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11. Finding The True Mahdi: He Is The Twelfth Of A Sinless Dynasty (Part 2)

Imamah is from Allah, and He bestows it only to those descendants of Ibrahim, 'alaihi al-salam, who never commit wrongdoing. Sin, of course, is a form of wrongdoing, as explained by Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 H):

His Statement {My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers}: **So, whosoever commits a sin, he is a wrongdoer to himself** due to His, the Most High's Statement: {And of them are those who wrong themselves} [35:32]1

This is confirmed by the Book of Allah too:

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then such are the wrongdoers.2

Therefore, Allah grants His Covenant of *Imamah* to those among the offspring of Ibrahim who never commit sin, to the absolute exclusion of all else. This process shall continue interrupted till the Hour.

Imamah is also a "kingdom". Therefore, on account of their *khilafah*, Ibrahim and his offspring were kings too, appointed by Allah:

We have granted the Book and the Hikmah to the family of Ibrahim, and We gave them A GREAT

KINGDOM.3

Shaykh al-Kulayni (d. 329 H) reports this authentic *riwayah* about the verse:

علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن محمد بن أبي عمير، عن عمر بن أذينة، عن بريد العجلي عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام في قول الله تبارك وتعالى} :فقد آتينا آل إبراهيم الكتاب والحكمة وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما {قال: جعل منهم الرسل والأنبياء والأئمة فكيف يقرون في آل إبراهيم عليه السلام وينكرونه في آل محمد صلى الله عليه وآله؟ !قال: قلت} :وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما{؟ قال: الملك العظيم أن جعل فيهم أئمة، من أطاعهم أطاع الله، ومن عصاهم عصى الله، فهو الملك .العظيم

'Ali b. Ibrahim – his father – Muhammad b. Abi 'Umayr – 'Umar b. Uzaynah – Burayd al-'Ijli:

Abu Ja'far, peace be upon him, said concerning the Statement of Allah the Most Blessed the Most High {We have granted the Book and the *Hikmah* to the family of Ibrahim, and We gave them a great kingdom}: "**He appointed messengers, prophets and Imams from them**. So, how can they accept concerning the family of Ibrahim, peace be upon him, while denying it in the case of the family of Muhammad?!"

I said: {and We gave them a great kingdom}?

He (Abu Ja'far) said: "The great kingdom is to appoint Imams among them. Whosoever obeys them has obeyed Allah, and whosoever disobeys them has disobeyed Allah. So, that is the great kingdom."4

'Allamah al-Majlisi says about the hadith:

حسن

Hasan.5

'Allamah al-Ruhani, on his part, states:

صحيح

Sahih.6

Then, he adds:

الملك بالضم هو المملكة، فجعل الأئمة من جهة الأمر بإطاعتهم وجعلها قرين إطاعة الله تعالى صاحب الملك العظيم عبارة أخرى عن الحكومة المطلقة كما هو واضح

The kingdom is the royal power. So, He appointed the Imams and, in terms of the command to obey them, He made it equivalent to obedience to Allah the Most High. Obviously, "the possessor of the great kingdom" is another terminology for the absolute government.7

The Qur'an has further given the specific example of Dawud, 'alaihi al-salam, who was one of the Imams from the family of Ibrahim:

O Dawud! We have appointed you **A** *KHALIFAH* over the earth. Therefore, judge between mankind with the truth.8

Meanwhile, while referring to his khilafah elsewhere, Allah emphasizes its royal nature:

We made HIS KINGDOM strong and gave him wisdom and sound judgment.9

So, he was – as in the case of all the other Imams too – a royal *khalifah*. More importantly, his *khilafah* was also hereditary in nature:

And Sulayman INHERITED Dawud. 10

Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 H) says in his exegesis of the ayah:

He, the Most High, says: Sulayman **INHERITED** the **knowledge** which Allah gave his father during his lifetime and **the kingdom** which He specially bestowed upon him above all of his people. 11

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) also states:

Allah the Most High said: {And Sulayman inherited Dawud...} [27:16], that is, INHERITANCE of

prophethood and kingdom. 12

And Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has these words too:

Allah the Most High says {And Sulayman inherited Dawud}, that is: **he INHERITED his prophethood, knowledge and kingdom**. 13

The moral of all this, simply, is that the *khilafah* is clearly a hereditary royal system. The *khalifah* is an absolute monarch, and he rules over the earth by kingdom. His authority, by its nature, is equally hereditary. Therefore, Allah places His chosen *khalifahs* in the loins of the reigning Imam, except in extraordinary cases.

At this point, it is imperative to clear a slightly common misconception within the *Ummah*: that monarchy is an inherently illegitimate system of government. This wrong notion, interestingly, is held among many Sunnis and Shi'is alike. In fact, the opposition of some brothers from the Ahl al–Sunnah – including the Salafiyyah – to the regime in Saudi Arabia hinges primarily upon its royal nature 14. However, kingdom is a legitimate, Islamic mode of governance. In fact, it is Allah's Own style of government:

So Exalted be Allah, the True King. There is no god but He, the Lord of the Honourable Throne. 15

This was equally His chosen form of government for many of His prophets, messengers and Imams:

And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allah has appointed Talut as a king over you." 16

And:

And Dawud killed Jalut, and Allah gave him the kingdom. 17

Of course, as we mentioned, his son, Sulayman, 'alaihi al-salam, inherited the kingdom from him.

Even in Paradise, the system of government there will be monarchy:

And when you look there, you will see delight, and a magnificent kingdom. 18

And:

They will recline on thrones arranged in ranks. 19

Looking at these verses, one may even say that kingdom is the best form of government. Allah never chooses for Himself except the best, and He never chooses for His prophets, messengers and *awliya* and the people of Paradise except the best.

Meanwhile, it must be re-emphasized that Allah gave "a great kingdom" to the "family of Ibrahim." This made them a royal family, from which the sinless kings were appointed by our Lord. Interestingly, He has bestowed the same blessing upon the family of Muhammad too, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alaihim*, in line with this *hadith* of Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H):

حدثنا قيس بن حفص وموسى بن إسماعيل قالا حدثنا عبد الواحد بن زياد حدثنا أبو قرة مسلم بن سالم الهمذاني قال حدثني عبد الله ابن عيسى سمع عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال: لقيني كعب بن عجرة فقال ألا أهدي لك هدية سمعتها من النبي صلى الله عليه و سل؟ فقلت بلى فأهدها لي فقال سألنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقلنا يا رسول الله كيف الصلاة عليكم أهل البيت فإن الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليكم؟ قال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجي اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما صليت على إبراهيم إنك حميد مجي اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

Qays b. Hafs and Musa b. Isma'il – 'Abd al-Wahid b. Ziyad – Abu Qurrah Muslim b. Salim al-Hamdani – 'Abd Allah b. 'Isa – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli:

Ka'b b. 'Ujrah met me and said, "Shall I not give you a present I got from the Prophet, peace be upon him?" I said, "Yes, give it to me." He said, "We asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the manner of the *salat* upon you, Ahl al-Bayt, for Allah has taught us how to send *salam* you (Ahl al-Bayt)?' He replied, 'Say: O Allah! Send *salat* upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent *salat* upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious."20

So, the family of Muhammad are a royal family as well, to which "a great kingdom" has been granted by

Allah. They have been blessed *in exactly the same manner* as the family of Ibrahim. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) also records a *hadith* which leaves no doubt about the matter:

Abu Dawud 'Umar b. Sa'd - Sharik - al-Rukayn - al-Qasim b. Hassan - Zayd b. Thabit - the Prophet:

"I have left behind over you the two all-comprehensive *KHALIFAHS*: the Book of Allah and MY OFFSPRING. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."21

The two annotators say:

The hadith is sahih. It has witnesses (shawahid).22

The word *khalifah*, of course, is both singular and plural. Therefore, it can refer to only one *khalifah* or to many, as submitted by Imam al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 501 H):

The word *khalifah* is used to refer to a single person or to a group.23

As such, we know from the above *sahih hadith* that the offspring of Muhammad are the *khalifahs* of this *Ummah*. They are the twelve Qurayshi *khalifahs* who rule by kingdom till the Day of *al-Qiyamah*. In particular, the *hadith* has emphasized upon their sinlessness – a fundamental requirement in *Imamah*:

Verily, both shall NEVER separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.

Therefore, those offspring of Muhammad meant in the *riwayah* never separate from the Qur'an for even a millisecond in any situation or circumstance – in their thoughts, sayings, actions and omissions. Their number is only twelve, as indicated in other authentic Sunni narrations. They are the living Qur'ans, just like their father – Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah the Messenger of Allah. Everything they think, say or do is a fulfilment of the Qur'an – absolutely everything! Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records the same situation for

the Prophet:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق عن معمر عن قتادة عن زرارة عن سعد بن هشام قال سألت عائشة فقلت حدثنا عبد الله عليه و سلم فقالت كان خلقه القرآن

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Abd al-Razzaq – Ma'mar – Qatadah – Zurarah – Sa'd b. Hisham:

I asked 'Aishah, saying: "Tell me about the behaviour of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him." She replied, "**His behaviour was the Qur'an**".24

Shaykh al-Arnau® comments:

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs25

Muhammad gave the same description for the twelve *khalifahs* from his offspring too. They never separate from the Qur'an.

The first of these royal *khalifahs* was Amir al–Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihi al–salam, according to the Prophet himself. Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) documents:

ثنا محمد بن المثنى، حدثنا يحي بن حماد، عن أبي عوانة، عن يحيى بن سليم أبي بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي: أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي: أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي:

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu 'Awanah – Yahya b. Sulaym Abu Balj – 'Amr b. Maymun – Ibn 'Abbas: **The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to 'Ali**: "You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a prophet. **And you are MY** *KHALIFAH* **over every believer after me**."26

Dr. al-Jawabirah says:

اسناده حسن. رجاله رجال الشيخين غير ابي بلج واسمه يحيي بن سليم بن بلج، قال الحافظ: صدوق ربما اخطأ.

Its chain is hasan.27

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also comments on the sanad:

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إسناده حسن .ورجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين غير أبي بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج قال الحافظ" :صدوق ربما ." أخطأ
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Its chain is hasan.28

Grading the same chain, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) declares:

This hadith has a sahih chain.29

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

صحيح

Sahih.30

'Allamah Ahmad Shakir (d. 1377 H) too says on the same sanad:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.31

Imam al-Busiri (d. 840 H) does not hold a different opinion either about the isnad:

سند صحيح

A sahih chain.32

This authentic *hadith* establishes, among other things, that 'Ali was – for the purpose of the *khilafah* – counted among the offspring of Muhammad. This was similar to how Iblis was numbered among the angels by Allah in His Order to them to prostrate to Prophet Adam, 'alaihi al–salam33, even though he was only a *jinn*34. Such instances exist in Islam.

The last of the twelve Imams, of course, is the Mahdi. So, to find the true Mahdi, we must look for a man with the following qualities:

- 1. He is the twelfth Imam from the Ahl al-Bayt, and his name is Muhammad.
- 2. He is the last *khalifah* of this *Ummah*.
- 3. He is a royal *khalifah* who will rule by kingdom.
- 4. He is part of the sinless dynasty of Muhammad. He never does wrong, and never separates from the Qur'an for even a single millisecond in his thoughts, sayings, actions and omissions.
- 5. All the previous eleven Imams before him were from the offspring of the Messenger, starting with 'Ali
- b. Abi Talib, and none of them ever separated from the Book of Allah in any situation and circumstance.
- 6. None of the eleven Imams before him ever did wrong.
- 7. All the eleven Imams belong to the royal family of Muhammad to whom Allah bestowed "a great kingdom"; and all of them ruled by kingdom.
- 8. Succession of their khilafah was by inheritance, subject to the choice of Allah.
- 9. The rule of the twelve khalifahs lasts uninterrupted till the establishment of the Hour.
- 10. Each of the eleven Imams before him held the Covenant of Allah and His Command, never committed any wrongdoing, and was the supreme guide of humanity during his reign.

Whichever "Mahdi" fails *any* of the above realities is a fake, an impostor, a *dajjal*. So, which of the numerous "Mahdis" matches the description?

- 1. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, 'Ismat al-Anbiya (1406 H), p. 14
- 2. Qur'an 2:229
- 3. Qur'an 4:54
- 4. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Ya'qub b. Ishaq al-Kulayni al-Razi, al-Usul min al-Kafi (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: 'Ali Akbar al-Ghiffari], vol. 1, p. 206, # 5
- 5. Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi, Mir-at al-'Uqul fi Sharh Akhbar Al al-Rasul (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah) [annotator: Sayyid Muhsin al-Husayni al-Amini], vol. 2, p. 412
- 6. Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni al-Ruhani, Fiqh al-Sadiq (Qum: Muasassat Dar al-Kitab; 3rd edition, 1413 H), vol. 16, p. 157
- 7. Ibid, vol. 16, p. 158
- <u>8.</u> Qur'an 38:26. Prophet Dawud was both a prophet and a khalifah. In the above verse, Allah is clearly making reference to his khilafah, and not to his nubuwwah.
- 9. Qur'an 38:20
- 10. Qur'an 27:16
- 11. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur'an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-'Annatator: Sidqi S
- 12. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 2, p. 22
- 13. Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Jawzi al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi, Zad al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsir (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd Allah], vol. 6, p. 60

- 14. A clarification is needed here. Well, even though kingdom is itself not an inherently illegitimate system of government, there are certain conditions that can make it invalid, from an Islamic point of view, in some situations. We know from Qur'an 4:54 and the hadith of al–Kulayni that it was Allah Himself Who explicitly appointed the family of Ibrahim, and the family of Muhammad, royal families by wahy. Therefore, the legitimacy of every monarchy rests entirely upon this fact. Did Allah name the concerned ruling family with kingdom in any revelation sent down from the heavens? If the answer is "no", then their kingdom has zero Islamic legitimacy. Moreover, even if the answer is "yes", what about the reigning king specifically? There has to be a separate wahy from Allah declaring him the king, amir, khalifah or Imam, before his rule can be valid, Islamically. The case of Talut (Qur'an 2:247) is particularly instructive on this point. This has been Allah's practice with the kings from the families of Ibrahim and Muhammad, 'alaihima al–salam: "That was the Sunnah of Allah in the case of those passed away of old, and you will not find any change in the Sunnah of Allah" (Qur'an 33:62).
- 15. Qur'an 23:116
- 16. Qur'an 2:247
- 17. Qur'an 2:251
- 18. Qur'an 76:20
- 19. Qur'an 52:20
- 20. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mus⊡afa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1233, # 3190
- 21. Abu Bakr 'Abd Allah b. Abi Shaybah, Musnad Ibn Abi Shaybah (Riyadh: Dar al-Wa®an; 1st edition, 1418 H) [annotators: 'Adil b. Yusuf al-'Azazi and Ahmad b. Farid al-Mazidi], vol. 1, p. 108
- 22. Ibid
- 23. Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn b. Muhammad b. al-Mufadhdhal al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Tafsir al-Raghib al-Isfahani wa Muqadimmatuh (Kulliyat al-Adab, Jami'ah Tanta; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad 'Abd al-'Aziz Basyuni], vol. 1, p. 139
- 24. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qur®ubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnau®], vol. 6, p. 163, # 25341
- 25. Ibid
- 26. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (Dar al-Sami'i li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi') [annotator: Dr. Basim b. Faysal al-Jawabirah], vol. 1, pp. 799-800, # 1222
- **27**. Ibid
- 28. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188
- 29. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'A\mathbb{T}a], vol. 3, p. 143, # 4652
- 30. Ibid
- <u>31.</u> Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir], vol. 1, p. 331, # 3062
- 32. Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Isma'il al-Busiri, Itihaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-'Ashara (Riyadh: Dar al-Wan; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 7, p. 184, # 6630
- 33. See Qur'an 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:71-74,
- 34. Qur'an 18:50

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