hāshim ibn al-Barīd** — **Abū Sa‘īd al-Taymī** — **Thābit Mawlā Āl Abī Dharr** — Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها.¹

The identity of **Thābit** is a bit of a mystery, he is not mentioned in the books of Ḥadīth narrators. So, Thābit is Majhūl.

Abū Sa‘īd al-Taymī is named Dīnār. He is considered extremely weak and unreliable. Some have suspected him of forgery.² Since he is a common narrator the narration is significantly flawed even though the chain branches out later.

Hāshim ibn al-Barīd, while considered a reliable narrator, is known to be a committed Shī‘ī. here we find an isolated narration that supports his beliefs and is only known via a suspicious chain of transmission. It is a possibility that his beliefs have influenced him in this case, although the most likely problem is Abū Sa‘īd al-Taymī.

2. “Alī is to me as my head is to my body”

This narration is known by way of **Ayyūb ibn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb** — ‘**Anbas ibn Ismā‘īl al-Qazzāz** — **Ayyūb ibn Muṣ‘ab al-Kūfī** — Isrā‘īl — Abū Ishāq al-Sabī‘ī — al-Barā’ bn ‘Āzib رضي الله عنه.³

There are a series of Majhūl narrators, in addition to the fact that this narration is only transmitted by way of Isrā‘īl from Abū Ishāq via this chain as attested to by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.⁴

1 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 124

2 *Su‘ālāt al-Barqānī* (143), *Mizān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 30

3 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 7 pg. 462; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 344

4 *Ibid*

There is another chain going to Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه by way of Ḥusayn al-Ashqar — Qays ibn al-Rabi’ — Layth — Mujāhid.¹ This chain is riddled with problematic narrators and we have provided details about the unreliability of the narrators in this chain under Letter 48.²

This narration is thus severely weak. It was not uncommon for unscrupulous narrators to graft the wording of another chain to a chain of their invention. The common practise was to include a few unknown narrators so that the narration could not be traced and the narrator who appeared to possess this narration would hope to impress by narrating that which is rare. It is not farfetched that this second Isnād is the actual isnād and the narration from Barā’ could easily be a grafted chain; Allah Knows best.

3. “...I shall send a man from me, or like me...”

This narration appears by way of **Ṭalḥah ibn Jabr** — Muṭṭalib ibn ‘Abd Allah — **Mus‘ab ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān** — ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf.³

Ṭalḥah ibn Jabr is considered weak and unreliable.⁴

Mus‘ab ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, while his identity is known, is considered Majhūl in terms of being a Ḥadīth narrator. Ibn Abī Ḥātim does not mention any grading, neither positive nor negative.⁵

‘Abd al-Razzāq narrates this report by way of Tāwūs — from Muṭṭalib — from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم; omitting the other narrators. Tāwūs is a much

1 *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* narration no: 335

2 Letter 48, narration no: 8

3 *Muṣannaf ibn Abī Shaybah* vol. 17 pg. 107; *Musnad Abī Ya‘lā* vol. 1 pg. 244; *al-Mustadrak* vol. 2 pg. 120

4 *Talkhīs al-Mustadrak* vol. 2 pg 120; *Lisān al-Mizān*

5 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl* vol. 8 pg. 303

more accomplished narrator than Ṭalḥah. The version from Tāwūs—the interrupted version— appears to be a more accurate representation of how this Ḥadīth was narrated.

For all the reasons given above, this narration is unreliable. There is another version of this Ḥadīth, the discussion on Letter 44 deals with it.

Letter 51

Muharram 14, 1330

I. Rebutting the Arguments through similar ones

Their debaters may refute your claim by citing texts which enumerate the virtues of the three righteous caliphs, and by citing other texts praising the posterity from the Muhajirun (Meccan Immigrants) and the Ansar (Medenite Supporters); so, what would you say to that?

Sincerely,

S

Letter 52

Muharram 15, 1330

I. Rejecting the Rebuttal's premise

We believe in the virtues of all posterity since the time of the Muhajirun and the Ansar, may Allah be pleased with them and they with Him, and these are beyond count or reckoning. Certain verses of the Book (Qur'an), in addition to a few Sunni sahih books, must suffice you for a testimony in this regard. We have scrutinized these, too. We have not found them at all, and Allah knows best, to be in contradiction to the texts that praise 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, or even in any way eligible to disqualify him [from caliphate].

Yes, our opponents may stand alone in narrating the ahadith which are not authentic according to our sources. Their use of such ahadith to disprove our views is rejected and is not expected from any unbiased arbitrator. We by no means can take them into serious consideration. Do you not see how we do not argue by quoting the texts narrated only by our own sources?

On the contrary, we base our arguments on their own narrations regarding events such as the Ghadir incident or the like. But we have scrutinized the texts pertaining to these virtues recorded by their sources, and we could not find any clues in them opposing such caliphate, nor do they contain anything suggesting it; therefore, they have not been relied upon by anyone to prove the legitimacy of the caliphate of the three righteous caliphs,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

Sh

Discussions

Forgeries reveal themselves

Despite the appearance of resistance, the question posed with the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī is flawed inherently. How could the virtues of the Muhājirīn and Anṣār be a possible reason for questioning the candidacy of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ for Khilāfah? This question is premised on a worldview that sees ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ a significant other to the rest of the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. It is further flawed by the fact that the Anṣār are excluded from Khilāfah on account of them not being from Quraysh. This is also the case for some of the Muhājirīn.

Yes, the virtues of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ which are shared between him and the other Companions cannot be taken as unique characteristics that put him in pole position. However, that does not appear to be the objection raised in the letter ascribed to Shaykh al-Bishrī.

Forty Aḥādīth on the virtues of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا

1. Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates that he heard the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول بينا أنا نائم رأيتني على قليب عليها دلو فنزعت منها ما شاء الله ثم أخذها ابن أبي قحافة فنزع بها ذنوباً أو ذنوبين وفي نزعها ضعف والله يغفر له ضعفه ثم استحالت غرباً فأخذها ابن الخطاب فلم أر عبقرياً من الناس ينزع نزع عمر حتى ضرب الناس بعطن

While I was sleeping, I saw myself standing at a well over which there was a bucket. I drew out as many buckets of water as Allah wished from it. Then Ibn Abī Quḥāfah took the bucket from me and drew out one or two full buckets, but there was weakness in his pull – Allah will forgive that. Then the bucket turned into a very large one and ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb took it. I have never seen any noble draw water with such strength as ‘Umar did: to the extent that the people [drank to their satisfaction and] watered their camels to their fill; whereupon the camels sat beside the water.”¹

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Ḥadīth no: 3664; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2392

The weakness in the drawing of water mentioned in this narration either refers to the short period of his Khilāfah, or the fact that much of it was dedicated to bringing people back into Islam during the Wars against Apostasy, hence the conquests had only just begun. In the time of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه the Muslims conquered vast territories in a short span of time.

The forgiveness mentioned is not a consequence of Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه actions, but what he deserved from his Lord. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was also instructed to seek forgiveness from his Lord in Sūrah al-Naṣr, one of the last Sūrahs to be revealed. Taking this into consideration the forgiveness mentioned in the Ḥadīth also could be interpreted to mean that Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه passing will not be very long after the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم departure from this world.

A similar narration is reported from ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما¹ and Abū al-Ṭufayl رضي الله عنه.²

2. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه relates that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم once came out of his home after the sun had risen and said to us:

عن ابن عمر قال خرج علينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في ذات غداة بعد طلوع الشمس فقال رأيت قبيل الفجر كأنني أعطيت المقاليد والموازين فأما المقاليد فهذه المفاتيح وأما الموازين فهذه التي تزنون بها فوضعت في كفة ووضعت أمتي في كفة فوزنت بهم فرجحت ثم جىء بأبي بكر فوزن بهم فوزن ثم جىء بعمر فوزن فوزن ثم جىء بعثمان فوزن بهم ثم رفعت.

Before Fajr I had seen (in a dream) as if I had been given keys and scales; the keys are used for opening and the scales for weighing. I was placed on one pan (of the scale) and the rest of my Ummah were placed on the other pan, and I outweighed them. Then Abū Bakr was brought and weighed against then and he outweighed them. ‘Umar was then brought and weigh

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, Ḥadīth no: 3676; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2393

2 *Musnad Abī Ya’lā* vol. 2 pg. 198, Ḥadīth no: 904

against them and he outweighed them. The same happened with ‘Uthmān before it was lifted.¹

The mention of keys can be understood as a symbol of the imminent conquests that would occur at the hands of the Muslims. This Prophetic vision also demonstrates the superiority of the Prophet ﷺ over the entire Ummah, and the superiority of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ over the rest of the Ummah. With the absence of the Prophet ﷺ and Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, ‘Umar outweighed the entire Ummah, indicating his superiority over them, and then ‘Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. This is consistent with what appears later.

3. Abū Bakrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said one morning:

عن أبي بكر أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ذات يوم من رأى منكم رؤيا فقال رجل أنا رأيت كان ميزانا نزل من السماء فوزنت أنت وأبو بكر فرجحت أنت بأبي بكر ووزن عمر وأبو بكر فرجح أبو بكر ووزن عمر وعثمان فرجح عمر ثم رفع الميزان فرأينا الكراهية في وجه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

“Whom amongst you had seen a dream?”

A man said, “I have. I saw as though a scale descended from the sky. You and Abū Bakr were weighed and you were heavier; Abū Bakr and Umar were weighed and Abū Bakr was heavier; ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān were weighed and ‘Umar was heavier. The scale was then taken up.”

We noticed signs of concern on the face of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?

Abū Dāwūd relates the same narration with a slightly different chain going to Abū Bakrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. This version has the addition, “It will be a Khilāfah on the pattern of Prophethood, then Allah will grant kingdom to whomever He wishes.”³

1 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 76 (old edition), al-Haythamī states in *Majma’ al-Zawā’id* vol. 9 pg. 58, “It is narrated by Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī, and their narrators are reliable.”

2 *Abū Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 4634; *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Ru’yā, Ḥadīth no: 2287

3 *Abū Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 4635

Al-Ḥākim’s version of this Ḥadīth is by way of Safīnah رضي الله عنه, the freed slave of Umm Salamah رضي الله عنها. It is worded similar to the Ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah رضي الله عنه above, but it, too, has an additional statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

The Khilāfah will remain in my Ummah for thirty years, then it will become a monarchy after that.

Safīnah said, “Count. Abū Bakr’s Khilāfah was 2 years, ‘Umar’s was 10 years, ‘Uthmān’s was 12 years, and ‘Alī’s was 6 years.”¹

This narration differs from the narration of Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما in terms of the comparison. The narration of Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه compares them against the entire Ummah, whereas the narration of Abu Bakrah رضي الله عنه establishes specifically the hierarchy of superiority among the Khulafā; Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه being the highest in rank, followed by ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, followed by ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه.

4. Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه relates that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

عن جابر بن عبد الله أنه كان يحدث أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أرى الليلة رجل صالح أن أبا بكر نيظ برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ونيظ عمر بأبي بكر ونيظ عثمان بعمر قال جابر فلما قمنا من عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قلنا أما الرجل الصالح فرسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأما تنوط بعضهم ببعض فهم ولاة هذا الأمر الذي بعث الله به صلى الله عليه وسلم

Last night a righteous man had a vision in which Abū Bakr appeared to be joined to the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, and ‘Umar was joined to Abū Bakr, and ‘Uthmān was joined to ‘Umar.

Jabir said, “When we got up and left the gathering of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم we said, “The righteous man is the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and that their being joined together is a symbol that they would eventually

1 Al-Mustadrak vol. 3 pg. 71

be the custodians over this matter with which Allah has sent His Prophet

”¹” ﷺ

5. Samurah ibn Jundub رضي الله عنه relates that a man reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن سمرة بن جندب رضي الله عنه أن رجلا قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رأيت كأن دلوا دلي من السماء فجاء أبو بكر فأخذ بعراقيها فشرب شربا ضعيفا ثم جاء عمر فأخذ بعراقيها فشرب حتى تضلع ثم جاء عثمان فأخذ بعراقيها فانتشطت وانتضح عليه منها شيء

I saw (in a dream) that a bucket was suspended from the sky. Abū Bakr came, caught hold of both ends of its wooden handle, and drank a little of it. Next came ‘Umar who caught hold of both ends of its wooden handle and drank of it to his fill. Next came ‘Uthmān who caught hold of both ends of its handle, but it began to shake and some (water) from it was spilled on him. ²

6. Ibn ‘Abbās or Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه relate that a man came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and told him:

إن ابن عباس كان يحدث أن رجلا أتى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال إني رأيت الليلة في المنام ظلة تنطف السمن والعسل فأرى الناس يتكفون منها فالمستكثر والمستقل وإذا سبب واصل من الأرض إلى السماء فأراك أخذت به فعلوت ثم أخذ به رجل آخر فعلا به ثم أخذ به رجل آخر فعلا به ثم أخذ به رجل آخر فانقطع ثم وصل. فقال أبو بكر يا رسول الله بأبي أنت والله لتدعني فأعبرها فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اعبرها قال أما الظلة فالإسلام وأما الذي ينطف من العسل والسمن فالقرآن حلاوته تنطف فالمستكثر من القرآن والمستقل وأما السبب الواصل من السماء إلى الأرض فالحق الذي أنت عليه تأخذ به فيعليك الله ثم يأخذ به رجل من بعدك فيعلو به ثم يأخذ به رجل آخر فيعلو به ثم يأخذ به رجل آخر فينقطع به ثم يوصل له فيعلو به فأخبرني يا رسول الله بأبي أنت أصبت أم أخطأت قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أصبت بعضا وأخطأت بعضا قال فوالله يا رسول الله لتحدثني بالذي أخطأت قال لا تقسم

I saw a huge cloud in a dream and butter and honey were dripping from it. Then I saw people collecting it in their hands, some gathering much

1 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no. 4636

2 Musnad Aḥmad vol. 33 pg. 384, Ḥadīth 20242

and some gathering a little. Suddenly, there was a rope extending from the earth to the sky, and I saw that you (the Prophet) held it and went up, and then another man held it and went up and (after that) another (third) held it and went up, and then after another (fourth) man held it, but it broke and then got connected again.

Abu Bakr said, “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, may my father be sacrificed for you! Allow me to interpret this dream.”

The Prophet ﷺ said to him, “Interpret it.”

Abu Bakr said, “The cloud with shade symbolizes Islam, and the butter and honey dripping from it, symbolizes the Qur’ān, its sweetness dripping. Then there are people who take from the Qur’ān in abundance and those who take less. The rope which is extended from the sky to the earth is the Truth which you (the Prophet) are upon. You follow it and Allah will raise you high with it, and then another man will follow it and will rise up with it and another person will follow it and then another man will follow it but it will break and then it will be connected for him and he will rise up with it. O Messenger of Allah, may my father be sacrificed for you! Am I right or wrong?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “You (interpreted) some of it correctly and in some you erred.”

Abū Bakr said, “O Prophet of Allah! By Allah, you must tell me in what I was wrong.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not take an oath.”¹

7. Ḥudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن حذيفة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اقتدوا باللذين من بعدي أبي بكر وعمر.

Follow the two after me Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ta’bīr, Ḥadīth no: 7046; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ru’yā, Ḥadīth no: 2269

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3662

This narration is emphatic and unequivocal in proving that Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما were the most worthy of being followed after the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. It also demonstrates that they would perform the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم duties as leader after he has departed from this world.

8. Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه relates:

عن أنس بن مالك قال بعثني بنو المصطلق إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالوا سل لنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى من ندفع صدقاتنا بعدك قال فأتيته فسألته فقال إلى أبي بكر فأتيتهم فأخبرتهم فقالوا ارجع إليه فإني حدثت بأبي بكر حدث فإلى من فأتيته فسألته فقال إلى عمر فأتيتهم فأخبرتهم فقالوا ارجع إليه فإني حدثت بعمر حدث فإلى من فأتيته فسألته فقال إلى عثمان فأتيتهم فأخبرتهم فقالوا ارجع إليه فإني حدثت بعثمان حدث فإلى من فأتيته فسألته فقال إن حدث بعثمان حدث فتبا لكم الدهر تبا

Banū al-Muṣṭāliq sent me to the Messenger of Allah telling me to ask him whom they should hand over their Ṣadaqāt to¹ after his passing. So I went to him and asked and he responded, “To Abū Bakr.” In turn I returned and informed him of what the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said.

Then they asked me to return to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and ask him, “Whom shall we pay our Ṣadaqāt to, if something befalls Abū Bakr?” I went to him and asked him and he replied, “To ‘Umar.” I returned and informed him of what the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said.

Then they asked me to return to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and ask him, “Whom shall we pay our Ṣadaqāt to, if something befalls ‘Umar?” I went to him and asked him and he replied, “To ‘Uthmān.” I returned and informed him of what the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said.

Then they asked me to return to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and ask him, “Whom shall we pay our Ṣadaqāt to, if something befalls ‘Uthmān?” I went to him and asked him and he replied, “May time cause you to perish if anything were to happen to ‘Uthmān!”²

1 It is common to refer to Zakāh as Ṣadaqah

2 *Al-Mustadrak* vol. 3 pg. 77; *al-Dhahabī* graded it Ṣaḥīḥ

This narration proves that they would be custodians of the Prophetic legacy after his ﷺ passing. While the narration does not assign the role of Khilāfah explicitly, it does imply that the Prophet ﷺ was divinely informed of the future Khulafā' to which he did not object. On the contrary, he gave strong hints endorsing their appointments.

9. Jubayr ibn Muṭ'īm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

عن جبير بن مطعم قال أتت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم امرأة فكلمته في شيء فأمرها أن ترجع إليه قالت يا رسول الله أ رأيت إن جئت ولم أجدك كأنها تريد الموت قال إن لم تجدني فأني أبا بكر.

A woman came to the Messenger ﷺ and he instructed her to return to him later.

She said, “What should I do if I return and I do not find you?” It was as if she was implying death.

He replied, “If you do not find me then go to Abū Bakr.”¹

Why would the Prophet ﷺ inform her to go to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ if he was not a worthy candidate for Khilāfah?

10. 'Irbād ibn Sāriyah relates a sermon which the Prophet ﷺ delivered during his final days:

عن العرياض بن سارية أنه يقول وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم موعظة ذرفت منها العيون ووجلت منها القلوب فقلنا يا رسول الله إن هذه لموعظة مودع فما تعهد إلينا قال قد تركتكم على البيضاء ليلها كنهارها لا يزيغ عنها بعدي إلا هالك فمن يعيش منكم فسبى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بما عرفتم من سنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين عضوا عليها بالنواجذ وعليكم بالطاعة وإن عبدا حبشيا فإنما المؤمن كالجمل الأنف حيثما قيد انقاد“

One day, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stood up among us and delivered a deeply moving speech that melted our hearts and caused our eyes to flow.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3459; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2386

It was said to him, “O Messenger of Allah, it is as though you have delivered a speech of farewell, so enjoin something upon us.”

He said, “I urge you to fear Allah, and to listen and obey, even if (your leader) is an Abyssinian slave. After I am gone, you will see great conflict. I urge you to adhere to my Sunnah and the path of the Rightly-Guided Khulafā’, and cling to it with your molars. And beware of newly-invented matters, for every innovation is a deviation.”¹

This narration enforces obedience to the leader, even an Abyssinian slave. Under what circumstances would an Abyssinian slave have authority over the Muslims? Surely, not by the divine appointment of twelve specific individuals. The Prophet ﷺ also makes a distinction between the Khilāfah Rāshidah from the abstract post of Khalīfah. The Khulafā’ Rāshidūn are worthy of emulation. The Prophet ﷺ already informed us to emulate Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا which is an indicator of the fact that they are from the Khulafā’ Rashidūn without any doubt.

11. Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates that the Prophet ﷺ delivered a sermon. In it he said:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال خطب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال إن الله خير عبدا بين الدنيا وبين ما عنده فاختار ما عند الله فبكى أبو بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه فقلت في نفسي ما يبكي هذا الشيخ إن يكن الله خير عبدا بين الدنيا وبين ما عنده فاختار ما عند الله فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هو العبد وكان أبو بكر أعلمنا قال يا أبا بكر لا تبك إن أمن الناس علي في صحبته وماله أبو بكر ولو كنت متخذا خليلا من أمتي لاتخذت أبا بكر ولكن أخوة الإسلام ومودته لا يبقين في المسجد باب إلا سد إلا باب أبي بكر

Allah gave a choice to one of (His) slaves either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter. He chose the latter.

Abū Bakr began to weep. I said to myself, “What is this old man weeping for, if Allah gave a choice to one (of His) slaves either to choose this world

1 Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 3607, *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-‘Ilm, Ḥadīth no: 2676; *ibn Mājah*, al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth no: 42

or what is with Him in the Hereafter and he chose the latter?” (However) that slave was Allah’s Messenger ﷺ; he was referring himself. Abū Bakr was more knowledgeable than us.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Abū Bakr! Do not cry.”

The Prophet ﷺ then added, “The person who has favoured me the most with his wealth and companionship is Abū Bakr. If I were to take a Khalīl (close friend) other than Allah, I would certainly have taken Abū Bakr. Nevertheless we share the Islamic bond of brotherhood and friendship. No door leading into the Masjid is to be left open besides the door of Abū Bakr.”¹

This narration establishes the longstanding friendship between Abū Bakr ﷺ and the Prophet ﷺ. In it, the Prophet ﷺ acknowledges the favours Abū Bakr ﷺ has done for him and states that none can match the financial and physical contributions of Abū Bakr ﷺ. He concludes by instructing that all doors leading to the Masjid be closed, except the door of Abū Bakr ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ is giving a hint to the Ummah about his preferred candidate for Khilāfah.

12. Abū Hurayrah ﷺ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما لأحد عندنا يد إلا وقد كافيناها ما خلا أبا بكر فإن له عندنا يدا يكافئه الله بها يوم القيامة وما نفعني مال أحد قط ما نفعني مال أبي بكر ولو كنت متخذًا خليلًا لآخذت أبا بكر خليلًا ألا وإن صاحبكم خليل الله

No one has done a favour for us except that we have repaid him in full, with the exception of Abū Bakr. Verily his favour upon us is such that Allah will repay him on the Day of Judgement. The wealth of none of you has benefited me as much as the wealth of Abū Bakr. Were I to take a close companion it would have been Abū Bakr; however my Khalīl is Allah.²

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt, Ḥadīth no: 466; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2382

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no.3661

In this narration the Prophet ﷺ praises Abū Bakr excessively inferring that only Allah can repay the favours of Abū Bakr ﷺ adequately. This proves Abū Bakr's ﷺ longstanding commitment and dedication to the cause of Islam from its earliest days.

13. Ibn 'Abbās ﷺ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لو كنت متخذًا من أمتي خليلًا لاتخذت أبا بكر ولكن أخي وصاحبي

If I were to take a Khalil, I would have taken Abu Bakr, but he is my brother and my companion.¹

In this narration the Prophet ﷺ refers to Abū Bakr ﷺ as his brother. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn had earlier attempted to connect the kinship between the Prophet ﷺ and 'Alī ﷺ with a narration on brotherhood; thereby proving that this was a unique feature for 'Alī ﷺ. We know that in a literal sense, that relationship does not exist and by necessity the narration has to be interpreted. Abū Bakr ﷺ is also referred to as the Prophet's ﷺ brother. The difference is that the narrations that mention brotherhood with 'Alī ﷺ specifically are questionable in terms of their reliability, whereas this is an authentic narration. Either way, Ahl al-Sunnah do not object to 'Alī ﷺ being referred to as the Prophet's ﷺ brother.

14. Abū al-Dardā ﷺ relates an incident that he witnessed when he was sitting with the Prophet ﷺ one day:

عن أبي الدرداء رضي الله عنه قال كنت جالسا عند النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذ أقبل أبو بكر أخذًا بطرف ثوبه حتى أبدى عن ركبته فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أما صاحبكم فقد غامر فسلم وقال إني كان بيني وبين ابن الخطاب شيء فأسرعت إليه ثم ندمت فسألته أن يغفر لي فأبى علي فأقبلت إليك فقال يغفر الله

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3656

لك يا أبا بكر ثلاثا ثم إن عمر ندم فأتى منزل أبي بكر فسأل أبا بكر فقالوا لا فأتى إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فسلم فجعل وجه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يتمعر حتى أشفق أبو بكر فبثنا على ركبته فقال يا رسول الله والله أنا كنت أظلم مرتين فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله بعثني إليكم فقلتم كذبت وقال أبو بكر صدق وواساني بنفسه وماله فهل أنتم تاركوا لي صاحبي مرتين فما أودى بعدها

I was sitting with the Prophet when Abū Bakr headed towards us holding onto the edge of his cloak to the extent that he exposed his knees. The Prophet said, “It appears as if your companion is upset.”

Abū Bakr greeted and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Something happened between me and Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (‘Umar). I hastened (after the incident) towards him and regretted (my action) and asked him to forgive me but he refused so I came to you.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “May Allah forgive you, O Abū Bakr,” repeating it thrice.

Then ‘Umar regretted his action and went to the house of Abū Bakr and asked, “Is Abū Bakr home?” and they replied that he was not. He then went to the Prophet ﷺ and when the Prophet saw him, his face turned red to the point that Abū Bakr regretted (taking the matter to the Prophet).

Abū Bakr sat up and said, “O Messenger of Allah! I was the one in the wrong,” repeating it twice.

The Prophet ﷺ then said, “Allah sent me to you and you all said, ‘you are lying,’ and Abū Bakr said, ‘you speak the truth,’ he provided me with both physical and financial assistance. Will you not leave my companion for my sake?” repeating it twice. He (Abū Bakr) was never inconvenienced again after that.¹

This narration proves the superiority of Abū Bakr’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ rank over ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. It also demonstrates the Prophet ﷺ empathy for Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is afforded the accolade of having supporting

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 4361

the Prophet ﷺ when there was no one else; highlighting his early acceptance of Islam. The mode of expression used by the Prophet ﷺ signifies the important role of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه in the early days as there was no one who was mature in age, and who had influence, who supported the cause of Islam. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was a young boy at this time. May Allah be pleased with them all.

15. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن ابن عمر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال اللهم أعز الإسلام بأحب هذين الرجلين إليك بأبي جهل أو بعمر بن الخطاب قال وكان أحبهما إليه عمر

O Allah! Honour Islam through the most beloved of these two men to you: Through Abū Jahl or through ‘Umar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb. He also said, “The most beloved to Him – from the two – was ‘Umar.”¹

‘Umar’s Islam رضي الله عنه was a consequence of the Prophet’s ﷺ supplication. It also indicates that Allah brought honour to Islam through ‘Umar رضي الله عنه in addition to Him loving ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. Would Allah bring honour to Islam with ‘Umar, only for him to bring dishonour by misappropriating the Khilāfah? Unless one believes that Allah is indecisive, this narration is a form of Divine approval for ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.

16. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه recalled the difficulty experienced by the Muslims and Makkah. They were subject to persecution and abuse, and they could not pray openly in front of the Ka‘bah. The situation changed completely after ‘Umar رضي الله عنه accepted Islam; which attests the fruition of the Prophetic request; that Allah brings honour to Islam through ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. Ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه says:

قال عبد الله ما زلنا أعزّة منذ أسلم عمر

We continued to be resilient since ‘Umar embraced Islam.²

1 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 9 pg. 506 Ḥadīth no: 5696; *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3681

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī رضي الله عنه, Ḥadīth no: 3684

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه relates that when the Quraysh heard of ‘Umar’s رضي الله عنه Islam they said, “They are even with us now (in strength).”¹ Muḥammad ibn ‘Ubayd رضي الله عنه recalls that the Muslims could not pray in public before ‘Umar accepted Islam. After he accepted Islam none of the Quraysh dared to interfere with anyone praying out of fear of ‘Umar’s retaliation.² These are all accounts which confirm the honour that was achieved through ‘Umar’s رضي الله عنه acceptance of Islam.

17. Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه relates:

عن شقيق قال سمعت حذيفة يقول بينما نحن جلوس عند عمر إذ قال أياكم يحفظ قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في الفتنة قال فتنة الرجل في أهله وماله وولده وجاره تكفرها الصلاة والصدقة والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر قال ليس عن هذا أسألك ولكن التي تموج كموج البحر قال ليس عليك منها بأس يا أمير المؤمنين إن بينك وبينها بابا مغلقا قال عمر أياكم الباب أم يفتح قال بل يكسر قال عمر إذا لا يغلق أبدا قلت أجل . قلنا لحذيفة أكان عمر يعلم الباب قال نعم كما يعلم أن دون غد ليلة وذلك أي حدثته حديثنا ليس بالأعاليط . فهبتنا أن نسأله من الباب فأمرنا مسروقا فسأله فقال من الباب قال عمر

Once, while we were sitting with ‘Umar, he said, “Who among you remembers the statement of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم about the tribulation?”

Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه replied, “The of a man is in his family, his property, his children and his neighbours. These are expiated by his prayers, charity, and enjoining good and forbidding evil.”

‘Umar said, “It is not about those that I ask, but about those afflictions which will move like the waves of the sea.”

Ḥudhayfah رضي الله عنه said, “Don’t worry about it, O Amīr al-Mu’minīn, for there is a closed door between you and these [tribulations].”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه then asked, “Will that door be broken or opened?”

I responded, “No. it will be broken.”

1 Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah vol. 1 pg. 248

2 Ṭabaqāt ibn Sa’d vol. 3 pg. 270

‘Umar said, “In that case it will never be closed.”

I said, “Yes.” – the Narrator says – We asked Ḥudhayfah, “Did ‘Umar know what that door meant?”

He replied, “Yes! Just as he knew that there will be night will precede the morning. That is because I narrated it to him, free from errors.”

We dared not ask Ḥudhayfah as to whom the door symbolized so we ordered Masrūq to ask him what does the door stand for?

He replied, “‘Umar.”¹

This narration proves that ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a barrier and fortress against a colossal tragedy that would afflict the Ummah. The conspiracies and clandestine movements began after the demise of ‘Umar, which resulted in the first Fitnah which raised its head at the end of ‘Uthmān’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ Khilāfah.

18. Thumāmah ibn Ḥazan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates what he observed at the home of ‘Uthmān when the rebels lay siege to it:

عن ثمامة بن حزن القشيري قال شهدت الدار حين أشرف عليهم عثمان فقال اتوني بصاحبكم اللذين ألباكم علي. قال فجيء بهما فكأنهما جملان أو كأنهما حماران قال فأشرف عليهم عثمان فقال أنشدكم بالله والإسلام هل تعلمون أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قدم المدينة وليس بها ماء يستعذب غير بئر رومة فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من يشتري بئر رومة فيجعل دلوه مع دلاء المسلمين بخير له منها في الجنة فاشتريتها من صلب مالي فأنتم اليوم تمنعوني أن أشرب منها حتى أشرب من ماء البحر. قالوا اللهم نعم. فقال أنشدكم بالله والإسلام هل تعلمون أن المسجد ضاق بأهله فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من يشتري بقعة آل فلان فيزيدها في المسجد بخير له منها في الجنة فاشتريتها من صلب مالي فأنتم اليوم تمنعوني أن أصلي فيها ركعتين قالوا اللهم نعم. قال أنشدكم بالله والإسلام هل تعلمون أني جهزت جيش العسرة من مالي قالوا اللهم نعم. ثم قال أنشدكم بالله والإسلام هل تعلمون أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان على ثبير مكة ومعه أبو بكر وعمر وأنا فتحرك الجبل حتى تساقطت حجارته بالحضيض قال فركضه برجله وقال اسكن ثبير فإنما عليك نبي وصديق وشهيدان قالوا اللهم نعم. قال الله أكبر شهدوا لي ورب الكعبة أني شهيد ثلاثا

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth no: 7097; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Fitan, Ḥadīth no: 144

‘Uthmān emerged from his home saying, “Bring me your two companions who have turned you against me.”

So they were brought as if they were two camels, or as if they were two donkeys.

‘Uthman emerged from above and said, “I adjure you by Allah and by Islam, are you aware that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to Al-Madinah, and it had no sweet water (suitable for drinking) except the well of Rūmah, he said, ‘Who will purchase the well of Rūmah and dip his bucket in it alongside the buckets of the Muslims [i.e. his share in it will be like the rest of the Muslims], in return for a better one in Paradise?’ and I purchased it with my capital? Yet today you are preventing me from drinking from it, so that I have to drink salty water?”

They said, “By Allah, yes.”

He said, “I adjure you by Allah and by Islam, are you aware that I equipped the army of *Al-‘Usrah* (at the expedition of Tabūk) from my own wealth?”

They said, “By Allah, yes.”

He said, “I adjure you by Allah and by Islam, are you aware that when the Masjid became too small for the people and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘Who will buy the land belonging to the family of so and so and add it to the Masjid, in return for a better piece of land in Paradise?’ I bought it with my capital and added it to the Masjid? Yet now you are preventing me from praying two Rak’ahs therein.”

They said, “By Allah, yes.”

He said, “I adjure you by Allah and by Islam, are you aware that when the Messenger of Allah was on (the mountain of) Thabīr—in Makkah—and with him were Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and myself, the mountain shook, and the Messenger of Allah stamped it with his foot and said, ‘Be still, Thabīr! Upon you are none other than a Prophet, a Ṣiddīq and two martyrs!’”

They said, “By Allah, yes.”

He said, “Allahu Akbar! They have testified for me, by the Lord of the Ka’bah [i.e. that I am a martyr]!” He repeated this thrice.¹

While this narration primarily speaks of the merits of ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه, it also confirms other significant facts. ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was murdered so he was a martyr. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was also murdered and also attained martyrdom. The difference was that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه was murdered by a disbeliever, whereas ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was murdered by the Muslims. This confirms the status of al-Ṣiddīq for Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.

Similar narrations testifying to the status of al-Ṣiddīq, and martyrdom of ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنهما are related by way of Anas,² Abū Hurayrah,³ and Sa’d ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه.⁴ In some of the other narrations other Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم are included; ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, Ṭalhāh رضي الله عنه, Zubayr رضي الله عنه.

19. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما relates:

عن ابن عباس قال حدثني عمر بن الخطاب قال لما كان يوم بدر نظر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى المشركين وهم ألف وأصحابه ثلاثمائة وتسعة عشر رجلا فاستقبل نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم القبلة ثم مد يديه فجعل يهتف بربه اللهم أنجز لي ما وعدتني اللهم آت ما وعدتني اللهم إن تهلك هذه العصابة من أهل الإسلام لا تعبد في الأرض فما زال يهتف بربه ما دا يديه مستقبل القبلة حتى سقط رداؤه عن منكبيه فأتاه أبو بكر فأخذ رداءه فألقاه على منكبيه ثم التزمه من ورائه وقال يا نبي الله كذاك مناشدتك ربك فإنه سينجز لك ما وعدك فأنزله الله عز وجل إذ تستغيثون ربكم فاستجاب لكم أني ممدكم بألف من الملائكة مردفين فأمده الله بالملائكة قال أبو زميل فحدثني ابن عباس قال بينما رجل من المسلمين يومئذ يشدد في أثر رجل من المشركين أمامه إذ سمع ضربة بالسوط فوقه وصوت الفارس يقول أقدم حيزوم فنظر

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3703; *al-Nasā’ī*, Kitāb al-Aḥbās, Ḥadīth no: 3608

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥāb al-Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, Ḥadīth no: 3675, 3686, 3699; *Abū Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 4651; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3697

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2417; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3696

4 *Abū Dāwūd*, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 4648; *ibn Mājah*, al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth no: 134

إلى المشرك أمامه فخر مستلقيا فنظر إليه فإذا هو قد خطم أنفه وشق وجهه كضربة السوط فاحضر ذلك أجمع فجاء الأنصاري فحدث بذلك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال صدقت ذلك من مدد السماء الثالثة فقتلوا يومئذ سبعين وأسرروا سبعين قال أبو زميل قال ابن عباس فلما أسروا الأسارى قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لأبي بكر وعمر ما ترون في هؤلاء الأسارى فقال أبو بكر يا نبي الله هم بنو العم والعشيرة أرى أن تأخذ منهم فدية فتكون لنا قوة على الكفار فعسى الله أن يهديهم للإسلام فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما ترى يا ابن الخطاب قلت لا والله يا رسول الله ما أرى الذي رأى أبو بكر ولكني أرى أن تمكنا فنضرب أعناقهم فتمكن عليا من عقيل فيضرب عنقه وتمكني من فلان نسيبا لعمر فأضرب عنقه فإن هؤلاء أئمة الكفر وصناديدها فهوي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما قال أبو بكر ولم يهو ما قلت فلما كان من الغد جئت فإذا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأبو بكر قاعدان يبكيان قلت يا رسول الله أخبرني من أى شيء تبكي أنت وصاحبك فإن وجدت بكاء بكيت وإن لم أجد بكاء تباكيت لبكائكما فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أبكي للذي عرض على أصحابك من أخذهم الفداء لقد عرض على عذابهم أدنى من هذه الشجرة شجرة قريبة من نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنزل الله عز وجل ما كان لنبي أن يكون له أسرى حتى يثخن في الأرض إلى قوله فكلوا مما غنمتم حلالا طيبا فأحل الله الغنيمة لهم

On the day on which the Battle of Badr was fought, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ looked in the direction of the disbelievers, and they were one thousand while his own Companions were only three hundred and nineteen in number. The Prophet ﷺ turned (his face) towards the Qiblah. Then he stretched his hands and began supplicating to his Lord,

“O Allah, fulfil for me what You have promised to me. O Allah, that which You have promised to me. O Allah, if this small band of Muslims is destroyed, You will not be worshipped on this earth.”

He continued beseeching his Lord, stretching his hands, facing the Qibla, until eventually his shawl slipped off from his shoulders. So, Abu Bakr came to him, picked it up and put it back on his shoulders. Then he embraced him from behind and said, “O Prophet of Allah, this prayer of yours to your Lord will suffice, and He will fulfill for you what He has promised you.”

Immediately thereafter Allah revealed (the verse):

When you appealed to your Lord for help, He responded to your call (saying): I will reinforce you with one thousand angels coming in succession. [Sūrah al-Anfāl: 9]

So Allah sent Angels as reinforcements for him.

On that day, a Muslim was pursuing a disbeliever when he heard the crack of a whip from above, and the voice of the rider saying, “Forward, Ḥayzūm!” He looked towards the disbeliever who had (now) fallen down on his back. When he looked at him he observed that there was a scar on his nose and his face was lacerated as if it had been lashed with a whip, and had turned green with its poison. An Anṣārī came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and related this (event) to him. He said, “You are correct. This was the help from the third heaven.”

On that day (i.e. the day of the Battle of Badr) the Muslims killed seventy enemy combatants and captured seventy. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, “What is your opinion about these captives?”

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “They are our relatives and blood. I think you should release them after getting from them a ransom. This will be a source of strength to us against the infidels. It is quite possible that Allah may guide them to Islam.”

Then the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “What is your opinion, Ibn Khaṭṭāb?”

He said, “O Messenger of Allah, I do not hold the same opinion as Abū Bakr. I suggest that you should hand them over to us so that we may cut off their heads. Hand over ‘Aqīl to ‘Alī that he may cut off his head, and hand over such and such relative to me that I may cut off his head. They are leaders of the disbelievers and veterans among them.”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه continued, “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ preferred the opinion of Abū Bakr and did not approve what I said. The next day when I came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, I found that both he and Abū Bakr were in tears. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, why are you and your companion crying? Tell me the reason. I will also cry, or I will at least try to cry in empathy.’

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘I weep for what has happened to your companions for taking ransom (from the prisoners). I was shown the torture to which they were subjected. It was brought to me as close as this tree.’”

(He pointed to a tree close to him.) Then Allah revealed the verse:

It is not proper for a prophet that he should take prisoners until the force of the disbelievers has been crushed...¹

to the end of the verse

So consume [now] what you have taken of war booty [as being] lawful and good, and fear Allah . Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.²

So, Allah made war booty lawful for them.³

It is evident from this narration that both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما were part of the Prophet’s ﷺ inner circle and he turned to them for counsel on matters that affected the Muslims. Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه correlation to the Prophet ﷺ preceded the revelation of the first verse in the narration. ‘Umar’s رضي الله عنه opinion on how to deal with the prisoners of war was preferred by Allah, and the next series of verses came. Even though ‘Umar’s رضي الله عنه suggestion was aligned to what was later revealed, the Prophet ﷺ relied on Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه counsel. This clearly demonstrates the Prophet’s ﷺ confidence in their capacity to lead the Ummah, and it further demonstrates the extent to which they intuitively identified the objectives of the Shari‘ah.

20. The Prophet ﷺ attested to the purity of Abū Bakr’s رضي الله عنه heart, and confirmed that it was free of pride. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما relates that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said:

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 67

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 69

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Jihād wal-Siyar, Ḥadīth no: 1763

عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من جر ثوبه خيلاء لم ينظر الله إليه يوم القيامة فقال أبو بكر إن أحد شقي ثوبي يسترخي إلا أن أتعاهد ذلك منه فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إنك لست تصنع ذلك خيلاء

“Allah will not look on the Day of Judgment at the person who drags his robe out of pride.”

Abu Bakr asked (out of concern), “One side of my robe (accidentally) slips down unless I constantly pay special attention to it.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ exempted him saying, “You do not do that out of pride.”¹

The Prophet ﷺ testified to matters of the heart; matters which no human is privy to except those inspired by revelation. Abū Bakr’s ﷺ spiritual excellence is divinely attested to.

21. Abū Hurayrah ﷺ relates:

عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من أصبح منكم اليوم صائما قال أبو بكر أنا قال فمن تبع منكم اليوم جنازة قال أبو بكر أنا قال فمن أطعم منكم اليوم مسكينا قال أبو بكر أنا قال فمن عاد منكم اليوم مريضا قال أبو بكر أنا فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما اجتمعن في امرئ إلا دخل الجنة

The Prophet ﷺ once asked, “Who among you is fasting today?”

Abū Bakr ﷺ replied, “I am.”

The Prophet ﷺ then asked, “Who among you followed a Janāzah today?”

Abu Bakr ﷺ replied, “I did.”

The Prophet ﷺ asked, “Who among you fed a poor person today?”

Abū Bakr ﷺ replied, “I have.”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3665

The Prophet ﷺ went on to ask, “Who among you visited a sick person today?”

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “I did.”

Upon this the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Anyone in whom (these good deeds) are combined will certainly enter paradise.”¹

This narration confirms the excellent traits which were combined in the character of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه. In each of these qualities he demonstrates empathy and concern for those around him. He is a person who needed not be prompted to see to the needs of his community. Such compassion, care, and dedication are necessary traits in a leader; moreso the successor of the Final Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم.

22. Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه relates that he heard the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم saying:

عن أبي هريرة قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول من أنفق زوجين من شيء من الأشياء في سبيل الله دعي من أبواب يعني الجنة يا عبد الله هذا خير فمن كان من أهل الصلاة دعي من باب الصلاة ومن كان من أهل الجهاد دعي من باب الجهاد ومن كان من أهل الصدقة دعي من باب الصدقة ومن كان من أهل الصيام دعي من باب الصيام وباب الريان فقال أبو بكر ما على هذا الذي يدعى من تلك الأبواب من ضرورة وقال هل يدعى منها كلها أحد يا رسول الله قال نعم وأرجو أن تكون منهم يا أبا بكر

Whoever spends a pair of something in the Path of Allah will be summoned from the doors of Paradise, “O slave of Allah! This (door) is better (for you).” Whoever was regular with Ṣalāh will be summoned from the door of the Ṣalāh (in Paradise). Whoever was regular with Jihād will be summoned from the door of Jihād. Whoever was regular with Ṣadaqah will be summoned from the door of Ṣadaqah. Whoever observed fast regularly will be summoned from the door of fasting, the gate of Rayyān.

Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه said, “Whoever is summoned from any of these doors will have no further need, but will anyone be summoned from all these doors, O Messenger of Allah?”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Zakāt, Ḥadīth no: 1028

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Yes! and I expect that you will be among those, O Abu Bakr!”¹

This narration is further confirmation of Abū Bakr’s elevated spiritual rank. It is also a testification from the Prophet ﷺ to the acceptance of Abū Bakr’s ﷺ wide-spectrum of righteous deeds, and that he is guaranteed a lofty position in Jannah.

23. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن ابن عمر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن الله جعل الحق على لسان عمر وقلبه. وقال ابن عمر ما نزل بالناس أمر قط فقالوا فيه وقال فيه عمر أو قال ابن الخطاب فيه شك خارجة إلا نزل فيه القرآن على نحو ما قال عمر وفي الباب عن الفضل بن العباس وأبي ذر وأبي هريرة

“Indeed Allah has put the truth upon the tongue and in the heart of ‘Umar.”

Ibn ‘Umar said, “No matter occurred among the people, except that they said something about it, and ‘Umar held a position on it,” – or he said “Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb” Khārijah (one of the narrators) was not entirely certain which expression was used – “except that the Qur’an was revealed in line with what ‘Umar had said.”²

The Prophet ﷺ is testifying to integrity of heart and speech of ‘Umar ﷺ. He is informing the entire Ummah that ‘Umar ﷺ has been inspired by Allah with an intuitive recognition of the nature of the Sharī‘ah. These are necessary traits for a Rightly Guided Khalīfah who is to be a role model for generations to come; and at whose hands the consolidation of Dīn will be accomplished.

24. Abū Hurayrah ﷺ reports that the Prophet ﷺ said:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3666; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Zakāh, Ḥadīth no: 1027

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3682

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إنه قد كان فيما مضى قبلكم من الأمم محدثون وإنه إن كان في أمتي هذه منهم فإنه عمر بن الخطاب

In the nations that preceded you there were people who were Muḥaddathūn (i.e. divinely inspired, though they were not prophets), and if there are any such person amongst my followers, it is ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.¹

This narration elaborates on the previous one. ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is the inspired genius of this Ummah, and the distinguished Mujtahid. This accolade is conferred upon him by none other than Allah’s Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

25. Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates

عن محمد بن سعد بن أبي وقاص عن أبيه قال استأذن عمر بن الخطاب على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وعنده نسوة من قريش يكلمنه ويستكثرنه عالية أصواتهن على صوته فلما استأذن عمر بن الخطاب قمن فبادرن الحجاب فأذن له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فدخل عمر ورسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يضحك فقال عمر أضحك الله سنك يا رسول الله فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عجبت من هؤلاء اللاتي كن عندي فلما سمعن صوتك ابتدرن الحجاب فقال عمر فأنت أحق أن يهجن يا رسول الله ثم قال عمر يا عدوات أنفسهن أتهجنني ولا تهجن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلن نعم أنت أفظ وأغلظ من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إيها يا ابن الخطاب والذي نفسي بيده ما لقيك الشيطان سالكا فجا قط إلا سلك فجا غير فجك

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ sought permission from the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, in whose gathering there were some women from Quraysh who were talking to him and asking him for more financial support, raising their voices above the voice of the Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the process.

When ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ sought permission to enter, they hastened to put on their veils. When the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ granted permission ‘Umar entered and found that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was smiling, so ‘Umar said, “O Messenger of Allah! May Allah always keep you smiling.”

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā, Ḥadīth no: 3469; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2398

The Prophet ﷺ said, “I am surprized at these women who were with me. As soon as they heard your voice, they hastened to veil themselves.”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه said, “O Messenger of Allah, you have more right to be feared by them than I.”

Then ‘Umar رضي الله عنه addressed the women saying, “O enemies of your own selves! You fear me more than you do Allah’s Messenger?”

They said, “Yes, for you are harsh and more fierce in comparison to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.”

The Messenger ﷺ then said, “O son of al-Khaṭṭāb! By Him in Whose Hands my life is! Never does Shayṭān find you going on a path except that he takes another path; other than yours.”¹

26. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما relates that he heard the Prophet ﷺ saying:

عن ابن عمر قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال بينا أنا نائم أتيت بقدح لبن فشربت حتى إني لأرى الري يخرج من أطرافي ثم أعطيت فضلي عمر بن الخطاب قالوا فما أولته يا رسول الله قال العلم

While I was sleeping, I saw that a bowl full of milk was brought to me and I drank my fill until I felt its wetness in my limbs . Then I gave the remaining milk to ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

When asked about how he interpreted it he said that he interpreted it to mean knowledge (of Dīn).²

27. Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه relates that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه said:

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī رضي الله عنه, Ḥadīth no:3683; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنه, Ḥadīth no: 2396

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ta’bīr, Ḥadīth no: 7007 ; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنه, Ḥadīth no: 2391

عن أنس بن مالك قال قال عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه وافقت ربي في ثلاث فقلت يا رسول الله لو اتخذنا من مقام إبراهيم مصلى فنزلت واتخذوا من مقام إبراهيم مصلى [البقرة ١٢٥] وآية الحجاب قلت يا رسول الله لو أمرت نساءك أن يحتجبن فإنه يكلمهن البر والفاجر فنزلت آية الحجاب واجتمع نساء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في الغيرة عليه فقلت لهن عسى ربه إن طلقكن أن يبدله أزواجا خيرا منكن فنزلت هذه الآية”

I concurred with my Lord on three matters:

I said, “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ; I wish we took the Maqām Ibrāhīm as a place for some of our prayers. So came the Divine Revelation:

And take the Maqām Ibrāhīm as a place of prayer (for some of your prayers)...¹

Also, the (verse of) the veiling of the women, I said, “O Messenger of Allah ﷺ; I wish you ordered your wives to cover themselves from strange men because good and bad ones talk to them.” So the verse of the veiling of the women was revealed.

Once, the wives of the Prophet ﷺ made a united front against the Prophet ﷺ and I said to them, “It is possible if he (the Prophet) divorced you, that his Lord would replace him with wives better than you.” So this verse (worded as he had said) was revealed, i.e. [Sūrah al-Taḥrīm: 5].²

28. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ relates that ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said:

عن ابن عمر قال قال عمر وافقت ربي في ثلاث في مقام إبراهيم وفي الحجاب وفي أسارى بدر

I concurred with my Lord (in my Ijtihād) on three occasions. In matter of Maqām Ibrāhīm, in the matter of Ḥijāb and in the matter of the prisoners of Badr.³

1 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 125

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, Ḥadīth no: 402

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Ḥadīth no: 2399

These are manifestations of the Prophet's ﷺ description of 'Umar رضي الله عنه being divinely inspired.

29. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه reports that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول بينا أنا نائم رأيت الناس عرضوا علي وعليهم قمص فمنها ما يبلغ الثدي ومنها ما يبلغ دون ذلك وعرض علي عمر وعليه قميص اجتره قالوا فما أولته يا رسول الله قال الدين

While I was sleeping, the people were presented to me (in a dream), wearing shirts. Some of which were barely covered their (chests), and others were a bit longer. 'Umar was presented before me and his shirt was so long that he was dragging it.

They asked, "How have you interpreted it, O Messenger of Allah ﷺ?"

He ﷺ said, "Dīn."¹

30. Anas رضي الله عنه narrates from the Prophet ﷺ that he said about Abū Bakr and 'Umar رضي الله عنهما :

عن أنس قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لأبي بكر وعمر هذان سيدا كهول أهل الجنة من الأولين والآخرين إلا النبيين والمرسلين

These two are the masters of the elder people among the all the inhabitants of Paradise, from the first to the last, except for the Prophets and Messengers.²

A similar narration is related by way of 'Alī رضي الله عنه. The only difference in his version is that the Prophet ﷺ instructed him not to tell them about this as long as they remain alive.³

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā'il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no:3691; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم, Ḥadīth no: 2390

2 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3665

3 *Ibn Mājah*, al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth no: 95

31. Abū ‘Uthmān al-Nahdī relates:

عن أبي عثمان أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعث عمرو بن العاص على جيش ذات السلاسل قال فأتيته فقلت أي الناس أحب إليك قال عائشة قلت من الرجال قال أبوها قلت ثم من قال عمر فعد رجلا فسكت مخافة أن يجعلني في آخرهم

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ sent ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the commander of the army on the expedition of Dhāt al-Salāsil. (On his return) ‘Amr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “I came to the Prophet ﷺ asking him, ‘Whom is the most beloved of all people to you?’

He replied, “Ā’ishah.”

I said, ‘(I meant) from amongst the men?’

He replied, ‘Her father (Abū Bakr)’.

I said, ‘Whom (do you love the most) after him?’

He replied, ‘Umar’. Then he listed the names of many men, and I remained silent after that [i.e. stopped asking him] for fear that he might regard me as the last of them.”¹

The Prophet’s ﷺ good mannerism, and manner of dealing with people always made them feel so special that they assumed they must have been the most beloved to him. This was also the case ‘Amr ibn al-Āṣ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ; only in his case he was put in charge of an army comprising of the senior companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Under these circumstances he anticipated that he must have been one of the most beloved to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He was not surprised to hear the name ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, nor Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, nor ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, but he expected to feature on the top. We learn that these were the most beloved to the Prophet ﷺ by his own statement, and by the fact that it was common knowledge among the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

1 Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, Ḥadīth no: 4358; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, Ḥadīth no:2384

32. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه relates:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال كنا في زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا نعدل بأبي بكر أحدا ثم عمر ثم عثمان ثم نترك أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا نفاضل بينهم

We used to say during the time of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم: We do not compare anyone with Abū Bakr. ‘Umar came next and then ‘Uthmān. We then would leave (rest of) the companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم without considering any as superior to another.¹

One might ask about the lack of mention of the status of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in this narration, even though his position is immediately after ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه according to Ahl al-Sunnah. This was not on account of Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه overlooking his status. Rather, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was considered young compared to the three mentioned in this narration. He was the first child to accept Islam whereas Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was the first man to accept Islām. Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه was considered the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم peer in terms of his age, whereas ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was more like a son to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. As a matter of fact, this is consistent with what ‘Alī رضي الله عنه thought, as we shall see in the next narration.

33. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (known as ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah) asked his father, ‘Alī رضي الله عنه:

قلت لأبي أي الناس خير بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أبو بكر. قلت ثم من قال ثم عمر. وخشيت أن يقول عثمان قلت ثم أنت قال ما أنا إلا رجل من المسلمين

“Who is the best of all people after the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم?”

“Abū Bakr,” came the reply.

“Who then?” asked ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah.

“Umar,” replied ‘Alī.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صلى الله عليه وسلم, Ḥadīth no:3697

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah says, ‘I feared he would say ‘Uthmān next if I asked him, so I said, “Then you.”’

‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied, “I am but an ordinary man from the Muslims.”¹

The fact that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ considered Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ superior to himself is well recorded. Besides Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafīyyah, many of the companions of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relate it from him including: Abū Juḥayfah,² ‘Abd Allāh ibn Salamah,³ ‘Abd Khayr,⁴ and one of those on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100, ‘Alqamah ibn Qays.⁵

34. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrates the manner in which ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ lamented the passing of ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ:

وضع عمر على سريره فتكفنه الناس يدعون ويصلون قبل أن يرفع وأنا فيهم فلم يرعني إلا رجل أخذ منكبي فإذا علي فترحم على عمر وقال ما خلفت أحدا أحب إلى أن ألقى الله بمثل عمله منك وإيم الله إن كنت لأظن أن يجعلك الله مع صاحبك وحسبت أني كنت كثيرا أسمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول ذهبت أنا وأبو بكر وعمر ودخلت أنا وأبو بكر وعمر وخرجت أنا وأبو بكر وعمر

‘Umar was placed on his bed. Then the people surrounded him supplicating and praying before he was raised and I was amongst them. Then a man alarmed me holding onto my shoulder and then I noticed it was ‘Alī. He prayed for Allah’s mercy upon ‘Umar and said, “I have not left behind anyone who I wished more to meet Allah with his deeds than you! By Allah! I think Allah will place you with you your two Ṣaḥābah, I remember I often used to hear the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying, “Myself, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar went... Myself, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar entered... Myself, Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar left...”⁶

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, ḥadīth no: 3671

2 *Musnad Aḥmad*, Vol. 2 pg. 200, Ḥadīth no: 833

3 *Ibn Mājah*, al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth no: 106

4 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 2 pg. 238, Ḥadīth 908

5 *Musnad Aḥmad* vol. 2 pg. 311, Ḥadīth no: 1051

6 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, ḥadīth no: 3482.

35. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Shaqīq enquired of ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا:

عن عبد الله بن شقيق قال قلت لعائشة أى أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان أحب إلى رسول الله قالت أبو بكر قلت ثم من قالت عمر قلت ثم من قالت ثم أبو عبيدة بن الجراح قلت ثم من قال فسكتت

“Which of the Companions of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ were the most beloved to him?”

She said, “Abū Bakr.”

I said, “Then who?”

She said, “Then ‘Umar.”

I said, “Then who?”

She said, “Then Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ.”

I said, “Then who?”

He said, “Then she was silent.”¹

36. ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا relates:

عن عائشة أم المؤمنين رضي الله عنها أنها قالت إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال في مرضه مروا أبا بكر يصلي بالناس قالت عائشة قلت إن أبا بكر إذا قام في مقامك لم يسمع الناس من البكاء فمر عمر فليصل للناس فقالت عائشة فقلت لحفصة قولي له إن أبا بكر إذا قام في مقامك لم يسمع الناس من البكاء فمر عمر فليصل للناس ففعلت حفصة فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مه إنكن لأنتن صواحب يوسف مروا أبا بكر فليصل للناس

During the final illness of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ he said, “Instruct Abū Bakr to lead the people in prayer.”

I said to him, “If Abū Bakr stands in your place, the people would not hear him because of his crying. Why not instruct ‘Umar to lead the prayer?”

1 Al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Manāqib, ḥadīth no: 4018

‘Ā’ishah added, “I said to Ḥafṣah, ‘Tell him: If Abu Bakr should lead the people in the prayer in your place, the people would not be able to hear him due to his crying; so please, order ‘Umar to lead the prayer.’

Ḥafṣah did so but the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Enough! You are indeed [like] the Companions of Yūsuf. Instruct Abū Bakr to lead the people in the prayer.’”¹

The Prophet ﷺ would not tolerate that anyone but Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ leads the Muslims in Ṣalāh. **Why did he single out Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to represent him during his absence in minor Imāmah if he were not the Prophet’s ﷺ preferred candidate to succeed him in the major Imāmah?**

37. ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates:

قال لي رسول الله يوم بدر ولأبي بكر مع أحدكما جبريل ومع الآخر ميكائيل. وإسرائيل ملك عظيم يشهد القتال أو يكون في القتال

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to me and Abū Bakr on the Day of Badr, “Jibrīl was with one of you and Mikā’īl was with the other. And Isrāfīl is a huge angel; he witnessed or partook in the battle.”²

38. Umm Salamah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا relates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

عن أم سلمة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن في السماء ملكين أحدهما يأمر بالشدة والآخر يأمر باللين وكل مصيب جبريل وميكائيل ونبیان أحدهما يأمر باللين والآخر يأمر بالشدة وكل مصيب وذكر إبراهيم ونوحا ولي صاحبان أحدهما يأمر باللين والآخر بالشدة وكل مصيب وذكر أبا بكر وعمر

Verily in the heavens are two Angels; one of them commands with firmness and the other with gentleness; each of them is correct: Jibrīl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Mikā’īl رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. (Similarly on earth) There were two Prophets; one of them

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, Ḥadīth no: 679; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh, Ḥadīth no: 418

2 *Musnad Abī Ya’lā*, vol. 1, p. 340, the editor said: “Its chain is authentic.”

dealt with firmness and the other with gentleness; both are correct. He mentioned Ibrāhīm عليه السلام and Nūh عليه السلام. I also have two such companions; one who conducts himself with gentleness and the other with firmness; and both are correct. He mentioned Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.¹

39. Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه relates:

عن أبي هريرة قال كنا قعودا حول رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم معنا أبو بكر وعمر في نفر فقام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من بين أظهرنا فأبطأ علينا وخشينا أن يقتطع دوننا وفزعنا فقمنا فكنت أول من فرغ فخرجت أبتغي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى أتيت حائطاً للأَنْصَارِ لبني النَجَارِ فدرت به هل أجد له باباً فلم أجد فإذا ربيع يدخل في جوف حائط من بئر خارجة والربيع الجدول فاحتفرت فدخلت على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال أبو هريرة فقلت نعم يا رسول الله قال ما شأنك قلت كنت بين أظهرنا فبطأت علينا فخشينا أن تقتطع دوننا ففزعنا فكنت أول من فرغ فأتيت هذا الحائط فاحتفرت كما يحتفر الثعلب وهؤلاء الناس ورائي فقال يا أبا هريرة وأعطاني نعليه قال أذهب بنعلي هاتين فمن لقيت من وراء هذا الحائط يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله مستيقنا بها قلبه فبشره بالجنة فكان أول من لقيت عمر فقال ما هاتان النعلان يا أبا هريرة فقلت هاتان نعلان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعثني بهما من لقيت يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله مستيقنا بها قلبه بشرته بالجنة فضرب عمر بيده بين ثديي فخررت لاستي فقال ارجع يا أبا هريرة فرجعت إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأجهشت بكاء وركبني عمر فإذا هو على أترتي فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ما لك يا أبا هريرة قلت لقيت عمر فأخبرته بالذي بعثني به فضرب بين ثديي ضربة خررت لاستي قال ارجع فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يا عمر ما حملك على ما فعلت قال يا رسول الله بأبي أنت وأمي أبعثت أبا هريرة بنعليك من لقي يشهد أن لا إله إلا الله مستيقنا بها قلبه بشره بالجنة قال نعم قال فلا تفعل فإني أخشى أن يتكل الناس عليها فخلهم يعملون قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فخلهم

We were sitting around the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were also present. In the meanwhile the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم got up and left us, He delayed in coming back to us, which caused anxiety that he might be attacked by some enemy when we were not with him; so being alarmed we got up. I was the first to be alarmed. I, therefore, went out to look for the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and came to an enclosed garden belonging to the Anṣār, Banū al-Najjār to be precise.

1 Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr vol. 23 pg. 315; al-Haythamī said aboth this narration in *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 54, “The narrators in this chain are all reliable.”

I searched the perimeter looking for a gate but failed to find one. After seeing a small streamlet flowing into the garden from a well outside, I drew myself together, like a fox, and slinked into (the place) where the Messenger ﷺ was.

He ﷺ said, “Abu Hurayrah?”

I replied, “Yes, O Messenger of Allah.”

He ﷺ said, “What is the matter (that brings you here)?”

I replied, “You were amongst us but got up and went away and delayed for so long, that we feared that you might be attacked by some enemy while we were absent; so we became alarmed. I was the first to be alarmed. So when I came to this garden, I drew myself together as a fox does, and these people are close behind me.”

He addressed me as Abū Hurayrah and gave me his sandals and said, “Take these sandals of mine, and when you meet anyone outside this garden who testifies that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, being assured of it in his heart, give him the glad tidings of Paradise.”

The first one I met was ‘Umar.

He asked, “What are these sandals, O Abū Hurayrah?”

I replied, “These are the sandals of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with which he has sent me to convey to anyone I meet who testifies that there is no god but Allah, being assured of it in his heart, with the glad tidings of Paradise.”

Thereupon ‘Umar struck me on the chest and I fell on my back. He said, “Go back, Abū Hurayrah.”

So, I returned to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about to break into tears. ‘Umar followed me closely and there he was behind me.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “What is the matter, O Abū Hurayrah?”

I said, “I happened to meet ‘Umar and conveyed to him the message with which you sent me. He struck me on my chest which made me fall down on my back, and he ordered me to return.”

Upon this the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, “What prompted you to do this, O ‘Umar?”

He said, “O Messenger of Allah, may my mother and father be sacrificed to you. Did you send Abū Hurayrah with your sandals to convey to anyone he met and who testified that there is no god but Allah, and being assured of it in his heart, with the glad tidings of Paradise?”

He said, “Yes.”

‘Umar said, “Please do it not, for I am afraid that people will rely on that only (and becomes lax with righteous deeds); let them continue doing (good) deeds.”

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ (agreed to this suggestion) saying, “Let them (continue).”¹

This narration demonstrates that the Prophet ﷺ accepted the counsel of ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. It also bears testimony that ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ is trustworthy; how else would the Prophet ﷺ agree to his counsel. ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was the first recipient of the promise of Paradise.

In this Ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ was obviously summoned to receive Waḥī. He was informed that all who testify to the Oneness of Allah, with firm conviction and soundness of heart, would enter Jannah. He initially wanted all the Muslims to hear this glad news, but ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ feared that

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Īmān, Ḥadīth no: 31

this would cause them to become complacent. The Prophet ﷺ did not forbid Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ from relating this narration even though he accepted the suggestion of ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Before, his death Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ conveyed this Ḥadīth, since he was one of very few who were privy to this glad tidings from the Prophet ﷺ.

While it may be argued that this is only found in Sunnī books, hence prone to prejudice. We cite a narration appearing in the Shī‘ī tradition, by one of the ‘infallible’ Imāms.

40. ‘Alī ibn Abī al-Faḥ al-Arbīlī relates his book *Kashf al-Ghummah fī Ma‘rifat al-A‘immah* from ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn:

A group of people came to him from Iraq and made some disparaging remarks about Abū Bakr, and ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. When they completed what they had to say, he said to them, “Are you from the group (described by the verse):

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا
وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

For the first emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger of Allah. Those are the truthful?”¹

They answered, “No.”

He asked, “Are you then from the group (described by the verse):

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي
صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ
شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتْلِحُونَ

1 Sūrah al-Ḥaṣhr: 8

Those who were settled in the Home [i.e. Madīnah] and [adopted] the faith before them. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what they [i.e., the Muhājirīn] were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation?¹

They answered, “No.”

‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn then said, “As for you, you have distanced yourselves from being either one of these two groups and I testify that you are not amongst those whom Allah says about them:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And those who came after them, saying, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts (any) resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.²

Be gone from me, Allah will do with you what He wills.³

Not only does this narration prove the high rank of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنهم; it also highlights the value of the consensus of the Muhājirīn and Anṣār. If the statements of the Imāms are equivalent to the Qur’an as ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges, anyone who has accepted his views until this point ought to accept the Khilāfah of the three who preceded ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, and accept the weight of the agreement of the Muhājirīn and Ansar رضي الله عنهم.

These are forty sound narrations which, collectively, indicate the worthiness of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما for succession after the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم demise. As a

1 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 9

2 Sūrah al-Ḥashr: 10

3 *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 2, p. 291, under the heading Faḍā’il al-Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn

matter of fact, they demonstrate the reasons why Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما rank above ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in virtue; despite his lofty status رضي الله عنه.

Khilāfah vs Imāmah

While ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is no longer with us to review these narrations, we urge any objective person—who is persuaded by the value of argument rather than emotional and sentimental attachment—to review those narrations and consider their implications.

That being said, the standard view of Ahl al-Sunnah is that the appointment of a Khalīfah is the prerogative of the Ummah. This is in stark contrast to the Shī‘ī doctrine of Imāmah that considers the roles of leadership assigned to specific individuals by Divine instruction. A person who rejects the leadership of any of the four rightly-guided Khulafā’ will be considered an innovator since this person has overturned the standing consensus of the entire Ummah; whereas anyone who does not uphold the doctrine of Imāmah is considered an apostate and disbeliever according to the Twelver Shī‘ah.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s coy gesture of acknowledging the virtues of the early ones among the Muhājirīn and Anṣār is part of the character he is playing in *al-Murāja‘āt*. If he could dig up forty narrations about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, most of which are unreliable, he could surely have found the forty we cited about Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما. He removes this mask in his book, *Abū Hurāyrah*, and bares his venomous fangs and reveals his true nature.

Abū Bakr and ‘Umar in authentic Shī‘ī literature

While ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn might find reason to conceal his contempt towards Abū Bakr and ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما, the scholars upon whom the Twelver Shī‘ah rely upon religiously have no worries in expressing their real disposition towards these great personalities.

Ni‘mat Allāh al-Jazā‘irī states about the Prophet’s ﷺ Companions in general:

Most of the Companions were *Munāfiqs* [hypocrites]. They concealed their hypocrisy during the Prophet’s ﷺ lifetime. However, after his departure from this world their hypocrisy became apparent. They were open and brazen in rejecting the *Waṣīyyah* [bequest].¹

In the *Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī he cites a narration ascribed to Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq] wherein he interprets the verse of the Qur’ān:

Do not follow the footsteps of Shayṭān.²

The footsteps of Shayṭān is the authority of so-and-so, i.e. Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.³

Abū Baṣīr relates that he asked Abū ‘Abd Allāh [Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq] about the verse:

Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant.⁴

He replied: the *Amānah* [Trust] refers to *Wilāyah*, and *Insān* refers to Abū al-Shurūr, the *Munāfiq*.

Al-Majlisiī points out that Abū al-Shurūr refers to Abū Bakr.⁵

This narration is confirmed acceptable by Muḥammad Āṣif Muḥsinī, a contemporary, high-ranking Shī‘ī scholar.⁶

1 *Al-Anwār al-Nu‘māniyyah* vol. 1 pg. 81

2 *Sūrah al-Baqarah*: 168

3 *Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī* vol. 1 pg. 121

4 *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*: 72

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār* vol. 23 pg. 279

6 *Mashra‘at al-Biḥār* vol. 1. pg. 428

Al-Majlisī devotes an entire chapter towards proving the apostasy of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān in his book, *Bihār al-Anwār*.¹

The content in this regard is abundant, but we have demonstrated the point without having to pollute our work further with those unspeakable narrations.

Reluctance on relying on Sunnī narrations

While it might appear prudent to show reluctance at relying on the sources of the opposition it is acceptable to hold the opposition to account for what is considered reliable to them in their own literature; and to acknowledge the preponderant nature of their explanation to these narrations. After all, it is their own legacy.

That being established, there is not a single case where ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn could raise a valid objection on the basis of a sound ḥadīth. The overwhelming majority of the narrations that he has cited throughout his correspondence have either been unreliable or complete forgeries. On the rare instances where he cited an authentic narration we find those narrations do not support his allegation in any way whatsoever.

This might create the impression that there is an impasse. However, there is a method to validate a certain narrative of events objectively, and that is to subject the collective tradition according to the criteria of the experts and masters, to the arbitration of the Qur’an and the role of the Prophet ﷺ as the Final Messenger.

One would expect the Final Messenger to be a success and that he would manage to effect such change that humanity would not need further instruction. The Shī‘ī narrative of history portrays the Prophet’s ﷺ mission a failure since all, save three, were saved from apostasy after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise. Furthermore, he ﷺ, could not effect change to those around him as he was surrounded by hypocrites!

1 *Bihār al-Anwār* vol. 20 pg. 167

On the other hand, the Sunnī narrative of history, during the Prophet's ﷺ lifetime and after his demise is uninterrupted and consistent. It portrays the Prophet ﷺ as an ultimate success, and one who left the Ummah upon guidance. Furthermore, his predictions of future events and visions of what was to come was consistent with what has been related from his companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ; and recorded in the authentic sunnī legacy.

The glowing manner in which the Qur'ān describes those around the Messenger, Allah's pleasure with those who participated in the Pledge of Riḍwān, and the fact that the early Muhājirīn and Anṣār were role models is consistent with the narrative provided by the Ahl al-Sunnah.

As a matter of fact, even the behaviour of 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ appears erratic based on the Shī'ī narrative; if compared to the periods of the Khulafā' who preceded him and his fighting the armies at Jamal, Siffīn, and Nahrawān.

Letter 53

Muharram 16, 1330

I. Requesting the Hadith Pertaining to the Ghadir Incident

You have repeatedly referred to the Ghadir incident. Please narrate its story from Sunni sources so that we may look into it, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 54

Muharram 18, 1330

I. Glitters of Ahadith Relevant to the Ghadir Incident

Relying on the consensus of narrators of hadith, al-Tabrani and many others¹ have quoted Zayd ibn Arqam saying:

“The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, once delivered a sermon at Ghadir Khumm under the shade of a few trees saying, ‘O people! It seems to me that soon I will be called upon and will respond to the call.² I have my responsibility³ and you have yours;⁴ so, what do you say?’ They said: ‘We bear witness that you have conveyed the Message, struggled and advised [the nation]; therefore, may Allah reward you with the best of His rewards.’

He asked them: ‘Do not you also bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger, that His Paradise is just and that His Fire is just, that death is just, that the life after death is just, that the Hour will undoubtedly approach, and that Allah shall bring the dead to life from their graves?’

They said: ‘Yes, indeed, we do bear witness to all of that.’ He said: ‘O Mighty Lord! Bear witness that they have.’ Then he said: ‘O people! Allah is my Master, and I am the mawla (master) of the believers. I have more authority over their lives than they themselves have;⁵ therefore, to whomsoever I have been a mawla, this (‘Ali) is his mawla;⁶ O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him, and be an enemy of whoever sets himself as his enemy.’

Then he said: ‘O people! I am to precede you, and you shall join me, at the Pool [of Kawthar] which is wider than the distance from Basra to San’a; it contains as many silver cups as the stars; and I shall ask you when you join me about the Two Weighty Things, how you shall succeed me in faring with them; the Greatest

Weighty Thing is the Book of Allah, the Omniscient, the Sublime, one end of which is in Allah's hand and the other in yours; so, uphold it so that you may not go astray, and your faith shall not suffer any alteration; and the other are my Ahl al-Bayt, for the most Gracious and Knowing has informed me that they both shall never part from each other till they join me at the Pool.”⁷

In a section dealing with 'Ali's virtues in Al-Mustadrak, the author indicates that Zayd ibn Arqam⁸ is quoted through two sources both of which are held reliable by both Shaykhs: al-Hakim [one of such sources] says that when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, returned from his Farewell Pilgrimage, he camped at Ghadir Khumm and ordered the believers to sweep the area under a few huge trees where a pulpit of camel litters was made for him.

He stood and said: “It seems as if I have been called upon and responded to the call, and I enjoin you to look after both the Book of Allah and my Progeny; see how you fare with them after me, for they shall never part from each other till they join me at the Pool.”

Then he added: “Allah, the Dear and Mighty, is my Master, and I am the master of every believer,” then he took 'Ali by the hand and said: “To whomsoever I have been a master, this 'Ali is [henceforth] his master; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him, and be the enemy to whoever antagonizes him.”

The author quotes this lengthy hadith in its entirety. In his Talkhis, al-Thahbi quotes it without commenting on it. Al-Hakim, too, quotes it as narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam in his Al-Mustadrak, admitting its authenticity. In spite of his intolerance, al-Thahbi admits the same in his Talkhis, to which you may refer.

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal has quoted the same hadith as narrated by Zayd ibn Arqam thus:

“We were in the company of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, when he camped in a valley called Wadi Khumm, and he ordered

everyone to gather for prayers in midday heat. He then delivered a sermon to us under the shade of a robe over a rush tree [Juncus spinosus] to protect him from the heat of the sun.

He said: ‘Do you know - or do you bear witness - that I have more authority over a believer’s life than the believer himself has?’ They answered: ‘Yes, indeed, you do.’ He said: ‘Whosoever accepts me as his mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla; O Lord! Befriend whosoever befriends ‘Ali and be the enemy of whomsoever opposes ‘Ali.’”

Al-Nisa’i quotes Zayd ibn Arqam saying that when the Prophet ﷺ returned from the Farewell Pilgrimage, and having reached Ghadir Khumm, he ordered the ground under a few huge trees to be swept clean. He announced: “It looks like I have been invited [to my Lord’s presence] and I have accepted the invitation, and I am leaving with you the Two Weighty Things, one of them is bigger than the other: the Book of Allah and my Progeny, my Household; so, see how you succeed me in faring with both of them, for they shall never part from each other till they join me at the Pool.”

Then he added: “Allah is my Master, and I am the master (mawla) of every believer.” Taking ‘Ali’s hand, he added saying, “To whomsoever I have been a master, this ‘Ali is his master; O Lord! Befriend those who befriend him, and be the enemy of all those who antagonize him.” Abul-Tufail says: “I asked Zayd: ‘Have you heard these words of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, yourself?’”⁹ He answered that all those who were there under the huge trees had seen the Prophet with their own eyes and heard him with their own ears. This hadith is recorded by Muslim in a chapter on the attributes of ‘Ali in his Sahih from several different narrators ending with Zayd ibn Arqam, but he abridged it and cut it short - and so do some people behave.

Imam Ahmad has recorded this hadith from al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib¹⁰ from two avenues saying; it reads: “We were in the company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when we camped at Ghadir Khumm. The call for congregational prayers was made. The site of two trees was chosen, and it was swept clean. He performed the noon-time

prayers then took 'Ali by the hand and asked the crowd: 'Do you not know that I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?'

They answered: 'Yes, we do.' He asked: 'Do you know that I have more authority over every believer than the believer himself has?' They answered in the affirmative; then he took 'Ali's hand and said: 'Whoever has accepted me as his master, this 'Ali is his master; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him and be the enemy of whoever chooses to be his enemy.' 'Umar met him immediately following that and said to him: 'Congratulations to you, son of Abu Talib! You have become, at dawn and at sunset, the master of every believing man and woman.'"

Al-Nisa'i has quoted 'Ayisha daughter of Sa'd saying that she heard her father saying: "I have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on the Day of Juhfa, when he took 'Ali's hand and delivered a sermon, praised and adored Allah, then said: 'O people! I am your wali.' They said: 'You have said the truth.' Then he raised 'Ali's hand and said: 'This is my wali unto you to discharge the responsibilities of my religion on my own behalf, and I support whoever supports him and am the enemy of whosoever chooses to be his enemy.'"

Sa'd is also quoted saying: "We were in the company of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. When he arrived at Ghadir Khumm, those who went ahead of him returned to join him, while he waited for those who lagged behind, till all people assembled. Then he said: 'O people! Who is your wali?'

They answered: 'Allah and His Messenger.' Then he took 'Ali's hand, made him rise and said: 'Whoever has taken Allah and His Messenger as his wali, this ('Ali) is his wali; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him and be the enemy of whoever chooses to be his enemy.'"

The books of traditions recording this incident are numerous and cannot be all cited here. They all contain explicit texts indicating that Ali is the Prophet's vicegerent and successor, just as al-Fadl ibn al-Abbas Abu Lahab has said:¹¹

The one to be recognized as the Vicegerent, generation after generation,

After Muhammad, is 'Ali; for he was his companion in every occasion.

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes

1. Many renowned authorities have admitted its authenticity, so much so that even Ibn Hajar stated the same, quoting al-Tabrani and others, in the shubha (allegation) number 11 of the ones which he enumerates on page 25, Section 5, Chapter One, of his book Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
2. He has eulogized his own pure soul simply to attract their attention to the fact that time had come to bring his mission to perfection, necessitating the appointment of his successor, and that he is unable to postpone doing so for fear he might be called upon [i.e. die] before discharging such mission which he is to bring to perfection, a mission that is indispensable to his nation.
3. Since the appointment of his brother weighs heavily against those who compete, envy, create dissension and hypocrisy, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, desired, before making such an announcement, to first apologize to them in the hope that that might touch and unify their hearts and in apprehension of their speeches and deeds; he said: "And I am responsible," so that they might come to know that he receives orders, and that he is responsible to discharge them; therefore, he simply has to do so. Imam al-Wahidi, in his book Asbabul Nuzul, quotes Abu Sa'id al-Khudri saying: "The verse 'O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord' was revealed on Ghadir Khumm day in reference to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ."

4. By saying “You, too, are responsible,” he, peace be upon him and his progeny, may have implied, as quoted by al-Daylami and others and stated in *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa* and other books from Ibn Sa’id, that they should follow in their footsteps, since they are responsible regarding ‘Ali’s wilayat. Imam al-Wahidi has said: “They are responsible regarding the wilayat of ‘Ali and Ahl al-Bayt.” Thus, the purpose of his saying “and you, too, are responsible” is to threaten those who would dispute the authority of his wali and wasi.

5. Many have contemplated upon this sermon, giving it due attention, and they have come to know that its gist is nothing other than a reference to the fact that ‘Ali’s wilayat is as much a root of the faith as his own responsibility as the Imam, for the Prophet ﷺ first put the question: “Do not you bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger?” Then he said: “The Hour is approaching; there is no doubt about it, and Allah shall certainly bring to life those who are in the graves,” following that with a statement in which he mentioned the wilayat so that it would be understood that the latter bears the same significance like the matters about which he has asked them and to which they have agreed. This is obvious to all the discreet who are familiar with the methods and objectives of speech.

6. His statement: “I am the mawla” is an outspoken testimony to a significant fact. The meaning of “mawla” is: one who is “awla,” foremost in status, superior. Thus, the meaning of his statement is: “Allah is superior to me, and I am superior to the believers, and whoever considers me to be superior to him must also consider ‘Ali as such.”

7. This wording of the hadith is quoted by al-Tabrani, Ibn Jarir, al-Hakim al-Tirmithi, from Zayd ibn Arqam. It is transmitted by Ibn Hajar from al-Tabrani and others in this exact wording, without questioning its authenticity; so, refer to page 25 of *Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa*.

8. Refer to page 21 of Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya, where the Prophet ﷺ is quoted saying: "To whomsoever I have been the wali, this ('Ali) is his wali.
9. Abul-Tufayl's question is obviously indicative of his amazement at this nation's overlooking this matter regarding 'Ali in spite of the hadith it narrates from its Prophet ﷺ in his honor on the day of the Ghadir. As if suspicious of the accuracy of the narrated hadith, he went ahead and inquired of Zayd, having heard him narrate the same, "Did you hear it from the Messenger of Allah?!" His tone is that of someone amazed, bewildered, and skeptical. Zayd answered him that all individuals present under those trees had, indeed, seen the Prophet with their eyes and heard him with their ears; so, Abul-Tufayl then knew that the matter was just as al-Kumait, may Allah be merciful unto his soul, says:

On the day of the dawah, the dawah of the Ghadir,
 Caliphate was made for him manifest and clear,
 Only if the throngs opted to obey;
 Yet I have never seen such a day,
 Nor have I seen such right
 Trampled upon, discarded outright;
 But the men had sold it, and I never saw
 Such a precious thing to sale would go...

10. This occurs on page 281 of his Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya, in a chapter dealing with 'Ali's status in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, the Omniscient, and also on page 25 of another chapter enjoining acceptance of his wilayat and warning against bearing animosity towards him.
11. These are among poetic lines composed as the answer of al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah ibn Abu Ma'it, quoted by Muhammad Mahmud al-Rafi'i in his Introduction to Sharh al-Hashimiyat, page 8.

Discussions

The second round of correspondence around the sermon delivered at Ghadīr Khumm revives the opportunity to build on what has been ‘exchanged’ in recent correspondence. It allows for the debate to pursue a new course, and initiates a shift in the portrayal of the character of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī.

The background to the incident of Ghadīr Khumm has already been discussed,¹ along with the meaning of the term *Mawlā*.² Since the details have been discussed earlier, we will suffice by the mere facts below.

It has been established that this sermon was not delivered during Ḥajj, but at a resting place near *Juhfah*. Those who came for Ḥajj from different parts of the Arabian Peninsula had taken off in their respective directions, and it was only the people of Madīnah who accompanied him here. The Prophet ﷺ stopped to rest and to replenish water supplies, not specifically for the purpose of addressing his companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

The Prophet ﷺ had received a number of complaints during Ḥajj about ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and since this was an internal matter he addressed it when only the people of Madīnah were present. After reminding the Companions of the general rights of the Ahl al-Bayt, the Prophet ﷺ ensured that the relationship with ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ specifically was repaired. His ﷺ family includes his wives, and Banū Hāshim.

The Prophet’s ﷺ *Waṣīyyah* (bequest) to be cautious with the rights of Ahl al-Bayt is very similar to his *Waṣīyyah* to uphold the rights of the Anṣār. Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates:

خرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وقد عصب على رأسه حاشية برد. قال فصعد المنبر ولم يصعده بعد ذلك اليوم فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال أوصيكم بالأنصار فإنهم كرشي وعييتي وقد قضاوا الذي عليهم وبقي الذي لهم، فاقبلوا من محسنهم وتجاوزوا عن مسيئتهم

1 Discussions on Letters 8, 36

2 Discussions on Letters 26, 38

The Prophet ﷺ came out with his head wrapped in a piece of cloth. He ascended the pulpit which he never ascended after that day. He glorified and praised Allah and then said, “My Waṣiyyah to you is that you take good care of the Ansar as they are my close companions and trusted friends. They have fulfilled their obligations and rights which were enjoined on them but there remains what is for them. So, accept their good and overlook their failings.”¹

The version found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* is worded thus:

عن أنس بن مالك أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إن الأنصار كرشى وعيبي وإن الناس سيكثر
ويقلون فاقبلوا من محسنهم واعفوا عن مسيئهم

The Anṣār are my close companions and my trusted friends. The people are going to increase in number whereas they (the Anṣār) would become less and less, so appreciate their good and overlook their failings.²

These are the people whose favour upon the Prophet ﷺ, and support of him, warranted that he ﷺ advise the Ummah to honour their rights and obligations.

Misrepresentation

It is necessary, prior to evaluating the narrations cited in this letter, to point out some of the gross oversights and major misrepresentations in this round of correspondence in *al-Murāja'āt*.

He begins by quoting a narration found in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī whose chain, he claims, is unanimously accepted as authentic. In the footnotes he goes on to cite Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī as having authenticated this narration in *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Muḥriqah*. The truth is that al-Haytamī declared the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr authentic

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Manāqib al-Anṣār, Ḥadīth no: 3799

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Faḍā'il al-Anṣār, Ḥadīth no: 2510

in general, not a specific version of it. Furthermore, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī does not undertake an investigation on the reliability of these chains, he relies on the grading of others.

The chain of transmission for the narration for this particular narration is problematic as we shall demonstrate later.

Āyat al-Tablīgh and the sermon at Ghadīr Khumm

The sermon at Ghadīr Khumm has been tied in with the verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, dubbed *Āyat al-Tablīgh*:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

O Messenger! Convey that has been revealed to you from your Lord. For if you do not, then you will not have conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people [have no fear]. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.¹

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges that this verse was revealed in connection with the sermon given at Ghadīr Khumm. The Prophet ﷺ was warned that if he did not declare ‘Alī رضي الله عنه his successor he would have failed his mission, claims ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn.

Consider the timeline and what ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها relates:

عن عائشة قالت كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يحرس حتى نزلت هذه الآية والله يعصمك من الناس فأخرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم رأسه من القبة فقال لهم يا أيها الناس انصرفوا فقد عصمني الله

The Prophet ﷺ used to be guarded until this verse was revealed, “Allah will protect you from the people.” So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stuck his head out from the room and said, “O people! You may leave, for Allah has undertaken to protect me.”²

1 Sūrah al-Mā'idah: 67

2 Al-Tirmidhī, Abwāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth no: 3046

This narration suggests that this verse was revealed early on in Madīnah. What need would the Prophet ﷺ have for the promise of protection for conveying now: at the end of his life, after he fulfilled his responsibility and Islam was well-established?

Another verse from Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed during the Ḥajj which heralded the completion of the Prophet's ﷺ mission.

جاء رجل من اليهود إلى عمر بن الخطاب فقال يا أمير المؤمنين آية في كتابكم تقرأونها لو علينا معشر اليهود نزلت لاتخذنا ذلك اليوم عيداً قال أي آية قال اليوم أكملت لكم دينكم وأتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الإسلام دينا فقال عمر إني لأعلم المكان الذي نزلت فيه واليوم الذي نزلت فيه نزلت على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في عرفات في يوم الجمعة

A Jewish man came to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb رضي الله عنه and said, "O Amīr al-Mu'minīn! There is a verse in your Book which you recite; if it had been revealed to us Jews we would have taken that day as a festival."

He said, "Which verse is that?"

The Jewish man responded saying, "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

'Umar said, "I know the place where it was revealed and the day on which it was revealed. It was revealed to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ at 'Arafāt, on a Friday."¹

The Prophet's ﷺ sermons during Ḥajj are well-known. Why did he not appoint his successor during Ḥajj? How is it possible that the Prophet ﷺ is threatened with incompleteness of his mission if he does not announce 'Alī رضي الله عنه as his successor, whereas Allah already revealed to him that the religion was complete and that his mission had been fulfilled?

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-'iṭisām, Ḥadīth no: 7268; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Tafsīr, Ḥadīth no: 3017

Consider the damning consequences of associating the divine warning with announcing ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ successor. The initial tone of the verse is sombre. Was the final Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ sent only to announce that he would be succeeded by ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ? What about all the good that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ taught? What did the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ endure hardships in Makkah for; Tawhīd or the succession of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ? He was driven out of Makkah because his teachings were incompatible with the idolatry that was being perpetrated in and around the Sacred Ka’bah; yet the most pressing demand of conveying from his Lord is about his successor? Does that not trivialize twenty-three years of striving and toil? Was the only significant revelation from his Lord the Imāmah of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that he was admonished? Is the most important task of the Final Prophet announcing the Imāmah of ‘Alī? Reflect!

Furthermore, if this verse were revealed when ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn claims it was, then it proves that all the previous verses which, he claims, prove the Imāmah of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ do not prove it. It would be redundant to warn the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ regarding the nomination of his successor if it was already spelled out in the Qur’ān.

Worse still, it portrays the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ a coward. What consequence did he have to after Allah promised him protection; that he resorted to an ambiguous term as *Mawlā* instead of appointing his successor in unambiguous terms. The ambiguity of this term forced the Shī’ah to resort to mental gymnastics to prove their desired meaning for this term. Consider it carefully.

Would the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ need to “first apologize to them in the hope that that might touch and unify their hearts and in apprehension of their speeches and deeds” after they had pledged their lives and wealth for his service? Who was it that stood bravely at Badr? Whose lives were spent at Uhud? Who are those who placed their hands in his under the tree at Hudaibiyyah pledging to die for his cause, on account of which Allah revealed:

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.¹

These very individuals are those whom ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn describes as, “those who compete, envy [sic], create dissension and hypocrisy [sic].” Whereas Allah says about those whom he is pleased:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ

*Allah will never be pleased with a defiantly disobedient people.*²

Is ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s true personality beginning to reveal itself? After all, *Taqiyyah* (subterfuge) is nine-tenths of the faith according to the Shāh. Actually, there is no faith in one who does not practise *Taqiyyah*.³

Has the Prophet ﷺ failed in conveying from his Lord when a woman came to him for some need of hers and he instructed her to return to him at another time. She said, “What if I come and do not find you?” as if she wanted to say, “If I found you had already passed away?” and the Prophet ﷺ said, “If you should not find me, go to Abu Bakr.”⁴

What about when he appointed Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to lead the prayer during his illness? Had the Prophet ﷺ done a proper job of conveying from his Lord when ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ did not even realise that he had already been appointed the Prophet’s ﷺ successor?

We have previously mentioned this narration of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās, who stated that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib emerged from the Prophet’s ﷺ home during his final illness:

1 Sūrah al-Faḥ: 18

2 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 96

3 *Al-Kāfi*, vol. 2 pg. 217

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-‘iṣām bi al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah, Ḥadīth no: 7360

عن الزهري قال أخبرني عبد الله بن كعب بن مالك الأنصاري وكان كعب بن مالك أحد الثلاثة الذين تيب عليهم أن عبد الله بن عباس أخبره أن علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه خرج من عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في وجعه الذي توفي فيه فقال الناس يا أبا حسن كيف أصبح رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال أصبح بحمد الله بارئاً فأخذ بيده عباس بن عبد المطلب فقال له أنت والله بعد ثلاث عبد العصا وإنني والله لأرى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم سوف يتوفى من وجعه هذا إنني لأعرف وجوه بني عبد المطلب عند الموت اذهب بنا إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلنسأله فيمن هذا الأمر إن كان فينا علمنا ذلك وإن كان في غيرنا علمناه فأوصى بنا فقال علي إنا والله لئن سألتها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فمنعناها لا يعطيناها الناس بعده وإنني والله لا أسأله رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

The people said, “O Abu al-Ḥasan; How is the Messenger of Allah ﷺ this morning?”

He said, “All praise be to Allah, he is well this morning.”

‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib took him by the hand and said to him, “I swear by Allah, in three days’ time you will be a subject. By Allah, I think that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will die of this illness. I recognise the look of death in the faces of the Banū ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib when they are dying. Let us go to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and ask him who will take charge over this matter (Khilāfah). If it is for us, then we will know that, and if it is for someone other than us, we will know and he can advise him to look after us.”

‘Alī replied, “By Allah, if we ask him for it and he refuses us, then the people would never give it to us afterwards. By Allah, I will not ask it from the Messenger of Allah.”¹

Why would ‘Alī رضي الله عنه fear something that had already been initiated unless the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم failed in his duty to convey.

It is intriguing that in this narration ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه asks ‘Alī رضي الله عنه whether someone other than the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم family is going to take charge of the affairs of the Muslims, yet ‘Alī رضي الله عنه did not object to the idea of someone else being

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Maghāzī, ḥadīth no. 4182

the Prophet's ﷺ successor. His statement bears much greater clarity than the Prophet's ﷺ words, "Whomsoever considers me his Mawlā, 'Alī is his Mawlā."

If anything, this narration reinforces the meaning of what the Prophet meant when he spoke about the lessor of the Two Weighty things: "If it [leadership] is for someone other than us, we will know **and he can advise him to look after us.**"

The narrations cited by 'Abd al-Ḥusayn

1. The narration of Zayd ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* of al-Ṭabarānī.¹

This Ḥadīth is narrated by way of 'Abd Allah ibn Bukayr al-Ghanawī — **Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr** — Abū al-Ṭufayl — Zayd ibn Arqam...

Appearing in this chain is **Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr**, who is considered weak. Al-Dāraquṭnī and al-Nasā'ī considered him significantly weak, in addition to the fact that he was known to hold Shī'ī beliefs. Ibn Ḥibbān suggests that the extent of his *Tashayyū'* was extreme.²

Such a narration would never meet the criteria of being accepted unanimously. Al-Haythamī has declared this narration weak because of Ḥakīm ibn Jubayr as well.³

Despite the weakness of this chain, there is nothing in it that indicates holding on to the Lesser of the Two Weighty Things. Those elements within this version which are corroborated by other narrations would be acceptable, not the narration in its entirety.

1 *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 5 pg. 166, Ḥadīth no: 4981

2 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, vol. 3 bio. 65; *al-Ḍu'afā wal-Matrūkīn* of al-Nasā'ī, bio. 129; *Al-Majrūhīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān, vol. 1 pg. 246; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 7 pg. 165

3 *Majma' al-Zawā'id*, vol. 9 pg. 164

2. The narration of Zayd ibn Arqam in *al-Mustadrak*.

This is narrated by two chains:

- Al-A‘mash — Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit — Abū al-Ṭufayl — Zayd ibn Arqam.¹
- Kāmil Abū al-‘Alā — Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit — Yaḥyā ibn Ja‘dah — Zayd ibn Arqam.²

3. The narration of Zayd ibn Arqam in *Musnad Aḥmad*.

This is narrated by way of Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far Shu‘bah — **Maymūn Abū ‘Abd Allah** — Zayd ibn Arqam.³

Maymūn is an unreliable narrator. We have disvused him previously.⁴

4. The narration of Zayd ibn Arqam in *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī* of al-Nasā’ī.

This is no different from the Ḥadīth in *al-Mustadrak*. The common chain is narrated by way of al-A‘mash — Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit — Abū al-Ṭufayl — Zayd ibn Arqam.

Reason for Imām Muslim not including this version

The reason for Imām Muslim not including this version of the Ḥadīth is not due to his prejudice as claimed by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. The real reason is that it does not meet his criteria. The narration from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit is inconsistent and presents with a number of issues which Muslim would have avoided. One cannot expect ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn to know this when he cannot even identify authentic narrations from his own legacy.

1 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 109

2 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 109

3 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 32 pg. 75

4 See discussions under Letter 26.

Ḥabīb was well-known for *Tadlīs*, and *Irsāl*: omitting the person whom he received the narration from and attributing it to someone higher in the chain.¹ ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī has indicated that the narration of al-A‘mash from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit is not very strong, even though they are both reliable narrators in their own right.²

It might be asked why does Muslim include narrations in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, wherein al-A‘mash narrates from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit? After studying all these places in *Ṣāḥīḥ Muslim* it has become apparent that the narration of al-A‘mash from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit was only listed as a supplementary narration, not one that Muslim lists as the primary Ḥadīth of that chapter.

Furthermore, the narrations of al-A‘mash from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit—with the exception of one case³ where there is an alternative chain for the entire narration—Muslim cites the narrations of other students of Ḥabīb as co-narrators from Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit.⁴

The inconsistency arises when Ḥabīb—at times—narrates it from Yahyā ibn Ja‘dah, from Zayd ibn Arqam and sometimes from Abū al-Ṭufayl, from Zayd ibn Arqam. Other times he narrates it as if he received it from Zayd ibn Arqam directly;⁵ whereas he is only known to have heard Ḥadīth from Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Āishah رضي الله عنها according to ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī.⁶

The version in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* has been discussed under Letter 8.

1 *Al-Taqrīb*, bio. 1084

2 *Sharḥ ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 2 pg. 800

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Masājīd, Ḥadīth no: 705

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ḥadīth no’s: 1194, 2218, 2549

5 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3788

6 *Al-‘Ilal wa Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*, pg. 331

5. The narration of al-Barā ibn ‘Āzib in *Musnad Aḥmad*.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn suggests that Imām Aḥmad narrates this with two chains. In reality Imām Aḥmad only narrates it with a single chain: ‘Affān — Ḥammād ibn Salamah — **‘Alī ibn Zayd** — ‘Adī ibn Thābit — al-Barā’ ibn ‘Āzib

‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān is a weak narrator. He is on ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s list of 100 and we have discussed him previously.¹ The weakness of ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān is mitigated by the numerous other chains which support the narration. However, only those elements which are corroborated can be accepted, and the additional statements remain unreliable.

6. The narration of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه in al-Nasā’ī’s *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* رضي الله عنه.

This has been narrated by way of **Mūsā ibn Ya‘qūb** — Muḥājir ibn Mismār — ‘Ā’ishah bint Sa‘d — Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه.²

Mūsā ibn Ya‘qūb is unreliable and has been discredited by a number of experts including Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Nasā’ī. Ibn Ḥajar states that he was truthful but was affected with a bad memory.³

7. The narration of Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه in al-Nasā’ī’s *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī* رضي الله عنه.

This has been narrated by way of **Ya‘qūb ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Kathīr** — Muḥājir — ‘Ā’ishah bint Sa‘d — Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ رضي الله عنه.⁴

This version states that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم delivered this Khuṭbah on the way to Makkah. This is clearly an error since ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was not with

1 See discussions under Letter 16

2 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī*, Ḥadīth no: 94

3 *Mīzān al-ī’tidāl*, vol. 3 pg. 227; *Al-Taqrīb*, bio. 7026

4 *Khaṣā’iṣ ‘Alī*, Ḥadīth no: 96

the Prophet ﷺ on the journey to Makkah, instead he was in Yemen. Furthermore, the expert Ḥadīth scholar, al-Mizzī indicates that Ya‘qūb ibn Ja‘far ibn Abī Kathīr narrates this Ḥadīth from Mūsā ibn Ya‘qūb, from Muhājir.¹

Wording of the Ḥadīth, “Whomsoever considers me his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā”

There are varying elements of this narration:

- A. I am leaving behind Two Weighty things
- B. Holding on to the Book of Allah
- C. Upholding the rights of Ahl al-Bayt
- D. Whomsoever considers me his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā
- E. O Allah, take as friends those who take him as a friend, and take as enemies those who take him as an enemy
- F. And help whoever helps him. And forsake whoever forsakes him
- G. Cause the truth to be with him whichever course he treads

Points **A**, **B** and **C** are all correct and found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, as well as the reliable versions of this Ḥadīth.

Point **D** is correct even if it does not appear in the version of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* as it appears in many of the other sound versions. Al-Dhahabī considered this statement Mutawātir.²

1 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 32. Pg. 317

2 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 pg. 681 (Dār Hajr edition)

Point E is contested among the scholars. Al-Dhahabī accepts it due to multiple chains.¹ Those who do not accept it point out that almost all the chains that establish this addition are independently not very strong and it is because of corroboration that some accept it.

There is a narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* which seems to indicate that this addition was in fact a supplication made by those who narrated the Ḥadīth rather than it being the words of the Prophet ﷺ.² Allah Knows Best.

Points F and G are completely unreliable and are only known to appear in narrations with problematic chains.

1 Ibid

2 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 2 pg. 434, Ḥadīth no: 1311 (Risālah edition)

Letter 55

Muharram 19, 1330

I. Why use it as a testimonial if not Transmitted Consecutively?

Shi'as apply the principle of consecutive reporting when discussing imamate, due to the fact that they consider consecutive reporting as one of the principles of faith; so why do you quote the Ghadir hadith in support of your argument although such hadith is not consecutively reported according to Sunnis, even if its authenticity is attested to by their sahihs?

Sincerely,

S

Letter 56

Muharram 22, 1330

- I. Natural Laws Necessitate the Consecutive Reporting of Hadith al-Ghadir
- II. The Almighty's Benevolence
- III. Concern of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ
- IV. Concern of the Commander of the Faithful
- V. al-Husain's Concern
- VI. Concern of the Nine Imams عليه السلام
- VII. Shi'as' Concern
- VIII. Its Consecutive Reporting Through the Masses

Suffices to prove its application as an argument what we have mentioned in Letter No. 24 above.

1. The consecutive reporting of the Ghadir hadith is necessitated by the natural laws which Allah has created. Its similitude is like that of any great historical step undertaken by the most important man of a nation who announces, in the presence of thousands of his nationals, the undertaking of a major step, so that they may convey its news to various lands and nations, especially if such an undertaking enjoys the concern of his own family and their supporters in all generations to come, so that such an announcement might receive the widest possible publicity.

Can such an announcement, as significant as it is, be transmitted by, say, just one single person? Certainly not. Its news would spread as widely as the early morning sun rays, encompassing the plains as well as the oceans;

“And you shall never find any alteration to Allah’s order (Qur’an, 33:62).”

2. Hadith al-Ghadir has won the divine concern of Allah, the Dear One, the Sublime, Who inspired to His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, including it in His Qur’an which is recited by Muslims even during the late hours of the night or the early hours of the day, in public and in private, in their supplications and ceremonial prayers, from the top of their pulpits and the heights of their minarets, stating:

“O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord, and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message at all, and Allah will protect you from (evil) men.” (Qur’an, 5:67)¹

When he, peace be upon him and his progeny, conveyed the divine Message (implied in this verse), appointing ‘Ali as the Imam and entrusting him with the caliphate, Allah Almighty revealed the following verse:

“Today have I perfected your religion (Islam) for you, completed my blessing unto you, and accepted Islam as your religion.” (Qur’an, 5:3)²

So, congratulations upon congratulations to ‘Ali; this is Allah’s favour; He grants it to whomsoever He pleases. Anyone who looks into these verses will be profoundly impressed by such divine favours.

3. If divine concern is as such, no wonder, then, that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, expressed such a profound concern when death approached him, may my life be sacrificed for his sake. It was then that, according to the order which he received from Allah Almighty, he set to announce ‘Ali’s wilayat during his supreme pilgrimage, in the presence of so many witnesses, without being satisfied with similar previous announcements such as his warning in Mecca, or on other occasions with some of which you have by now become familiar. He, therefore, invited the believers to participate in his very last pilgrimage, known as the Farewell

Pilgrimage. People from far and wide responded to his invitation, and no less than one hundred thousand pilgrims left Medina with him.³

On the standing day at ‘Arafat, he informed the attendants that: “‘Ali is of me, and I am of ‘Ali, and nobody discharges the responsibility [of my religion] on my behalf except I and ‘Ali.”⁴

And when he came back from the pilgrimage and arrived at the valley of Khumm, trusted Gabriel descended upon him with “ayat al-tabligh,” verse of conveying the Message, from the Lord of the Worlds.

Immediately thereupon, he alighted there till those who lagged behind him, as well as those who went ahead of him, joined him. When they all assembled, he conducted the obligatory prayers then delivered a sermon about Allah, the Dear and the Omniscient, emphasizing the significance of ‘Ali’s wilayat. You have already heard a glittering report of its news, and what you have not heard is even more exact and more explicit; yet what you have heard should suffice you. Its news was carried on behalf of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, by all those masses who were present with him there and then and who are estimated to have been over one hundred thousand pilgrims from various lands.

The order of Allah, the Dear and Sublime, which does not suffer any alteration in His creation, necessitates the consecutive reporting of this hadith in spite of all obstacles in conveying it. Yet the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt S follow their own wise methods of disseminating it and publicizing for it.

4. Referring to the latter, I suggest that you may consider the measure taken by the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, then Caliph, in gathering people in the spacious meeting place, the Rahba plain. He then said: “I ask in the Name of Allah each Muslim who heard what the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said on the Ghadir Day to stand and testify to what he heard.

Nobody should stand except those who saw the Prophet with their own eyes and heard him with their own ears.”

Thirty sahabis, twelve of whom had participated in the Battle of Badr, stood and testified that the Prophet ﷺ took ‘Ali by the hand and asked people: “Do you know that I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?” They answered in the affirmative. He, peace be upon him and his progeny, then said: “To whomsoever I have been mawla, this (‘Ali) is his mawla; O Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him, and be the enemy of whosoever chooses to be his enemy.” You know that accusing thirty sahabis of being liars is rejected by reason; therefore, the achievement of consecutive reporting through their testimony is an irrefutable and undeniable proof.

The same hadith was transmitted from those thirty sahabis by all those crowds who were then present at the Rahba, and who disseminated it after their dispersal throughout the land, thus providing it with extremely wide publicity. Obviously, the Rahba incident took place during the caliphate of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who received the oath of allegiance in the year 35 A.H.

The Ghadir event took place during the Farewell Pilgrimage, 10 A.H. The time period separating the first date from the second is twenty-five years during which many events took place such as a devastating plague, wars, the opening of new countries, and the invasions contemporary to the three righteous caliphs.

This time period, one fourth of a century, merely due to its duration, wars and invasions, in addition to a sweeping and devastating plague, had ended the lives of many of those who had witnessed the Ghadir event, especially the elderly among the sahabah as well as their youths who were eager to meet their Lord through conducting jihad in His way, the Exalted, the Omniscient, and in the way of His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, so much so that their dead outnumbered their survivors.

Some of them were scattered throughout the land, and many of those were not present at the Rahba except those who kept company with the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in Iraq, and these were only males.

In spite of all this, thirty sahabah, twelve of whom were participants in the Battle of Badr, had heard hadith al-Ghadir from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

There may have been others who hated to testify, such as Anas ibn Malik⁵ and others who received their due punishment in lieu of the prayers of the Commander of the Faithful to Allah to punish those who hid the truth while knowing it.

Had he been able to gather all sahabis who were alive then, males and females, and address them in the same way which he employed at Rahba, several times that many would have testified; so, what if he had asked people in Hijaz before the passage of such a long time after the incident of the Ghadir? Contemplate upon this fact and you will find it a very strong proof testifying to the consecutive reporting of hadith al-Ghadir.

The books of tradition should suffice you in their documentation of hadith al-Ghadir. Take, for example, what Imam Ahmad has quoted on page 370, Vol 4, of his Musnad from Abul Tufayl who has said: “Ali gathered people at the Rahba, then he said to them: ‘I adjure in the name of Allah every Muslim who heard what the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, had said on the Ghadir Day to state his testimony.’ Thirty persons stood up.”

Abu Na'im has said: “Many stood up and testified how the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ took 'Ali by the hand and asked people: ‘Do you know that I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?’ They answered: ‘We do, O Messenger of Allah!’ Then he said: ‘To whomsoever I have been a mawla, this 'Ali is his mawla; O Lord! Befriend whoever

befriends him and be the enemy of whoever sets himself as his enemy.”

Abul-Tufail continues to say: “I left the place dismayed (disgusted with many people’s ignorance of this hadith), and I met Zayd ibn Arqam and said to him: ‘I have heard ‘Ali say such and such.’ Zayd said: ‘Then do not deny that you have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, say so about him.’”

Zayd’s testimony stated above, and ‘Ali’s statement in this regard, may be added to the testimony of the thirty sahabis, thus bringing the number of narrators of this hadith to thirty-two sahabis. Imam Ahmad has recorded ‘Ali’s hadith on page 119, Vol. 1, of his Musnad as transmitted by Abdul-Rahman ibn Abu Layla. The latter says: “I saw ‘Ali at the Rahba abjuring people to testify, emphasizing that only those who had seen and heard the Prophet ﷺ should stand and testify. Twelve participants in the Battle of Badr, whom I remember so well as if I am looking at them right now, did so.”

Abdul-Rahman quotes the latter testifying that they had all heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, asking people on the Ghadir Day: “Do not I have more authority over the believers’ lives than they themselves do, and my wives are their mothers?” The audience responded: “Yes, indeed, O Messenger of Allah!”

Then he said, as Abdul-Rahman quotes him, “Then whosoever takes me as his mawla must take ‘Ali as his mawla; O Mighty Lord! Befriend whoever befriends him and be the enemy of whoever bears animosity towards him!”

Another narration is recorded by Imam Ahmad on the same page. It quotes the Prophet ﷺ saying: “O Lord! Befriend whoever takes him as his wali and be the enemy of whoever antagonizes him; support whoever supports him, and abandon whoever abandons him.” The narrative goes

on to state that with the exception of three men, the witnesses stood to testify. 'Ali invoked Allah to curse those who hid the truth, and his invocation was heeded.

If you add 'Ali and Zayd ibn Arqam to the afore-mentioned twelve participants in the Battle of Badr, then fourteen is obviously the number of witnesses. By tracing the traditions regarding the Rahba incident, 'Ali's wisdom becomes manifest in disseminating hadith al-Ghadir and publicizing for it.

5. The Master of Martyrs, Abu Abdullah al-Husain, peace be upon him, has left us a legacy of a very memorable stand which he took during the reign of Mu'awiyah. It was then that truth became manifest. It was similar to the stand taken by 'Ali at the Rahba.

During the pilgrimage season, al-Husain عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, surrounded by throngs of pilgrims, praised his grandfather, father, mother and brother, and delivered an unprecedented, wise and eloquent speech that captivated his audience and won their hearts and minds. His sermon was inclusive, one wherein he reawakened the masses, traced and researched history, and paid the Ghadir incident its fair and just dues. His great stand, therefore, produced great results, and it became equivalent to hadith al-Ghadir in its fame and wide publicity.

6. His nine descendants, all sinless Imams, applied their own methods to publicizing and propagating the same hadith. Their methods reflect their wisdom which is comprehended by all those who possess sound senses. They used the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah as a special annual feast to congratulate and congratulate one another, merrily and humbly seeking nearness to Allah, the Exalted, the Mighty, through fasting, prayers and supplications.

They go beyond limits in their deeds of goodness and acts of righteousness, thanking Allah for the blessings which He bestowed upon them on that Day by virtue of the text that nominated the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام as Caliph, and His divine promise for him to be the Imam. They used to visit their kin, give more generously to their families, visit their brethren, look after their neighbours, and enjoin their followers to do likewise.

7. For this reason, the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah of every year is celebrated as a feast by the Shi'as of all times and climes.⁶ It is then that they rush to their mosques to offer obligatory and supererogatory prayers, recite the Glorious Qur'an, and read the most celebrated supplications as a token of thanking Allah Almighty for perfecting His religion and completing His blessings upon them by nominating the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام as the Imam [in the theological as well as the secular sense].

It is then that they exchange visits and happily wish each other the best, seeking nearness to Allah through righteousness and goodness, and through pleasing their kin and neighbours. On that day, every year, they visit the mausoleum of the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, where no less than a hundred thousand pilgrims come from far and wide. There, they worship Allah on that day in the same way their purified Imams used to worship Him: through fasting, prayers, and remembrance of Allah. They seek nearness to Him through acts of righteousness and the payment of sadaqat.

They do not disperse before addressing the sacred shrine with a highly commended address authored by some of their Imams. It includes testifying to the glorious stand taken by the Commander of the Faithful S, honouring his feats and struggle to lay the foundations of the principles of the faith, his service of the Master of Prophets and Messengers صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, and his virtues and merits, among which was the honour which he had received from the Prophet on the Ghadir Day. This is the custom of the Shi'as every year.

Their orators have always been referring to hadith al-Ghadir, quoting its tradition or even without reference to them, and their poets are accustomed to compose poems in its commemoration in old as well as modern times;⁷ therefore, there is no way to cast doubts about its being consecutively reported from the sources of Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and their Shi'as.

Their motives to memorize it by heart, their efforts to maintain its pristine text, safeguard its authenticity, publicize and disseminate it., all have indeed resulted in the achievement of their most aspired objectives. Refer to all the four major Shi'a Musnads, as well as other Shi'a references, containing well-documented and supported traditions, and you will find each one of them reverberating with the same meaning, and each tradition supporting the other. Whoever acquaints himself with these traditions will find out that this hadith is mutawatir through their precious sources.

8. There is no doubt about its being consecutively reported through Sunni sources, according to natural laws, as you have come to know;

“Allah’s creation suffers no alteration; this is the Right Guidance, but most people do not know.” (Qur’an, 30:30)

The author of Al-Fatawa al-Hamidiyya, in spite of his stubbornness, admits the consecutive reporting of this hadith in his abridged dissertation titled Al-Salawat al-Fakhira fil Ahadith al-Mutawatira.” Al-Sayyuti and other scholars of exegesis all admit the same. Refer to Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, author of the famous works titled “Tafsir” and “Tarikh,”

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id ibn Aqdah, Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn 'Uthman al-Thahbi, have all written critiques of the sources of this hadith. Each one of them has written an entire book on this subject. Ibn Jarir includes in his own book as many as one hundred and five sources for this hadith alone.⁸ Al-Thahbi, in spite of his fanaticism, has testified to the truth of many of its sources. In chapter sixteen of Ghayat al-Maram, as

many as eighty ahadith transmitted by Sunnis testify to the authenticity of the Ghadir hadith.

Yet he did not quote al-Tirmithi, al-Nisai, al-Tabrani, al-Bazzar, Abu Ya'li, or quite a few other reporters who transmit this hadith. Al-Sayyuti quotes this hadith while discussing 'Ali in his book *Tarikh al-Khulafa'* transmitted by al-Tirmithi, adding, "This hadith is also recorded by Ahmad as transmitted by 'Ali عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, and also by Ayyub al-Ansari, Zayd ibn Arqam, 'Umar [ibn al-Khattab], and Thu Murr. Abu Ya'li quotes it from Abu Hurayrah, al-Tabrani from Ibn 'Umar and from Ibn Abbas as transmitted by Malik ibn al-Huwayrith, Habshi ibn Janadah, and Jarir, and also by Ammarah and Buraydah."

A proof of the fame of this hadith is evident from the fact that Imam Ahmad records it in his *Musnad* from Riyah ibn al-Harish as transmitted by two sources. It states that a group of men once came to 'Ali S and said: "Assalamu Alaikum, our mawla."

The Imam asked who they were, and they answered him by saying that they were his subjects. The Imam asked them: "How can I be your mawla, while you are [stranger] bedouin Arabs?" They said: "We have heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on the Ghadir Day saying: 'Whoever I have been his mawla, 'Ali is his mawla.'"

Riyah says that when they left, he followed them and asked them who they were, and that they said to him: "We are a group of the Ansar (Medenite Supporters) in the company of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari." Another proof of its fame is what has been recorded by Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi while explaining *Surat al-Ma'arij* in his book *Al-Tafsir al-Kabir*, relying on two very highly respected sources, and stating the following:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, ordered people on the Ghadir Day to assemble, then he took 'Ali's hand and said:

“Whoever accepts me as his mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla.” The news of this announcement spread throughout the land, and al-Nu‘man al-Fahri came to know about this hadith. Riding his she-camel, he came to meet the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

Having alighted, he said the following to the Prophet: “O Muhammad! You ordered us to bear witness that there is no deity except Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah, and we obeyed; then you ordered us to offer prayers five times a day, and we agreed; then you ordered us to pay zakat, and we agreed; then you ordered us to fast during the month of Ramadan and we agreed; then you ordered us to perform the pilgrimage and we agreed; then, as if all of this is not sufficient, you favoured your cousin to all of us and said ‘Whoever accepts me as his mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla;’ is this one of your own orders, or is it Allah’s?”

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered: “I swear by the One and only God that this is the command of Allah, the Exalted and Omniscient;” whereupon al-Harith left heading towards his animal murmuring softly to himself: “O Lord! If what Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم says is true, then let it rain stones, or let a severe torment descend upon us.”

He hardly reached his animal before Allah caused a stone to cleave his head, penetrate his body and come out of his anus, leaving him dead on the spot. It is in reference to that incident that Allah Almighty revealed the following verse:

“A man who brought a question (to the Prophet) asked for a sure penalty - which cannot be warded off by those who reject the truth - from Allah, Lord of the Ways of Ascent.”⁹ (Qur’an, 70:1-3)

This is how the tradition, quoted verbatim,¹⁰ concludes. Its authenticity is accepted by many Sunni scholars as a common fact, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. We do not dispute its revelation in reference to 'Ali's wilayat on Ghadir Khumm Day, and our narratives from the sources of the purified progeny are consecutive. Suffices you for reference to its narration by others besides the latter what Imam al-Wahid has quoted in his exegesis of Surat al-Ma'ida on page 150 of his book Asbabul Nuzul from two respected sources: 'Atiyah and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri. The author says: "This verse [that is, the one reading: "O Messenger! Convey that which has been revealed unto you from your Lord"] was revealed on Ghadir Khumm Day in reference to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ." The same is narrated by al-Hafiz Abu Na'im who interprets it in his book Nuzul al-Qur'an relying on two sources one of which is Abu Sa'id and the other is Abu Rafi'. It is also narrated by Imam Ibrahim ibn Muhammad al-Hamawaini al-Shafi'i in his book Al-Fawa'id from various sources ending with Abu Hurayrah. It is quoted by Imam Abu Ishaq al-Tha'labi while explaining the meaning of this verse in his Al-Tafsir al-Kabir from two respected sources. What testifies to its reference to 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ is the fact that prayers had been already established, zakat was enforced, fasting was legislated, the pilgrimage to the House was being conducted, what is permissible was clarified and so was what is forbidden, the Shari'ah was already regulated and its injunctions enforced; so, what else required Allah to place so much emphasis other than on the issue of caliphate, one which prompted Him to pressure His Prophet in a way which was almost similar to threatening? And regarding what, if not caliphate, could the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ feel presentiment of dissension if he did not convey it, something which required God's own immunity against any harm that might result from discharging it?

2. sahihs documenting the occasion that necessitated the revelation of this verse are consecutive from the sources of the purified progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ. We do not doubt what the purified progeny of Muhammad صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ narrates even when al-Bukhari claims that the verse was revealed on the day of 'Arafat, for the members of the Prophet's house know what is revealed in their house.

3. Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, in a chapter on the Farewell Pilgrimage in his book *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyya* [Biography of the Prophet], writes: "Ninety thousand - some say a hundred and twenty-four thousand, while others say more - accompanied him, peace be upon him and his progeny, from Medina, and this is just a rough figure of the number of people who accompanied him," to the end of his statement from which you come to know that those who went back with him were more than a hundred thousand, and they all witnessed the Ghadir hadith.

4. We have quoted this hadith in our Letter No. 48; so, if you refer to it, you will find it verbatim numbered 15 in the said reference; the same Letter refers to and comments on it in a way worthy of the attention of researchers.

5. He, peace be upon him, said to him then: "Why don't you stand with other companions of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and testify to what you heard of him then?" He answered: "O Commander of the Faithful! I have grown old, and I have forgotten it." 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ said: "If you are telling a lie, then may Allah strike you with a white [disease, i.e. leprosy] which your turban cannot conceal." He hardly left before his face was filled with the marks of leprosy; so, he used to say: "I have become the object of a curse invoked by the Righteous Servant." This incident is quite famous, and a testimony for its authenticity exists when Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal quotes it at the end of page 119, Vol. 1, of his *Musnad*, adding: "They all, except three men, rose to testify; and those three fell under the effect of his curse."

6. Ibn al-Athir, while narrating the significant events that took place in the year 352 in his Kamil, says the following on page 181, Vol. 8, of his history book: “On the eighteenth of Thul-Hijjah of that year, Mu’izz al-Dawla ordered decorations to be installed in Baghdad, fires to be lit at the police quarters, and all merriments be displayed; so, market-places were opened at night just as is customary during ‘Id nights; he did all that to celebrate ‘Id al-Ghadir, Ghadir Khumm. Drums were beaten; and trumpets were sounded, and it was quite a memorable day.”

7. Al-Kumait ibn Zayd has said:

On the day of the dawh, the Ghadir dawh day,
Caliphate was made manifest for him: were they to obey...

Abu Tammam, in a poetic masterpiece which he includes in his diwan, says:

On the Day of Ghadir, truth looked clear and bright;
Redolently, with no curtains nor bars to hide;
The Messenger of Allah stood there to invite
Them to come close to what is just and right,
Gesturing with his hands, introducing your wali
And mawla; yet see what happened to you and me!
He brings the news to people so eloquently,
While they come with grudge and depart grudgingly,
Yet he made the truth eloquently shine,
While they usurped even your right and mine.
You made its destiny the sharp blades of your sword:
And the grave for whoever wanted the truth to uphold...

8. The author of *Ghayat al-Maram* says near the conclusion of Chapter 16, page 89, of his book: “Ibn Jarir has quoted the Ghadir hadith from ninety-five sources in a book which he dedicated to this subject, calling it *Al-Wilayat*, and Ibn ‘Uqdah has quoted it from one hundred and five sources written down in a book which he also dedicated solely for this subject-matter. Imam Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddiq al-Magharibi has stated that both al-Thahbi and Ibn ‘Uqdah have dedicated a special book solely for this hadith;” so, refer to the sermon in his valuable book titled *Fath al-Malik al-‘Ali Bisihhati Babil ‘Ilm ‘Ali*.
9. This is quoted from al-Tha’labi by a group of Sunni dignitaries such as scholar al-Shiblinji of Egypt in a biography of ‘Ali in his book *Nurul Absar*; so, you may refer to its eleventh page if you wish.
10. Refer to what al-Halabi has quoted of the narratives related to the Farewell Pilgrimage in his book of biography known as *Al-Sira al-Halabiyya* and you will find this hadith at the end of page 214 of its third volume.

Discussions

This round of ‘correspondence’ commences under the presumption that the term *Mawlā* means successor. We have provided adequate evidence showing why this term does not refer to *Imāmah*.¹ The *Ḥadīth* being *Mutawātir* [mass-transmitted] does not change the meaning. It does not help at all; as a matter of fact it is a redundant line of reasoning to begin with. If anything, it reinforces the fact that *Mawlā* was not meant to be succession after the Prophet ﷺ in that context. Why would they all narrate it only to practice contrary to what it means?

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is going to cite narrations from his own sources which imply that whoever rejected the *Imāmah* immediately after the Prophet ﷺ became apostate. It is convenient that they are believers to argue *Tawātur*, but they are apostates when it applies to the doctrine of *Imāmah*? All the Companions whose names he will list under those who narrate the *Ḥadīth* about *Ghadīr Khumm* have pledged allegiance to *Abū Bakr* رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ after the Prophet ﷺ departed from this world.

The *Tawātur* in question refers only to the statement, “Whomsoever considers me his *Mawlā*; ‘Alī is also his *Mawlā*.” By necessity it stands to reason that this was said at *Ghadīr Khumm* and not at *Ḥajj* as we have pointed out previously.² All the additional phrases are not considered *Mutawātir*.³

The circumstances and reasoning mentioned by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn for the *Tawātur* of the sermon at *Ghadīr* are no different from the sermon that the Prophet ﷺ delivered just days before his passing; wherein he said:

عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال خطب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال إن الله خير عبدا بين الدنيا وبين ما عنده
فاختار ما عند الله فبكى أبو بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه فقلت في نفسي ما يبكي هذا الشيخ إن يكن الله

1 See discussions under Letters: 26, 36, 38

2 See discussions under Letter 8

3 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 8 pg. 335; *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7 pg. 681 (Dār Hajr edition)

خير عبدا بين الدنيا وبين ما عنده فاختر ما عند الله فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم هو العبد وكان أبو بكر أعلمنا قال يا أبا بكر لا تبك إن أمن الناس علي في صحبته وماله أبو بكر ولو كنت متخذا خليلا من أمتي لاتخذت أبا بكر ولكن أخوة الإسلام ومودته لا يبقين في المسجد باب إلا سد إلا باب أبي بكر

“Allah gave a choice to one of (His) slaves either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter. He chose the latter.”

Abū Bakr began to weep. I said to myself, “What is this old man weeping for, if Allah gave a choice to one (of His) slaves either to choose this world or what is with Him in the Hereafter and he chose the latter?” (However) that slave was Allah’s Messenger ﷺ; he was referring himself. Abū Bakr was more knowledgeable than us.

The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Abū Bakr! Do not cry.”

The Prophet ﷺ then added, “The person who has favoured me the most with his wealth and companionship is Abū Bakr. If I were to take a *Khalīl* (close friend) other than Allah, I would certainly have taken Abū Bakr. Nevertheless, we share the brotherhood in Islam and mutual love. No door leading into the Masjid is to be left open besides the door of Abū Bakr.”¹

The content of this Khuṭbah is narrated by Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī², ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbās³, ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr⁴, ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd⁵, Jundub ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Bajalī⁶, Abū Hurayrah⁷ and Abū al-Mu‘allā⁸ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ. The claim of Tawātur is present here as well.

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ṣalāt, Ḥadīth no: 466; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2382

2 *Ibid*

3 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3657

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3658

5 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2383

6 *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Masājid, Ḥadīth no: 532

7 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 12 pg. 414, Ḥadīth no: 7446 ; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3661; *Ibn Mājah*, al-Muqaddimah, Ḥadīth no: 94

8 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 25 pg. 266, Ḥadīth no: 15922; *al-Tirmidhī*, Abwāb al-Manāqib, Ḥadīth no: 3659

Ahl al-Sunnah accept both narrations, whereas the Rāfiḍah reject this narration and only accept the Ḥadīth, “Whomsoever is my Mawlā...”

When was the Khuṭbah delivered?

We have dealt with the absurdity of the claim that the verse of *Tablīgh* was revealed in relation to the sermon at Ghadīr. It is self-contradictory to maintain that the appointment was made at Ḥajj, and the instruction to appoint ‘Alī, in *Āyat al-Tablīgh*, was revealed in connection with the sermon of Ghadīr Khumm. If the Prophet ﷺ already conveyed it, why instruct him to convey it again? Why had the hundred-thousand present at the Farewell Ḥajj pledge their allegiance to Abū Bakr ﷺ after the Prophet’s ﷺ demise if ‘Alī ﷺ had already been appointed?

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn misquotes the narration of Ḥubshī ibn Junādah because he either misunderstood the meaning of the narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* or deliberately intended to mislead his audience. The mention of the *Farewell Ḥajj* in this narration is to prove that Ḥubshī ﷺ was a companion of the Prophet ﷺ as he was present during the Prophet’s ﷺ *Farewell Ḥajj*; not that he heard this Ḥadīth during the Prophet’s ﷺ *Farewell Ḥajj*! This narration has been discussed previously in detail.¹

As for discarding the narration in al-Bukhārī about the circumstances under which the other verse in Sūrah al-Mā’idah was revealed:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

*This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.*²

This narration cannot be said to be the invention of al-Bukhārī. It appears in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* as well as we have pointed out in the previous discussion.³ The bold

1 See discussions on Letter 48, Ḥadīth. 15

2 Sūrah al-Mā’idah: 3

3 Letter 54

claim of sufficing on what is found in their ‘Ṣaḥīḥ’ collections is rich when ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn cannot even find a single narration proving Imāmah that meets the SHĪT standards of Ḥadīth criticism as we shall demonstrate under Letter 62.

The narration about ‘Alī رضي الله عنه enlisting the confirmation those companions who heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم saying, “Whoever considers me his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā,” occurred less than four months from ‘Alī’s رضي الله عنه assassination at the hands of the Khawārij. Why would ‘Alī require their confirmation from these companions—who pledged allegiance to Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه after the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم demise—if he sought to justify his leadership when he was already the sworn Khalīfah? The only plausible explanation is that he did not understand this term to mean his appointment. Instead, he understood it to mean that it was his right to be respected and loved; an issue which the dissenting Khawārij ignored completely.

Allegation against Anas ibn Mālik

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alleges that Anas رضي الله عنه withheld his testimony on this occasion and that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه cursed him on account of it.

There may have been others who hated to testify, such as Anas ibn Malik,
and others who received their due punishment.

The narration which he refers to—under footnote no. 5—has been disproved by the very Ibn Qutaybah, whose book, *al-Ma‘ārif*, he relied on when listing the 100 narrators.

Ibn Qutaybah states that this story is baseless and has no credibility whatsoever!¹ The plot thickens when we discover that this story cannot be found except in Ibn Qutaybah’s *Kitāb al-Ma‘ārif*. Ibn Qutaybah only related the incident to point out that it was a forgery. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn came across the narration but conveniently

1 *Kitāb al-Ma‘ārif*, pg. 194-195

forgot to add that Ibn Qutaybah calls it a forgery. To hide his crime, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn conceals his source.

Reality and fact, however, disprove the allegation. Al-Ṭabarānī has recorded a narration which proves that Anas رضي الله عنه was one of those who stood up confirming that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did, in fact, say, “Whomsoever considers me his Mawlā; ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”¹ The narration also mentions Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa‘īd رضي الله عنهما among those who stood up in confirmation.

Problem with using this narration to prove Tawātur

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn bases his claim on the mass-transmission of this narration on the fact that twelve, or thirteen, or fourteen, or even thirty companions testified to the Ḥadīth of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. This is inherently flawed since it remains a solitary narration. The Tawātur of this narration by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s standard is no different from the narration of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم not being inherited. If he claims Tawātur here, then he has essentially forfeited all arguments on the issue of Fadak:

عن مالك بن أوس بن الحدثان قال دخلت على عمر بن الخطاب ودخل عليه عثمان بن عفان والزبير بن العوام وعبد الرحمن بن عوف وسعد بن أبي وقاص ثم جاء علي والعباس يختصمان فقال عمر لهم أنشدكم بالله الذي ياذنه تقوم السماء والأرض تعلمون أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا نورث ما تركناه صدقة قالوا نعم قال عمر فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فنجئت أنت وهذا إلى أبي بكر تطلب أنت ميراثك من ابن أخيك ويطلب هذا ميراث امرأته من أبيها فقال أبو بكر إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا نورث ما تركناه صدقة والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق قال أبو عيسى وفي الحديث قصة طويلة . وهذا حديث حسن صحيح غريب من حديث مالك بن أنس

Mālik ibn Aws ibn al-Ḥadathān relates:

I entered upon ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Then, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, Zubayr, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Awf, and Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ entered. Then ‘Alī and

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 1 pg. 119, Ḥadīth no: 175

‘Abbās came disputing. ‘Umar said to them, “I ask you, by Allah, by Whose Will the heavens and the earth are maintained, you do know that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘We are not inherited from, what we leave is charity?’”

They said, “Yes.”

‘Umar said, “When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ died, Abū Bakr said, ‘I am the custodian of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.’ So you and he went to Abu Bakr and you sought your inheritance from your nephew, and he sought the inheritance of his wife from her father. So Abu Bakr said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘We are not inherited from, what we leave is charity.’ And Allah knows that he is truthful, innocent, instructing and following the truth.”¹

The same elements for ‘Tawātur’ are present here.

1 *Al-Tirmidhī*, Kitāb al-Siyar, Ḥadīth no: 1610

Letter 57

Muharram 25, 1330

I. I. Interpreting Hadith alGhadir

II. II. The Link

1. Believing in the truthfulness of the Sahabah requires interpreting hadith alGhadir, whether it is consecutively reported or not. For this reason, Sunnis have claimed that “mawla” bears various meanings all of which have been applied in the Holy Qur’an. It may mean “the deserving,” as the Almighty says when He addresses the infidels: “Your resort is the Fire; it is your mawla,” meaning “You deserve the punishment of the Fire.”

Another meaning is “the supporter,” as Allah, praised be His Name, says: “It is so because Allah is the mawla of those who believe, and the infidels have no mawla.” It also means “the heir,” as in the statement of the Almighty: “For each We have assigned mawali [mawlas] from the inheritance of the parents and the relatives,” meaning heirs.

It also means “relatives,” as is clearly understood from the following verse of the Dear and Mighty One: “I fear the mawali after me,” meaning relatives. It also means “friend,” as the verse suggests: “On that Day, no mawla will be able to do any good to his mawla.” “Wali” also connotes the person who is most qualified to fare with someone else’s affairs, as we may say: “Mr. so and so is the wali of the minor.”

It also means “the supporter” and “the loved one.” Some have said: “The gist of the hadith could be ‘whoever I have supported, befriended, or loved;’ for ‘Ali was as such, and this meaning agrees with the prestige enjoyed by the good ancestors, and with the imamate of the three righteous caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them.

2. It is also possible that some people regarded this hadith to refer to 'Ali simply because one of 'Ali's companions in Yemen noticed his uncompromising policy in executing the commandments of Allah; therefore, he spoke ill of him; for this reason, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, did not appreciate their attitude and stood up on the Ghadir Day, praised the Imam and lauded his contributions, attracting the attention to his prestige and defending his name against those who intended to chew it.

The pretext used by such a group of advocates is that in his sermon, the Prophet ﷺ praised 'Ali in particular, saying: "Whoever I have been his wali, 'Ali is his wali," and his Ahl Al-Bayt in general, saying: "I am leaving with you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my progeny, my Ahl Al-Bayt;" so, he simply recommended that they should cherish 'Ali in particular and his kin in general. They claim that such a statement neither commits Ali to be his successor, nor does it connote imamate for him, Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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Letter 58

Muharram 27, 1330

I. Hadith alGhadir Cannot be Interpreted

II. Pretext for its Interpretation is Speculative and Misleading

1. Somehow I have the feeling that your heart is not satisfied with what you yourself have stated, and your soul is not thereby pleased! You revere the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and cherish his pristine wisdom, infallibility, conclusive Prophethood, believing that he is the master of the wise, and the seal of the prophets:

“He does not speak of his own inclination; it is but a revealed inspiration; he has been taught by one mighty in power (Qur’an, 53:3-5).”

Suppose a philosopher from another faith asks you about the Ghadir Day saying:

“Why did he ﷺ stop all those thousands of companions from proceeding, confining them in midday heat in such a sunbaked plain? Why did he make sure to call back whoever advanced, and wait for whoever lagged behind? Why did he camp with them in such a desolate place where neither water nor vegetation was available? Then why did he preach to them about Allah Almighty in that place and enjoined those who were present there to convey, upon dispersing, what they had heard to those who had not, and why did he start with a selfeulogizing sermon, saying: ‘It looks like my Lord’s Messenger [angel of death, Isra’il] is about to come to call me [to return to my Lord] and I will respond to the call; I am responsible, and so are you,’ and what message was the Prophet ﷺ enjoined to convey and which the nation was enjoined to heed?

Why did he ask them: ‘Do not you believe that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad ﷺ is His Servant and Messenger, that His Paradise is just and His Fire is just, that death is just and the life after death is just, that the Hour is undoubtedly approaching, that Allah will bring to life all those who are lying in their graves?’ and they responded in the affirmative? Why did he immediately take ‘Ali’s hand, lift it till the white hair in his armpit became visible, saying: ‘O people! Allah is my mawla, and I am the mawla of the believers;’ then why did he explain his statement ‘I am the mawla of the believers’ by asking them: ‘Do not I have more authority over your lives than you yourselves have?’

Then why did he say, having made such an explanation, ‘Whoever has accepted me as his mawla, this (‘Ali) is his mawla; O Lord! Befriend whosoever befriends him and be the enemy of whosoever antagonizes him; support whosoever supports him and betray whosoever betrays him,’ and why did he specifically choose him and pray for him in such a manner which is worthy only of just Imams and truthful successors?

And why did he require them to testify by asking them: ‘Do I not have more authority over you than you yourselves have?’ and they answered in the affirmative; then he said: ‘To whomsoever I have been a mawla, ‘Ali is his mawla,’ or ‘To whomsoever I have been a wali, ‘Ali is his wali, and why did he link the Qur’an to his progeny, thus making them the examples for the wise to follow till the day of Judgment?’

Why so much concern from such a wise Prophet? What was the mission that necessitated all these introductions, and what was the aspired objective from such a memorable stand? What was the message which Allah Almighty ordered him to convey when He said:

‘O Messenger! Convey what has just been revealed unto you from your Lord, and if you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His Message (at all), and Allah will protect you from (evil) men (Qur’an, 5:67),’

and what mission required so much emphasis from Allah Who demanded, in a tone so close to threatening, to be conveyed? What was the affair regarding which the Prophet feared dissension if not conveyed by him, one the announcement of which required a profound protection from Allah against the harm of the hypocrites...?”

I ask you, in the name of your grandfather, if you are asked all these questions, will you answer them by saying that Allah, the Omniscient, the allPowerful, simply wanted to explain to the Muslims how ‘Ali had been supporting them, and how friendly he was to them? I do not think that you would give such an answer, and I do not think that you would interpret Allah’s words, or the words of the master of the wise, the seal of messengers and prophets, as such.

You are above thinking that he ﷺ would exhaust his means and resources in explaining something too clear, according to reason and common sense, to require such an explanation. There is no doubt that you look at the actions and statements of the Prophet ﷺ in a better light, one which is not derided by the discreet, nor criticized by philosophers or sages. There is no doubt that you appreciate the value of his statements and actions and render them to wisdom and infallibility.

Allah the Almighty has said:

“He is a blessed Messenger endowed with strength from the One with the Throne, obeyed, able, and trustworthy; certainly your fellow is not possessed (Qur’an, 81:19-22).”

You are above accusing him of clarifying what is already clear, or expounding upon what is already common knowledge, or bringing unusual introductions for such clarifications, or introductions having no bearing over nor correlation thereto. Allah and His Messenger are above that. You, may Allah support the truth through your person, know that what suits

such measures, undertaken in the midday heat of that place, ones that are conducive to his actions and statements on the Ghadir Day, is nothing less than the conveying of the divine Message, and the appointment of his vicegerent.

Logical proofs and rational explanations unequivocally prove that what he intended to do on that day was nothing other than the appointment of ‘Ali as his vicegerent and successor. This hadith, supported by proofs, is an explicit text regarding ‘Ali’s caliphate, one which does not even require an interpretation, and there is no way to understand it otherwise. This is quite clear for anyone who is

“... with a sound mind, attentive, and a witness (Qur’an, 50:37).”

2. As regarding the pretext they claim, it is nothing but a speculation and an adulteration. It is the sophistry of confusion and embellishment. The Prophet ﷺ dispatched ‘Ali to Yemen twice, the first took place in 8 A.H. It was then that scandalmongers spread rumours about him, and some people complained about him to the Prophet ﷺ upon their return to Medina. It was then that he resented their complaints,¹ and they saw the sparkle of anger on his face; yet they did not refrain from trying again.

The second time took place in 10 A.H. It was then that the Prophet ﷺ tied a knot on ‘Ali’s standard, fixed his headwear with his own hands, and said: “Proceed, and do not be distracted;” whereupon ‘Ali عليه السلام proceeded to his destination as the divinely guided leader of the rest till he discharged the responsibility entrusted to him by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny.

Then he participated in the Prophet’s Farewell Pilgrimage. It was then that the Prophet welcomed him very warmly and even shared with him his own offering. It was then that no scandalmonger dared to open his mouth, nor did any unfair person charge him with anything; so, how can this

hadith be necessitated by the objections of those in the opposition party? Or how could it be only an answer to their charges, as some people claim?

Yet mere antagonism to 'Ali is not sufficient for the Prophet to pile praises on him in the way which he has done from a pulpit of camel saddles on the Ghadir Day except, Allah forbid, that he risks his own deeds and statements, responsibilities and mission, just to please 'Ali. His divine wisdom is way above that, for Allah, praised be His Name, says: "It is the saying of a glorious Messenger; it is not the speech of a poet; little do you believe; nor is it the speech of a monk; little do you remember; it is but revelation from the Lord of the Worlds." (69:40-43)

Had he desired to just show 'Ali's contributions, and to rebut those who bore grudge against him, he صلى الله عليه وسلم would simply have said: "This is my cousin, my soninlaw, the father of my descendants, the master of my household; therefore, do not harm him," or something like this to show mere admission of status and dignity.

But the way this hadith is worded gives no impression other than what we have suggested. It points out rational and deductive proofs. Let the reason be whatever it may be, the statements quite obviously bear explicit meanings which demand no inquiry into their causes.

As regarding his reference to his household in hadith alGhadir, it is only to support the same meaning which we have suggested, since he correlated them to the Glorious Book of Allah, setting them as examples for all the wise, saying: "I am leaving with you these which, as long as you adhere to, shall never let you stray: the Book of Allah, and my progeny, my household." He did not do that only so that the nation might realize that it had none to refer to, nor rely upon, after the Prophet, other than both of them.

Suffices you for a testimony regarding the Imams from the Prophet's purified progeny عليه السلام is that they are correlated to Allah's Book which

no wrong can approach from front nor from back. Just as it is not possible to refer to any book which differs in its judgment from the Book of Allah, the Praised One, the Sublime, it is not possible likewise to refer to an Imam who opposes in his judgment the Imams from the purified progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Consider his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “They shall never separate till they join me at the Pool;” it is a proof that the earth shall never be without an Imam from his loins who is equivalent to the Book. Anyone who scrutinizes this hadith will find it restricting the caliphate to the Imams from the purified progeny of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

This is supported by the hadith reported by Zayd ibn Thabit and quoted by Ahmad in his Musnad at the beginning of page 122, Vol. 5. It states that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “I am leaving you with two successors: the Book of Allah, like a rope extending from heavens to earth, and my household, for they both shall never part from each other till they join me at the Pool.”

Such a statement is indeed indicative of assigning the caliphate to the Imams from the purified progeny, peace be upon them. You know that the text which emphasizes following the Prophet’s progeny implies following ‘Ali’s leadership, since ‘Ali, after the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, is the undisputed master, and the obeyed Imam of his household. On one hand, hadith alGhadir and others like it imply that ‘Ali is the Imam of the Prophet’s household whose status, according to Allah and His Messenger, is equal to that of the Holy Qur’an. On the other hand, it gives credit to his own great personality because of which he became the wali of all those whose wali is none other than the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Wassalam.

Sincerely

Sh

Footnotes

1. We have clarified the same in our Letter No. 36; so, refer to it and do not overlook our comment in this regard.

Discussions

There is not much to discuss under this round of correspondence since much of what he has mentioned he is merely a repetition of what he mentioned earlier in his writings. He has not brought any academic argument. Instead he employed a very emotive tone to give a new veneer to his older arguments.

His claim that the Prophet ﷺ camped at a desolate place where neither water nor vegetation was available is at odds with reality. The name, *Ghadīr*, suggests that it was a place of water. This is mentioned expressly in some versions of the Ḥadīth.¹

He alleges that the Prophet ﷺ stood up to give a sermon in the unbearable extreme heat in order to instate ‘Alī as the khalīfah. It’s counter-intuitive to state that standing in the heat to deliver a speech was the underlying sign of ‘Alī’s appointment. It would be more sensible if the Prophet ﷺ gave a specific instruction for everyone to gather at Ghadīr Khumm before announcing ‘Alī’s appointment. However, reality paints quite a different picture. No announcement was made for the people to gather at Ghadīr Khumm. Instead the Prophet ﷺ waited until his return from the Farewell Ḥajj, and when he stopped for water and rest at Ghadīr Khumm he addressed those who were present with him.

This tells us that the reason for addressing the Companions at this point was never to announce ‘Alī’s khilāfah because if that were the case he would have mentioned it during the Farewell Ḥajj, wherein he delivered numerous sermons about the most important matters for the entire Ummah to know. However, because this was not something to be conveyed to the people he did not mention it. After delivering those sermons he said, “Have I conveyed? O Allah, be my witness!”

This reinforces the view that says that the word *Mawlā* was not used with the intention of *Khilāfah*. Why wait until after Ḥajj to appoint the *Khalīfah*, after the majority of Muslims have returned to their respective destinations?

1 See our discussions on Letter 36

We have discussed the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr at length under numerous letter so it is most appropriate that we ask a few questions of our own:

- Why did the Prophet ﷺ appoint Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to lead the prayer during his final illness?
- Why did the Prophet ﷺ, who could barely walk, ascend the pulpit, his head bandaged, only to state that he was at his end and that he has repaid the kindness of everyone besides Abū Bakr, and that he was most indebted to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ for his service to Islām? In that sermon he insisted that all doors leading to Masjid be closed, and that only the door of Abū Bakr ought to lead directly into the Masjid; why?
- What caused him to smile when he saw his Companions for the last time; at the time of Fajr, in prayer behind Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ?

Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, the Companion who served the Prophet ﷺ for over ten years, narrates:

عن الزهري قال أخبرني أنس بن مالك الأنصاري - وكان تبع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وخدمه وصحبه أن أبا بكر كان يصلي لهم في وجع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الذي توفي فيه حتى إذا كان يوم الاثنين وهم صفوف في الصلاة، فكشف النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ستر الحجره ينظر إلينا وهو قائم كأن وجهه ورقة مصحف ثم تبسم يضحك فهمنا أن نفتن من الفرح بروية النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فنكص أبو بكر على عقبه ليصل الصف وظن أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم خارج إلى الصلاة، فأشار إلينا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن أتموا صلاتكم وأرخى الستر فترفي من يومه.

The last glimpse I had of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at the time of his last illness, on the Monday morning when he lifted the curtain of his house (to take a look at his ummah praying). His face was radiant and shining as if it was a page of the Muṣḥaf. His face was lit with a smile of joy. The people were performing the (fajr) prayer behind Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and began moving back (in happiness after seeing him, thinking that he would come to join them). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ made a sign to them to remain in their places. The Messenger ﷺ passed away on that day.¹

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Adhān, Ḥadīth no: 680; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Kitāb al-Ṣalah, Ḥadīth no: 419

Letter 59

Muharram 28, 1330

I. Truth Manifests

II. Evasion

1. I have never seen, in the past or in the present, anyone more gentle in his tone, more strong in his argument, than your own self. Now truth has manifested itself due to the proofs which you have brought forth, thus uncovering the mask of doubt, revealing the pleasant countenance of conviction.

No longer do we claim that the meaning of “wali” and “mawla” in hadith alGhadir is “foremost,” or that it implies the “supporter,” or the like, nor anything akin to what that man who asked for a sure torment had suggested; your view regarding the “mawla” stands on firm grounds, and is taken for granted.

2. I wish you agree to our interpretation of the said hadith which is endorsed by a group of learned ‘ulema, including imam Ibn Hajar in his Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa, and alHalabi in his Sirat. They argue that even if we agree that he (‘Ali) is the most worthy of imamate, the [Prophet’s] intention here is futuristic; otherwise, he would have become the Imam in spite of the presence of the Prophet ﷺ [which is an impossible situation, since the Prophet, as long as he was alive, was the sole Imamtr.], who did not mind the forthcoming of an Imam after him.

It is as though the Prophet ﷺ had said: “‘Ali shall be the Imam as soon as he receives the oath of allegiance;” so, such a situation will not collide with the precedence of the three Imams; it thus safeguards the honour of the good ancestors, may Allah Almighty be pleased with them all.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 60

Muharram 30, 1330

I. Evasion Refuted

You have, may Allah support the truth through your person, asked us to be convinced that the gist of hadith alGhadir is that ‘Ali is the most worthy of imamate when and if the Muslims choose him as such and swear the oath of allegiance to him, hence his priority to which the hadith hints is futuristic, rather than immediate. In other words, such a priority will take place when and if it is forcibly taken, rather than being actual, so that it does not clash with the caliphate of the three Imams who preceded him [in ruling the Muslims].

We ask you in the light of the truth, the dignity of justice, the honour of fairness, and the logic of fair play, if you yourself are convinced of it so that we may follow suit and follow in your footsteps. Do you agree to give such an explanation yourself, or can it be attributed to you, so that we may follow in your footsteps and do as you do?

I do not think that you are convinced or pleased with a view such as this. I am convinced that you yourself wonder about anyone who would accept to derive such a meaning for this hadith when the text does not at all suggest it, nor can anyone conceive it as such; nay, it even challenges the wisdom and discretion of the Prophet ﷺ ..., astaghfir-Allah.

It neither agrees with his great deeds nor very serious statements made on the Ghadir Day, nor with the irrefutable proofs which we brought forth above, nor with what alHarith ibn alNu‘man alFahri understood, and what is emphasized by Allah and His Messenger, as well as all the companions.

Yet even the pending priority does not actually agree with the general meaning of this hadith, for it obviously does not necessitate that ‘Ali ﷺ should not have

been the mawla of the three caliphs, nor the mawla of anyone who died while being contemporary to any of them.

This is exactly the opposite of the conclusion driven home by the Prophet ﷺ who asked: “Do I not have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have?” and people answered him in the affirmative; then he ﷺ said: “To whomsoever I have been the mawla (i.e. master of each and every Muslim individual, without any exception), ‘Ali is his mawla.”

So, as you see, nobody is made the exception [other than, of course, the person of the Prophet Himself.] implied in this statement; ‘Ali is indeed the mawla without any argument. Both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, having heard the words of the Prophet ﷺ on the Ghadir Day, said to ‘Ali:1 “You have, O son of Abu Talib, become the mawla of every believing man and woman,” thus admitting that he had become the master of every believing man and woman, generalizing the application to all believing men and women since the sun set on the Day of the Ghadir.

Once ‘Umar was asked: “Your conduct with ‘Ali is quite different from that of any other companion of the Prophet ﷺ.” ‘Umar responded by saying: “Why, he is my mawla,” as stated by Dar Qutni on page 36 of Al-Sawa’iq al-Muhriqa.

He thus admitted that ‘Ali was his master, and he (Ali) had not been chosen to be a caliph yet, nor had he yet received the oath of allegiance from anyone. Consider how his (‘Umar’s) statement proved that ‘Ali was his mawla and the mawla of every believing man and woman right then, not by virtue of futurity, since the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, on behalf of the Almighty Allah, conveyed the same on the Ghadir Day. ‘Umar once asked ‘Ali to arbitrate in a case brought forth before him involving two bedouins disputants.

One of them asked: “Is this man (‘Ali) to judge between us?” ‘Umar immediately leaped in rage, took the man by the neck and said to him: “Woe unto you! Do you know who this man is? He is your mawla, my mawla, and the mawla of all believers; whoever rejects him as the mawla is certainly not a Muslim,” as stated

near the conclusion of Chapter 11 of Ibn Hajar's *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*. Those who have recorded this incident are quite a few.

You, may Allah support the truth through your person, are aware of the fact that had the philosophy of Ibn Hajar and his supporters regarding the Ghadir hadith been accepted, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, would have been proven to be tampering with his own mission and responsibility - we seek refuge with Allah against thinking in such a manner - hallucinating in his speeches and deeds - Allah is above letting His Messenger do that - without having, according to such a philosophy, any purpose in that awesome situation other than making an announcement that after 'Ali had been elected as caliph, he would be most fit for it, and that, the theory goes on, nobody should monopolize it, for 'Ali and all other companions, and Muslims in general, are in that respect equal. What characteristic did the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, intend then and there to attribute to 'Ali, and 'Ali alone, from among all others who are wellknown for their history in serving Islam, if such philosophy, O Muslims, is proven accurate?

As regarding their claim that had 'Ali's priority regarding the Imamate not been futuristic, he would have become then the Imam in spite of the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, we say that such a claim is indeed quite odd; it is the watering down of the truth, an unmatched misrepresentation which ignores the covenants of all prophets, caliphs, kings and princes to their successors. It overlooks the meaning of the hadith: "You to me are like Aaron to Moses except there will be no prophet after me."

It is an attempt to forget his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, in the hadith relevant to his kin when he warned them saying, "Therefore, listen to him [to 'Ali] and obey him," and to other numerous texts in this meaning. Even if we suppose that due to the presence of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, 'Ali's priority of the imamate could not be effective immediately, then obviously it had to be effective after his demise, following

the unanimously accepted rule of interpreting a statement the absolute truth of which is unattainable by its closest meanings. As regarding the honour of the good ancestors, it is safeguarded without forcing such an interpretation as we will explain if necessary, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. This is quoted by Dar Qutni, as indicated near the conclusion of Section 5, Chapter One, of *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa* by Ibn Hajar; so, refer to page 26. It is also narrated by many traditionists, each from his own source, and in their own books of traditions. Ahmad has quoted something similar from 'Umar of the ahadith narrated by al-Bara' ibn 'Azib on page 281, Vol. 4, of his *Musnad*, which we have already quoted in Letter No. 54 above.

Discussions

It seems that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s best attempt to convince his audience of his argument is through propaganda. Initially he allowed the character of the Shaykh al-Azhar to resist and contest the reasoning; and now he portrays his character as having conceded to his opponent’s softer argument.

The reasoning provided by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn does not seem convincing to members of the Ahl al-Bayt though.

Fuḍayl ibn Marzūq states:

عن الفضيل بن مرزوق قال سمعت الحسن بن الحسن يقول لرجل ممن يغلو فيهم ويحكم أحبونا لله فإن أطلعنا الله فأحبونا وإن عصبنا الله فأبغضونا. قال فقال له رجل إنكم قرابة رسول الله وأهل بيته فقال ويحك لو كان الله مانعا بقرابة من رسول الله أحدا بغير طاعة الله لنفَع بذلك من هو أقرب إليه منا أباً وأماً والله إنني لأخاف أن يضاعف للعاصي منا العذاب ضعفين وإنني لأرجو أن يؤتى المحسن منا أجره مرتين. ويلكم اتقوا الله وقولوا فينا الحق فإنه أبلغ فيما تريدون ونحن نرضى به منكم ثم قال لقد أساء بنا آباؤنا إن كان هذا الذي تقولون من دين الله ثم لم يطلعونا عليه ولم يرغّبونا فيه. قال فقال له ألم يقل رسول الله ﷺ لعلي من كنت مولاة فعلي مولاة؟ فقال أما والله إن لو يعني بذلك الإمرة والسلطان لأفصح لهم بذلك كما أفصح لهم بالصلاة والزكاة وصيام رمضان وحج البيت. ولقال لهم أيها الناس هذا وليكم من بعدي. فإن أنصح الناس كان للناس رسول الله ﷺ ولو كان الأمر كما تقولون إن الله ورسوله ﷺ اختارا علياً لهذا الأمر والقيام بعد النبي ﷺ إن كان لأعظم الناس في ذلك خطأ وجرماً إذ ترك ما أمره به رسول الله ﷺ أن يقوم فيه كما أمره أو يعذر فيه إلى الناس.

I heard Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan saying to a man who used to show excessive love to them, i.e. the Ahlul Bayt, “Woe unto you people! Love us (only) for the pleasure of Allah. If we are obedient to Allah, then love us. And if we are disobedient to Allah, then do not love us.”

The man said to Ḥasan, “You are related to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and from his family!”

Ḥasan said, “Woe unto you! If Allah were to prevent anyone from not worshipping Allah on account of his familial relationship with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then those that are paternally and maternally closer to him than us would (also) benefit. By Allah, I fear that a sinner from among us will be given double punishment. Still, I hope that a good-doer among us will be given his reward twice. Woe unto you! Fear Allah and speak the truth about us, for this is closer to what you (actually) desire. We are well-pleased if that comes from you.”

He continued saying, “If what you people are saying (about us) is considered to be a part of Allah’s religion – and our forefathers neither informed us about it nor encouraged us – then surely they have wronged us!”

The man said to him, “Did the Messenger of Allah ﷺ not say to ‘Alī, ‘Whoever considers me his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā?’”

Ḥasan replied, “Certainly! By Allah, if the Messenger of Allah ﷺ intended by it governance and authority he would have stated it unequivocally. The Messenger ﷺ was most eloquent, and most sincere to all Muslims. He would have stated [emphatically], ‘O people! This is the one in authority and the one deputed to carry out your affairs, so listen to him and obey.’

By Allah, if Allah and His Messenger ﷺ chose ‘Alī for this matter [succession after the Prophet ﷺ] and appointed him to implement it for the Muslims after him, then ‘Alī disregards the command of Allah and His Messenger ﷺ, he would be the first one responsible for disregarding the Allah’s and His Messengers instruction.”¹

His ensuing arguments are premised on the term *Mawlā* meaning successor. Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have always maintained that it does not mean successor. They might engage in a discussion—under the presumption that it meant successor—that it refers to his eventual *Khilāfah* and not immediate appointment. The reasoning in their argument is formidable. If we were to pursue this line of

1 *Al-I'tiqād wa al-Hidāyah* by al-Bayhaqī, pg. 232-233

reasoning—assuming that the term *Mawlā* means successor—the character of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه suddenly appears inconsistent.

He is brave and strong against the *Khawārij*, but meek and timid in front of Abū Bakr? Let us not forget that the initial disappointment expressed by ‘Alī رضي الله عنه for not being included in the consultation about who would succeed the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was shared by Zubayr رضي الله عنه; why did they not mention the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr at this instance? Why would ‘Alī cite this Ḥadīth when arguing with the *Khawārij* after he was already the *Khalīfah*; when it would have been more appropriate for him to have raised this objection when Abū Bakr ‘usurped’ his post?

The narration that he cites about the congratulatory process is unreliable. appearing in the chain is ‘Alī ibn Zayd ibn Jud‘ān, who is unreliable as we have repeatedly pointed out.¹

The second narration about ‘Umar رضي الله عنه intervening is also unreliable.² Appearing in this chain is **Ḥusayn al-Ashqar**. We have also repeated pointed out that he is severely criticized and unreliable.³ Furthermore, in this narration the chain is interrupted between Sālim ibn Abī al-Ja‘d and ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.

Let us reflect on ‘Abd al-Ḥuayn’s reasoning when he cites the Ḥadīth, “Does it not please you that you will be unto me as Hārūn was to Mūsā?” to prove that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is the immediate successor.

Let us begin by establishing the facts, then exploring the plausibility of his reasoning. The Ḥadīth about Hārūn عليه السلام and Mūsā عليه السلام refers to the incident at Tabūk, which preceded the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Ḥajj. Now let us assume that this referred to *Khilāfah*. Let us momentarily ignore the fact that Hārūn عليه السلام

1 See our discussions on Letter 16

2 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 42 pg. 235

3 See our discussions on Letter. 10

predeceased Mūsā عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ as that would take us back to discussions which we have already dealt with.¹ Proceeding under this assumption, we find that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn argues that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was instructed to announce ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ appointment or risk failing to convey; *Āyat al-Tablīgh*. This verse would be redundant if the Ḥadīth at Tabūk referred to Khilāfah. The converse is also true: if this verse actually means what ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn says it means; the only reasonable conclusion is that the Ḥadīth at Tabūk did not refer to Khilāfah after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ demise. Rather it meant, minor Khilāfah during his absence.

If we establish that the Ḥadīth at Tabūk does not refer to Khilāfah, it is pointless citing it here to prove ‘Alī’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ immediate succession since the exclusion of his Khilāfah during the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ lifetime—after announcing that he is the Mawlā—limits the timeframe of his being a Mawlā. If it could be delayed during the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ time, it is equally plausible that it be delayed during the Khilāfah of the three who preceded him رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

We reiterate: this line of reasoning is purely for the purpose of exploring the consequences if the term Mawlā meant leadership. We have already proven that it does not refer to leadership. Instead it refers to friendship, solidarity, and support.

1 See our discussions on Letters: 26, 30

Letter 61

Safar 1, 1330

I. Requesting Texts Narrated by Shi'a Sources

As long as the honour and dignity of the good ancestors are protected, then there is nothing wrong with considering all the ahadith regarding the Imam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام, the ones to which you have referred, including hadith alGhadir or any other one, without the need for an interpretation.

You may also know other ahadith relevant to this subject with which the Sunnis are not familiar; so, may I request you to narrate them so that we may acquaint ourselves therewith? Wassalam.

Sincerely,

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Letter 62

Safar 2, 1330

Forty Ahadith

Yes, we will narrate to you consecutively reported ahadith with which the Sunnis are not familiar. These are narrated by members of the purified progeny of Muhammad ﷺ, of which we relate forty:1

1. Al-Saduq Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Babawayh alQummi has included in his book *Ikmal adDin wa Itmam alNi'mah*, as transmitted by 'AbdulRahman ibn Samrah, one particular hadith in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, addresses 'AbdulRahman thus: "O Abu Samrah! If views differ and opinions vary, then refer to 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, for he is my nation's Imam, and my successor over them after me."
2. In the same reference, i.e. the *Ikmal*, Al-Saduq quotes Ibn 'Abbas narrating one hadith in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, says: "Allah, the Praised One and the Sublime, cast a scrutinizing look at the inhabitants of the earth and chose me from among them to be the Prophet, then he cast another look and chose 'Ali as the Imam and commanded me to take him as my brother, and appoint him as the wali and vizier."
3. Al-Saduq, also in the *Ikmal*, traces one hadith to Imam alSadiq عليه السلام who quotes his father and ancestors citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "Gabriel has told me that the Lord of Power, exalted is His Greatness, has said: 'Whoever comes to know that I am the Lord without any partner, and that Muhammad is my Servant and Messenger, that Ali ibn Abu Talib is Muhammad's successor, and that the Imams from his descendants are My Arguments, then I would let him enter Paradise through My Mercy.'"

4. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, traces another hadith to Imam alSadiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who quotes his father and grandfather citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “The Imams after me are twelve: The first is ‘Ali and the last is alQa’im [alMahdi]; they are my successors and the executors of my will.”
5. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, traces yet another hadith to al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah who says that the Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ once approached, his hand in the hand of his son alHasan, and said: “The Messenger of Allah once came to us and his hand was in mine like this, saying: ‘The best of creation after me, and their master, is this brother of mine who is the Imam of every Muslim, the prince of every believer after me.’”
6. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, tracing one hadith to Imam alRida عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who quotes his forefathers citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “Whoever likes to uphold my religion and embark upon the Ark of Salvation after me, let him follow the example of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib, for he is the executor of my will, and my vicegerent over my nation during my lifetime and after my demise.”
7. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, attributes another hadith by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, to Imam alRida عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who quotes his ancestors stating that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ once said: “I and ‘Ali are the fathers of this nation; whoever knows us very well also knows Allah, and whoever denies us also denies Allah, the Unique, the Mighty. And from ‘Ali’s descendants are my grandsons alHasan and al-Husayn, who are the masters of the youths of Paradise, and from al-Husayn’s descendants shall be nine: whoever obeys them obeys me, and whoever disobeys them also disobeys me; the ninth among them is their Qa’im and Mahdi.”
8. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, traces another hadith through isnad to Imam alHasan al’Askari عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ who quotes his ancestors up to the Messenger of

Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, addressing Ibn Mas'ud thus: "O Ibn Mas'ud! 'Ali ibn Abu Talib is your Imam after me; he is my successor over you."

9. Quoting one hadith related by Salman, Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, says that once Salman visited the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and found al-Husayn ibn 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ sitting on his lap, and the prophet was kissing him and saying: "You are a master, son of a master, an Imam and son of an Imam, brother of an Imam, father of Imams, and you are Allah's Argument, the son of His Argument (Hujjah), and father of nine Arguments from your loins, the ninth of them is their Qa'im."
10. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, quotes another hadith traced also to Salman who quotes a lengthy hadith by the Messenger of Allah in which he صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ says: "O Fatima! Have you not come to know that we are Ahl Al-Bayt? Allah has made the Hereafter dearer to us than this life, and Allah the Exalted, Praised is His Name, cast a look at the inhabitants of the earth and chose me from among His creation; then he cast a second look and chose your husband and inspired me to marry you to him and take him as wali and vizier, and to make him my successor over my nation. So, your father is the best of prophets, your husband is the best of wasis, and you are the first to join me."
11. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, quotes a lengthy hadith and mentions in it that a meeting of over two hundred men from the Muhajirun (Meccan Immigrants) and the Ansar (Medenite Supporters) were seeking knowledge and studying jurisprudence, and that each one of them started bragging about himself, while 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ remained silent.

They asked him: "O father of alHasan, what stops you from saying something?" In response to their question, he عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ only reminded them of a statement made by the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in which he said: "Ali is my brother, vizier, heir, executor of my will, successor over my

nation, and the wali of every believer after me; so, admit all of this about him.”

12. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, quotes a lengthy hadith narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Ja’far, alHasan, al-Husayn, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas, ‘Umar ibn Abu Salamah, Usamah ibn Ziyad, Salman, Abu Tharr al-Ghifari, and alMiqdad who all say that they heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: “I have more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have; my brother ‘Ali has after me more authority over the believers than the believers themselves have.”
13. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal ad-Din wa Itmam al-Ni’mah*, quotes al-Asbagh ibn Nabatah who cites Ibn ‘Abbas saying that he heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying, “I, ‘Ali, alHasan, al-Husayn, and nine from the progeny of Husayn are Purified.”
14. Al-Saduq has also quoted in his *Ikmal Ibn Abayah ibn Rab’i* citing Ibn ‘Abbas saying that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: “I am the master of the Prophets, while ‘Ali is the master of the wasis.”
15. Al-Saduq has also quoted in his *Ikmal* one hadith transmitted by Imam al-Sadiq S through isnad stating that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: “Allah, the Exalted, the Almighty, favoured me over all other prophets, and favoured ‘Ali over all other wasis, and favoured from ‘Ali’s descendants al-Hasan and al-Husayn, and chose from al-Husayn’s progeny the wasis who safeguard the faith against the distortion of extremists, the adulteration of liars, and the misinterpretations of those who have strayed.”
16. Al-Saduq, also in his *Ikmal*, has quoted ‘Ali عليه السلام citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: “The Imams after me are twelve: the first of them is ‘Ali, and the last is alQa’im through whom Allah, the Exalted and the Mighty, shall open the east of the earth as well as the west.”²

17. Al-Saduq has also quoted in his Amali a lengthy hadith narrated by 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, says, "Ali is of me, and I am of 'Ali who is created of my own mould; he solves people's disputes regarding my Sunnah; he is the Commander of the Faithful, the leader of the foremost among all men, and the best of wasis."
18. Al-Saduq, also in his Amali, has quoted another lengthy hadith reported by 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ in which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, says: "Ali is the Commander of the Faithful according to the Wilayat of Allah, the Exalted and the Mighty, which He tied in a knot upon His Throne and required the angels to witness; 'Ali is Allah's Vicegerent and Proof [Hujjatullah]; he is the Imam of the Muslims."
19. Al-Saduq, also in his Amali, has quoted Ibn 'Abbas relating that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "O 'Ali! You are the Imam of the Muslims, the Commander of the Faithful, the leader of the foremost renowned of all men, Allah's Proof after me, and the master of all wasis."
20. Al-Saduq, also in his Amali, has cited Ibn 'Abbas quoting the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "O 'Ali! You are my successor over my nation, and you are to me like Seth to Adam."
21. Al-Saduq, also in his Amali, has quoted Abu Tharr alGhifari saying, "We were once in the company of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ at his mosque when he said: 'A man will enter through this door who is the Commander of the Faithful and the Imam of the Muslims,' whereupon 'Ali ibn Abu Talib came in, and the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ welcomed him, turned his glorious face to us and said: 'This is your Imam after me.'"
22. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has cited Jabir ibn 'Abdullah alAnsari quoting the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "Ali ibn Abu Talib is the foremost

among them in accepting Islam, and he is the most learned... He is the Imam and successor after me.”

23. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted one hadith correct through isnad related by Ibn ‘Abbas who quotes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: “O people! Whose words are better than Allah’s? Your Lord, Mighty is His Grace, has commanded me to assign ‘Ali over you as the most outstanding Imam, as my own successor and executor of my will, and that you should regard him as my brother and vizier.”
24. In his Amali, Al-Saduq also quotes one hadith correct through isnad narrated by Abu ‘Ayyash who says: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ once ascended the pulpit and delivered a sermon in which he said: ‘My cousin ‘Ali is also my brother, vizier, successor, and the one who pays my dues on my own behalf.’“³
25. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted one hadith correct through isnad reported by the Commander of the Faithful who says: “Once, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ delivered a sermon in which he said: ‘O people! The month of Allah has approached,’ and he continued his sermon recounting the attributes of the month of Ramadan. I asked: ‘O Messenger of Allah! What is the best of deeds in this month?’ He replied: ‘It is staying away from whatever Allah has forbidden you,’ then he burst weeping, so I inquired: ‘What grieves you, O Messenger of Allah?’ and he answered: ‘O ‘Ali! I am grieving at what horrible forbidden things that will happen to you in the same month,’ adding, ‘You are my wasi, the father of my descendants, and my successor over my nation during my lifetime and after my death; your bidding is as good as mine, and so is your forbidding.’“
26. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has quoted another hadith narrated by ‘Ali, peace be upon him, thus: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: ‘O ‘Ali! You are my brother and I am yours; I have been chosen to be the Prophet while you have been chosen to be the Imam; I take charge of the revelation [of

the Holy Qur'an] while you take charge of its implementation; you are the father of this nation. O 'Ali! You are my wasi and vicegerent, my vizier and heir, and the father of my offspring.”

27. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted one hadith the isnad of which is authentic as transmitted by Ibn 'Abbas who says: “While the Ansar were assembling at Quba' Mosque, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘O 'Ali! You are my brother and I am yours; you are the executor of my will and my own successor, and the Imam of my nation after me: Allah will assist whoever assists you, and He will be the enemy of whoever antagonizes you.’”
28. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted a lengthy hadith narrated by Ummu Salamah in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ addresses her thus: “O Ummu Salamah! Listen and bear witness: This 'Ali ibn Abu Tlib is the executor of my will; he is my successor, the one who tries my enemies, and the one who safeguards my Pool [of alKawthar].”
29. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted Salman al-Farisi saying, “I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: ‘O Muhajirun and Ansar! Shall I lead you to that which, as long as you adhere to, shall never let you stray after me?’ They said: ‘O yes, Messenger of Allah!’ He ﷺ said: ‘This 'Ali is my brother and the executor of my will, my vizier, heir and successor; he is your Imam; therefore, love him as much as I love him, and respect him as much as I respect him, for Gabriel has enjoined me to say so to you.’”
30. In his Amali, Al-Saduq has also quoted through isnad one hadith related by Zayd ibn Arqam in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is quoted saying: “Shall I lead you to that which, as long as you adhere to, will protect you against annihilation and straying? Your Imam and wali is 'Ali ibn Abu Talib S; therefore, do support him, listen to his counsel, and believe in him, for Gabriel has ordered me to say so to you.”

31. In his Amali, Al Saduq has quoted Ibn ‘Abbas relating one hadith in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says: “O Ali, You are the Imam of my Ummah and my Khalifah upon them after me.”

This hadith Has been omitted from the English translation, thus the numbering of the next two hadith, 31 and 32, does not correspond with the original Arabic. The refutation follows the numbering of the original Arabic.

32. [31] In his Amali, Al-Saduq has quoted Ibn ‘Abbas relating one hadith in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says: “Allah, the Praised, the Sublime, has inspired to me: ‘I have selected from your nation a brother and heir for you, a successor and executor of your will.’ I inquired: ‘O Lord! Who is he?’ He replied: ‘It is he who loves me and I love him...,’ till He said in His divine statement: ‘It is ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib.’”
33. [32] In his Amali, Al-Saduq has quoted Ibn ‘Abbas citing another hadith related by his ancestors in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ says: “During my isra’ (night journey), my Lord, Exalted is His Might, promised me that ‘Ali is the Imam of the pious, the leader of the foremost among renowned men, the religion’s chief.”
34. [34] In his Amali, Al-Saduq has quoted one hadith through isnad to Imam alRida عليه السلام who quotes his ancestors citing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ saying: “‘Ali is of me, and I am of ‘Ali; may Allah wage war against those who fight ‘Ali; ‘Ali, indeed, is the Imam of creation after me.”
35. Abu Ja’far Muhammad ibn alHasan alTusi, the sect’s shaykh, in his Amal quotes one hadith narrated by ‘Ammar ibn Yasir in which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is quoted telling ‘Ali, “Allah has decorated you in a way that is most dear to Him: through asceticism to the extent that you do not feel deprived of any of this life’s pleasures, and none of them feels deprived of you, and He has endowed you with the love for the destitute, making their fellowship welcomed by you, and they welcome you as their Imam;

therefore, congratulations to whoever loves you and believes in you, and woe unto whoever hates you and tells lies about you.”

36. In his Amali, Shaykh Al-Saduq has also quoted one hadith through isnad to ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَام who has said while preaching from Kufa’s pulpit: “O people! The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ granted me ten attributes that are dearer to me than anything upon which the sun shines: He صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has said to me: ‘O ‘Ali! You are my brother in this life and the life hereafter, and you are the closest to me among all creation on the Day of Resurrection; your residence in Paradise faces mine; you are my heir, the executor of my will after me, faring with both my foes and family; you protect my family on my own behalf during my absence; you are my nation’s Imam; you execute justice among my followers; you are my friend, and my friend is the friend of Allah; your enemy is my enemy, and my enemy is surely the enemy of Allah.”
37. In Al-Saduq’s book titled Al-Nusus ‘ala al-A’imma, which contains texts relevant to the Imams, alHasan ibn ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَام is quoted saying: “I have heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say the following to my father: ‘And you are the inheritor of my knowledge, the substance of my own judgment, and the Imam after me.”
38. Also in his work containing texts about the Imams, Al-Saduq quotes ‘Umran ibn Hasin saying: “I have heard the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ say to ‘Ali, ‘You are the Imam and successor after me.”
39. Also in his same work, Al-Saduq quotes ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَام citing the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying to him: “O ‘Ali! You are the wasi over those who have died among my household, and the caliph of those who are alive among my nation.”
40. Also in the same reference cited above, Al-Saduq quotes al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَام saying: “When Allah revealed the verse: ‘And those who are kin of

each other are more worthy of each other in the Book of Allah,' I asked the Messenger of Allah to interpret it, and he said: 'You are the kin; when I die, your father 'Ali is the most worthy of me and my station; when your father dies, your brother alHasan is most worthy of it; and if alHasan dies, then you are most worthy of his station.'"

This is the conclusion of what we wanted to quote in such a hurry. Its ratio to the remainder of the texts is like that of one bouquet to the remainder of all flowers, or the drop of water to the ocean; yet a portion should suffice; praise be to the Lord of the worlds, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
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Footnotes

1. This much suffices due to the fact that we have narrated quite a few ahadith from sources such as the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلِيٌّ, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abul-Darda', Abu Hurayrah, Anas ibn Malik, Ma'ath ibn Jabal, quoting various sources, all stating that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "Whoever teaches my nation forty ahadith related to its faith, Allah will resurrect him on the Day of Judgment in the company of the faqihs and the learned." In another wording of the same hadith, "Allah will resurrect him as a learned faqih." According to Abul-Darda', the statement reads: "I will include him in my intercession on the Day of Judgment, and he shall be a witness." According to Ibn Mas'ud, "It will be said to him: 'Enter Paradise from whichever gate you please.'" According to Ibn 'Umar's narration, "... he will be included with the men of knowledge, and be resurrected in the company of martyrs." Suffices us in learning these forty ahadith and others included in all our

Letters his statement, peace be upon him and his progeny, “Allah will look after whoever listens to my statement, comprehends it and conveys it just as he heard it.” And also his hadith: “Let those of you who witness [my Sunnah] convey it to those who are absent.”

2. This hadith and the ones before it exist in a chapter containing what has been narrated about the Prophet ﷺ regarding the Qa'im, and that he is the twelfth in the line of Imams; it is Chapter Twenty-Four of *Ikmal ad-Din wa Itmam al-Ni'mah*, pages 149-167.
3. This hadith, together with the four preceding it, is quoted from *al-Saduq's Ghayat al-Maram*. These are quite lengthy, and we have quoted from them whatever testifies to our argument. As regarding the ahadith which succeed it, they are to be found in Chapter 13 of *Ghayat al-Maram*.

Discussions

Ḥadīth of the Shī'ah

If one considers the fact that the sermon at Ghadīr Khumm is inadmissible as an argument to prove Imāmah along with the fact that the narrations of the Imāms themselves are inadmissible as evidence for their own Imāmah, the portrayal of the Shaykh al-Azhar is out of character with someone who is intent on debating such a contentious issue of creed.

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s fascination with citing forty narrations has prompted him to request—with the pen of Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī—textual evidence from Shī'ī sources that support the interpretation that he has given.

Before we analyze the narrations in light of Shī'ī sources let us gain some insight into the nature of Shī'ī Ḥadīth. Do these narrations emanate from the Imāms to begin with, or are there telling signs that these are fabrications against them? Why is their Ḥadīth legacy so different from that of the Ahl al-Sunnah?

Below is a translation of an article on the subject by Abū Muḥammad al-Afrīqī:¹

Background

The Ahl al-Sunnah and Shī'ah both share in taking the Qur'ān as a source of religious legislation (tashrīf), and despite the opinion of the Qur'ān being tampered being common among the Shī'ah, they are nonetheless ordered to rely upon the Qur'an currently in our midst, until the Hidden Imām appears.

Likewise, just as both groups deem the Qur'ān a source of religious legislation, they also both rely upon the Sunnah, except that the Shī'ah concept of Sunnah differs with that of the Ahl al-Sunnah. We can disregard

1 Adapted from the translation on <https://www.basair.net/implications-inconsistency-hadith-shia/>

the finer distinction between the concepts of Sunnah according to each group, and for practical reasons, conclude that the Sunnah according to the Ahl al-Sunnah is that which the hadith books of Ahl al-Sunnah comprise. At the forefront of these books are the Six Books—the two *Saḥīḥs* and the four *Sunan* collections—and the *Musnad* and *Muʿjam* collections. On the other hand, the Sunnah according to the Shīʿah is that which their Ḥadīth sources comprise, the most important of them being the Four Books (*Al-Kutub Al-Arbaʿah*): *Al-Kāfī* of al-Kulaynī; *Man La Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh* of Al-Ṣadūq ibn Bābawayh; *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*; and *al-Istibṣār*, both by Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī.

Whatever the case, both groups claim they are exclusively upon the truth which was revealed to Muḥammad ﷺ, and that other groups besides them have erred from this truth, because they took the Sunnah from the wrong people and trusted unreliable sources which were distorted at the hands of fabricators. It was hence vital to carefully consider what each group considers a reliable source of religious legislation.

As the Qurʾān is a common denominator for both groups, albeit at a superficial level¹, the only option was to look at the Sunnah and see which is the real Sunnah of Muḥammad ﷺ: the Sunnah of the Ahl al-Sunnah or that of the *Imāmiyyah Shīʿah* (Twelvers)? With this purpose in mind, we shall shed some light upon the Sunnah tradition according to the Shīʿah.

And with Allah lies all success.

The Concept of Imāmah

The core belief of the *Imāmiyyah*² is Imāmah, the belief that Allah Most High appointed twelve Imāms after Muḥammad ﷺ whose duty was to take charge of the heritage of the Prophet ﷺ, and to protect and

1 In light of the many Shīʿ narrations which state the Qurʾān was tampered with and is currently not in its original form.

2 Also known as the Ithnā ʿAshariyyah, or Twelvers.

convey it; the Imām is the sole conveyor from the Messenger ﷺ. And to ensure his conveying was sound from lapses or mistakes, Allah Most High granted them inerrancy (‘Iṣmah), making them infallible (Ma‘ṣūm) Imāms, **conveying one after the other in a manner that is divinely-protected by Allah from every human deficiency.**

This succession continued through twelve Imāms, each Imām having students who recorded the Sunnah which they took from them. And why should they not record it, seeing that they are the inerrant Imāms and custodians of the heritage of their grandfather, the Chosen One ﷺ? How can they not write on their authority, when they are the treasurers of the knowledge of Muḥammad ﷺ; specifically appointed by Allah Most High to convey on behalf of the Prophet ﷺ; with them are the Tawrāh, Injīl and the Qur’ān written by Amīr al-Mu’minīn; their and their forefathers’ status is greater than that of the Prophets of Great Resolve (Ulu al-‘Azm); and every atom in the universe humbles itself before their power? For this reason, every Imām was the sole infallible authority, with respect to the Sunnah, in his lifetime, whereas others were merely narrators who were either right or who had erred.

Hence, whatever books the students of a particular Imām compiled during his lifetime, when a new Imām would take the former Imām’s place after his demise and become the new sole authority of the Sunnah, it left no need for what his father’s¹ students had compiled.

Based on this, one would expect after a golden chain of infallible Imāms, each with his own students who recorded the Sunnah from him, that the Sunnah of the followers of these Imāms would all trace back through this chain: the Twelfth Imām, from his father, from his father, from his father, until it reaches ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه from Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

1 i.e. the previous Imām.

A Shī'ī poet has actually boasted about this:

If you wish to choose a school for yourself,

Which shall deliver you from the flames of the Fire on the Day of Gathering,

Leave the opinions of Shafi'i, Malik, Ibn Hanbal, and what Ka'b al-Ahbar has related,

Take from people whose statements and narrations are: Our grandfather narrated from Jibril from the Creator.

Furthermore, the basis for the claim that the Sunnah in its entirety should be narrated through this golden chain is that Allah's care towards the Sharī'ah being soundly conveyed meant that He did not suffice upon average narrators to preserve the Sharī'ah from being lost and to transmit it to future generations. Rather, Allah chose for this Ummah divinely-guided guides and infallible Imāms. All of this was to ensure no mistake or lapse could seep into this great heritage. Thus, Allah was not going to let the Ummah depend on the narrations of human transmitters who were prone to human error and forgetfulness, as long as He had appointed for them those regarding whom none of the above was ever imaginable. This is the philosophy of infallibility (ʿIṣmah) which the Shī'ah claim for their Imāms.

Nonexistence of Shī'ah Hadiths Through the Infallible Chain

After explaining the concept, we move towards the ground reality and turn to the Shī'ah books of hadith, to examine the extent of conformance to this concept. It is at this point we are left utterly surprised to realise we cannot find even one narration which has been related through this golden infallible chain.

Let us take a few chapters from *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*¹ as an example:

1 *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1 pg. 108

Chapter on the Incumbence of Obeying the Imāms. There are seventeen ḥadīths in this chapter:

1. On the authority of Zurārah from Imām al-Bāqir
2. On the authority of Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ from Imām al-Ṣādiq
3. On the authority of Bashīr al-‘Aṭṭār from from Imām al-Ṣādiq
4. On the authority of Ḥusayn ibn al-Mukhtār from one of our companions from Imām al-Ṣādiq
5. On the authority of Abū al-Ḥasan al-‘Aṭṭār from Imām al-Ṣādiq
6. On the authority of Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Kinānī from Imām al-Ṣādiq
7. On the authority of Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-‘Alā’ from Imām al-Ṣādiq
8. On the authority of Ma‘mar ibn Khallād from Imām al-Riḍā’
9. On the authority of Abū Baṣīr from Imām al-Ṣādiq
10. On the authority of Muḥammad ibn Zayd al-Tabarī from Imām al-Riḍā’
11. On the authority of Abū Salamah from Imām al-Ṣādiq
12. On the authority of Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl from Imām al-Bāqir
13. On the authority of Ismā‘īl ibn Jābir from Imām al-Bāqir
14. On the authority of Abū Ishāq from one of the companions of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn
15. On the authority of Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm from Imām al-Ṣādiq
16. On the authority of Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-‘Alā’ from Imām al-Ṣādiq
17. On the authority of ‘Abd al-A‘lā’ from Imām al-Ṣādiq

Although this is just one chapter, we chose it randomly upon opening the book, not through selection or browsing its pages. What the reader notices in the narrations of this chapter, namely that most of the chains

converge at Imām al-Ṣādiq and Imām al-Bāqir through the chains of their students and not the Imāms from their progeny, is a phenomenon which is reflected throughout the book, and in fact, all four of their books.

If you find this issue surprising, what is more surprising is that there is not a single narration from the Twelfth Imām in *Al-Kāfi*, despite al-Kulaynī being a contemporary of all four of his emissaries (Safir)¹. Why does al-Kulaynī rely on secondary narrators when he is able to take the Sunnah from his contemporaries from Imām al-Mahdī, who had only been given infallibility so he can convey “from his grandfather from Jibril from the Creator”²?

And if this left you astonished, here is something which will surprise you even more: ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī was the first emissary who benefitted from being in contact with the Hidden Imām, hence he was by virtue of this contact, the best narrator from the Hidden Imām from his forefathers. Despite this, we do not find a single narration of his from the Twelfth Imām in the Four Books. In fact, not even from the eleventh Imām, whom he was known to have served. In *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*³, al-Ardabīlī mentions five of his chains in *Al-Tahdhīb* and *Al-Kāfi*, but none of them reach Ḥasan al-‘Askarī [the eleventh Imām] or the Hidden Imām.

Below are these five chains:

1. ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī — from Muḥammad ibn Sulayman — from Maymun al-Bān — from Imām al-Ṣādiq

1 It was believed that the Hidden Imām had emissaries who met him and relayed messages on his behalf to the people, after he went into hiding.

2 It is appropriate to mention that I came across this point when I heard a Shī‘ī say that al-Bukhārī deviated from the Ahl al-Bayt, as he had abandoned narrating from Imām Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, despite being his contemporary. I researched the matter and said to him, “If this proves that al-Bukhārī was a *Naṣībī* [an opponent of the Ahl al-Bayt], al-Kulaynī is the greatest *Naṣībī*.” It then became clear to me that this objection stems from ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn in *al-Murāja‘āt* (Abū Muḥammad al-Afrīqī).

3 *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1 pg 533

2. ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī — from ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Hamadanī — from Abū Tumāmah — from Imām al-Jawād
3. ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī — from a man — from Imām al-Ṣādiq
4. ‘ Ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī narrates from his dream of al-Qā’im
5. ‘Uthmān ibn Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī — from ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn ‘Alī al-Kūfī — from Muhājir al-Asadī — from Imām al-Ṣādiq

This will definitely raise many questions in the reader’s mind. Did al-‘Amrī no se letters anything worthy of inclusion in his book? Was there nothing more to those letters besides cursing the accursed individuals who competed with al-‘Amrī and his son to be emissaries of the Hidden Imām, and praising those emissaries who were entrusted with collecting the Khums¹ and the share of the Imām?

Let us leave the father and move to the son, Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān, the second emissary who remained at this post for close to half a century. Al-Ardabīlī tells us that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has mentioned in *Al-Fihrist* that Muḥammad [ibn ‘Uthmān] ibn Sa‘īd did not narrate from any of the Imāms, and this was by writing the symbol ۛ with his name.² Fifty years yet not a single narration from the Imām he claims to meet.

As for the single narration al-Ardabili³ narrated from the third emissary, Abū al-Qāsim Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī, in *al-Tahdhīb*⁴, it is by way of Abū al-Qāsim — from Muḥammad ibn Ziyād — from Abū al-Hāshim al-Ja‘farī — from Imām al-Jawād.

1 A substantial tax collected on behalf of the Imām

2 *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*, vol. 2, pg. 148. ۛ was a symbol to denote there are no narrations from him.

3 *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1 pg 240

4 *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 6 pg. 93

The fourth emissary, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Sāmarrī, is the most destitute among them in narration: no narration from him in the books of Ḥadīth nor any mention of him in the earlier biographical collections. According to *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt*, his first listing as a narrator appears as late as Ibn Muṭahhar's eighth century list, *Al-Khulāṣah*.¹

The Real Sources of Shī'ah Ḥadīths

It is established from what has passed that the infallible chain has not played—for the Shī'ah—the role for which Allah had made it infallible. So we ask: if the authors of the four books did not rely upon this chain in acquiring the Sunnah, what did they rely upon? And if they did not take Ḥadīth directly from the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt, whom did they take it from? The answer to this has been briefly alluded to in some of what he mentioned previously, but now we shall answer in detail.

The sources from which these authors acquired the Sunnah are the books which the students of the Imāms, in particular Imāms al-Baqir and al-Ṣādiq, compiled. These books are known by the Shī'ah as the Four Hundred Sources (*al-Uṣūl al-Arba'umi'ah*). Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī have, in a very lucid and satisfactory manner, explained to us that they rely upon these sources, as they do not quote any Ḥadīth in their books with their own complete chains of transmission, but rather the chain starts by mentioning the author of the particular relied-upon amongst the Four Hundred Sources. They have mentioned at the end of *Al-Faqih* [i.e., *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqih*], *Al-Tahdhīb* and *Al-Istibṣār* the shaykhs through whom their chains trace back to the authors of the Four Hundred Sources, albeit some discrepancy in these chains of their teachers too. In short, their reliance upon these sources is true beyond any doubt.

As for al-Kulaynī, his methodology in narrating Ḥadīth is different to that of his two colleagues; he narrates the full chain from himself to the Imām.

1 *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1 pg 598

If this casts a doubt on al-Kulaynī's reliance upon these sources, al-Taqī al-Majlisī has affirmed that al-Kulaynī is no different to Ibn Bābawayh and al-Ṭūsī with respect to relying upon the Four Hundred Sources.

He says in his commentary of *al-Faqīh*, entitled *Rawḍat al-Muttaqīn*:

It is apparent that the two Shaykhs transmitted everything in the two books from the Four Hundred Sources, upon which the True Sect relies, as stated by al-Ṣadūq. The same is understood from the words of Thiqaṭ al-Islām [al-Kulaynī].¹

To emphasise further, we relate what one of the eminent Shī'ī scholars said in this regard. Al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī says in his book, *Al-Dirāyah*:

The earlier scholars compiled the Ḥadīths which had reached them from our Imāms—may Allah's peace be upon them—into four hundred books they named the Sources (al-Uṣūl) and upon which they relied, such as the Aṣl of Jamīl ibn Darrāj, the Aṣl of Zurārah, and so forth. Some of our elders embarked on compiling and sequencing them into specific books, to make them more accessible to the reader. The best of them are the Four Books which are relied upon in this era. They are *Al-Kāfī* of Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 A.H), in which he gathered different types of ḥadīth; *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh* of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381 A.H), in which he gathered the Ḥadīths of rulings from the Sources; and *Al-Tahdhīb* and *Al-Istibṣār* of Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 A.H) in which he also gathered just Ḥadīths of rulings.²

Hence, the reliance of the authors of the Four Books on the Four Hundred Sources and their taking therefrom is an undisputed matter.

1 *Rawḍat al-Muttaqīn*, vol. 1 pg. 28

2 *Al-Dirāyah*, pg. 7

Let us now move to defining the period in which the Four Hundred Sources were compiled. Here too, Shī'ī scholars have saved us the difficulty of investigating the matter.

Al-Māmaqānī states in *Miqbās al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*:

It is commonly stated by the scholars, rather in their books too, that the Four Hundred Sources were compiled in the era of our master al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام according to some, or in the era of both (i.e. al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq) according to another, or in the era of al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzim عليه السلام as mentioned by al-Ṭūsī in *ʿIlm al-Warā*, where he says: 'Four thousand people among the renowned people of knowledge narrated from al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام. Four hundred famous books were compiled from his answers to questions, known as *al-Uṣūl*, and which were narrated by his students and the students of his son, Mūsā عليه السلام.¹

One who has read the beginning of this article must note the connection between what al-Māmaqānī has mentioned here, on the authority of al-Ṭabarsī, and the chapter of *Al-Kāfi* which we presented as an example.

Inconsistency in Shī'ah Ḥadīth

It is clearly established from what has already passed that with respect to the Sunnah, the Shī'ah rely on their books, the most important of them being the Four Books, just as it is established that these books trace their origins back to the Four Hundred Sources, and that these four hundred compilations appeared in the era of Imām al-Ṣādiq, his father al-Bāqir, and his son al-Kāzim.

From this point we move to another very critical phenomenon, which is the issue of inconsistency in Shī'ah ḥadīth. However, before going to the depths of this discussion, we would like to digress by postulating another issue, namely that these sources should enjoy a high level of credibility

1 *Miqbās al-Hidāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 20

and authenticity. This is because it is supposed that their authors compiled them in light of what they took from the Imāms, and at times they would also present these books to them. For this reason, reliance upon these books was widespread amongst the early Shīʿī scholars.

The first Majlisi [the father of Bāqir al-Majlisi] says in his *Sharḥ al-Faqīh*:

Undoubtedly, the reliance of our early scholars was on the books narrated by the reliable companions of the Imāms... They recorded what they heard from them in their books, and these books were authentic according to the scholars.¹

This is what also prompted the authors of the Four Books to place uncritical reliance upon the Four Hundred Sources.

Ibn Bābawayh said in the introduction to *Al-Faqīh*:

I wrote this book by removing the chains, so that its paths of transmission are not too many... Everything contained in it has been extracted from renowned books which are relied upon and which are referred back to.²

Thus, he had every right to say in the preface to his book that he will only include in the book that which he agrees with, affirms as authentic and considers a proof (Ḥujjah) between him and his Lord.

Likewise, Al-Ṭūsī paid great attention to giving preference to and reconciling between differing ḥadīths. However, you will rarely see him preferring one ḥadīth over the other due to one being weak.

It is also clear from al-Kulaynī's preface that he trusts what he has narrated in his book. He addresses the person who requested him to compile the book as follows:

1 *Rawḍat al-Muttaqīn*, vol. 1 pg. 130

2 *Al-Faqīh*, vol. 1 pg. 12

And you said you would like to have a book which suffices, gathering therein from all branches of religious knowledge that which the student can suffice upon, and to which a seeker of guidance can refer, and from which he may take who seeks knowledge of the religion and wishes to act upon authentic narrations of the truthful (alayhim al-salām) and practiced sunan... And Allah made easy, and to Him belongs praise and favour, compiling what you asked. I hope it is as you anticipated.¹

Moreover, when the Four Hundred Sources were trusted, it is only logical that we should find therein the knowledge of the family of Muḥammad ﷺ, pure and impeccable, and harmonious without any crookedness or discrepancy, as “had it been from other than Allah, they would have found much discrepancy therein”. It was also expected that the Four Books, due to their content being taken from the Four Hundred Sources, will reflect the same harmony and consistency.

However, what the reader of these books will encounter is something starkly different. What you will find when looking into them is discrepancy in its most ugly form. If you think I have fallen into this extreme mode of expression due to becoming a victim of bias, listen with me to what al-Ṭūsī said in the beginning of his book, *al-Tahdhīb*, immediately after praising Allah and sending blessings on the Prophet ﷺ:

One of my friends amongst those whose right upon me is binding—may Allah support him—discussed with me the hadiths of our people—may Allah support them and have mercy on the predecessors among them—and the difference, incongruity, contradiction, and disparity which has occurred in them, to the extent that rarely will there be a narration except that in opposition to it, there is that which contradicts it, and no hadith is safe from being opposed by that which negates it. Our opponents have made this one of the biggest attacks on our school and have used this as a route to nullify our creed. They said, ‘Your shaykhs, from the predecessors and

1 *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 1 pg. 49

the successors, have always criticised their opponents for the differences they follow, and they vilify them over disunity in subsidiary matters, mentioning that it is impermissible for a person of wisdom to adopt this as a religion, and for a person of knowledge to allow this to be practiced. However, we have found you to differ even more than your opponents and to conflict with each other more than your adversaries. The existence of this difference on your part, despite your believing this to be falsehood, is a proof of the invalidity of the source.’ This reached the extent that doubts crept into a group of them who are not strong in knowledge nor do they have insight into the modes of contemplation and meanings of words. Many of them retracted from the truth when the reason behind this [i.e. this difference] was unclear to them and they were unable to solve the doubt therein. I heard my Shaykh, Abū ‘Abd Allāh [al-Mufīd]—may Allah support him —mention that Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Hārūnī al-‘Alawī used to believe the truth and follow the belief of Imāmāh. However, he retracted from it, when the matter of differences in ḥadīth became confusing for him. He left the school and practiced something else, when the different meanings therein were not clear to him.¹

It was this phenomenon of gross and ubiquitous discrepancy that spurred Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to compile *Al-Tahdhīb*. Once his book *Al-Tahdhīb* became renowned, some asked him to separately compile the hadiths in which there was discrepancy. Hence, he wrote his second book *Al-Istibṣār*, whose full name *Al-Istibṣār fī mā ukhtulifa min al-akhbār* (Contemplating the narrations in which there is discrepancy) discloses its real essence. Specifying two books amongst four books of ḥadīth, due to inconsistency in the texts, is the clearest proof of the true extent of this discrepancy. However, we cannot stop here out of astonishment, but rather pose another bitter question: what could the cause of this unsightly discrepancy be, which was condemned by this group among the Imāmiyyah, whose disavowing of Imāmiyyah Shī‘ism and its beliefs was lamented by al-Ṭūsī? This is where the heart of the matter lies.

1 *al-Tahdhīb* vol. 1 pg. 2

As a preface to uncovering this secret, I would like readers to imagine the following scene: a man is sat with us, and surrounding him are a group of people who are speaking in his name, except that they are all essentially lying and fabricating against him what he did not say. Each one of them is speaking independently of the other, without them conspiring amongst themselves to achieve a uniform statement. Even if this unification occurs at times, it is non-existent for the majority of the time. So I ask you in the name of Allah: is it not natural that there will be discrepancy and inconsistency between what these liars all say in the name of this one person?

Take into consideration how many liars had gathered around the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt, to the extent that Imām al-Ṣādiq said, “Not a single one of us (Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt) is safe from liars.” Consider the extent to which these narrators were affiliated to extremist sects, regarding whom Imām al-Ṣādiq said, “Amongst them are those who lie, to the extent that even Satan is in need of their lies.”¹ Also consider the fact that a number of the authors of the Four Hundred Sources were of heterodox belief.

Al-Māmaqānī states:

Al-Mawlā al-Wāhid related from his maternal uncle, al-Majlisī (the second), and also his grandfather al-Majlisī (the first) that being an author of one of the Sources is amongst the causes of excellence, but he himself scrutinised this, considering that many of the authors of the Sources had adopted incorrect beliefs, albeit their books are reliable, as clearly stated at the beginning of *Al-Fihrist*.²

Thereafter, al-Māmaqāni presents ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’inī as an example, who wrote many books and a complete commentary of the

1 *Miqbās al-Hidāyah*, vol. 2 pg. 403

2 *Miqbās al-Hidāyah*, vol. 3 pg. 33

Qu'ran, except that Ibn Faḍḍāl said about him, “A liar, accused [of lying], accused... I do not consider it lawful to relate even one hadith from him.”¹

If you consider all of this, it will become totally clear to you, Allah willing, that this huge heritage which the Shī'ah boastfully attribute towards the Imāms from the family of Muhammad ﷺ is nothing but a caricature of what Allah said: “So woe to those who write the “scripture” with their own hands, then say, “This is from Allah,” in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.”²

And if you want proof for this, look for it in the principle which Allah Most High informed us of when He said, “If it had been from [any] other than Allah, they would have found within it much contradiction.”³

And if you want to find out the identity of those who are accused of this great lie, look at what al-Māmaqani said:

It is commonly stated by the scholars, rather in their books too, that the Four Hundred Sources were compiled in the era of our master al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام according to some, or in the era of both Ṣādiqs عليهما السلام (i.e., al-Bāqir and al-Ṣādiq) according to another, or in the era of al-Ṣādiq and al-Kāzīm عليهما السلام.⁴

Having read this, you will now hopefully realise:

- why there are so few narrations from the latter Imāms in the books of the Shī'ah,
- why they completely ignored the divinely-infallible chain of narration of the Imāms,

1 *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1 pg. 547

2 *Sūrah al-Baqarah*: 79

3 *Sūrah al-Nisā'*: 82

4 *Rawḍat al-Muttaqīn*, vol. 1 pg. 130

- why, in transmitting the Sunnah, their exclusive reliance is upon suspicious and mendacious persons who turned Imām Ja‘far al-Şādiq عليه السلام into the pseudo-source for the lies which they then spread in his name,
- and how all of that turned into the self-contradictory mass of narrations that is the Ḥadīth of the Shī‘ah.

When you see al-Kulaynī turn away from narrating the Ḥadīth of the Ahl al-Bayt through the chain of Imām al-Mahdī — from Imām al-‘Askarī — from Imām al-Hādī — from Imām al-Jawād — from Imām al-Riḍā — from Imām al-Kāẓim — from Imām al-Şādiq; but you see he is very happy to acquire the Sunnah from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī — from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Barqī — from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥakam — from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’inī — from Abū Baṣīr — from al-Şādiq; then know the secret behind this and do not be from the absentminded!

We ask Allah to protect our religion for us.

All praise belongs to Allah in the beginning and the end. May Allah bless and send peace on our leader Muḥammad, his family and his companions.
[End Quote]

It is clear that the Shī‘ah Ḥadīth tradition rests on very shaky foundations and is subject to immense internal criticism. The primary sources of Shī‘ah Ḥadīth suffer from such irregularity and inconsistency by their own admission, that some of their early scholars have desperately attempted to bring about some semblance of reconciliation. What function does it serve if fallible individuals have to sift out, what they believe are, the reliable statements attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Forty narrations

Let us set the epistemological issue of whether the statements of the Imāms hold authority or not aside for the moment since it has already been dealt with, and we have demonstrated that the argument for the authority of the Imāms is based on circular reasoning.¹ Instead, let us evaluate the narrations cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn. For the sake of objectivity, fairness, and faithful representation let us subject these narrations to the standards of Shī‘ī Ḥadīth evaluation and base our findings primarily on Shī‘ī Ḥadīth literature. We shall list the narrations in the order which they appear in ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s letter.

1. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah

Al-Ṣadūq and al-Majlisī record this with a common chain by way of **Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī al-Kūfī** — **Muḥammad ibn Sinān** — Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar — Jābir ibn Yazīd al-Ju‘fī — **Sa‘īd ibn al-Musayyab** — ‘**Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah** that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Appearing in this chain is **Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī**, whose Kunyah is Abū Samīnah. He is known for lying and deceiving. Al-Kashshī quotes al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān that Abū Samīnah, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī is a well-known liar.³

Al-Khū‘ī is also on record for having called him weak and a liar.⁴ This was mentioned in disproving a narration on the topic of *Taḥrīf al-Qur’ān* (Interpolation of the Qur’ān). When dismissing it, Muḥammad al-Ṣayrafī is boldly declared a liar, but ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn appears to have no issue in citing his narration when it comes to proving ‘Alī’s ﷺ Imāmah!

1 See discussions on Letters 8 and 10

2 *Kamāl al-Dīn* vol. 1 pg. 256; *Amālī al-Ṣadūq* pg. 78; *Bihār al-Anwār* vol. 36 pg. 226

3 *Rijāl al-Kashshī* pg. 546, bio. 1033

4 *Ṣiyānat al-Qur’ān min al-Taḥrīf*, pg 226

Also appearing in this chain is **Muḥammad ibn Sinan, Abū Ja‘far al-Hamadānī**. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī declares him an extremist, weak, one who forges Ḥadīth and one whose narrations deserve no attention.¹ Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī also declares him weak and an extremist whose narrations are riddled with errors.² ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī stops short of grading him and withholds his opinion on his narrations.³

Thirdly, they consider **Sa‘īd ibn al-Mussayyab** a Nāṣibī, an opponent of Ahl al-Bayt and opinions varied over the acceptance or rejection of his narrations.⁴

Al-Māmaqānī identifies ‘**Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah** as a Ṣaḥābī, but grades him Majhūl. Al-Khūṭī states that opinions vary on ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Samurah but he prefers to withhold his opinion due to insufficient information.⁵

For all the reasons above, this narration is clearly unreliable by Shī‘ī standards.

2. The narration ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās

Al-Ṣadūq, al-Majlisī, and Hāshim al-Baḥrānī record this narration by way of Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn Mutawakkil — Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Kūfī — **Mūsā ibn Imrān al-Nakha‘ī** — **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd** — **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Sālim** — his father — Abū Ḥamzah — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...⁶

1 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, pfg. 92

2 *Rijāl ibn Dāwūd*, pt. 2, Bio. 455

3 *Al-Khulāṣah*, 394

4 *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*, vol. 1 pg. 363; *al-Naṣb wa al-Nawāṣib*, pg 238

5 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 83; *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 9 pg. 145

6 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 257; *Bihār al-Anwār*, vol. 36 pg. 283; *Ghāyat al-Marām* vol. 1 pg. 116

Al-Māmaqānī declared **Mūsā ibn Imrān al-Nakha'ī Majhūl**.¹

‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī claims that he could not find data on him from the early scholars in the matter of narrator criticism.²

Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Sālim, also referred to as Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’ī’nī is described as weak, a liar, and accursed.

Al-Kashshī quotes Muḥammad ibn Mas‘ūd, who asked ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Faḍāl about Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’ī’nī and he responded, “He is an accursed liar! I recorded many Ḥadīth from him, as well as the Tafsīr of the entire Qur’ān. However, I do not deem it permissible to transmit even one Ḥadīth from him.” He goes on to quote Abū al-Ḥasan Ḥamdwayh ibn Naṣir, who states on the authority of a number of his teachers that Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’ī’nī is an evil person.³

Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī states that he is a Wāqifī,⁴ the son of a Wāqifī. He is weak, and his father is narrowly more reliable than he is.⁵

Al-Māmaqānī says, “It is absolutely necessary to discard his narrations. At best, he was a Wāqifī; not reliable and therefore included among the weak [narrators].”⁶

Another unreliable narration.

1 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 3 pg. 258

2 *Al-Khulāṣah*, vol. 9 pg. 216

3 *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, pg 552, bio. 1042

4 Waqifī is taken from the Arabic root W-Q-F, which means to stop. This term refers to a Shī‘ī sect called the Wāqifiyyah who believed that Imāmah stopped with Mūsā al-Kāzīm, hence the title Wāqifī.

5 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, pg 51

6 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 290

3. The narration ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq — from his father — from his fathers

This narration is recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and with his chain, al-Khazzāz al-Qummī as well as al-Ṭabarsī — by way of Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn Mutawakkil — Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Kūfī — **Mūsā ibn 'Imrān al-Nakha'ī** — **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd** — **Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah** — his father — al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام — his father عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام — His fathers عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said...¹

The issues which rendered the previous narration unreliable are present in this narration as well.

4. The narration ascribed to Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, from his father, from his fathers

This narration is recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and with his chain, al-Khazzāz al-Qummī, al-Ṭabarsī, al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, al-Majlisī — by way of 'Alī ibn Aḥmad — Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Kūfī — **Mūsā ibn 'Imrān al-Nakha'ī** — **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd** — **Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah** — his father — Yaḥyā ibn Abī al-Qāsim — al-Ṣādiq عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام — his father عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام — his grandfather عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “The Imāms after me are twelve. The first of them is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and the last of them is al-Qā'im. They are my Khulafā' and Awṣiyā', and Allah's proof over my Ummah after me. **Those who accept them are believers and those who reject them are disbelievers.**”²

The problematic narrators from the previous two narrations are present in this one as well, **Mūsā ibn 'Imrān al-Nakha'ī**, **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd**, and **Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah**.

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 258; *Kifāyat al-Athar* pg. 144; *A'lām al-Warā*, vol. 2 pg. 183

2 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 259; *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, vol. 4 pg. 180; *Kifāyat al-Athar* pg. 145; *A'lām al-Warā*, vol. 2 pg. 183; *al-Jawāhir*, pg. 282; *al-Bihār*, vol. 36 pg. 252

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī has omitted it from his critical rendition of *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhū al-Faqīh*, titled *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Faqīh*, which means that he deemed it unreliable.

It is interesting to note that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn—who believes this narration to be Mutawātir—omitted the last phrase of the Ḥadīth, “Those who accept them are believers, and those who reject them are disbelievers.” His omission of this phrase, and his belief of the mass-transmission of this Ḥadīth have revealed his pleasantries to be nothing more than an act for his audience. If he really believed in this narration it would mean that he considers, not only the Ahl al-Sunnah, but all other Shī‘ah sects who do not believe in the Imāmah of these twelve, to be disbelievers. He amputated the tail-end of the narration to keep up appearances.

5. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī

This narration is recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and with his chain, al-Ṭabarsī and al-Majlisī — by way of ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Barqī — his father — his grandfather, **Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh** — his father, Muḥammad ibn Khālīd — **Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd** — **Muḥammad ibn Jārūd al-‘Abdī** — Asbagh ibn Nubātah — ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...¹

Objections have been raised against **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd** for being careless about whom he takes narrations from, often omitting the person whom he actually received the narration from.²

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd is a name shared by a number of narrators, all of whom are weak and unreliable. Even though it is not possible to identify the actual narrator of this report, he, and all his namesakes are considered unreliable.³

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 259; *I‘lām al-Warā*, vol. 2 pg. 185; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 36 pg. 253

2 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*, pg. 39; *al-Fihrist*, pg. 48

3 *Hidāyat al-Muḥāddithīn*, pg. 237

Muḥammad ibn al-Jārūd is considered Majhūl, and his name doesn't even appear in most early books on narrator biographies.¹

Considering the above factors, this narration is also unreliable.

It is worthy of noting that the narration as it appears in *al-Murāja'āt* is extremely truncated. 'Abd al-Ḥusayn conveniently omitted the statement wherein the Prophet ﷺ allegedly states that anyone who rejects the Imāmah of any of the twelve has effectively rejected him. If one accepts this narration then it stands to reason that such a person considers any Sunnī a disbeliever.

6. The narration ascribed to 'Alī al-Riḍā, from his father, from his fathers

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of **Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Mājīlawayh** — 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm — his father — **'Alī ibn Ma'bad** — **Ḥusayn ibn Khālīd** — 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā — his father — his fathers that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

The teacher of al-Ṣadūq, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Mājīlawayh, is a narrator whom the Shī'ah Ḥadīth authorities differ over greatly. Al-Jawāhirī calls him Majhūl.³ Al-Tusturī and al-Khū'ī have objected very firmly to those scholars who accepted the narration of any narrator simply because he was a teacher of al-Ṣadūq. They argue that the blanket acceptance of his teachers is misplaced, and that many of his teachers were found to be weak and unreliable.⁴ This is consistent with the grading of al-Māmaqānī, "Al-Ṣadūq invoked mercy upon him, and he was one of his teachers. Notwithstanding that, the man is Majhūl and ignored."⁵

1 *Mustadrakāt 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 6 pg. 488

2 *Kamāl al-Dīn* vol. 1 pg. 260; *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 1 pg. 131

3 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 559

4 *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1 pg. 73, vol. 9 pg. 460; *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 21 pg. 203

5 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 108

‘Alī ibn Ma‘bad is considered Majhūl as established by al-Māmaqānī.¹ Similarly, Al-Khūṭī states that Ḥusayn ibn Khālīd al-Ṣayrafi cannot be proven to be a reliable narrator.²

This is yet another narration which fails the test according to Shī‘ah Ḥadīth standards. If one were to accept it, then it ought to be accepted in its entirety as the narration continues further than what is stated in *al-Murāja‘āt*. The narration goes on to state that whoever leaves ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ after the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ passing will not see the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ on the Day of Judgement, nor will the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ want to look at such a person. Furthermore, anyone who opposes ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ will be forbidden to enter Jannah and will be destined for Jahannam. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn selectively cited the passage that supports his argument and withheld the segment of the narration that reveals how the Shī‘ah actually view their Sunnī ‘brothers’: destined for Hell!

7. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī al-Riḍā, from his father, from his fathers

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him, by al-Majlisī — by way of Aḥmad ibn Ziyād ibn Ja‘far — ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim — his father — ‘Alī ibn Ma‘bad — Ḥusayn ibn Khālīd — ‘Alī al-Riḍā — his father — his fathers — that the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said...³

The critical appraisal of both ‘Alī ibn Ma‘bad and Ḥusayn ibn Khālīd have been discussed under the previous narration.

8. The narration ascribed to Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Askarī, from his father, from his grandfather

1 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol 2 pg. 309

2 *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 6 pg. 250

3 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 261 ; *al-Bihār*, vol. 16 pg. 364

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him, by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of **Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq** — Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Hamadānī — **Muḥammad ibn Hishām** — **‘Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Sā’iḥ** — Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-‘Askarī — his father — his father — his grandfather, that the Prophet ﷺ said...¹

Al-Jawahirī states that the reliability of **Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq al-Ṭālaqānī** cannot be established.² His being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq is inconsequential as elaborated under narration no. 6.

There is no mention of **‘Alī ibn Ḥasan [or Ḥusayn] al-Sā’iḥ**. The manuscripts have his name spelled differently. Despite this he cannot be traced in the narrator literature.

The expert Shīʿī scholars cannot decide whether **Muḥammad ibn Hishām** is reliable or not. The abbreviation in his biographical entry in the early books has perplexed the Shīʿah experts on Ḥadīth. Some say that he was an ‘Āmmī, which literally translates as a layperson or commoner but is used by Shīʿah scholars to refer to Sunnīs. Others have interpreted the abbreviation to mean ‘Ālim, referring to him being a scholar.³

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has been consistent in only exposing his readers to a portion of the narration. He could not risk citing the entire narration, especially when it states that if any person were to reject any one of the Imāms, it would be tantamount to rejecting the Prophet ﷺ and Allah ﷻ!
!سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى

9. The narration ascribed to Salmān al-Fārisī

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 261; *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 1 pg. 303

2 *Al-Mufīd*, pg 483

3 *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, vol. 6 pg. 225

This has been recorded by Sulaym ibn Qays, and al-Ṣadūq narrates it with varying chains from him.¹ Hāshim al-Baḥrānī narrates it by way of al-Ṣadūq, from Sulaym ibn Qays.²

The version in *Kamāl al-Dīn* is narrated by way of Abān ibn Taghlib — **Sulaym ibn Qays** — Salmān.

The version in by way of Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, and the way it is found in *Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays* mentions Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh as the narrator from Sulaym.

There is an interruption between Abān ibn Taghlib and **Sulaym ibn Qays** as the two of them did not meet and there is an intermediary between them. So, if this is the preferred version it would mean that the chain of transmission is interrupted.

On the other hand, appearing in the second version is **Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh** who is suspected of forging the book of Sulaym ibn Qays and ascribing it to him. Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī states that he is absolutely weak and unreliable.³

Al-Barqa‘ī states that both Abān ibn ‘Ayyāsh and Sulaym are both Majhūl; and that the book of Sulaym is filled with forgeries and lies.⁴ Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī has absolutely no doubt about the fact that his book is a forgery.⁵

If the narration of Abān ibn Taghlib is taken, it suffers two flaws: interruption and the unreliability of Sulaym. If the version of Abān is

1 *Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays*, pg. 461; *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 261;

2 *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 1 pg. 117

3 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*, pg 63; *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*, vol.1 pg. 9

4 *Kasr al-Ṣanam*, pg. 234

5 *Ma‘rifat al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 33

taken, the unreliability of both Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh and Sulaym is a problem. Either way, the narration is unreliable.

10. The narration ascribed to Salmān al-Fārisī

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Walīd — Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār — Ya‘qūb ibn Yazīd — Ḥammād ibn ‘Isā — ‘Umar ibn Udhaynah — **Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh** — **Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Yamānī** — **Sulaym ibn Qays** — Salmān رضي الله عنه who heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم...¹

Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh and Sulaym ibn Qays have been discussed under the previous narration. There is another disputed narrator who appears in this chain, **Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Yamānī**. Al-Najāshī has vetted him, whereas ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī has declared him extremely weak.² Most of the scholars have not mentioned any details about his reliability.³

Therefore, the presence of Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Yamānī either adds to the intensity of the weakness, or does not affect the fact that is already extremely weak, if not forged.

11. The scene ‘observed’ by Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of his father and Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan — Sa‘d ibn ‘Abd Allāh — Ya‘qūb ibn Yazīd — Ḥammād ibn ‘Isā — ‘Umar ibn Udhaynah — **Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh** — **Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī**...⁴

The problems with this chain have been discussed under Ḥadīth no. 9.

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 262; *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 5 pg. 14

2 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*, pg 36

3 *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 185

4 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 274

12. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far

This narration has been recorded by both al-Ṣadūq and al-Kulaynī with a common chain by way of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭsā — Ibn Abī ‘Umayr — ‘Umar ibn Udhaynah — **Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh** — **Sulaym ibn Qays** — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far...¹

Both narrators have been discussed under narration no. 9

Majlisī states that the scholars differed about this narration.² It is evident that al-Bahbūdī considered it weak since he excluded it from his revised edition of *al-Kāfi*, titled *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi*.

It is interesting to note that this narration describes a heated discussion in the presence of Mu‘āwiyah رضي الله عنه as well as Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Umar ibn Abī Salamah, and Usāma ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه. During this discussion ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far رضي الله عنه allegedly states that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم appointed ‘Alī رضي الله عنه as his successor, and if he is martyred then his son, Ḥasan, then Ḥusayn; and if he were to be martyred then his son, ‘Alī [ibn al-Ḥusayn]. Could there be any vindication for Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī رضي الله عنه abdicating in favour of Mu‘āwiyah after being divinely appointed?

13. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and later on by al-Majlisī — by way of ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Warrāq al-Rāzī — Sa‘d ibn ‘Abd Allāh — Haytham ibn Abī Masrūq al-Nahdī — **Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alwān** — **‘Umar ibn Khālīd**³ — **Sa‘d ibn Ṭarīf** — Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم said...⁴

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 270; *al-Kāfi*, vol. 1 pg. 529

2 *Mir‘āt al-Uqūl*, vol 7. Pg 216

3 His name is given as ‘Amr ibn Khālīd in ‘*Uyūn al-Akhbār*.

4 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 280; ‘*Uyūn al-Akhbār*, vol. 2 pg. 66; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 25 pg. 202

Al-Māmaqānī considers ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Warrāq unreliable.¹

Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alwān is not an Imāmī. Al-Ṭūsī² objects to a narration about washing the feet in Wuḍū³ which is transmitted by way of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alwān — from ‘Amr ibn Khālīd — from Zayd ibn ‘Alī stating that this chain comprises of ‘Āmmīs and Zaydīs.⁴ So this narrator is fine when it comes to proving Imāmāh, yet problematic when it pertains to a matter of practise which goes contrary to the established practise among the Twelvers.

‘**Amr ibn Khālīd** is also referred to as a Batrī,⁵ a Shī‘ī who does not reject the Khulafā’ before ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. There is another narrator who shares this name, but he is not known for being a teacher of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alwān.⁶

Sa’d ibn Ṭarīf is considered weak by Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī.⁷ He also appears in the Sunnī Rijāl literature as well; albeit severely discredited. He is one of the 100 narrators that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn claimed that Sunnīs rely on.⁸

Again, another unreliable narration.

14. The narration of Ibn ‘Abbās

This narration is recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Qaṭṭān** — **Aḥmad ibn Yaḥya ibn Zakariyyā al-Qaṭṭān** — **Bakr ibn ‘Abd**

1 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol.1 pg. 180

2 *Al-Istibṣār*, vol. 1 pg. 125

3 The Twelver Shī‘ah do not wash their feet in Wuḍū’, they merely wipe over it.

4 ‘Āmmī, meaning a commoner, is the derogatory reference that the Imāmī Shī‘ah use for Sunnīs, or those Shī‘ah who do not share all their beliefs. Zaydī is a term to identify the branch of Shī‘ah that ascribe themselves to Zayd ibn ‘Alī.

5 *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, pg 131

6 *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 8 pg. 96

7 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī* pg. 64

8 See our discussions under Letter 16

Allāh ibn Ḥabīb — **Faḍl ibn Ṣaqr al-‘Adī** — Abū Mu‘āwiyah — al-A‘mash — ‘Abāyah ibn Rib‘ī — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ that the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said...¹

Al-Jawāhirī states that **Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Qaṭṭān**, despite being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq, is Majhūl and probably an ‘*Āmmī*.²

Al-Māmaqānī declared **Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyyā al-Qaṭṭān** Majhūl as well.³

Bakr ibn ‘Abd Allāh is considered weak and unreliable.⁴

There is no mention of **Faḍl ibn Ṣaqr** in the Shīrī Rijāl literature.

Not much of a narration to build one’s creed upon!

15. The narration from Ja‘far al-Ṣadiq, from his fathers

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq from a number of his teachers, none of whom he names — Abū ‘Alī Muḥamad ibn Hammām — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ja‘far — **Aḥmad ibn Hilāl** — Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Umayr — **Sa‘īd ibn Ghazawān** — Abū Baṣīr — Abū ‘Abd Allāh عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام — his fathers صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ that the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said...⁵

Al-Ṣadūq has not identified his teachers. Nonetheless, **Aḥmad ibn Hilāl** is considered weak and accursed.⁶ Furthermore, **Sa‘īd ibn Ghazawān** cannot be proven to be reliable.⁷

1 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 280

2 *Al-Mufīd min Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 25

3 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 11

4 *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, vol. 1 pg. 271

5 *Kamāl al-Dīn*, vol. 1 pg. 281

6 *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 364; *al-Ghaybah*, pg. 353

7 *Al-Mufīd min Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 252

We might add that one of the possible reasons for Aḥmad ibn Hilāl being accursed is his competing claim for representation of the Hidden Mahdī. His rivals realized that discrediting him was a convenient way to gain monopoly over representing the Hidden Imām.

16. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī

Al-Ṣadūq records this narration by way of **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yahyā al-‘Atṭār** — his father — Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-jabbār — **Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn Ziyād¹ al-Azdī** — Abān ibn ‘Uthmān — Thābit ibn Dīnār — ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn — Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī — ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...²

Both **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-‘Atṭār** and **Abū Aḥmad, Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī** are considered Majhūl.³

17. The narration ascribed to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, from his father, from his fathers

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of **Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa‘īd al-Hāshimī** — **Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Furāt al-Kūfī** — Muḥammad ibn Zāhīr — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl al-Hāshimī — Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq — his father — his fathers, that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...⁴

Al-Jawāhirī says that **Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa‘īd al-Hāshimī** is Majhūl despite being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq.⁵

1 Some texts name him Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn Ziyād.

2 *Kamāl al-Ḍīn*, vol. 1 pg. 282

3 *Al-Mufīd min Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg 46; *Mustadrakāt ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 1 pg. 440

4 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 26; Ḥadīth. 8

5 *Al-Mufīd*, pg 154

Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm, a Shīʿī scholar, had authored a book on Tafsīr. The editor had nothing to write under his biography besides the fact that there is absolutely no mention of him in the biographies compiled by Shīʿī scholars. He goes on to state that there are no biographical entries for him in any of the Rijāl books at his disposal.¹ He is therefore, Majhūl.

Al-Māmaqānī states that **Muḥammad ibn Ḍahīr** is also Majhūl.²

18. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, from his father, from his father

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** — Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Āmir — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir — ibn Abī ‘Umayr — **Ḥamzah ibn Ḥumrān** — his father — Abū Ḥamzah — ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn — his father — his father, that the Prophet ﷺ said...³

Both **Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** and **Ḥamzah ibn Ḥumrān** are described as Majhūl.⁴

19. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī and Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of **Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sinānī** — Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Asadī al-Kūfī — **Mūsā ibn Imrān al-Nakhaī** — **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd** — **‘Alī ibn Sālim** — his father — **Sa‘d ibn Ṭarīf** — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁵

1 *Tafsīr Furāt*, pg. 10

2 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 139

3 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 27; Ḥadīth.8

4 *Zubdat al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 260; *Al-Mufīd min Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 198

5 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 49, Ḥadīth. 16, *al-Biḥār*, vol 18. Pg. 338; *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 1 pg. 86

Al-Jawāhirī endorses the grading of his teacher, al-Khūṭī, of **Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sinānī**, stating that he is Majhūl despite being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq.¹

Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān al-Nakha’ī and **Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd** have already been shown to be Majhūl.²

Al-Māmaqānī states that **‘Alī ibn Sālim al-Kūfī** is an Imāmī, but he is Majhūl.³

Sa’d ibn Ṭarīf has already been shown to be unreliable and weak.⁴

20. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Aḥmad ibn Hārūn al-Fāmī** — Muḥammad ibn Ja’far ibn Jāmi’ al-Ḥimyarī — his father — Ayyūb ibn Nūḥ — Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Umayr — **Abān al-Aḥmar** — **Sa’d al-Kinānī** — Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...⁵

Al-Jawāhirī endorses the view of his teacher, al-Khūṭī, stating that **Aḥmad ibn Hārūn al-Fāmī** is Majhūl.⁶

Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī has documented the entry of **Abān ibn ‘Uthmān al-Aḥmar** in the second part of his *Rijāl*; the part reserved for narrators who are graded weak or Majhūl.⁷

1 *Al-Mufīd fī Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 496

2 See discussions under Narration no. 2

3 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 156

4 See discussions under Narration no. 13

5 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 58, Ḥadīth. 17

6 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 49

7 *Al-Rijāl*, vol. 2 pg. 226

Sa'd al-Kinānī is considered Majhūl. The early scholars have not recorded biographical data on him.¹

21. The narration ascribed to **Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī**

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī and Hāshim al-Baḥrānī — by way of **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAttār** — his father — Yaʿqūb ibn Yazīd — Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr — **Sayf ibn ʿUmayrah** — **Ash'ath ibn Sawwār** — Aḥnaf ibn Qays — Abū Dharr, that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAttār was already shown to be an unreliable narrator.³

Opinions have varied about **Sayf ibn ʿUmayrah**. He has been declared a Wāqifī though.⁴

Al-Māmaqānī describes **Ash'ath ibn Sawwār** as an Imāmī who is Majhūl.⁵

22. The narration ascribed to **Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī**

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Hāshimī — **Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm** — Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Maʿmar — Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Ramlī — Muḥammad ibn Mūsā — Yaʿqūb ibn Ishāq al-Marwazī — Amr ibn Manṣūr — **Ismāʿīl ibn Abān** — Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr — his father — Abū Hārūn al-ʿAbdī — **Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Anṣārī**, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁶

1 *Mustadrakāt ʿilm al-Rijāl*, vol.4 pg. 41

2 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 80, Ḥadīth. 7; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 38 pg. 107; *Ghāyat al-Marām* (8)

3 See Narration no. 16

4 *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, pg. 16

5 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, bio. 998

6 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 2 Ḥadīth. 6, *al-Biḥār*, vol. 38 pg. 90

Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm has already been shown to be unreliable.¹

Al-Māmaqānī describes **Ismā‘īl ibn Abān** as an Imāmī who is Majhūl.²

Muḥammad Amīn al-Kāẓimī states that all narrators with the name Jābir — with the exception of Jābir al-Ju‘fī — are considered weak and unreliable.³ No exception has been made for the Prophet’s ﷺ companion, **Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī** رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

23. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī — Muḥammad ibn Abī Qāsim — Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Kūfī — **Muḥammad ibn Sinān** — Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar — Thābit ibn Abī Ṣafīyah — Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁴

Appearing in this chain is **Muḥammad ibn Sinān al-Hamadānī**, Abū Ja‘far. We have already shown that Shī‘ah Ḥadīth authorities describe him as an extremist, weak, known for forging Ḥadīth and whose narrations deserve no attention.⁵

24. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by Hāshim al-Baḥrānī and al-Majlisī — by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Baghdādī — **Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Thābit ibn Kinānah**

1 See Narration no. 17

2 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg 14 (old edition)

3 *Al-Mushtarakāt*, pg. 28

4 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 8 Ḥadīth. 4; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 36 pg. 29

5 See the discussions under Narration. No.1

— Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Abbās al-Khuzā‘ī — **Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-‘Uranī** — ‘Amr ibn Thābit — **‘Aṭā’ ibn Sā’ib** — Abū Yaḥyā — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...¹

Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Thābit ibn Kinānah has not been mentioned by the early Shī‘ī authorities, he remains Majhūl.²

Al-Māmaqānī describes **‘Aṭā’ ibn al-Sā’ib** as unreliable.³

Al-Jawāhirī endorses the view of his teacher, al-Khū‘ī, that **Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-‘Uranī** is Majhūl.⁴

25. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm** — Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Hamadānī — **‘Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍāl** — **his father** — ‘Alī al-Riḍā — Mūsā ibn Ja‘far — Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq — Muḥammad al-Bāqir — ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn — Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī — ‘Alī, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁵

The name **Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq** is shared between two narrators; al-Ṭālaqānī and al-Fārisī. Al-Jawāhirī⁶ states that al-Ṭālaqānī has not been credited as a reliable narrator, and that al-Fārisī is Majhūl. Whichever of the two is identified, the narration remains in question.

‘Alī ibn Ḥasan is not acceptable as a narrator.⁷ It is claimed that he is deemed unreliable because he was a Faṭḥī; he believed that the line of

1 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 15 Ḥadīth. 11; *Ghāyat al-Marām*, vol. 1 pg. 169; *Bihār al-Anwār* vol. 38 pg. 94

2 *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 6 pg. 406

3 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 102 (old edition)

4 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 137

5 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 20, Ḥadīth. 4

6 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 483

7 *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, vol. 2 pg. 433

Imāmah continued with ‘Abd Allāh al-Afṭāh. His father, **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍāl**, is also said be a Faṭḥī.¹

26. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sinānī** — Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far al-Kūfī — Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Barmakī — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad — **Qāsim ibn Sulaymān** — Thābit ibn Abī Ṣafīyyah — **Sa‘īd ibn ‘Ilāqah** — **Abū Sa‘īd ‘Aqīṣā** — Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib — ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Al-Jawāhirī endorses the grading of his teacher, al-Khū‘ī, of **Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Sinānī**, stating that he is Majhūl despite being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq.³

Al-Māmaqānī states that numerous scholars have declared **Qāsim ibn Sulaymān al-Baghdādī** unreliable and weak.⁴

Sa‘īd ibn ‘Ilāqah is described as an Imāmī who is Majhūl.⁵ The same goes for **Abū Sa‘īd ‘Aqīṣā**.⁶

27. The narration of Ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of **Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** — Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Āmir — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Āmir — **Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-**

1 *Muntahā al-Maqāl* vol. 4 pg. 379

2 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, majlis. 53 Ḥadīth. 13;

3 *Al-Mufīd fī Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 496

4 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 122 (old edition)

5 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 64 (old edition)

6 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 52 (old edition)

Azdī — Abān ibn ‘Uthmān al-Aḥmar — Abān ibn Taghlib — **‘Ikrimah** — Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...¹

Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr is graded Majhūl.²

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī is not mentioned in the early Rijāl works and is considered Majhūl.³

Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī has documented the entry of **Abān ibn ‘Uthmān al-Aḥmar** in the second part of his *Rijāl*; the part reserved for narrators who are graded weak or Majhūl.⁴

Al-Khūṭī quotes al-Kashshī stating that **‘Ikrimah** was discredited.⁵

28. The narration ascribed to Umm Salamah

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Walīd — Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Qāsim — **Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī** — **Muḥammad ibn Sinān** — Mufaḍḍal ibn ‘Umar — Abū ‘Abd Allāh ﷺ [al-Ṣādiq] — his father — his grandfather — Umm Salamah, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁶

Appearing in this chain is **Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī**, whose Kunyah is Abū Samīnah. He is known for lying and deceiving. He has already been discussed.⁷

1 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 56 Ḥadīth. 7; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 38 pg. 102

2 *Zubdat al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 260; *Al-Mufīd min Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 198

3 *Mustadrakāt ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 1 pg. 440

4 *Al-Rijāl*, vol. 2 pg. 226

5 *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 12 pg. 177

6 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 60 Ḥadīth. 10

7 See the discussions under Narration No. 1

We also find **Muḥammad ibn Sinān al-Hamadānī** in this chain. We have already shown that Shī'ah Ḥadīth authorities describe him as an extremist, weak, known for forging Ḥadīth and whose narrations deserve no attention.¹

29. The narration ascribed to Salmān al-Fārisī

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of his father — **‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥasan al-Mu’addib** — **Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Aṣbahānī** — Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī — ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Hāshim — **Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusayn** — **Sa’d ibn Ṭarīf** — Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah — Salmān, that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Al-Jawāhirī has endorsed the grading of al-Khūṭī; that **‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥasan al-Mu’addib** is Majhūl.³ He says the same about **Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Aṣbahānī**.⁴

Yaḥyā ibn Ḥusayn is not mentioned in the Rijāl books. Contemporary Shī'ah scholars merely cite this narration of his identifying that he is the narrator of this Ḥadīth. He is also Majhūl.⁵

Sa’d ibn Ṭarīf was previously shown to be unreliable.⁶

30. The narration ascribed to Zayd ibn Arqam

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Walīd — **Aḥmad ibn ‘Alawiyyah**

1 See the discussions under Narration. No.1

2 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 72 Ḥadīth. 21

3 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 331

4 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 33

5 *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 8 pg. 197

6 See discussions under Narration no. 13

— Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad — al-Mas‘ūdī — ‘Alī ibn Qāsim al-Kindī — Sa‘d ibn Ṭālib — ‘Uthmān ibn Qāsim al-Anṣārī — Zayd ibn Arqam, that the Prophet ﷺ said...¹

Al-Māmaqānī states that **Aḥmad ibn ‘Alawiyyah** is certainly and Imāmī, but suggests that he is Majhūl.²

31. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Barqī — his father — his grandfather, **Aḥmad ibn Abī ‘Abd Allāh** — his father, Muḥammad ibn Khālīd — Ghiyāth ibn Ibrāhīm — Thābit ibn Dīnār — **Sa‘d ibn Ṭarīf** — Sa‘d ibn Jubayr — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...³

Objections have been raised against **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd** for being careless about whom he takes narrations from, often concealing the person whom he actually received the narration from.⁴

Sa‘d ibn Ṭarīf has previously been shown to be unreliable.⁵

32. The narration ascribed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās

This narration has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of **Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs** — his father — Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Jabbār — **Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī** — Ismā‘īl

1 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 72 Ḥadīth. 22; *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 38 pg. 104

2 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* vol. 6 pg. 325 (Mu‘assasah Āl Bayt edition)

3 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 45 Ḥadīth. 18; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 43 pg. 24

4 *Rijāl ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*, pg. 39; *al-Fihrist*, pg. 48

5 See discussions under Narration no. 13

ibn Faḍl — his father — Thābit ibn Dīnār — Saʿīd ibn Jubayr — ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...¹

Husayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Idrīs is considered Majhūl.²

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī is not mentioned in the early Rijāl works and is considered Majhūl.³

There is another mistake in this narration. Al-Khūṭī states that Ismāʿīl ibn Faḍl does not narrate from his father; instead it his own son, Faḍl, who narrates from him, Ismāʿīl.⁴ He goes on to say that he has identified over 450 places where this error has occurred in the Shīʿī Ḥadīth literature. In all those narrations Ismāʿīl ibn Faḍl actually narrates from Abū ‘Abd Allāh ﷺ, and only at one place does he narrate by way of Thābit ibn Dīnār.⁵

The occurrence of such a mistake alone would imply that this narration is not well preserved; what then could be said of the presence of other problematic narrators in the chain?

33. The narration about the Prophet’s ﷺ ascension

Al-Ṣadūq has recorded this with four different chains in his *Āmālī*. All four chains are flawed and have problematic narrators.

- a. His father — ‘Abd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī — Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā — his father — Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān — **Manṣūr al-Ṣayqal** — Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq — his fathers, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁶

1 *Āmālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 81 Ḥadīth. 17; *al-Bihār*, vol. 38 pg. 107

2 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 162

3 *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 1 pg. 440

4 *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 14 pg. 302

5 *Ibid*

6 *Āmālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 72 Ḥadīth. 17

Al-Jawāhirī endorses al-Khū'ī, stating that **Manṣūr al-Ṣayqal** is Majhūl.¹

- b. **Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** — Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Āmir — 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Āmir — **Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī** — **Abān ibn 'Uthmān al-Aḥmar** — Abān ibn Taghlib — **'Ikrimah** — Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr, Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Azdī, Abān ibn 'Uthmān al-Aḥmar and **'Ikrimāh** have already been shown to be unreliable.³

- c. **Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Qaṭṭān** — 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥātim — Hārūn ibn Ishāq al-Hamadānī — 'Abdah ibn Sulaymān — **Kāmil ibn al-'Alā** — Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit — Sa'īd ibn Jubayr — 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abbās, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁴

Al-Jawāhirī states that **Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-Qaṭṭān**, despite being a teacher of al-Ṣadūq, is Majhūl and probably an 'Āmmī.⁵

Kāmil ibn 'Alā is described by al-Māmaqānī as Majhūl, despite being an Imāmī.⁶

- d. **Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd al-Hāshimī** — **Furāt ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Furāt al-Kūfi** — **Muḥammad ibn Ḍaḥīr** — 'Abd Allāh ibn Faḍl al-Hāshimī — Ja'far al-Ṣādiq — his father — his fathers, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁷

1 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 622

2 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 56 Ḥadīth. 7

3 See the discussions on Narrations: 16, 18, 20, 27

4 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 50 Ḥadīth. 14

5 *Al-Mufīd min Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, pg. 25

6 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 126 (old edition)

7 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 26 Ḥadīth. 8

The issues with this entire chain have already been discussed.¹

34. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī al-Riḍā, from his father, from his fathers

This has been recorded by al-Ṣadūq by way of **Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** — Muḥammad ibn Ja‘far ibn Jāmi‘ al-Ḥimyarī — his father — Ya‘qūb ibn Yazīd — **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍāl** — ‘Alī al-Riḍā — his father — his fathers, that the Prophet ﷺ said...²

Both problematic narrators in this chain, **Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Masrūr** and **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍāl** have already been discussed.³

35. The narration ascribed to ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir

This has been recorded by al-Ṭūsī — and from him by al-Majlisī — by way of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad — **Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Khālīd al-Marāghī** — **Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ** — ‘Abd al-A‘lā ibn Wāṣil al-Asadī — **Mukhawwil ibn Ibrāhīm** — ‘**Alī ibn Ḥazawwar** — Aṣbagh ibn Nubātah — ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir, that the Prophet ﷺ said...⁴

Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Khālīd al-Marāghī, **Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ**, ‘**Abd al-A‘lā ibn Wāṣil al-Asadī** and **Mukhawwil ibn Ibrāhīm** are all Majhūl and have no narrator data on record in the books of Rijāl.⁵

Al-Māmaqānī states that ‘**Alī ibn Ḥazawwar** is weak and unreliable.⁶

1 See discussions on Narration no. 17

2 *Amālī al-Ṣadūq*, Majlis. 94 Ḥadīth. 12

3 See discussions under Narrations:18 and 25

4 *Amālī al-Ṭūsī*, Majlis. 7 Ḥadīth. 5; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 39 pg. 298

5 *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl*: vol. 4 pg. 366, vol. 5 pg. 365, vol. 7 pg. 138, vol. 7 pg. 389

6 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 106 (old edition)

Shī'ah scholars have been skeptical about the *Amālī* of al-Ṭūsī. It is not well-established that it is his work. Āṣif Mūhsinī expressed his reservations about it stating that it is questionable whether al-Majlisī actually had a good copy of it since the book was extremely rare.¹

36. The narration ascribed to 'Alī رضي الله عنه

This narration is found in the *Amālī* of al-Ṭūsī — and from him recorded by al-Majlisī — by way of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad — **Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib** — Ḥasan ibn 'Alī al-Za'farānī — Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī — **'Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah** — **'Amr ibn Maymūn** — Ja'far ibn Muḥammad — his father — his grandfather — Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said to him...²

'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib is Majhūl and there is no record of him in the books of Rijāl.³

Al-Jawāhirī shares the view of al-Khū'ī that **'Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah is Majhūl**.⁴

Al-Māmaqānī states that **'Amr ibn Maymūn** is Majhūl.⁵

37. The narration ascribed to Ḥasan ibn 'Alī

'Abd al-Ḥusayn ran out of narrations from primary sources so he became resourceful. He sourced narrations from later collections which cite earlier sources and made as if he had quoted the narrations from the

1 *Buḥūth fi 'Ilm al-Rijāl*. Pg. 514

2 *Amālī al-Ṭūsī*, Majlis. 7 Ḥadīth. 31; *al-Biḥār*, vol. 38 pg. 155

3 *Mustadrakāt 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 5 pg. 444

4 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 368

5 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1 pg. 113

primary source. The book which he cites, *Nuṣūṣ ‘alā al-A‘immah*, was never published. The only complete manuscript of the book is claimed to have been in the possession of Muḥammad ibn Murtaḍā al-Kashmīrī in Najaf.¹

How would ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn have access to the book, then too, to expect the Shaykh al-Azhar to research the topic? This is further confirmation of the forged nature of the correspondence between the two parties.

Al-Majlisī mentions this narration citing *Kifāyat al-Athar*, by al-Khazzāz al-Qummī. Hāshim al-Baḥrānī records it in *Ghāyat al-Marām* as well.²

The following narrators appear in the chain:

Dāwūd ibn Abī ‘Awf. Al-Jawāhīrī endorses al-Khū‘īs findings; that Dāwūd ibn ‘Awf remains Majhūl, and that the crediting of Ibn ‘Uqdah cannot be proven with a reliable chain.³

Sufyān ibn Sa‘īd al-Thawrī. ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī says, “He is not from our companions.” He included him in the second part of his *Rijāl* which is reserved for unreliable and unknown narrators.⁴

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh is considered an ‘*Āmmī*.⁵

38. The narration ascribed to ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has referenced this to the unpublished work, *Nuṣūṣ al-A‘immah*. It can be found in the work of Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, *Ghāyat al-Marām*.⁶

1 *Al-Dharī‘ah*, vol. 22 pg. 179

2 *Ghāyat al-Marām*, narration. 55

3 *Al-Mufīd*, pg. 214

4 *Al-Khulāṣah*, pg. 356; *al-Rijāl* by Ibn Dāwūd, pg. 248

5 *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 16 pg. 14

6 Narration. 56

Appearing in this chain is ‘**Alī ibn Ḥazawwar**. Al-Māmaqānī states that he is weak and unreliable.¹

Another problematic narrator is ‘**Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Ishāq ibn Ja‘far**; whom al-Māmaqānī says is Majhūl despite being and Imāmī.²

39. The narration ascribed to ‘Alī

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has referenced this to the unpublished work, *Nuṣūṣ al-A‘immah*. It can be found in *Biḥār al-Anwār* of al-Majlisī.³

Appearing in this chain is **Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alwān**, who has previously been shown to be unreliable.⁴

40. The narration ascribed to Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has referenced this to the unpublished work, *Nuṣūṣ al-A‘immah*. It can be found in *Kifāyat al-Athar* by al-Khazzāz al-Qummī,⁵ and in *Biḥār al-Anwār* by al-Majlisī.⁶

Appearing in this chain are **Ḥarīz ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥadhdhā’**, of whom there is no record of him in the books of Rijāl;⁷ and ‘**Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghifārī** who is either weak or Majhūl according to al-Māmaqānī.⁸

1 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 106 (old edition)

2 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 86 (old edition)

3 *al-Biḥār*, vol. 36 pg. 335

4 See discussions under Narration no. 13

5 *Kifāyat al-Athar*, pg. 176

6 *Al-Biḥār*, vol. 36 pg. 344

7 *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 2 pg. 327

8 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, pg. 87 (old edition)

Conclusion

Not a single narration from the forty cited by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is free from criticism by Shī‘ī standards. If his own scholars are not prepared to accept these narrations how does he expect a Sunnī to accept them. Are these the narrations that the Imāmah of ‘Alī عليه السلام rests on within the Shī‘ī legacy?

Letter 63

Safar 3, 1330

I. Shi'a Texts Rejected as Testimonials

II. IWhy Have Others Refrained from Quoting Them?

III. Asking for More Texts

1. As long as these texts are not quoted by nonShi'as, Sunnis are not bound to accept them as testimonials.
2. Had they been verified, why has nobody else quoted them?
3. Let us refer only to the hadith narrated by Sunnis in this regard,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 64

Safar 4, 1330

I. Above Texts were Quoted upon Request

II. Sahihs are Proofs against the Majority

III. Not Quoted Because of Their Existence in Our Own Sahihs

1. We have cited those texts in order to acquaint you with them and in response to your own request.
2. Our own testimonial against your argument is what we have already quoted from your own sahihs.
3. The reason why those texts were not included is due to the prejudice, with which we are familiar, of those who concealed their grudge, and hid their animosity, from the party of Pharaoh during the early epoch of Islam, worshippers of authority and domination who spent everything they possessed of might and means to hide the contributions of Ahl Al-Bayt and put out their light in every land.

They forced people to deny their feats and attributes through means and methods of both tempting and terrorizing, through their wealth once, and through their positions and political stature another. They bestowed their favours upon those who denied these merits, dismissing, banishing or even murdering those who believed in them.

You know that the texts related to the imamate, and the promises of caliphate, are held with apprehension by those who fear that such texts may jeopardize their thrones or undermine the very foundations of their governments. The safety of these texts against the tampering of such people, of that of their followers and flatterers, and their ability to reach us through many sources and methods, is, indeed, a miracle testifying

to their own truth. This is so due to the fact that those who denied the status of Ahl Al-Bayt, usurped the positions rightly and divinely assigned to them, used to incur the worst punishment upon anyone who showed love for Ahl Al-Bayt.

They would shave his beard, convey him on the back of a donkey and tour the marketplaces, humiliating him, beating him and depriving him of even the most simple and basic human right, till he would lose all hope for justice from those rulers and despond of having friends in the community.¹

So, if anyone spoke well of ‘Ali عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ, he would be disowned, and retribution would fall upon him; therefore, his possessions would be confiscated, and he would be executed. How many tongues praising ‘Ali were cut off? How many eyes which looked at him with respect were gouged? How many hands which pointed out to him were amputated? How many feet which walked towards him affectionately were sawed? How many homes of his followers were burnt? And how many of their families were banished...?

Among the narrators of hadith and “protectors of the legacy” were people who worshipped those monarchs and tyrants as well as their rulers other than worshipping Allah, the Exalted, the Sublime, and they sought nearness to them with all their resources of scholarship, thus distorting, testifying for the authenticity of this or against the authenticity of that, just like many whom we see these days of flatterers among shaykhs, hired scholars, bad judges who race to please the rulers by endorsing their policies, be they just or unjust, calling their edicts correct, be they truly correct or corrupt; so, the ruler does not even have to ask them for a verdict in support of his regime or to indict his opponents, for they do so according to his own wish and according to the requirements of his policy, even if this means opposing the Book and the Sunnah, thus violating the nation’s consensus, out of their own eagerness to safeguard their positions, or due to their coveting of a position they aspire to acquire. What a distance separates these from those!

The latter did not value their governments, while the others needed their monarchs so badly, since they would use them to fight Allah and His Messenger. For this reason, they enjoyed with the monarchs and rulers a special lofty status, and their word was heeded; therefore, they commanded authority and prestige, and they were fanatical against the accurate ahadith if the latter pointed out to an attribute of ‘Ali عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ or of other members of the household of Prophethood; so, they would reject it strongly, dropping it violently, attributing to its narrators Rafidism - and Rafidism is the worst vice according in their judgment. This is their policy towards the traditions lauding ‘Ali, especially if they are held in high esteem by the Shi’as.

As regarding the flatterers, these have had friends in the specially high class in every land; they would speak highly of them, and they have for followers secular scholars who would publicize their views, from among those who make a show of asceticism and piety, among the leaders and tribal chiefs.

When the latter hear what they say regarding rejecting those authentic ahadith, they would hold their statements as gospelrevealed and would publicize them among the commoners and the ignorant, thus making them wellknown in every land and using them as principles upheld in every time. There is another group of people who were custodians of hadith in those days, and who were forced by fear to overlook the ahadith praising ‘Ali and Ahl Al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.

If those poor folks were asked about what those flatterers were saying regarding rejecting the accurate sunan containing ‘Ali’s contributions and those of Ahl Al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ, they would fear, if they told the general public of what they knew, that a blind, deaf and dumb dissension might occur.

They were, therefore, forced out of fear to seek shelter by sidetracking the subject for fear of being rebuked by the flatterers and those who publicize

for them, and for fear of those who repeat their words like parrots from among the populace and ignorant commoners.

Kings and rulers ordered people to denounce the Commander of the Faithful. They pressured them to do so once by tempting them with money, and once by threatening them with their armies and dreadful promises of retribution, thus forcing them to belittle him and his lineage, so much so that they painted a disgusting picture of him in their books and narrated ahadith whereby ears feel offended, making the cursing of his name from the pulpits a tradition followed by the Muslims during both 'iids and on Fridays.

The Light of Allah cannot be put out, and the contributions of His walis cannot be hidden; otherwise, those traditions would not have reached us through the sources of both groups, accurately and explicitly implying his caliphate. No texts are more consecutively reported than the texts in his praise, and I, by Allah, wonder about the favours which He has bestowed upon 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, His servant and the brother of His Messenger, how his light pierced through the clouds, the pitch of darkness, and survived the tumultuous waves, letting its ray shine on the world like midday sun!

4. You may refer, in addition to all the irrefutable proofs you have heard, to the text of inheritance, for it by itself is an irrefutable proof, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. Refer to page 15, Vol. 3, of Sharh Nahjul Balaghah by Ibn Abul-Hadid, and you will find out what atrocities befell Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام and their Shi'ahs in those days. Imam al-Baqir عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام has made a statement in this regard to which we refer the researchers.

Discussions

The character of the Shaykh al-Azhar is depicted obtuse. What would motivate him to ask for the texts from the Shīʿī sources only to later object by stating that these are inadmissible? It doesn't require much of an imagination to see through the propaganda.

It comes without surprise that 'Abd al-Ḥusayn's scathing attack on the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم is a mere smokescreen to camouflage the lies and forgeries in his own tradition. The real reason why many of these narrations don't appear in the Sunnī Ḥadīth collections is self-evident.

History of Shīʿī distortions

The mendacity of the Shīʿī was known early on. Shortly after the demise of 'Alī رضي الله عنه some of the judgements which were ascribed to 'Alī رضي الله عنه were presented to 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه. When he studied this document he only transcribed a small portion of it and exclaimed "By Allah, these are not the judgements of 'Alī; or else he went astray."¹

He meant, by this statement, that it is not possible for 'Alī رضي الله عنه to have judged in accordance to what was found on that document; someone had forged these verdicts in the name of 'Alī رضي الله عنه. Ahl al-Sunnah cannot be blamed for this.

Abū Ishāq al-Sabīʿī informs us that when people innovated after the demise of 'Alī رضي الله عنه, one of his true companions exclaimed, "May Allah destroy them! What knowledge they have corrupted!"²

The reality of the Shīʿah playing a pivotal role in the forgery of Ḥadīth is attested to by their own scholars. The Shīʿī scholar, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, writes in his commentary of *Nahj al-Balāghah*:

1 *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*

2 *Ibid*

The root of fabrications in ḥadīth of virtues originated with the Shī'ah. Indeed, they fabricated abundant Aḥādīth about their companion ('Alī) in the early stages; motivated by their enmity towards their adversaries.¹

The Shī'ī authority on Rijāl, al-Kashshī writes:

Yūnus said, "I visited Iraq and found a group of the students of Abū Ja'far there. I found the students of Abū 'Abd Allāh in abundance. I heard (Ḥadīth) from them and took their books (from them) and later presented it to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā. He denied a large number of their Aḥādīth; that they could possibly be attributed to Abū 'Abd Allāh, and said, "Indeed, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb forged a number of Aḥādīth against Abū 'Abd Allāh. May Allah curse Abū al-Khaṭṭāb! Likewise the students of Abū al-Khaṭṭāb smuggle these narrations into the books of the students of Abū 'Abd Allāh until this day."²

Outrageous Allegations

'Abd al-Ḥusayn attempts to draw attention away from the lack of any textual evidence which explicitly nominate 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ as the Prophet's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ successor by leveling accusations against the earliest Muslims. He refers to the earliest Muslims as "The Party of Pharaoh," accusing them of concealing their animosity towards Ahl al-Bayt and using their power, position and wealth to blot out the true status and rank of Ahl al-Bayt. He claims that they used their financial influence to bribe people, demanding that they do not relate the narrations that jeopardize their authority; and when this approach failed they banished and murdered those who sought to mention their praise.

Despite the graphic details in describing the actions of those he accuses of bearing hatred, 'Abd al-Ḥusayn was cautious to resort to allusions when it came to identifying them. All of this without any shred of evidence or remote reference.

1 *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, vol. 3, p. 17, Dār al-Fikr

2 *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, p. 195

We know, with absolute certainty, that his version of history could not possibly apply to the period which preceded the Khilāfah of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. The evidence to the contrary is in such abundance that it would detract from the purpose of our discussions. However, we may point a number of incidents which provide some details that substantiate our statement, incidents which have been well-established in terms of the historical accuracy.

The Qur’an’s description of the Ṣaḥābah

We know from the Qur’an that the first generation of Muslims, the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ, were blessed with divine approval.

The purity of their hearts and the sincerity of their faith is attested to by Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى who declared, for eternity, that He is pleased with them.

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا

Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.¹

Allah attests to the fact that the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Companions were believers, identifies the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil as their hallmark features; moreover He describes them as the best of all nations. Are we to expect such a community to fail in its duty?

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ

You, are the best nation ever brought forth for [the good of] humankind: You enjoin what is right, and you forbid what is wrong, and you believe in Allah.²

1 Sūrah al-Faḥ: 18

2 Sūrah Āl ‘Imrān: 110

It might be said that this verse is general and could apply to the entire Ummah; the response is that the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ are included by necessity since the verse would otherwise be meaningless at the time of its revelation. The verse is thus descriptive in terms of its initial audience and conditional for any later audience.

Allah has also identified them as role-models for the coming generations. After announcing His divine pleasure on the earliest Muslims, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, He promises His divine pleasure for those who follow the Muhājirūn and Anṣār with excellence, before promising all three groups a lofty abode in the next life. Is this in anyway consistent with the community described by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn?

وَالسُّبْقُونَ الْأُولُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

*And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.*¹

Allah acknowledges the struggles and pains of the Muhājirūn and Anṣār, the first group gave up their homes and wealth, the second group opened up their homes and shared their wealth. Furthermore, Allah testifies to the sincerity of their sacrifices, and that it was to earn Allah’s bounty and pleasure, and to support the cause of Allah and His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Allah also praises a third group who have yet to come. This group is praised for its loyalty and goodwill towards those who preceded them in faith. Were they going to endure all those difficulties only to sabotage the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ cause after his demise? This verse is a testimony of their commitment to the cause until their departure from this world; it would otherwise be redundant for the coming generations to be praised for praying for their predecessors in faith.

1 Sūrah al-Tawbah: 100

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّءُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِمَّا أُوتُوا وَيُؤْتُونَ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ وَمَنْ يُوقِ شَحْنًا نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

For the poor emigrants who were expelled from their homes and their properties, seeking bounty from Allah and [His] approval and supporting Allah and His Messenger, [there is also a share]. Those are the truthful ones. And [also for] those who were settled in al-Dār [Madinah] and [adopted] the faith before them [before their emigration]. They love those who emigrated to them and find not any want in their breasts of what the emigrants were given but give [them] preference over themselves, even though they are in privation. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful. And [there is a share for] those who came after them, saying, “Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith and put not in our hearts [any] resentment toward those who have believed. Our Lord, indeed You are Kind and Merciful.”¹

Allah bears testimony to the mutual support and loyalty among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ أَوْوَا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ

Indeed, those who have believed and emigrated and fought with their wealth and lives in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided - they are allies of one another.²

Immediately thereafter Allah affirms that *they* are true believers:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ أَوْوَا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

1 Sūrah al-Ḥashr:

2 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 72

Those who have believed and emigrated and fought in the cause of Allah and those who gave shelter and aided - it is they who are the believers, truly. For them is forgiveness and noble provision.¹

It might be asked: What about those who accepted Islam later on and did not undertake Hijrah? What is their situation? The previous verses refer to the Muhājirūn and Anṣār. Allah promises this group Paradise as well even though he distinguished between their status and that of the Muhājirūn and Anṣar.

لَا يَسْتَوِي مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَنْفَقَ مِنْ قَبْلِ الْفَتْحِ وَقَتْلَ أَوْلِيكَ أَكْثَرَ دَرَجَةً مِمَّنْ الَّذِينَ أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَقْتِهَا
وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

Not equal among you are those who spent before the conquest [of Makkah] and fought [and those who did so after it]. Those are greater in degree than they who spent afterwards and fought. But to all Allah has promised the best [reward]. And Allah, with what you do, is Acquainted.²

Allah ﷻ informs the Prophet ﷺ that He has provided support to him through the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ. Are those whom Allah has selected to support His Prophet ﷺ so unworthy in the eyes of ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn that he accuses them of chasing position and power? Furthermore, Allah ﷻ attributes the unity of their hearts to Himself. Allah repeatedly refers to Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ as the believers.

هُوَ الَّذِي آيَدَكَ بِبَصْرِهِ وَيَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْفَافِ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلْفَتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلْفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers. And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise. O Prophet, sufficient for you is Allah and for whoever follows you of the believers.³

1 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 74

2 Sūrah al-Ḥadīd: 10 - 12

3 Sūrah al-Anfāl: 62 - 64

While ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn accuses them of seeking positions through bribery, and using their wealth to conceal the status of the Ahl al-Bayt, we find that Allah ﷻ praises them stating that wealth and business would never distract them from being conscious of Allah:

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

*There are men whom neither commerce nor selling divert from the remembrance of Allah, or from the establishment of the Prayer, or the giving of Zakāt; they fear a Day wherein hearts and eyes will turn.*¹

The poor amongst the Ṣaḥābah were praised for their self-restraint, and the rich amongst them were praised for their spending. Are we to accept that those whose financial affairs were deserving of Divine pleasure would use their wealth at the expense of their Hereafter?

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْتَلُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْحَافَا وَمَا تَنْفَقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]. And whatever you spend of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it. Those who spend their wealth [in Allah 's way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly - they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.*²

Are we to imagine that those whose hearts had been united by Allah, and praised for their mutual relations would hold personal grudges and bear animosity in their

1 Sūrah al-Nūr: 37

2 Sūrah al-Baqarah: 273 - 274

hearts for one another? Could the community that was nurtured by Muḥammad صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ bear any resemblance to the account given by ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn? This is a community which saw the culmination of Allah’s Religion and those who were the bearers of the torch of faith which Allah swore would not be extinguished.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءَ بَيْنَهُمْ

Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah ; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves.

تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ

You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure. Their mark is on their faces from the trace of prostration. That is their description in the Torah.

وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ كَرَزَعٍ أُخْرِجَ شَطْطُهُ فَازْرَهُ فَاسْتَعْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيَصْبُرَ بِهِمُ الْكُفَّارَ

And their description in the Gospel is as a plant which produces its offshoots and strengthens them so they grow firm and stand upon their stalks, delighting the sowers - so that Allah may enrage by them the disbelievers.¹

Notice that they are not only praised in the Qur’ān but in previous scriptures as well. What a privelage!

History in perspective

If we consider both ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s version of history and compare it the the one given in the Qur’ān, the contrast is unmistakable. While the Qur’ān provides an alternate portrait of the earliest Muslim community in general, what follows are specific incidents that are in harmony with the Qur’anic description.

1 Sūrah al-Fath: 29

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn accuses that the Ṣaḥābah of using power, position and wealth to deal a blow to the Ahl al-Bayt, whereas the complete opposite is known to be true.

When Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا confronted Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ about her inheritance; he related to her what he had heard from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in this regard and he assured her that the distribution of income from her father’s properties would continue. Thereafter he pacified her by clearly stating that the rights of the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ family deserved higher priority than that of his own family.

عن عائشة أن فاطمة عليها السلام أرسلت إلى أبي بكر تسأله ميراثها من النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيما أفاء الله على رسوله صلى الله عليه وسلم وتطلب صدقة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم التي بالمدينة وفدك وما بقي من خمس خيبر فقال أبو بكر إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال لا نورث ما تركنا فهو صدقة إنما يأكل آل محمد من هذا المال يعني مال الله ليس لهم أن يزيدوا على المأكل وإني والله لا أغير شيئاً من صدقات النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم التي كانت عليها في عهد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ولأعملن فيها بما عمل فيها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فتشهد علي ثم قال إنا قد عرفنا يا أبا بكر فضيلتك وذكر قرابتهم من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وحقهم فتكلم أبو بكر فقال والذي نفسي بيده لقرابة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أحب إلي أن أصل من قرابتي

‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا relates that the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ daughter, Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا sent somebody to Abū Bakr asking him to give her her inheritance from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ from what Allah had given to His Messenger صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in the form of Fay.¹ She asked for the Ṣadaqah (i.e. wealth assigned for charitable purposes) of the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in Madīnah, and Fadak, and what remained of the *Khums* of Khaybar

Abū Bakr said, “The Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, ‘We (Prophets), are not inherited, and whatever we leave behind is a charity, but the family of Muḥammad may eat from this property, i.e. Allah’s property, but they have the right to take whatever the food they need, not more.’ By Allah! I will not bring any change in dealing with the Ṣadaqah of the Prophet, and I will administer it exactly as the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ used to.”

1 This refers to the spoils when territory is conquered without fighting.

Then ‘Alī proclaimed the Shahādah and added, “O Abū Bakr! We acknowledge your virtue.” Then he (‘Alī) mentioned their own relationship to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and their rights.¹ Abu Bakr responded saying, “By He in Whose Hands lies my life. Fulfilling the rights of the family of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is more beloved to me than the rights of my own family!”²

Moreover, Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is on record saying:

عن أبي بكر رضي الله عنه أنه قال ارقبوا محمدًا صلى الله عليه وسلم في أهل بيته

Show reverence to Muḥammad ﷺ by honouring his family members.³

Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ maintained excellent relations with all the members of Ahl al-Bayt. He was even seen carrying the son of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mounted the shoulders of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would amuse him. All of this in the presence of ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ who also shared in the laughter.

عن عقبه بن الحارث قال صلى أبو بكر - رضي الله عنه - العصر ثم خرج يمشي فرأى الحسن يلعب مع الصبيان، فحمله على عاتقه وقال بأبي شبيهه بالنبي لا شبيهه بعلي وعلي يضحك.

‘Uqbah ibn Ḥarith said that he had seen Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ walking outside after having prayed ‘Asr. Whilst walking he saw Ḥasan رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ playing with other children. He lifted him onto his shoulders and said, “By my father he resembles the Prophet; he does not resemble ‘Alī.” All the while ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was laughing.⁴

The version of this narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* clarifies that this happened a few days after the Prophet’s ﷺ passing.⁵ It also states that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was walking

1 This is consistent with what the Prophet ﷺ stated at Ghadīr Khumm.

2 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb Faḍā’il Aṣḥāb al-Nabī ﷺ; Ḥadīth no. 3712

3 Ibid

4 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Manāqib, Bāb Ṣifat al-Nabī ﷺ, Ḥadīth no: 3542

5 *Musnad Aḥmad*, vol. 1 pg. 213, Ḥadīth no: 40

alongside Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه from the Masjid after 'Asr prayer, thus confirming that 'Alī رضي الله عنه prayed with the rest of the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم. He was present and active in the community, not hiding away and biding his time as some allege.

'Umar رضي الله عنه was the first to institute state registers in Islam. He recorded the names of people according to their tribes and assigned them stipends. Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī elaborates on how the *Dīwān* was established during the Khilāfah of 'Umar رضي الله عنه:

هو أول من دون للناس في الإسلام الدواوين، وكتب الناس على قبائلهم، وفرض لهم العطاء.

حدثني الحارث، قال: حدثنا ابن سعد، قال: حدثنا محمد بن عمر، قال: حدثني عائذ بن يحيى، عن أبي الحويرث، عن جبير بن الحويرث بن نقيد، أن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه استشار المسلمين في تدوين الدواوين، فقال له علي بن أبي طالب: تقسم كل سنة ما اجتمع إليك من مال، فلا تمسك منه شيئا وقال عثمان بن عفان: أرى مالا كثيرا يسع الناس، وإن لم يحصوا حتى تعرف من أخذ ممن لم يأخذ، خشيت أن ينتشر الأمر فقال له الوليد بن هشام بن المغيرة: يا أمير المؤمنين قد جثت الشام، فرأيت ملوكها قد دونوا ديوانا، وجندوا جندا، فدون ديوانا، وجند جندا فأخذ بقوله، فدعا عقيل بن أبي طالب ومخرمة بن نوفل وجبير بن مطعم، وكانوا من نساب قريش - فقال: اكتبوا الناس على منازلهم، فكتبوا فبدعوا بني هاشم، ثم أتبعوهم أبا بكر وقومه، ثم عمر وقومه على الخلافة، فلما نظر فيه عمر قال: لوددت والله أنه هكذا، ولكن ابدعوا بقرابه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، الأقرب فالأقرب، حتى تضعوا عمر حيث وضعه الله

حدثني الحارث، قال: حدثنا ابن سعد، قال: أخبرنا محمد بن عمر، قال: حدثني أسامة بن زيد بن أسلم، عن أبيه، عن جده، قال: رأيت عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه حين عرض عليه الكتاب، وبنو تميم على إثر بني هاشم وبنو عدي على إثر بني تميم، فأسمعه يقول:

ضعوا عمر موضعه، وابدعوا بالأقرب فالأقرب من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فجاءت بنو عدي إلى عمر، فقالوا: أنت خليفة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، قال: أو خليفة أبي بكر، وأبو بكر خليفة رسول الله، قالوا: وذاك، فلو جعلت نفسك حيث جعلك هؤلاء القوم! قال: بخ بخ بني عدي! أردتم الأكل على ظهري، وأن أذهب حسناتي لكم! لا والله حتى تأتيكم الدعوة، وأن أطبق عليكم الدفتر ولو أن تكتبوا في آخر الناس، إن لي صاحبين سلكا طريقا، فإن خالفتهما خولف بي، والله ما أدرنا الفضل في الدنيا، ولا نرجو ما نرجو من الآخرة من ثواب الله على ما عملنا الا بمحمد صلى الله عليه وسلم، فهو شرفنا، وقومه أشرف العرب، ثم الأقرب فالأقرب، إن العرب شرفت برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ...

He was the first to institute the state registers for the people in Islam. He recorded the [names of] people according to their tribes and assigned them stipends.

Jubayr ibn Ḥuwayrith relates that when ‘Umar رضي الله عنه sought the advice of the Muslims on the matter of establishing state registers. ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه advised him to distribute all the wealth that accrued to him every year, without keeping any.

‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān remarked on the large amount of wealth that was coming to the people in ample quantities. He said, “If they are not subjected to an official census so that you know who has received [wealth] and those who have not, I am afraid things will get out of hand.”

Al-Walīd ibn Hishām ibn al-Mughīrah said to him, “O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn, I have been to Syria and seen how the rulers there have instituted a state register and conscripted a regular army. Why not do the same?”

‘Umar took his advice and summoned ‘Aqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib¹, Makhramah ibn Nawfal, and Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im – they were most knowledgeable about the genealogy of Quraysh – telling them to register people according to their ranks. So they made the registers, beginning with Banū Hāshim, followed by Abū Bakr and his family, then ‘Umar and his family as the first two Khulafā. When ‘Umar looked into (the matter), he said, “I would have hoped for it to be thus, but begin with the relatives of the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, the closest, then the next, until you register ‘Umar in the appropriate place.”²

According to al-Harith, who relates from Ibn Sa‘d, from Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar, from Usāmah ibn Zayd ibn Aslam, from his father, from his

1 The brother of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.

2 ‘Umar رضي الله عنه effectively refused to allow his position as the Khalīfah to promote his own name in the register and is insisting that relationship to the Prophet alone should be the criterion of order of listing.

grandfather who says: I saw ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, when it was being proposed to him that he should register the people, with Banū Taym¹ coming after Banū Hashim,² and Banū ‘Adī³ coming after Banū Taym, and I could hear him say, “Place ‘Umar down in the appropriate sequence! Begin with the closest related to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, then the next.”

Then Banū ‘Adī came to ‘Umar and said, “You are the Khalīfah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.”

He replied, “Or the Khalīfah of Abū Bakr; and Abū Bakr was the Khalīfah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” “This is also correct,” they replied, “What if you placed yourself where these people [who are carrying out the registration] place you?” “Bravo, Bravo, Banū ‘Adī,” he remarked (sarcastically), “You want to eat off my back! You want me to give over my righteous deeds to you!⁴ No, indeed, [you must wait] until the you are called, even if you come last in the register, even if you are registered after everyone else. I have two companions who have gone down a [particular] road already. If I am at variance with them, I will be led off in another direction. Indeed, we have achieved excellence only in this world, and we can only hope for Allah’s reward in the Hereafter for what we have done, because of Muḥammad ﷺ. He is our nobility, his family are the noblest of the Arabs, then the closest related to him, then the next. The Arabs are noble through the Messenger of Allah ﷺ...”⁵

Another interesting point to be gleaned from this passage is that ‘Alī رضي الله عنه was consulted on state affairs by ‘Umar رضي الله عنه. Would ‘Alī رضي الله عنه give counsel to the ‘Party of Pharaoh’?

1 The tribe of Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه.

2 The Prophet’s ﷺ tribe: Ahl al-Bayt.

3 The tribe of ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.

4 Meaning that he would be trading his pious actions for his family’s benefit.

5 *Tārikh al-Tabarī*, vol. 4 pgs 209-210

This narration does not only appear in the *Tārīkh* of al-Ṭabarī, but it is confirmed by the Shīʿī scholar Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd in commentary of *Nahj al-Balāghah*,¹ and the Shīʿī historian al-Yaʿqūbī in his work on history.²

Furthermore, when assigning their stipends ʿUmar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ fixed the amount for all the sons of the participants at Badr at two-thousand each; except for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا who were allocated the same amount as their father, five-thousand each. ʿUmar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ made this exception for them due to their relationship to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Similarly, he fixed the stipend of ʿAbbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, who fought on the side of the Mushrikīn at Badr, at five-thousand, because he was the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ uncle.³

Marvel at ʿUmar’s رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ love for the Ahl al-Bayt in the manner in which he distributed the treasures of Khosrow after the conquests of Persia. Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf relates:

أخبرنا عبد الرزاق، عن معمر، عن الزهري، عن إبراهيم بن عبد الرحمن بن عوف، قال: لما أتني عمر بنونوز كسرى، قال له عبد الله بن الأرقم الزهري ألا تجعلها في بيت المال حتى تقسمها قال لا يظلمها سقف حتى أمضيها فأمر بها، فوضعت في صرح المسجد، فباتوا يحرسونها فلما أصبح أمر بها فكشف عنها فرأى فيها من الحمراء والبيضاء ما يكاد يتلألأ منه البصر قال فيكى عمر فقال له عبد الرحمن بن عوف ما يبكيك يا أمير المؤمنين فوالله إن كان هذا ليوم شكر، ويوم سرور، ويوم فرح فقال عمر كلا إن هذا لم يعطه قوم إلا ألقى بينهم العداوة والبغضاء ثم قال أنكيل لهم بالصاع أم نحتو فقال علي بل احتوا لهم ثم دعا حسن بن علي أول الناس فتحنا له ثم دعا حسيناً ثم أعطى الناس

When the treasures of Khosrow reached ʿUmar, ʿAbd Allah ibn Arqam al-Zuhrī said to him, “Will you not place this in the Bayt al-Māl until you distribute it?”

He replied, “No roof ought to shelter it until I distribute it.”

1 *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 3 pg. 176

2 *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*, vol. 2 pg. 153

3 *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 3 pg. 213

He then ordered for it to be placed inside the Masjid and there were people who stood guard over it during the night. The next morning they removed the cover and they saw the red and white (gold and silver) which would make a person's eyes sparkle; but 'Umar began to weep.

'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Awf رضي الله عنه asked him, "What makes you cry O Amīr al-Mu'minīn? Today is a day of thanksgiving, a day of joy and celebration."

'Umar رضي الله عنه responded, "On the contrary! No nation has been given this (wealth) except that it soon thereafter hatred and animosity is cast upon them."

He then said, "Shall we measure it with a Sā' or distribute it by handfuls?"

'Alī رضي الله عنه said, "We rather distributed it by hand."

He ('Umar) called for Ḥasan ibn 'Alī رضي الله عنه first, and gave him his share, then he called for Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī رضي الله عنه and gave him his share, then he began to distribute it among the (rest of the) people.¹

Again, this narration confirms both the fact that 'Alī رضي الله عنه was consulted on state matters, and that 'Umar رضي الله عنه accepted his suggestions. We can clearly see that 'Umar رضي الله عنه observed the rights of Ahl al-Bayt, especially with the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم grandsons. He insisted that these two flowers from the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم garden received their share before anyone else. How noble are those hands that distributed these spoils and how precious are those hands that were the first to receive!

While the military campaigns in Persia were gaining momentum during the Khilāfah of 'Umar رضي الله عنه, the Persian elite were busy collaberating among themselves and was in the process of preparing an army in excess of fifty-thousand fighters. The governors of the garrison towns in 'Irāq began writing to 'Umar

¹ *Muṣannaf 'Abd al-Razzāq* vol. 11 pg. 100

رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ informing him of the situation. It occurred to ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that he ought to be part of the offensive against this huge Persian army. He felt that his mind would be more at ease if he were on the frontlines. However, before making his decision he put his idea before the people of his Shūra which included ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān, Ṭalḥah ibn ‘Ubayd Allah, Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, and ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

‘Uthmān, Ṭalḥāh, Zubayr, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ deliberated on the matter among themselves and were the first to announce their view. They felt that ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ ought not go personally to the front, rather it would be preferable if he remained in Madīnah and assisted the army with his strategies and prayed for their victory. Al-Ṭabarī records the speech made by ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ which endorsed their opinion.

قال : فقام علي بن أبي طالب فقال: أصاب القوم يا أمير المؤمنين الرأي، وفهموا ما كتب به إليك، وإن هذا الأمر لم يكن نصره ولا خذلانه لكثرة ولا قلة، هو دينه الذي أظهر، وجنده الذي أعز، وأيده بالملائكة، حتى بلغ ما بلغ، فنحن على موعود من الله، والله منجز وعده، وناصر جنده، ومكانك منهم مكان النظام من الخرز، يجمعه ويمسكه، فإن انحل تفرق ما فيه وذهب، ثم لم يجتمع بحذافيره أبدا والعرب اليوم وإن كانوا قليلا فهي كثير عزيز بالإسلام، فأقم واكتب إلى أهل الكوفة فهم أعلام العرب ورؤساؤهم، ومن لم يحفل بمن هو أجمع وأحد وأجد من هؤلاء فليأتهم الثلثان وليقم الثلث، واكتب إلى أهل البصرة أن يمدوهم ببعض من عندهم].

فسر عمر بحسن رأيهم، وأعجبه ذلك منهم

‘Alī stood up and said, “The people have arrived at the right decision, O Amīr al-Mu’minīn. Victory will not be determined by superior numbers in one army nor will defeat come about because of inferior numbers in the other army. Rather it is His religion, which He has caused to prevail; and His army, wherein He has granted might and which He has strengthened with His angels, that caused it to reach where it has reached. We ought to rely on the promise of victory from Allah. Allah will fulfill His promise and He will grant victory to His army.

For them [the Persians] you are like the string on which the beads of a necklace are threaded and held together. When the string is broken, all

the beads on it will scatter and be lost, and they will never be gathered together again. Although few in number, today the Arabs are numerous and powerful through Islam. So stay [in Madīnah] and write to the people of Kūfah...”

‘Umar was pleased with their counsel and he expressed his admiration for it.¹

Another version of the incident is worded thus:

فعاد عمر، فقال: إن هذا يوم له ما بعده من الأيام، فتكلموا، [فقام علي بن أبي طالب فقال: أما بعد يا أمير المؤمنين، فإنك إن أشخصت أهل الشام من شأهم سارت الروم إلى ذراريهم، وإن أشخصت أهل اليمن من يمتهم سارت الحبشة إلى ذراريهم، وإنك إن شخصت من هذه الأرض انتقضت عليك الأرض من أطرافها وأقطارها، حتى يكون ما تدع وراءك أهم إليك مما بين يديك من العورات والعيالات، أقرر هؤلاء في أمصارهم، واكتب إلى أهل البصرة فليتفرقوا فيها ثلاث فرق، فلتقم فرقة لهم في حرهم وذراريهم، ولتقم فرقة في أهل عهدهم، ولتلا ينتقضوا عليهم، ولتسر فرقة إلى إخوانهم بالكوفة مددا لهم، إن الأعاجم إن نظروا إليك غدا قالوا: هذا أمير العرب، وأصل العرب، فكان ذلك أشد لكليهم، وألبتهم على نفسك وأما ما ذكرت من مسير القوم فإن الله هو أكره لمسيرهم منك، وهو أفدر على تغيير ما يكره، وأما ما ذكرت من عددهم، فإننا لم نكن نقاتل فيما مضى بالكثرة، ولكننا كنا نقاتل بالنصر].

فقال عمر: أجل والله

‘Umar returned to the pulpit and said, “Today is a day that will be decisive for the Muslims. Speak your minds.”

Then ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib stood up and said, “Listen O Amīr al-Mu’minīn. If you order the people of Syria to leave their country, then their children will be an easy target for the Byzantines, and if you order the people of Yemen to leave theirs, the Ethiopians will pounce on their children. And if you depart from this land [al-Madīnah], rebellions may break out against your authority from all sides to the point that what you left behind, namely your wives and children, may become more important to you than what lies ahead of you. Let those tribesmen stay in their garrison cities,

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4 pg. 123

and write to the people of Baṣrah ordering them to divide themselves into three groups: one to remain behind to protect the women and children, another to remain behind to keep an eye on the conquered people who have treaties with the Muslims, lest they rebel against them, and the third to march out to their brethren in Kūfah as reinforcements for the latter. If the Persians lay eyes on you some day in the near future, they will say, ‘This is the Commander of the Arabs on whom the whole nation of the Arabs depends,’ and that will only increase their desire to defeat you. Thus you will have incited them against you. You also mentioned that the enemy has mobilized; Allah abhors that even more than you do, and He is more powerful to alter a situation He abhors. And as for the consideration you mentioned – that the enemy is so large – in the past we never had superior forces, instead we fought relying on divine support.” So, ‘Umar accepted this.¹

The friendly relations between ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and ‘Umar (a) resonates throughout these passages. Not only does ‘Umar رضي الله عنه call upon ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to discuss matters of state. But ‘Alī رضي الله عنه appears to endorse the entire mission and deems it successful and worthy of Allah’s divine aid. ‘Alī رضي الله عنه sees the worthiness of Allah’s promises in the cause that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه presides over. Moreover, his concern for ‘Umar رضي الله عنه and understanding of the role of the Khalīfah ‘Umar is mutually exclusive with the concept of *Waṣīyyah* which ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn is preparing to argue soon. This would have been the perfect opportunity for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه to assume control of state had he considered himself passed over.

Prior to this, in previous campaigns, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه conferred responsibility of Madīnah to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه in his absence.

Al-Ṭabarī relates the events of the year 14 A.H:

ففي أول يوم من المحرم سنة أربع عشرة - فيما كتب إلي به السري، عن شعيب، عن سيف، عن محمد وطلحة وزيد بإسنادهم - خرج عمر حتى نزل على ماء يدعى صرارا، فعسكر به ولا يدري الناس ما يريد،

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 4 pg. 125

أيسر أم يقيم وكانوا إذا أرادوا أن يسألوه عن شيء رموه بعثمان أو بعبد الرحمن بن عوف، وكان عثمان يدعى في إمارة عمر رديفاً- قالوا: والرديف بلسان العرب الرجل الذي بعد الرجل، والعرب تقول ذلك للرجل الذي يرجونه بعد رئيسهم- وكانوا إذا لم يقدر هذان على علم شيء مما يريدون، ثلثوا بالعباس، فقال عثمان لعمر: ما بلغك؟ ما الذي تريد؟ فنادى: الصلاة جامعة فاجتمع الناس إليه، فأخبرهم الخبر ثم نظر ما يقول الناس، فقال العامة: سر وسر بنا معك، فدخل معهم في رأيهم، وكره أن يدعمهم حتى يخرجهم منه في رفق، فقال: استعدوا وأعدوا فإني سائر إلا أن يجيء رأي هو أمثل من ذلك ثم بعث إلى أهل الرأي، فاجتمع إليه وجوه أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وأعلام العرب، فقال: أحضروني الرأي فإني سائر فاجتمعوا جميعاً، وأجمع ملؤهم على أن يبعث رجلاً من اصحاب رسول الله ص ويقيم، ويرمي بالجنود، فإن كان الذي يشتهي من الفتح، فهو الذي يريد ويريدون، وإلا أعاد رجلاً وندب جنداً آخر، وفي ذلك ما يغيظ العدو، ويرعوي المسلمون، ويجيء نصر الله بإنجاز موعود الله فنادى عمر: الصلاة جامعة، فاجتمع

الناس إليه، وأرسل إلى علي، وقد استخلفه على المدينة، فأتاه، وإلى طلحة وقد بعثه على المقدمة، فرجع إليه، وجعل على المجنبتين الزبير وعبد الرحمن بن عوف، فقام في الناس فقال: إن الله عز وجل قد جمع على الإسلام أهله، فألف بين القلوب، وجعلهم فيه إخواناً، والمسلمون فيما بينهم كالجسد لا يخلو منه شيء من شيء أصاب غيره، وكذلك يحق على المسلمين أن يكونوا أمرهم شورى بينهم وبين ذوي الرأي منهم، فالناس تبع لمن قام بهذا الأمر، ما اجتمعوا عليه ورضوا به لزم الناس وكانوا فيه تبعاً لهم، ومن أقام بهذا الأمر تبع لأولي رأيهم ما رأوا لهم ورضوا به لهم من مكيدة في حرب كانوا فيه تبعاً لهم يا أيها الناس، إني إنما كنت كرجل منكم حتى صرفني ذوو الرأي منكم عن الخروج، فقد رأيت أن أقيم وأبعث رجلاً، وقد أحضرت هذا الأمر، من قدمت ومن خلفت: وكان على خليفته على المدينة، وطلحة على مقدمته بالأعوص، فأحضرهما ذلك

‘Umar رضي الله عنه set out on the first day of the month of Muḥarram of the year 14 and halted near a spring called Şirār. He established a camp there as the people did not know whether he wanted to go farther or to stay.

When they wanted to ask ‘Umar رضي الله عنه something, they sent to him ‘Uthmān or ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه. During ‘Umar’s reign, ‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه was called a *Radīf*. They have said: In the language of the Bedouins the *Radīf* is a man (who rides) behind another man (on the back of the same mount); and the Arabs use the word for a person whom they want (to rule them) after (the death of) their ruler.

And, if ‘Uthmān and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه could not get the information that they required, they directed the question for the third time to the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم uncle, ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

‘Uthmān رضي الله عنه said to ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, “What has come to your knowledge? What is it that you want to do?”

‘Umar رضي الله عنه gave the call for a congregational prayer, the people gathered around him, and he passed the information to them. Then he considered what the people had to say. The general troops said, “Set out and take us with you.”

He appeared to share their view and did not want to dissociate himself from them and he said, “Prepare yourself and prepare your provisions and equipment, for I am about to set out unless a better idea better comes up.”

Then he sent for the men of sound judgment [Ahl al-Ra’y]. Prominent Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Arab notables gathered around him.

He said, “Let me have your opinion, for I am about to set out.”

All of them assembled and unanimously decided that he should stay, send out a man from the Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, and provide him with troops. If the desired victory should be attained, then this is what all of them wanted; if not, he would recall the man and recruit another army. This would enrage the enemy; the Muslims would regain their strength, and Allah’s victory would be achieved through the fulfillment of His promises.

‘Umar رضي الله عنه called for congregational prayer, and the people gathered around him. **He sent for ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, whom he had appointed to be his deputy in Madīnah, and ‘Alī رضي الله عنه came to him; and he also sent for Ṭalḥah رضي الله عنه, whom he had sent to command the vanguard, and he returned to him [as well].** On the two wings of the army he appointed al-Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf رضي الله عنه.

‘Umar stood up [to address] the people and said, “Allah سبحانه وتعالى has united the people of Islam, reconciled their hearts, and made them brethren. In

all matters concerning them, the Muslims are like one body; no part of it remains unaffected by something that afflicts another part.

Furthermore, it behoves the Muslims that their matters be decided in consultation among them, or, rather, among the wise men among them (*Dhawū al-Ra'y*). The people are subordinate to those who undertake this command. What the latter agree upon and are satisfied with is incumbent upon the people, and the people are subordinate to them in it. And those who undertake this command are subordinate to the wise men: Whatever the latter deem appropriate and are satisfied with concerning battle strategy, the commanders are subordinate to them.

0 people! I am like one of you, so that the wise men from among you prevented me from setting out, and I saw fit to stay and to send another person (instead of me). I have summoned – for consultation on this matter– the commander of the vanguard, and the person whom I have left as my deputy in Madīnah...”

‘Alī رضي الله عنه was ‘Umar’s رضي الله عنه deputy in Madīnah, and Ṭalḥah commanded the vanguard of the army in al-A‘waş. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه summoned both of them for consultation.¹

This is not the only occasion where ‘Umar رضي الله عنه appointed ‘Alī رضي الله عنه as his deputy. During the Conquest of Jerusalem ‘Umar رضي الله عنه went out on the advice of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and appointed him as his deputy and instructed him to lead the people in congregational Ṣalāh during his absence.

عن عدي بن سهل، قال: لما استمد أهل الشام عمر على أهل فلسطين، استخلف عليا، وخرج ممدا لهم، فقال علي: أين تخرج بنفسك! إنك تريد عدوا كلبا، فقال: إني أبادر بجهاد العدو موت العباس، إنكم لو قد فقدتم العباس لانتقض بكم الشر كما ينتقض أول الحبل

When the Muslims of Syria asked ‘Umar to help them against the people of Palestine, he appointed ‘Alī as his deputy and set out to reinforce them.

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 3 pgs. 479 - 481

‘Alī said: “Where are going by yourself? You are heading toward a rabid enemy!”

‘Umar said, “I hasten to fight the enemy before the death of ‘Abbas. After al-Abbas is gone, evil will unwind and affect you like the ends of a rope.”¹

The incidents that support the idea of mutual harmony and cordial relations are too many to mention under a single discussion. The Sunnī narrative of history does not see any ill-will or animosity between the Ahl al-Bayt and the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم; nor does it portray any competition or rivalry for leadership. On the contrary, they considered each other family and cared for each other in this way. How else do we explain the marriages between the Ṣaḥābah, their children and Ahl al-Bayt?

The earliest Muslims through the eyes of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه

In contrast to the morbid picture that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn paints of the earliest Muslim community we have the testimony of the first Imām of the Shī‘ah, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib رضي الله عنه – whose words and actions are legally binding according to ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn – that the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions were of excellent moral and religious standing. He praises their piety and devotion to Allah, describing their elevated stations of Taqwa and spiritual excellence.

Ibrāhīm al-Thaqafī records the following exchange between ‘Alī رضي الله عنه and his own companions in his book, *al-Ghārāt*:

“O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn! Inform us about your comrades.”

He asked, “About which comrades of mine?”

They said, “About the Companions of Muḥammad.”

He said, “All of the *Aṣḥāb* (Companions) of Muḥammad are my comrades.”²

1 *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 3 pg. 608

2 *Al-Ghārāt* vol. 1 p. 177

In *Nahj al-Balāghah*, a source accepted by the Shī'ah, the description of the Ṣaḥābah attributed to 'Alī رضي الله عنه is worded most eloquently:

لقد رايت اصحاب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فما ارى احدا يشبههم منكم لقد كانوا يصبحون شعثا غربا وقد بانوا سجدا وقياما يراو حون بين جباههم وخدودهم ويقفون على مثل الجمر من ذكر معادهم كأن بين اعينهم ركب المعزي من طول سجودهم اذا ذكر الله هملت اعينهم حتى تبل جيوبهم و مادوا كما يميد الشجر يوم الريح العاصف خوفا من العقاب و رجاء للثواب

Indeed, I have seen the *Aṣḥāb* (Companions) of Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and I do not see anyone amongst you who resembles them. They would rise in the morning, unkempt and covered with dust, because they had spent the night in prostration and standing. They would alternate between their foreheads and their cheeks, while it appeared as if they were standing on coals, reflecting on their eventual return to the Hereafter. (The space) Between their eyes (on their foreheads) resembled the knees of goats due to their lengthy prostration. When they would remember Allah, their eyes would flow causing their bosoms to become wet. They would shake as a tree shakes on a terribly windy day, fearing punishment and hoping for reward.¹

It is well-documented that 'Alī رضي الله عنه prayed behind the *Khulafā'* who preceded him. This historical fact is acknowledged by both the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah.² Since this is well-established, and this could be understood to be approval from the side of 'Alī رضي الله عنه, the early Shī'ī scholars had no recourse but to interpret his actions in a way that it would not compromise their own doctrine. They argue that this was done out of *Taqiyyah*, and that he repeated his prayers at home. The problem with this argument is the lack of evidence to support the theory of 'Alī رضي الله عنه repeating his prayers. The theory of *Taqiyyah* in this instance raises more questions than it provides answers. In the period after 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه a group emerged whom we refer to as *Nawāṣib*, the detractors of 'Alī رضي الله عنه. These were not Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, nor were any of the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah* with the commentary of Muḥammad 'Abduh, p. 225

2 *Al-Iḥtijāj*, pg 53; *al-Talkhīṣ al-Shāfi*, pg 254

Nāṣibīs either. A Nāṣibī might ask, if it is plausible that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was pretending to pray behind Abū Bakr , ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, how do we know that he was not pretending to pray behind the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? We seek refuge in Allah from such reproachful questions, just as we seek refuge in Him from preposterous interpretations!

Compare ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s account with what the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ describes of that era. ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ relates:

عن عبد الله قال سئل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أى الناس خير قال قرني ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم ثم يجيء قوم تبدر شهادة أحدهم يمينه وتبدر يمينه شهادته

It was asked of the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who amongst all people were the best. He replied, “(Those) of my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them, then there would come a people whose testimony would precede their oath; and their oath would precede their testimony.”¹

Similar narrations are related from ‘Āi’shah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, and ‘Imrān ibn Ḥuṣayn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ among other Companions رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ.

If the earliest Muslims tried to blot out the status of Ahl al-Bayt how is it that the Sunnī collections of Ḥadīth have chapters on the virtues of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib specifically, and the virtues of Ahl al-Bayt in general? Why is it that Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal placed the Musnad’s of the Ahl al-Bayt immediately after the Musnads of the ‘Asharah Mubashsharah? How is it that the collective narration from Ahl al-Bayt in Sunnī collections exceeds the number of narrations from Ahl al-Bayt in Twelver Shī‘ah Ḥadīth collections exponentially?

Is the Shī‘ī perspective of the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Companions so slanted that they believe that these individuals, who sacrificed their lives and their wealth for the

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Shahādāt, Ḥadīth no: 2652; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Fad‘īl al-Ṣaḥābah, Ḥadīth no: 2533

cause of Islam, deliberately distorted the religion and concealed the narrations about the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه?

Is it beyond reason to consider that an alternative narrative exists? Is it not plausible that they upheld the rights of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه, acknowledged his virtues and merits, and maintained good relations with him? If the Shī‘ah clergy – ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn being a prominent figure in his own time – fail to provide narrations from their own tradition, which satisfy their own criteria of acceptance, for the immediate succession of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه; why place the blame on the Ahl al-Sunnah for ‘concealing’ these narrations? Were there no righteous one’s among the Shī‘ah who could preserve the legacy of their first Imām?

With Allah’s grace, Ahl al-Sunnah have preserved dozens of narrations about the virtues of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه with pristine chains of transmission. They continue to love and revere ‘Alī رضي الله عنه until this day. Loving him is part of faith; and this is narrated by the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah with a sound chain!

It was known that the companions of ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ūd were the only ones in Kūfah who could be trusted when it came to transmitting religious knowledge passed down from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه.¹

We will discover who the actual liars and fabricators were in later discussions. That being said, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has consistently revealed himself to be an epitome of his predecessors!

1 Ibid.

Letter 65

Safar 5, 1330

I. Requesting the Ahadith Relevant to the Inheritance

Please narrate to us the hadith of inheritance as transmitted by Sunnis,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 66

Safar 5, 1330

I. Ali is the Prophet's Heir

There is no doubt that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has left 'Ali with a legacy of knowledge and wisdom as much as the Almighty permitted His prophets and wasis to inherit, so much so that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate; therefore, whoever wishes to attain knowledge, let him approach through the gate."¹

He, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said: "I am the storehouse of wisdom, and 'Ali is its door... 'Ali is the gateway of my knowledge, the one who explains after me the Message with which I have been sent; loving him is indicative of genuine faith, and hating him is hypocrisy."

According to Zayd ibn Abu 'Awfah, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, has addressed 'Ali thus: "You are my brother and heir;"² whereupon 'Ali inquired: "And what will you bequeath unto me?" He, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered: "Whatever Prophets before me used to bequeath." In another hadith, he, peace be upon him and his progeny, according to Buraydah, has said: "The heir of my knowledge is 'Ali."³

Refer also to the hadith on the day of warning. During the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, 'Ali عليه السلام used to say: "By Allah, I am his brother, successor and cousin, and the heir of his knowledge; so, who is more worthy of all this other than myself?"⁴

Once 'Ali was asked: "How did you come to inherit your cousin rather than your uncle?" He answered: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, gathered the descendants of 'Abdul Muttalib, who were quite a few, and each one of them had such an appetite that would consider tree trunks edible

and would drink water though not potable, and he prepared for them a mudd of food (a dry measure approximately Tangier 46.61, about one and threequarters of a pound); yet they all ate till they were satisfied, while the food looked as if it was not touched.

Then he, peace be upon him and his progeny, said: ‘O descendants of ‘Abdul-Muttalib! I have been sent to you in particular, and to all people in general; so, who among you pledges to be my brother, friend and heir?’ Nobody stood; so, I stood, though the youngest among the attendants, but he ﷺ told me to sit. He repeated his statement twice, and each time, I was the only one who stood up, and every time he would tell me to sit. On the third time, he shook hands with me; thus did I come to inherit my cousin instead of my uncle.”⁵

According to alHakim’s Al-Mustadrak,⁶ and to alThahbi’s Talkhis, who both testify to its authenticity, Qatham ibn al’Abbas was asked once: “How did ‘Ali come to inherit the Messenger of Allah ﷺ rather than your own selves?” He answered: “It is so due to his being the foremost among us in following him, and in keeping company with him more than anyone of us.”

It was wellknown that ‘Ali, rather than his uncle al’Abbas or any descendant of Hashim, was the heir of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. They accepted that as a fact, though they were informed of the reason why such inheritance was confined to ‘Ali alone, who was the Prophet’s cousin, rather than to al’Abbas, his uncle, or to any other uncle or relative of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny. For this reason, they used to ask ‘Ali ﷺ once and once Qatham, and the latter used to answer them as stated above in a way that is satisfactory to the understanding of those inquirers.

Otherwise, the answer would be that Allah, the Exalted and omniScient, looked upon the people of the earth and chose from among them Muhammad ﷺ and elevated him to be the Prophet, then He cast another look and selected ‘Ali and inspired to His Messenger, peace be upon him and his progeny, to take him as his heir and successor.

On page 125, Vol. 3, of Al-Mustadrak, alHakim, having quoted Qatham stating the above, says: “The judge of judges [supreme judge, or grand mufti], Abul-Hasan Muhammad ibn Salih alHashimi, has told me that he once heard Abu ‘Umar the judge saying: ‘I heard Isma’il ibn Ishaq the judge, having been informed of what Qatham had said, saying that a man inherits another through either a blood relationship or sincere loyalty, and men of knowledge do not dispute the fact that [under normal circumstances] a cousin does not become the heir while the uncle [his father] is still alive.’

According to such consensus, ‘Ali inherited the Prophet’s knowledge rather than they.” As a matter of fact, chroniclers are sequential in narrating such a fact, especially through the sources of the purified progeny, and suffices us for proof is the Will and its clear texts, Wassalam.

Sincerely,
Sh

Footnotes

1. We have quoted this hadith and the couple before it in Letter No. 48 above. Refer in that Letter to ahadith number 9, 10 and 11, and do not overlook our comments.
2. We have quoted the said hadith in Letter No. 32.
3. Refer to it in Letter No. 68 above.
4. This statement verbatim is confirmed as being ‘Ali’s. It is quoted by al-Hakim on page 126, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak through a narration endorsed by al-Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Thahbi, in his Talkhis al-Mustadrak, has admitted the same.

5. This hadith stands on firm grounds, and it is a lengthy one. It has been quoted by al-Diya' al-Maqdisi in his *Al-Mukhtara*, and by Ibn Jarir in his *Tahthib al-Athar*. It is hadith number 6155 on page 408, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*. It is also quoted by al-Nisa'i on page 18 of his *Al-Khasa'is al-'Alawiyya*, and it is transmitted by Ibn Abul-Hadid from al-Tabari's *Tarikh* near the end of the commentary on the "qasi'a" sermon, page 255, Vol. 3, of *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah*. Refer also to page 159, Vol. 1, of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's *Musnad* where you will find the same hadith conveying this meaning.

6. It occurs on page 125 of its third volume. It is also quoted by Ibn Abu Shaybah, and it is hadith number 6084 on page 400, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-'Ummal*.

Discussions

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has cited narrations which, he alleges, proves that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is the sole heir to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ knowledge which leads to the conclusion that only he is the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ rightful successor. He had previously cited all these narrations and we have already discussed them at length. Ahl al-Sunnah do not dispute the fact that ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is an heir to the Prophet’s صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ knowledge. However, they accept that there are many other heirs to this tradition and it is not limited to ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Narrations 1, 2, 3 are essentially the same narration. They are merely variations of the same narration.

“I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its door,”

“I am the abode of wisdom and ‘Alī is its door,”

“‘Alī is the door to my knowledge...”

We have already discussed this narration.¹ There is no harm in mentioning some of the Ḥadīth experts who considered this narration unreliable or even fabricated:

1. Yahyā ibn Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān – (d. 198 A.H)²
2. Yahyā ibn Ma‘īn – (d. 233 A.H) even though there are contrasting opinions attributed to him.³
3. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal – (d. 241 A.H)⁴
4. Al-Bukhārī – (d. 256 A.H)⁵

1 See the discussions under Letter. 48

2 *Kashf al-Khafā*, vol. 1 pg. 235

3 *‘Ilal Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 3 pg. 9; *al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl*, vol. 6 pg. 99

4 *‘Ilal al-Marrūdhī*, (308); *al-Muntakhab* (120)

5 *Al-‘Ilal al-Kabīr* by al-Tirmidhī, (699)

5. Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī – (d. 264 A.H)¹
6. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī – (d. 277 A.H)²
7. Al-Tirmidhī – (d. 279 A.H)³
8. Muṭayyin – (d. 297 A.H)⁴
9. Al-‘Uqaylī – (d. 322 A.H)⁵
10. İbn Ḥibbān – (d. 354 A.H)⁶
11. İbn ‘Adī – (d. 365 A.H)⁷
12. Al-Azdī – (d. 374 A.H)⁸
13. Al-Dāraquṭnī – (d. 380 A.H)⁹
14. Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī – (d. 543 A.H)¹⁰
15. İbn ‘Asākir – (d. 571 A. H)¹¹
16. İbn al-Jawzī – (d. 597 A.H)¹²
17. Abū ‘Abd Allah al-Qurṭubī – (d. 671)¹³
18. Al-Nawawī – (d. 676 A.H)¹⁴

1 *Al-Ḍu‘afā’*, vol. 1 pg. 519

2 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 8 pg. 22

3 *Jāmi‘ al-Tirmidhī*, Ḥadīth no: 3723; *al-‘İlal al-Kabīr*, (699)

4 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 42 pg. 381

5 *Al-Ḍu‘afā’*, vol. 3 pg.149

6 *Al-Majrūhīn*, vol. 1 pg. 151, vol. 2 pg. 94

7 *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 2 pg. 341, vol. 5 pg. 67

8 *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 11 pg. 96

9 *Al-‘İlal*, vol. 3 pg. 248

10 *Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 3 pg. 1114

11 *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 42 pg. 380

12 *Al-Mawḍū‘āt*, vol.1 pg. 353, 355

13 *Al-Jami‘ li Aḥkām al-Qur‘ān*, vol. 9 pg. 336

14 *Tahdhib al-Asmā wa al-Lughāt*, vol. 1 pg. 248

19. Ibn Daqīq al-‘Īd – (d. 702 A.H)¹
20. Ibn Taymiyyah – (d. 728 A.H)²
21. Al-Dhahabī – (d. 748 A.H)³
22. Ibn Kathīr – (d. 774 A.H)⁴
23. Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī – (d. 807 A.H)⁵
24. Al-‘Ajlūnī – (d. 1162 A.H)⁶
25. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mu‘allimī – (d. 1386 A.H)⁷

This list is not exhaustive, though it serves the purpose of this discussion.

The fourth narration

“You are my brother and heir...”

This narration was shown to be unreliable and defective in our discussion under Letter 32.⁸ Again, ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn merely lifted the words of the narration which suit him and he ignores the rest of the narration. In it there is praise for so many of the Prophet’s ﷺ Companions, whom he referred previously to as:

Those who concealed their grudge, and hid their animosity, from the party of Pharaoh during the early epoch of Islam, worshippers of authority and domination who spent everything they possessed of might and means to hide the contributions of Ahl Al-Bayt and put out their light in every land.⁹

1 *Al-Maqāṣid al-Ḥasanah*, pg. 97

2 *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, vol. 7 pg. 515-522

3 *Talkhīṣ al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 126; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 18 pg. 268

4 *Jāmi‘ al-Masānīd*, *Musnad ibn ‘Abbās* ﷺ (1940)

5 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9 pg. 114

6 *Kashf al-Khafā‘*, vol. 1 pg. 235

7 *Ḥāshiyat al-Fawā‘id al-Majmū‘ah*, pg. 349

8 Narration no. 4

9 Letter 64

If he is prepared to accept this narration, then he ought to retract his vile comments about the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم!

The narration, however, suffers from a series of flaws; the chain is interrupted, many narrators are unknown, and those who are known are weak and unreliable! Are these our ‘Ṣiḥāḥ’ that he claims is evidence against us?

The fifth narration

The Ḥadīth of Buraydah رضي الله عنه will feature in the next round of ‘correspondence’. We shall discuss this narration there.

The sixth narration

He has cited what he refers to as the Ḥadīth of the *Day of Warning*. We have previously pointed out the major flaws in this narration under the heading ‘The Ḥadīth of Warning his closest kin.’¹

The seventh narration

“By Allah, I am his brother, successor and cousin, and the heir of his knowledge...”

This is a statement attributed to ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. We have proven earlier that the chain of transmission for this report is unreliable.² The details in the footnote are blatant lies. Al-Ḥākim did not grade this authentic on the criteria of al-Bukhārī or Muslim, let alone both! Al-Dhahabī did not ratify the authenticity of this narration in his *Talkhīṣ*; on the contrary he remained silent. He did, however, declare it baseless in another work of his.³

1 See discussions on Letter 20

2 See discussions on Letter 34; Narration no.15

3 *Mīzān al-ʿitidāl*, vol. 3 pg. 255

The eighth narration

This is actually the **sixth narration** which he has repeated. He quotes a selected part of the Ḥadīth, creating the impression that it is a different narration, whereas it is the very Ḥadīth of *Day of Warning* which he alluded to a few lines back.

The ninth narration

This is not a Prophetic Ḥadīth. It is a declaration by Qutham ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه which is contested in terms of its reliability. It is only known by way of Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī, and from him there are two narrators: Zuhayr ibn Mu‘āwiyah and Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakhaṭī.¹

Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī is known for having suffered the loss of memory towards the end his life. As such, those who relate from him prior to the memory lapse are preferred over those who narrated from him towards the end of his life.²

Zuhayr ibn Mu‘āwiyah is a reliable narrator but only took Ḥadīth from Abū Ishāq towards the end of his life. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has criticized the narrations of Zuhayr from Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī specifically.³ Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī appear to share those reservations about the narration of Zuhayr from Abū Ishāq al-Sabīṭī.⁴

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Nakhaṭī took Ḥadīth from Abū Ishāq early on, but his narrations were affected on account of weakness of memory, especially after being assigned the post of Qāḍī.⁵

Some scholars considered this narration unreliable due to these factors, whereas those who accepted it understood it to mean inheritance in terms of knowledge.

1 *Al-Mustadrak*, vol. 3 pg. 125

2 *Al-Taqrīb*, bio. 5065

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta’dīl*, vol. 3 pg. 588; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 9 pg. 424

4 *Ibid*

5 See discussions under Letter 22

That does not mean that he was the exclusive heir of the Prophet; instead it refers to the fact that he was the most knowledgeable from the Ahl al-Bayt. This is consistent with the reasoning provided by Qutham ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه.

‘Alī رضي الله عنه negated the allegation that he was given any exclusive knowledge. Abū Juḥayfah relates:

عن الشعبي قال سمعت أبا جحيفة قال: سألت علياً رضي الله عنه هل عندكم شيء ما ليس في القرآن وقال مرة ما ليس عند الناس فقال والذي فلق الحب وبرأ النسيمة ما عندنا إلا ما في القرآن إلا فهما يعطى رجل في كتابه وما في الصحيفة. قلت وما في الصحيفة قال العقل وفكاك الأسير وأن لا يقتل مسلم بكافر

I asked ‘Alī, “Have you got any (exclusive knowledge) apart from the Qur’an?”

(Once he said...apart from what the people have?)

‘Alī رضي الله عنه replied, “By Him Who cause the grain split and created the soul, we have nothing except what is in the Qur’an. Other than that it is the understanding of His Book which He may gift any man with; and what is written on this scroll!”

I asked, “What is written in this scroll?”

He replied, “(The rules of) ‘Aql [bloodmoney], ransoming of captives, and that a Muslim should not be killed (in Qiṣāṣ) for killing a disbeliever.”¹

If it is a question of ‘Alī رضي الله عنه being the Prophet’s صلى الله عليه وسلم heir in knowledge, why is it that the Ahl al-Sunnah narrate more narrations from ‘Alī رضي الله عنه than what appears in the Shī‘ah collections?

If we take *Musnad Aḥmad* only, there are more than 800 narrations that are transmitted by way of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه. This collection of Ḥadīth, alone,

1 *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Diyāṭ, Ḥadīth no: 6903

exceeds the number of narrations transmitted by the Shī'ah collectively in their primary sources by way of 'Alī رضي الله عنه! If 'Alī رضي الله عنه was the sole heir to the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم knowledge, how is it that *Musnad Aḥmad* comprises of close to 30000 narrations. 'Alī's رضي الله عنه narrations in *Musnad Aḥmad* account for roughly three-percent of all the narrations found in it. If it were argued that this is due to prejudice; a simple comparison with the narrations of 'Umar رضي الله عنه in *Musnad Aḥmad* – which do not exceed 320 narrations in the entire *Musnad* – dismisses any allegation that this was a result of prejudice.

Let 'Abd al-Ḥusayn bring those narrations – which he alleges are Mutawātir – in this regard. We can only hope that they are nothing like the forty narrations he cited in Letter 60; those were unreliable even by Shī'ī standards!

Letter 67

Safar 6, 1330

I. Where is the Prophet's Will?

Where is the Prophet's Will?

Sunnis are not familiar with any will left for 'Ali, nor are they acquainted with any of its contents; so, please oblige and tell us its story,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

S

Letter 68

Safar 9, 1330

I. The Will's Text

The texts regarding the will are consecutively reported through the Imams of the purified progeny عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام; so, refer to what has been stated in this regard by others as mentioned in Letter No. 20 that quotes the statements of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, who took 'Ali عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام by the neck and said: "This is my brother and successor; he shall succeed me in faring with you; therefore, listen to him and obey him."

Muhammad ibn Hamid alRazi quotes Salamah alAbrash, Ibn Ishaq, Abu Rabi'ah al-Ayadi, Ibn Buraydah, ending with the latter's father Buraydah citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "For every Prophet there is a successor and an heir; my successor and heir is 'Ali ibn Abu Talib."¹

In his Kabir, and through isnad to Salman al-Farisi, alTabrani quotes the latter citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "My successor, my confidant, the best man I leave behind me to fulfill my promise and implement my religion, is 'Ali ibn Abu Talib عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام."²

This is a clear text proving that he is the successor, and an obvious testimony that he is the best of people after the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. It contains an obligatory instruction that he should succeed him, and that people should obey him, as is clear to the wise.

Abu Na'im alHafiz, in his Hilyat alAwliya',³ quotes Anas saying that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, said to him: "O Anas! The first to enter this door is the Imam of the pious, the leader of Muslims, the chief of religion, the seal of successors of prophets, and the leader of the most pious among renowned men." Anas says that 'Ali came in, and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him

and his progeny, stood up with excitement, hugged ‘Ali and said to him: “You will discharge my responsibility, convey my instructions, and explain all that in which they will dispute after me.”

AlTabrani, in his AlKabir, quotes Abu Ayyub alAnsari citing the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying that the Prophet ﷺ addressed Fatima once thus: “O Fatima! Have you not come to know that Allah, the Dear One, cast a look at the inhabitants of the earth and chose your father from among them and sent him as His Messenger, then He cast a second look and selected your husband and inspired me to marry him to you and appoint him as my successor?”⁴

Notice how Allah selected ‘Ali عليه السلام from among all other inhabitants of the earth, immediately after selecting from among them the Seal of His Prophets ﷺ, and see how the selection of the successor is conducted in the same sequence to the selection of the Prophet.

Also see how Allah inspired His Prophet to solemnize his marriage and appoint him as his successor. See if successors of prophets were any other than the latter’s own wasi. Is it fitting to push aside [when it comes to selecting a caliph] one who is the best among Allah’s servants, the wasi of the master of His Prophets, and prefer someone else over him?

Is it fitting if someone else, other than he, should rule the Muslims and make him simply one of his own commoners and subjects? Is it possible, by virtue of reason, that one elected by people should be obeyed by that who was selected by Allah, just as He selected His Prophet? How is it possible that both Allah Himself and His Messenger choose him while we elect someone else?

“No believing man nor woman, after Allah and His Messenger have decreed an edict, should practice free will regarding their affairs; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger surely strays manifestly (33:36).”

Narratives abound that state that as soon as those who were hypocritical, envious, and interestseeking came to know that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, was going to marry his daughter Fatima alZahra', mistress of the women of paradise and equal only to Mary عَلَيْهَا السَّلَام, to 'Ali, they envied 'Ali and were extremely concerned, especially after many of them had unsuccessfully sought her hand.⁵

They said that that was indicative of 'Ali's status; so, nobody had any hope of being his peer, and they even plotted and schemed. They sent their women to the Mistress of the Women of the World trying to turn her against 'Ali. Among what they said to her was that 'Ali was poor and did not have much of this world's possessions, but she, peace be upon her, was quite aware of their scheming and ill intentions as well as those of their men. In spite of all this, she did not offend them in any way, till the Will of Allah Almighty and omniScient and of His Messenger was carried out.

It was then that she desired to show those women the status enjoyed by the Commander of the Faithful عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام whereby Allah will shame his enemies, and she said: "O Messenger of Allah! Why did you marry me to a poor man who has no money?" He, peace be upon him and his progeny, answered her in the way stated above.

When Allah wishes to publicize

A virtue hidden from the eyes,

He facilitates to it one very wellknown

To covet and envy everyone.

AlKhatib quotes one author whose isnad is unanimously agreed upon, and who is very highly respected, namely Ibn 'Abbas, saying: "When the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ solemnized the marriage of Fatima and 'Ali, Fatima said: 'O Messenger of Allah!

You have married me to a poor man who does not have anything.’ The Prophet ﷺ said to her: ‘Are you not pleased that Allah has chosen from among the inhabitants of the earth two men one of whom is your father and the other is your husband?’“⁶

Recounting the attributes of ‘Ali, alHakim, on page 129, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak, quotes Sarij ibn Yunus citing Abu Hafs alAbar, alA’mash, Abu Salih, and ending with Abu Hurayrah who quotes Fatima عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ saying: “O Messenger of Allah! Why have you married me to a poor man with no money?” He ﷺ answered: “O Fatima! Are you not pleased that Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, cast a look at the inhabitants of the earth and chose two men one of whom is your father and the other is your husband?”

Ibn ‘Abbas is also quoted saying that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said the following to Fatima: “Are you not pleased that I have married you to the one who is the foremost among Muslims in accepting Islam and the one endowed with more knowledge? You are the Mistress of the women of my nation, just as Mary was the mistress of the women of her nation; are you not pleased, O Fatima, that Allah cast a look at the people of the earth and chose two men from among them: one of them is your father and the other is your husband?”⁷

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ, whenever the Mistress of the women of the world suffered any hardship, would remind her of Allah’s favour and that of His Messenger unto her, since he married her to the best of his nation, thus solacing her and removing from her chest whatever pain time had brought her.

Suffices you for a testimonial on this subject what Imam Ahmad has stated on page 26, Vol. 5, of his Musnad where he quotes one particular hadith narrated by Ma’qil ibn Yasar in which the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have visited Fatima عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ when she fell sick and said to her: “How do you feel?” She answered: “By Allah, my grief has intensified, my want has worsened, and my sickness has lasted for too long.” He ﷺ said to her: “Yet are you not satisfied that I have married you to the one who is the foremost among my nation in accepting Islam, the

one endowed with more knowledge, and the greatest in clemency?” Narratives relating this issue are nUmarous, and there is no room to state all of them in this letter,

Wassalam.

Sincerely,

Sh

Footnotes

1. Al-Thahbi has quoted this hadith while discussing the biography of Sharik in his book *Mizan al-I'tidal*, falsifying it and alleging that Sharik could not have tolerated narrating such a hadith. He said: “Muhammad ibn Hamid al-Razi is not trustworthy.” Our answer to his allegation is that Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Imam Abul Qasim al-Baghwi, Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, the Imam of critics and verifiers Ibn Ma’in, and others of their caliber, have all trusted Muhammad ibn Hamid and narrated his hadith, for he is their mentor. A reliable authority such as al-Thahbi admits the same in his biography of Muhammad ibn Hamid in his *Al-Mizan*. The man cannot be charged with Rafidism or Shi’ism, but the critic is a predecessor of al-Thahbi; so, there is no reason for initiating such an accusation regarding this hadith.
2. This hadith verbatim is numbered 2570 at the end of page 155, Vol. 6, of *Kanz al-Ummal*, and the author quotes it again in his *Muntakhab al-Kanz*; so, refer to *Al-Muntakhab*, footnote on page 32, Vol. 5, of Ahmad’s *Musnad*.
3. It exists on page 450, Vol. 2, of *Sharh Nahjul Balaghah*, and we have quoted it in Letter No. 48.

4. This hadith, verbatim, as well as its source are also in hadith number 2541 on page 143, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal, and it is quoted in Muntakhab al-Kanz as well; so, refer to the latter and read the footnote on page 31, Vol. 5, of Ahmad's Musnad.
5. Ibn Abu Hatim has quoted Anas saying: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar sought Fatima's hand from the Prophet, but he remained silent and did not tell them anything; so, they went to 'Ali to inform him."

It is also transmitted from Ibn Abu Hatim by many reliable authorities such as Ibn Hajar at the beginning of Chapter 11 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. Many other authorities have quoted something similar to it from Ahmad through isnad to Anas. Abu Dawud al-Sajistani, as stated by Ibn Hajar in Chapter 11 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, while discussing the twelfth verse, says that Abu Bakr sought Fatima's hand, and the Prophet ﷺ turned him down; then 'Umar did the same, and he turned away from him, too; so, they both informed 'Ali of it. 'Ali himself is quoted saying: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar sought Fatima's hand from the Messenger of Allah, but he ﷺ rejected them. 'Umar then said: 'You, 'Ali, are worthy of her.'" This hadith is quoted by Ibn Jarir. Al-Dulabi has quoted it, admitting its authenticity while discussing the Prophet's purified progeny, and it is hadith number 6007 on page 392, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal.

6. This hadith, verbatim, with reference to its narrator, is hadith number 5992 on page 391, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal, where the author admits the reliability of its narrator.
7. This hadith, verbatim, with reference to its narrator, is hadith number 2543 on page 153, Vol. 6, of Kanz al-'Ummal, where the author quotes it from Ibn 'Abbas and Abu Hurayrah. Al-Tabrani, in his Al-Muttafaq, has transmitted it from al-Khatib who quotes Ibn 'Abbas; so, refer to Al-Muntakhab and read the first line of footnote on page 39, Vol. 5, of Ahmad's Musnad.

Discussions

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn, the prodigy, is about to educate his inevitable initiate about the narrations of *Waṣīyyah*.¹ He claims that these narrations are Mutawātir from the Imāms. Based on experience with his past claims we have learnt not to take them seriously. They are as reliable as the correspondence that was exchanged between ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn and Shaykh Salīm al-Bishrī.

The problem with ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s line of argument is compounded when we cannot find any reliable narration tracing back to the Prophet ﷺ on the matter of *Waṣīyyah*. It has already been demonstrated that the statements of the Imāms are inadmissible as binding proof. Even if one were to accept that the Imāms are the only candidates for leadership, and that their Imāmah was originally established by *Waṣīyyah*; does it not appear strange as they are the only ones to narrate such a matter? There is no explicit verse from the Qur’an, nor any sound Ḥadīth from the Prophet ﷺ which is unambiguous. Is this merely nothing more than a repetition of his circular reasoning?

Suppose – if only for a moment – that we were to accept that such *Waṣīyyah* did exist; would it not exclude all the later Imāms as candidates? The indications of the majority of narrations that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has cited infer that everyone besides ‘Alī رضي الله عنه would be ineligible. The only rational conclusion – which is consistent with accepting such narrations – would be to apply this to the other Imāms in the time of ‘Alī as well. Therefore, if only ‘Alī رضي الله عنه is the Prophet’s *Waṣī*, it excludes both Ḥasan and Ḥusayn from the Prophetic nomination. If the texts are meant to be interpreted in a way that would include Ḥasan and Ḥusayn رضي الله عنهما; then the very same latitude for interpretation exists for the three Khulafā’ who preceded ‘Alī رضي الله عنه. However, all the texts which he has cited on the *Waṣīyyah* are problematic as we shall demonstrate in the coming paragraphs.

1 This term is used by those who subscribe to the view that the Prophet ﷺ bequeathed ‘Alī the leadership of the Muslim Ummah.

The narrations on *Waṣīyyah*

Narration One

The first narration that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn alludes to appears in Letter 20. It is the same narration which he has referred to as the *Ḥadīth of the Day of Warning*, which he quoted repeatedly in the previous round of correspondence! Is it imaginable that an accomplished scholar would fall for the repeated usage of the same narration three times without suspecting foul play?

This narration appears by way of two common chains. Appearing in one of the chains is ‘**Abd al-Ghaffār ibn al-Qāsim**,¹ and appearing in the other is ‘**Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Quddūs**.² They are both known Rāfiḍī’s who were unreliable and neither of whom could be trusted with faithful representation of the Prophetic legacy.

Not only is this narration severely flawed in terms of its chain of transmission, but the text is riddled with numerous inconsistencies as well. All of this has been dealt with in detail under the discussions on Letter 20.

Narration Two

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn reveals how ill-informed he is about the science of Ḥadīth when he cites the narration ascribed to Buraydah رضي الله عنه. He begins by omitting Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Nakhaī from the chain. Sharīk appears between Ibn Ishāq and Abū Rabī‘ah al-Iyādi. A more accurate representation of the chain is as follows:

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzi – Salamah ibn Faḍl al-Abrash – Muḥammad ibn Ishāq – Sharīk – Abū Rabī‘ah al-Iyādi – Ibn Buraydah – Buraydah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said...³

1 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* by al-Dhahabī, vol. 2, p. 640.

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl*, vol. 2, p. 458

3 *Al-Kāmil*, vol. 5 pg. 21; *Mīzān al-I’tidāl*, vol. 2 pg. 273

Abū Rabī'ah al-Iyadī

Al-Dhahabī quotes Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī on **Abū Rabī'ah al-Iyadī** – whose full name is ‘Umar ibn Rabī'ah – that he is a narrator whose narrations are disclaimed, *Munkar al-Ḥadīth*.¹ Ibn Ḥajar grades him *Maqbul* [lit. acceptable]², which is a term he used to describe those narrators who, in addition to having very few narrations, are slightly weak, and have the potential for being elevated if a supporting narration is found.

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh

Sharīk ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Nakha‘ī al-Qāḍī is weak, especially in that which he narrated from memory after being assigned a post in the judiciary. He has been discussed numerous times.³

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq

Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Yasār, despite being an acceptable narrator in general, was known for *Tadlīs*. Oftentimes he would omit the narrator from whom he actually received the Ḥadīth and ascribe it to someone higher in the chain. The scholars of Ḥadīth would not accept any of his narrations wherein he narrates using the phrase “an” [from]. Instead, they insisted on him being explicit about whom he received the Ḥadīth from before accepting it; thus only those narrations wherein he says, “I heard from so-and-so,” or similar phrases, not where he simply states, “from so-and-so”. The Ḥadīth we are studying is one where he narrated using the term “an” hence the potential for *Tadlīs*.

Salamah ibn Faḍl

Salamah ibn Faḍl al-Abrash is the narrator from Ibn Ishāq. He has been deemed weak by Ishāq ibn Rāhūya, al-Nasā‘ī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī among others. Some have

1 *Al-Mīzān*, vol. 3 pg. 196

2 *Al-Taqrīb*, bio no. 8093

3 See discussions on Letter 8

pointed out that many of his narrations could not be corroborated, in addition to his abundance of errors. Ibn ‘Adī states that while he is weak overall, whatever he narrates from Ibn Ishāq in field of *Maghāzī*, is of a slightly better standard than the rest of his narrations since those were found to be uncorroborated and contradictory in most instances.¹ This narration is not in the field of *Maghāzī*.

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd

While all the above are sufficient to declare this narration unreliable; the most obvious problem is the presence of **Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī** in the chain. In the footnotes of this letter in *al-Murāja‘āt* there is an attempt to deflect the criticisms on this narrator based on statements by two of the great experts of their generation, Yahyā ibn Ma‘in and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. In the following passages we shall demonstrate why that is of no consequence in this instance.

Before we proceed it is important to note that the first consideration when evaluation of any Ḥadīth is to examine the narrators in the chain. The two primary considerations in a narrator is that he can be trusted to convey what he heard from his teachers faithfully and accurately. A reliable narrator thus combines the character traits of *‘Adālah* and *Ḍabṭ*. *‘Adālah* being moral integrity and uprightness to the extent that there is no fear of deliberate misrepresentation; whereas *Ḍabṭ* refers to a narrators competence and precision in narration such that no discrepancies affect the narration of such a person from the time he receives a Ḥadīth until he then conveys it. The pre-requisite of *Ḍabṭ* is effectively a safety measure against inadvertent error. While these are the primary considerations that are not the only considerations in any narrator.

Let us now apply these principles to the narrators whom we have already discussed. **Abū Rabī‘ah al-Iyādī** is found wanting in terms of his *Ḍabṭ*, in addition to the fact that he is not a well-known narrator of Ḥadīth. Similarly, **Sharīk** was considered weak on account of his *Ḍabṭ*, moreover his preoccupation with

1 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 192, *al-Kāshif* bio.2043, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* bio. 2505

judicial duties can be identified as the cause for his lack of *Ḍabt*. **Muḥammad ibn Ishāq** is a narrator around whom there is a great deal of debate, but if one were to consider all that was said and apply it to his narrations it was evident to the experts that his *Ḍabt*, though not optimum, was within an acceptable range. The problem with him though is incidental; there is a specific problem to look out for and that is *Tadlīs*. **Salamah ibn Faḍl al-Abrash** lacks also in terms of *Ḍabt*.

Independently, none of these narrators could be relied upon due to lack of competence, with the exception of Ibn Ishāq; his issue is that he is a *Mudallīs* and the fact that he does not state explicitly whom he had heard this narration from. However, in the case of **Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī**, it is not his *Ḍabt* that is problematic but his *ʿAdālah*. He was accused of deliberate misrepresentation and thus cannot be trusted.

Another matter which is pertinent to this discussion is how to deal with contrasting opinions about a narrator; when some experts ratify the narrator and others discredit him. There are narrators who are unanimously accepted as reliable and others unanimously considered unreliable. However, there are instances when the scholars are divided on the status of a narrator.

There are a number of considerations given to resolve those cases where a divided opinion exists on the status of a narrator. Scholars either find a way to reconcile the conflicting views [*Jamʿ*], or they assign preference [*Tarjīh*] to one over the other after considering all the facts.

Narrator critics appear on a spectrum. Some are extremely cautious, others are described with some degree of leniency, and between these two margins are those who are neither excessively cautious nor lenient. Therefore, one consideration is on who pronounced a particular opinion on a narrator.

Another consideration is whether the opinion has been further supported with details or if it remains vague. Many scholars state that the default position in a case where there is no details about the underlying cause for a critic's opinion,

that the view of discreditation supercedes the view of validation as this implies that the critic who discredited the narrator was aware of something that the one who validated him was unaware of. Although, when the details are present they might reveal something else entirely.

Further consideration is given to the phrases used to either validate or discredit the narrator. Some phrases are generic, whereas some of the scholars used unique phrases indicating a level of strength or weakness. This phrase would not have the same technical meaning when used by other scholars.

Lastly, there are times when the opinion of the majority of scholars will be weightier than a minority.

So, while it is correct that Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal both praised Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd, many others have criticised him. Their criticism is not directed at his competence, rather it exists on account of his lack of *ʿAdālah* as we shall point out.

His full name is: Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd ibn Ḥayyān al-Tamīmī al-Rāzī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh. He was born around 160 A.H and lived in the city of Rayy.

Among his senior teachers are: Yaʿqūb ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak, Jarīr ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, Faḍl ibn Mūsā, Ḥakkām ibn Salm, Zāfir ibn Sulaymān, Nuʿaym ibn Maysarah, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, Salamah ibn Faḍl al-Abrash.¹

Those who heard Ḥadīth from him include: Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, Abū ʿIsā al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibrāhīm ibn Mālik al-Qaṭṭān, Aḥmad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Naṣr al-Jammāl, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal,² Aḥmad ibn Khālīd al-Rāzī famously known as al-Ḥarūrī, Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Abār, Ishāq ibn Abī ʿImrān al-Isfarāyīnī, Jaʿfar ibn Aḥmad

1 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25 pg. 98, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, vol. 11 pg. 503

2 He passed away before Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī.

ibn Naṣr al-Ḥāfiẓ, Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Shabīb al-Ma‘marī, Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Asadī famously known as Ṣāliḥ Jazarah, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad ibn Abī Khidāsh al-Mawṣilī,¹ ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Baghawī, Abū Bakr al-Bāghandī, Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Rūyānī, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Dhuhlī and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn,² among many others.³

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī said, “I arrived in Baghdād and met Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn. They asked me [to narrate to them] the Aḥādīth of Ya‘qūb al-Qummī so they distributed the pages [of my notes with his narrations] among themselves and wrote it down, thereafter I narrated it to them.”⁴

‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal quotes his father, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal having said, “As long as Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī is in Rayy, it can be said knowledge is still thriving there.”⁵

He also relates, “Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī visited Baghdād while my father was under arrest. When he was released Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd had already departed. His companions [Imām Aḥmad] began asking about the narrations of Ibn Ḥumayd so he asked me the reason. I said that Ibn Ḥumayd was here recently and he narrated many Aḥādīth which they were unfamiliar with. He asked me if I had written anything down from Ibn Ḥumayd and I responded that I had written a volume, so he asked to have a look at it. After examining it he said, ‘the narrations from the likes of Ibn al-Mubarak and Jarīr are fine; as for his narrations from the people of Rayy all I can say is that he is more knowledgeable about them.’”⁶

1 They were colleagues and shared the same teachers in any instances.

2 He also passed away before Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī.

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25 pg. 99, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 11 pg. 503

4 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 3 pg. 60

5 *Ibid*

6 *Ibid*

If we take this incident into careful consideration we realize that Imām Aḥmad – despite having praised Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī – was not aware of all his narrations. The narrations of the likes of Ibn al-Mubārak and Jarīr ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd – which were well-known – were correct and matched what others narrated from them. It is important to keep these two facts in mind: Imām Aḥmad was not aware of all his Aḥādīth and he confirmed the Aḥādīth of those whose narrations were well-known and properly documented like ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak.

Ibn Ḥibbān has recorded a visit from Muḥammad ibn Muslim ibn Wārah and Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal wherein they managed to draw his attention to the deception of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī. Ṣāliḥ, the son of Imām Aḥmad, recalls that his father would shake his hand [indicating uncertainty] whenever Ibn Ḥumayd was mentioned.¹ Without ignoring this incident, we shall continue to investigate this narrator under the assumption that there was no retraction from Imām Aḥmad.

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī relates that Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn asked him – before the real situation with Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī revealed itself – “What are your objections about him?” In response Abū Ḥātim stated that in the books of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd things were not recorded correctly, and when they would point out the errors he would adjust his book.² Yaḥyā exclaimed, “This is a bad practise! He came to Baghdād [a while back] so we took the book of Ya‘qūb al-Qummī from him and distributed the pages among ourselves – Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was with us at the time – we heard those from him and everything appeared fine.”³

This incident indicates that Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn was only privy to some of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd’s narrations. Both Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn predeceased

1 *Al-Majrūhīn*, vol. 2 pg. 303-304

2 The objection is that it is necessary to relate the Ḥadīth as he received it. If he received it with an error he ought to convey it likewise and then point out the error separately. Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd began adjusting his book and narrating it with the adjustments. This was early on in his career.

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 7 bio. 1275

Ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī. The validation of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī by these two experts is based on what they observed. When we study the reasons provided by those who discredit him we realize that they were aware of details which Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal were unaware of. In addition, it confirms the progression in Ibn Ḥumayd's deception.

Abū 'Alī al-Naysābūrī says, "I said to Ibn Khuzaymah, 'If our teacher could narrate to us from Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd since Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal had a good opinion of him.' He responded saying, 'He did not know him [all that well]. If he knew him as we do he would not have even praised him to begin with.'"¹

Ishāq ibn Manṣūr al-Kawsaj relates, "He [Ibn Ḥumayd] read to us *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* by way of Salamah. Fate had it that I ended up with 'Alī ibn Mihrān and found out that he read *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* to Salamah. I said to him that Ibn Ḥumayd had also read *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* to us, from Salamah. 'Alī ibn Mihrān was astonished and said, "He heard the book from me!"²

Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā al-Dāmaghānī recalls that after Hārūn ibn al-Mughīrah passed away he asked ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī to show him whatever he narrated from Hārūn. He took out his scrolls and I counted no more than three-hundred and sixty odd narrations. Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥammād al-'Aṭṭār says that when Ibn Ḥumayd presented his scrolls of the Aḥādīth from Hārūn ibn al-Mughīrah at a later stage, they were in excess of ten-thousand narrations.³ How did he narrate these from Hārūn after his demise?

Faḍlak al-Rāzī said that he entered upon Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd whilst he was grafting chains onto different texts.⁴ Al-Dhahabī commented on this saying that this was the point of suspicion with Ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī. He did not believe that

1 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol 11 pg. 503

2 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 3 pg. 64

3 *Al-Jarḥ wal-Ta'dīl*, vol. 7 pg. 233

4 *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, vol. 11 pg. 503

Ibn Ḥumayd would forge the wording of a Ḥadīth; rather he would attach an acceptable chain to a narration which has been transmitted with an unreliable chain. This is a classical case of *Sariqat al-Ḥadīth*.¹

Ṣāliḥ Jazarah states, “I have not seen anyone so skillful at deception as Sulaymān al-Shādhakūnī and Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Razī, his [Ibn Ḥumayd’s] narrations [from his teachers] grew over time!”² It is for this very reason that he used to say, “We were suspicious of Ibn Ḥumayd.”³

Al-Bukhārī said about him, “*Fīhi Naẓar*.”⁴ It is well-known that he used this term to indicate severity of weakness in a narrator. Al-Tirmidhī states that al-Bukhārī held a favourable opinion about Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd initially, then he declared him weak.⁵ The reason for al-Bukhārī re-evaluating his position on Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd is obvious; and confirms his progression as a deceitful narrator of Ḥadīth.

Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī maintained that Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd deliberately falsified narrations [meaning he replaced the weak chains with plausible chains].⁶ Similarly, it was the unanimous opinion of all the Ḥadīth experts of Rayy that Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd was extremely unreliable in Ḥadīth because he would replace the weak chains with acceptable chains.⁷

The following are known to have discredited Ibn Ḥumayd citing similar reasons: Ya‘qūb ibn Shaybah al-Sadūsī, al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur‘ah, Abū Ḥātim, Faḍlak al-Rāzī,

1 Ibid

2 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 3 pg. 64

3 *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 11 pg. 504

4 *Al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, vol. 1 pgs. 69-70; *al-Tārīkh al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 2 pg. 386; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25 pg. 102

5 *Al-Tirmidhī*, *Abwāb al-Jihād*, Ḥadīth no: 1677

6 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 25 pg. 104

7 *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 3 pg. 62

Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kawsaj, Šālih Jazarah, Ibn Khirāsh, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāī, Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Hibbān, Ibn ‘Adī, Ibn al-Jawzī, and of course al-Dhahabī since it is his biographical entry on Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd – wherein he points out the falseness of this narration specifically – that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn recorded this report.

To say it again, the endorsement of both Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal holds no weight in this instance. The list of those who discredit him is too large to ignore, especially when have provided details and reasons for discrediting Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī. This proves that they were aware of issues that Ibn Ma‘īn and Imām Aḥmad were not privy to. Moreover, we find that the experts of Ḥadīth from his own city, who knew him better than anyone else, stating that he could not be trusted and exposing his deceit.

There is much more evidence that supports these facts about Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Rāzī. However, whatever has been mentioned is sufficient to make the case. The narration attributed to Buraydah رضي الله عنه is thus extremely weak, if not entirely fabricated.

Narration Three

The narration ascribed to Salmān رضي الله عنه has been recorded by al-Ṭabarānī by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥaḍramī – Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan al-Tha‘labī – **Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā** – **Nāṣih ibn ‘Abd Allāh** – Simāk ibn Ḥarb – Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī رضي الله عنه...¹

Besides the obvious interruption between Simāk and Abū Sa‘īd رضي الله عنه, there are two unreliable narrators who appear in this chain.

Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā

Al-Dhahabī included **Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī** in his encyclopaedia of weak narrators, *Mizān al-I‘tidāl*, citing al-Bukhārī, who declared him *Muḍṭarib* (confused)

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, vol. 6 pg. 221, Ḥadīth no: 6063

as well as Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, who considered Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā weak. Al-Dhahabī pointed out that Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslāmī was known to have transmitted many disreputable narrations.¹

Ibn Ḥajar says, “Yaḥyā ibn Ya‘lā al-Aslamī al-Kūfī; a Shī‘ī, *Ḍa‘īf*.”²

Nāṣiḥ ibn ‘Abd Allāh

Nāṣiḥ ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Tamīmī is extremely weak. The abundance of errors and contradictions found in his narrations – when compared to his peers – resulted in his narrations being abandoned entirely. He was considered weak by a number of experts in the field of narrator criticism: al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī, Ya‘qūb ibn Sufyān, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā‘ī, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-‘Uqaylī, Ibn ‘Adī, al-Bazzār, al-Dāraquṭnī and al-Ḥākim al-Naysapūrī among many others.³

Yaḥyā ibn Ma‘īn repeatedly discredited him, sometimes saying that he is worth nothing.⁴ ‘Amr ibn ‘Alī al-Fallās has graded him *Matrūk* [suspected of forgery] due to the abundant anomalous narrations he narrates by way of Simāk. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī appears to share this opinion on Nāṣiḥ.⁵

After declaring that Nāṣiḥ is weak and providing quotations from the early scholars, al-Dhahabī has cited this narration specifically as one of the problematic narrations that were known from Nāṣiḥ.⁶

Al-Haythamī has also declared this narration extremely weak due to the presence of Nāṣiḥ in the chain.⁷

1 *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl* vol. 4, pg. 415

2 *Al-Taqrīb*, bio: 7677

3 *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 29 pg. 261, *Mīzān al-ī‘tidāl*, vol. 4 pg. 240

4 *Tārīkh ibn Ma‘īn*, vol. 2 pg. 601

5 *Al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 8 pg. 503

6 *Al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 240

7 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, vol. 9 pg. 114

Narration Four

The narration ascribed to Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه has been recorded by Abū Nu‘aym – and from him ibn ‘Asākir – by way of Muḥammad ibn ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah – **Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maymūn** – ‘Alī ibn ‘Ābis – Ḥārith ibn Ḥaṣīrah – **Qāsim ibn Jundub** – Anas ibn Mālik رضي الله عنه¹

‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has already cited this narration in Letter 48 and we have mentioned the details on why this narration is extremely unreliable, if not fabricated.²

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maymūn is documented among the weak narrators both by al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar. Ibn Ḥajar quotes al-Azdī describing him as extremely weak.³

There is consensus among the scholars of Ḥadīth that ‘Alī ibn ‘Ābis is weak and unreliable. Some going as far as describing him as deserving to be abandoned.⁴

Qāsim ibn Jundub is considered Majhūl, without biographical data.

Narration Five

The Ḥadīth ascribed to Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣarī رضي الله عنه appears by way of a common chain from **Qays ibn al-Rabī** – Al-A‘mash – ‘Abayah ibn Ribī – Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣarī رضي الله عنه.⁵

It has been discussed at length in Letter 48. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has run out of narrations and is constantly citing repeated narrations. We shall provide a summary of some of the issues below as the details have already been covered.⁶

1 *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’* vol. 1 pg. 63; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 386

2 See discussions on Letter 48, Ḥadīth no: 5

3 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol.1 pg. 64; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 356

4 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl*, vol.3 pg. 134-135

5 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 4 pg. 171-172

6 See discussions on Letter 48, Ḥadīth no: 28

The obvious cause for weakness, besides the issues with the narrators, is the interruption between al-A‘mash and ‘Abāyah ibn Rib‘ī.

Qays ibn al-Rabi‘ was considered weak in terms of his memory. The scholars only differed on how serious this weakness was. The fact that he was a Shī‘ī could have further influenced the way he narrates the *Faḍā’il* of ‘Alī عليه السلام.¹

‘**Abāyah ibn Rib‘ī** was a fanatic Shī‘ī, known for narrating baseless reports.²

Narration Six

The narration ascribed to Ibn ‘Abbās عليه السلام is an adaption of Narration Five. It appeared under the discussion on Letter 48. All the narrators from ‘Abd al-Razzāq, the common narrator in all chains, are either suspected of forging Ḥadīth or unknown entities.

It was common for unscrupulous narrators to invent a name and ascribe false narrations to reliable Muḥaddithīn by way of this invented narrator. This appears to be the case for this narration.³

Narration Seven

This narration, ascribed to Abū Ḥurarah عليه السلام, is also an adaptation of the previous two narrations. And has been dealt with under the discussions on Letter 48.⁴ Al-Dhahabī identified the problematic narrator in this chain: **Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Tirmidhī**. This is what he said about him, “He narrated a fabricated report from Surayj ibn Yūnus which he is suspected of forging.”⁵

1 *Al-Kāshif* bio. 4600, *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3 pg. 393, *al-Taqrīb* bio. 5573

2 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 388, *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 4 pg. 417

3 See discussions on Letter 48, Ḥadīth no: 28

4 *Ibid*

5 *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl* vol. 3. Pg. 457

Narration Eight

One wonders if ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn has any respect for the intelligence of his readers! He repeats the Ḥadīth attributed to ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه in Narration Six. The only difference is a slight variation of the wording. Essentially it is the same narration.

These are the narrators who ascribe the narration to ‘Abd al-Razzāq:

1. **Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥajjāj**¹ - Al-Dhahabī claims that he is *Majhūl*, and that he narrated a baseless report citing this very narration.² Ibn al-Jawzī has also declared this narration significantly flawed.³ Al-Haythamī also alludes to the fact that he is *Majhūl*.⁴
2. **Abū al-Ṣalt al-Harawī**⁵ - Significantly weak, suspected of lying. He is known specifically for transmitting baseless narrations by way of ‘Abd al-Razzāq.⁶
3. **Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Yazīd al-Hushaymī**⁷ - is suspected of forgery of Ḥadīth. Al-Dāraquṭnī states that he would narrate many false narrations by way of ‘Abd al-Razzāq.⁸

1 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319; *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol. 42 pg. 135

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg. 26

3 *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 220

4 *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id* vol. 9 pg. 112

5 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 94 Ḥadīth no: 11154; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol 42. Pg 136

6 *Al-Majrūhīn* vol. 2 pg. 151; *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 11 pg. 46-51; *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl* vol. 18 pg 73-82; *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā‘* vol. 11 pg. 446; *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 2 pg. 616

7 *Tārīkh Baghdād* vol. 5 pg. 319, *Tārīkh Dimashq* vol 42. Pg 136; *Al-‘Ilal al-Mutanāhiyah* vol. 1 pg. 353

8 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg; 109 *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 1 pg. 501

4. **Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī al-Ma‘marī**¹ - the scholars are divided about his status as a narrator of Ḥadīth and he is known for having narrated uncorroborated narrations. There were many discrepancies in what he narrated when compared against what his peers narrated. His version of this narration is further marred by the fact that he did not receive it from ‘Abd al-Razzāq; rather he narrates it via Abū al-Ṣalt, ‘Abd al-Salām ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Harawī.²
5. **Muḥammad ibn Jābān al-Jindaysāpūrī**³ is considered *Majhūl* and no biographical data on him can be found.

Narration Nine

It is no surprise that this narration, ascribed to Ma‘qil ibn Yasār رضي الله عنه, is also a repeat. Not only is it a repeat, but it is a version of the previously cited narrations five through eight. It has also been discussed under Letter 48.⁴

Conclusion

So much for ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn’s claim that Mutawātir narrations prove Waṣiyyah! He could barely bring a narration that he had not previously cited; then too extremely weak, like all the other narrations he has quoted thus far. The problem with forged correspondences is that the forgeries lack finesse and the craftsman becomes careless. No respectful scholar would have fallen for these repetitions, let alone accept the fabricated narrations that ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn filled his book with.

1 *Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* vol. 11 pg. 93 Ḥadīth no: 11153

2 *Mīzān al-I’tidāl* vol. 1 pg 505; *Lisān al-Mīzān* vol. 3 pg. 71

3 *Ibid*

4 Ḥadīth no: 28