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14. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: The Name Of His Father Is 'Abd Allah?

The other claim made by Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) is that the name of the Mahdi's father is Abd Allah, and not al-Hasan. He repeats it again:

أن الاثنى عشرية الذين أدعوا أن هذا هو مذهبهم مهديهم اسمه محمد بن الحسن والمهدي المنعوت الذي وصفه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اسمه محمد بن عبد الله ولهذا حذفت طائفة ذكر الأب من لفظ الرسول حتى لا يناقض ما كذبت وطائفة حرفته فقالت جده الحسين وكنيته أبو عبد الله فمعناه محمد بن أبى عبد الله وجعلت الكنية اسما

وممن سلك هذا ابن طلحة في كتابه الذي سماه غاية السول في مناقب الرسول ومن أدنى نظر يعرف أن هذا تحريف صريح وكذب على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فهل يفهم أحد من قوله يواطىء اسمه اسمي واسم ابيه اسم أبي إلا أن اسم أبيه عبد الله وهل يدل هذا اللفظ على أن جده كنيته أبو عبد الله

The Ithna 'Ashariyyah who claim that this is their *madhhab*, the name of their Mahdi is Muhammad b. al–Hasan. **But the described Mahdi, who was described by the Prophet, peace be upon him, his name is Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah**. This is why a group deleted the mention of the father from the statement of the Messenger, so that it does not contradict what it (the group) falsely claims. Another group also distorts it and says, "His ancestor was al–Husayn and his agnomen was Abu 'Abd Allah.

Therefore, its meaning is that he is Muhammad, son of Abu 'Abd Allah; and it (the second group) makes the agnomen a name. One of those who did this was Ibn Talhah in his book which he named *Ghayat al–Sul fi Manaqib al–Rasul*. Whoever has the least observation knows that this is a clear distortion and a lie upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Is there anyone who understands from his statement "his name corresponds with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father" anything other than that the name of his father is 'Abd Allah? Does this statement indicate that the agnomen of his ancestor is Abu 'Abd Allah? 1

He still has more words:

الأحاديث التي يحتج بها على خروج المهدي أحاديث صحيحة رواها أبو داود والترمذي وأحمد وغيرهم من حديث ابن مسعود وغيره كقوله صلى الله عليه و سلم في الحديث الذي رواه ابن مسعود لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوم لطول الله ذلك اليوم حتى يخرج فيه رجل منى أو من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي يملأ الأرض قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما

The ahadith that are relied upon as hujjah (proof) for the coming out of the Mahdi are sahih ahadith. Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, Ahmad and others narrated them in the hadith of Ibn Mas'ud and of others, like his statement, peace be upon him, in the hadith which was narrated by Ibn Mas'ud: "If there remains only one more day left for this world, Allah will elongate that day till a man from me, or from my Ahl al-Bayt, comes out. His name will correspond with my name, and his father's name will be the name of my father. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it is filled with oppression and injustice."2

But, is there really any reliable Sunni *hadith* establishing that the name of the Mahdi's father is the same as that of the Prophet's father? Let us check the *riwayat* to find out.

We start with this report of Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H):

أخبرني أبو بكر بن دارم الحافظ بالكوفة ثنا محمد بن عثمان بن سعيد القرشي ثنا يزيد بن محمد الثقفي ثنا حبان بن سدير عن عمرو بن قيس الملائي عن الحكم عن إبراهيم عن علقمة بن قيس وعبيدة السلماني عن عبد الله بن مسعود رضي الله عنه قال أتينا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ... فقال : إنا أهل بيت اختار الله لنا الآخرة على الدنيا وأنه سيلقى أهل بيتي من بعدي تطريدا وتشريدا في البلاد حتى ترتفع رايات سود من المشرق فيسألون الحق فلا يعطونه ثم يسألونه فلا يعطونه فيقاتلون فينصرون فمن أدركه منكم أو من أعقابكم فليأت إمام أهل بيتي ولو حبوا على الثلج فإنها رايات هدى يدفعونها إلى رجل من أهل بيتي يواطئ إسمه إسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي فيملك الأرض فيملأهما قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت جورا وظلما

Abu Bakr b. Darim al-Hafiz – Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Sa'id al-Qurashi – Yazid b. Muhammad al-Thaqafi – Hibban b. Sadir – 'Amr b. Qays al-Malai – al-Hakam – Ibrahim – 'Alqamah b. Qays and 'Ubaydah al-Salmani – 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud, may Allah pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came to us ... and said: "We, Ahl al-Bayt, Allah has chosen the Hereafter for us over this world. Verily, my Ahl al-Bayt will, after me, suffer expulsions and fright in the towns, until the black flags rise from the East. So, they will demand the right, but they will not give it. Then, they will demand it, but they will not give it. As a result, they will fight and will be helped to achieve victory (by Allah). Whosoever amongst you or your descendants meets it (i.e. that time), he must go to the Imam of my Ahl al-Bayt, even if he has to crawl on snow, for they are flags of guidance. They will submit them to a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. **His**

name corresponds with my name, and the name of his father is the name of my father. He will rule the earth by kingdom, and will thereby fill it with equity and justice just as it had been filled with aggression and injustice."3

Al-Hakim is quiet about this hadith, while Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) declares:

This is mawdhu' (a fabrication).4

This, obviously, is no evidence.

Imam al-Maruzi (d. 288 H) gives us the second Sunni "proof":

Al-Walid and Rishdin – Ibn Luhay'ah – Israil b. 'Ibad – Maymun al-Qidah – Abu al-Tufayl, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "The Mahdi, his name is my name and **the name of** his father is the name of my father."5

Dr. al-Bastawi has a simple verdict too:

Its chain is dha'if.6

Well, the *sanad* is actually *dha'if jiddan* (very weak), due to its multiple weaknesses. Al-Bastawi himself gives these details about it:

Al-Walid b. Muslim narrated in an 'an-'an manner. However, he has been seconded by Rishdeen who is *dha'if*. But, both of them narrated from Ibn Luhay'ah who is (also) *dha'if*. As for Maymun al-Qidah, I did not find any biographical entry for him (in the *rijal* books).7

In any case, this *riwayah* is impotent too.

Imam al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H) records the third one:

أخبرنا الحسين بن على بن الحسين بن بطحا المحتسب أخبرنا أبو سليمان محمد بن الحسين بن على الحراني حدثنا محمد بن الحسن بن قتيبة حدثنا احمد بن مسلم الحلبي قال حدثنا عبد الله بن السرى المدائني عن أبى عمر البزاز عن مجالد بن سعيد عن الشعبي عن تميم الداري قال قلت يا رسول الله ما رأيت للروم مدينة مثل مدينة يقال لها أنطاكية وما رأيت أكثر مطرا منها فقال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم نعم وذلك ان فيها التوراة وعصا موسى ورضراض الالواح ومائدة سليمان بن داود في غار من غيرانها ما من سحابة تشرف عليها من وجه من الوجوه الافرغت ما فيها من البركة في ذلك الوادي ولا تذهب الأيام ولا الليالي حتى يسكنها رجل من عترتى اسمه اسمى واسم أبيه اسم أبى يشبه خلقه خلقى وخلقه خلقى يملأ الدنيا قسطا وعدلا كما ملئت ظلما وجورا

Al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. al-Husayn b. Ba\(\text{sha} - Abu Sulayman Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali al-Harrani - Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Qutaybah - Ahmad b. Muslim al-Halabi - 'Abd Allah b. al-Sarri al-Madaini - Abu 'Umar al-Bazzaz - Mujalid b. Sa'id - al-Sha'bi - Tamim al-Dari:

I said, "O Messenger of Allah! I did not see any Roman city which is like a city called Antioch. And I did not see any with more rains than it." So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Yes. That is because there are in it *al–Tawrah*, the staff of Musa, the pieces of the tablets and the table of Sulayman b. Dawud, in one of its caves. There is no cloud which stands above it from any side except that it empties completely all the blessings in it on that valley. The days and the nights will not end until a man from my offspring resides in it. **His name is my name and the name of his father is the name of my father**. His creation will resemble mine, and his character will also resemble mine. He will fill the earth with equity and justice just as it had been filled with injustice and aggression."8

Again, Dr. al-Bastawi says about the hadith:

الحديث موضوع

The hadith is mawdhu' (a fabrication).9

With the total collapse of these three *ahadith*, we are left with only reports of 'Asim b. Bahdalah, also known as 'Asim b. Abi al-Najud. Every other *hadith* which contains the phrase "and the name of his father is the name of my father" has the name of 'Asim in its chain. For instance, Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H) documents:

حدثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا أبو نعيم ثنا فطر بن خليفة عن عاصم بن أبي النجود عن زر بن حبيش عن عبد الله بن مسعود يرفعه إلى النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال: لا يذهب الدنيا حتى يبعث الله رجلا من أهل بيتي يواطى اسمه اسمى واسم أبيه اسم المناطقة المناطقة

'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Aziz – Abu Nu'aym – Fi⊡r b. Khalifah – '**Asim b**. **Abi al-Najud** – Zirr b. Hubaysh – 'Abd Allah b. Mas'ud:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "The world will not end until Allaah sends a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father." 10

Concerning that 'Asim, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

قال ابن سعد كان ثقة إلا أنه كان كثير الخطأ في حديثه ... وقال يعقوب بن سفيان في حديثه اضطراب وهو ثقة ... وقال ابن أبي حاتم عن أبيه... محله عندي محل الصدق صالح الحديث وليس محله ان يقال هو ثقة ولم يكن بالحافظ وقد تكلم فيه ابن علية فقال كان كل من اسمه عاصم سئ الحفظ وقال النسائي ليس به بأس وقال ابن خراش في حديثه نكرة وقال العقيلي لم يكن فيه إلا سوء الحفظ وقال الدارقطني في حفظه شئ ... وقال أبو بكر البزار لم يكن بالحافظ ولا نعلم أحدا ترك حديثه على ذلك وهو مشهور وقال ابن قانع قال حماد بن سلمة خلط عاصم في آخره عمره وذكره ابن حبان في الثقات وقال العجلي كان عثمانيا

'Asim b. Bahdalah, and he was Ibn Abi al-Najud al-Asadi, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-Muqri....

Ibn Sa'd said: "He was thiqah (trustworthy), except that he made A LOT OF MISTAKES in his hadith" ... Ya'qub b. Sufyan said: "There is muddle in his hadith, and he is thiqah (trustworthy)" ... Ibn Abi Hatim narrated that his father said: "... His status in my opinion is sidq (truthfulness), salih al-hadith (i.e. his standalone reports are weak), and his status is NOT to say he is thiqah (trustworthy). He was not a memorizer." Ibn 'Ulayyah talked about him and said, "Everyone whose name was 'Asim had a defective memory." Al-Nasai said, "There is no problem with him." Ibn Kharrash said, "There is repugnancy in his hadith". Al-'Aqili said, "He had no problem except (his) defective memory." Al-Daraqueni said, "There is a problem with his memory"... Abu Bakr al-Bazzar said, "He was not a memorizer, and we do not know anyone who abandoned (narrating) his hadith due to that. He was well-known." Ibn Qani' said: "Hammad b. Salamah said: 'Asim became confused during the last part of his life." Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat, and al-'Ijli said, "He was an 'Uthmani".11

So, his problems are:

- 1. He made a lot of mistakes in his ahadith.
- 2. He used to muddle things up in his ahadith.
- 3. He had a defective memory.

- 4. There is repugnancy in his ahadith.
- 5. He became confused during the last part of his lifetime.

Apparently, all his problems – each of which is *very* serious – resulted mainly from his defective memory. There is obviously no doubt that 'Asim was *dha'if*, in fact *very* weak. Narrators with milder conditions are readily thrown out of the windows by Sunni scholars of *hadith* and *rijal*. Therefore, the standalone transmissions of 'Asim too are *dha'if* – all of them! With this, our brothers from the Ahl al–Sunnah lose all possible bases for their claim that the name of the Mahdi's father is 'Abd Allah.

But, there is need to address two more reports. Dr. al-Bastawi guotes the first of them here:

Ibn Abi Shaybah has recorded it, saying: al-Fadhl b. Dukayn – Fitr – 'Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "This world will not end until Allah sends a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. **His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father**." 12

We do not have any 'Asim here. But, al-Bastawi himself clarifies the situation in the footnote:

Obviously, "'Asim" has been dropped in this chain, for I did not find any report by Firer from Zirr. Also, all the narrators of this *hadith* agree on his (i.e. Firer's) narration of it from '**Asim** from Zirr. And Allah knows best. 13

Therefore, there actually is 'Asim in that sanad. As such, it is dha'if.

Al-Bastawi also gives us what is apparently the strongest Sunni evidence on this matter:

وأخرجه أيضا أبو نعيم في أخبار أصبهان قال: حدثنا أبو محمد بن حيان، ثنا أبو بكر بن الجارود، ثنا محمد بن عيسى الزجاج، ثنا أبو نعيم، ثنا فطر، عن أبي إسحاق وعاصم، عن زر، عن عبد الله قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: لو لم يبق من الدنيا إلا يوما واحدا بعث الله عز وجل رجلا من أهل بيتي يواطئ اسمه اسمي واسم أبيه اسم أبي

Abu Nu'aym recorded it in Akhbar Asbahan: Abu Muhammad b. Hayyan – Abu Bakr b. al-Jarud –

Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Zajjaj - Abu Nu'aym - Fillr - **Abu Ishaq AND 'Asim** - Zirr - 'Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Even if there remained only one (more) day for the earth, Allah the Almighty will send a man from my Ahl al-Bayt. **His name will correspond with my name and the name of his father is the name of my father**." 14

Here, 'Asim is seconded by Abu Ishaq. In the right circumstances, this corroboration would have neutralized the problem created by 'Asim's defective memory. However, the *mutaba'ah* of Abu Ishaq is even more useless than the original chain. Concerning him, al-Hafiz states:

'Amr b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Ubayd Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i: *Thiqah* (trustworthy); narrated a lot (of *ahadith*), a great worshipper (of Allah), from the third (£abaqat). **He became confused (in his narrations) during the end part of his lifetime**. 15

This then divides his narrations into two: those *before* his confusion and *those* after it started. His *ahadith* before his memory collapse are naturally authentic from him. However, all those reports that he narrated during his confusion were only products of a deranged mind. They are not just *dha'if*; they are *dha'if jiddan*! Luckily for us, a list of those who heard from him before his confusion is available. It allows us to know which of his *ahadith* is reliable, and which is deranged or confused. So, this verdict of Shaykh Dr. Asad about another report of Fier from Abu Ishaq hits the nail right on the head for our own investigation:

Its chain is *dha'if*. Fior b. Khalifah is NOT mentioned among those who narrated early (i.e. before the confusion) from Abu Ishaq. 16

So, the corroboration of Abu Ishaq is only a deranged, confused *riwayat*. This makes it completely worthless, whether as a proof or as a support. It must be added further that 'Asim himself – apart from having a defective memory, making "a lot" of mistakes in his narration and muddling up his *ahadith* – he too became confused later in life. Therefore, the best Sunni evidence is actually nothing but a *dha'if* confused report.

- 1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qur®ubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 256–257
- 2. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qur®ubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 254–255
- 3. 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 'Asa], vol. 4, p. 511, # 8434
- 4. Ibid
- 5. Abu 'Abd Allah Na'im b. Hammad al-Maruzi, Kitab al-Fitan (Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Dr. Suhayl Zakar], part 5, p. 227
- 6. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mawsu'at fi Ahadith al-Mahdi al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'at (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 123, # 36
- 7. Ibid
- 8. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. 'Ali al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh Baghdad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Asa], vol. 9, p. 477-478, # 5101
- 9. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mawsu'at fi Ahadith al-Mahdi al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'at (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 317, # 225
- 10. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hikam; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. 'Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 10, p. 133, # 10213
- 11. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 5, pp. 35–36, # 67
- 12. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 263, # 25
- **13**. Ibid
- **14.** Ibid
- 15. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Asa], vol. 1, p. 739, # 5081
- 16. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 2, p. 534, # 3362

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