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14) Hadith Al-Thaqalayn: Clarifying The Confusions Of Ibn Taymiyyah (Part 2)

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

وفي لفظ لا يزال الإسلام عزيزا إلى أثنى عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش وهكذا كان فكان الخلفاء أبو بكر وعمر وعثمان وعلي ثم تولى من اجتمع الناس عليه وصار له عز ومنعة معاوية وابنه يزيد ثم عبد الملك وأولاده الأربعة وبينهم عمر بن عبد العزيز

And in a text "Islam will never cease to be strong till twelve khalifahs, all of them from Quraysh", and this was exactly how it was, for the khalifahs were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali and then those upon whom the people agreed, who were strong and invincible, ruled: Mu'awiyah, his son Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik, and his four children, and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz was one of them.1

Here, our Shaykh tells us that:

- Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah, Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik and others were Imams from the offspring of Ibrahim.
- They all held the Covenant of Allah, which was Imamah, and guided humanity with His Command.
- None of them was a wrongdoer, to himself or to others.
- None of them was a wrongdoer who violated any of the laws of Allah, before and during his Imamah.
- All of them were directly appointed by Allah, as He appointed their father, Ibrahim and all the Imams before them.
- All of them were kings who ruled by kingdom, and held the kingdom over the Ummah.

- If we take Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn into consideration, then the submissions of lbn Taymiyyah also imply that:
- Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah, Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik and the others were all from the offspring of Prophet Muhammad.
- They were his offspring, his Ahl al-Bayt, who never contradicted or violated the Qur'an for even a single second.

Of course, Abu Bakr and the other Sunni khalifahs were:

- not from the offspring of Muhammad or his Ahl al-Bayt;
- not appointed by Allah;
- not holders of the Covenant or Command of Allah;
- wrongdoers who wronged themselves and others by disobeying Allah and committing sins on several occasions;
- not kings who ruled by kingdom, except for Mu'awiyah and the subsequent Umayyads (and Abbasids); and
- not holders of kingdom over the Ummah, except for Mu'awiyah and the subsequent Umayyads (and Abbasids).

The bottom-line is: it is impossible to fit Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, especially, into the descriptions of the true khalifahs mentioned in the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah. Undoubtedly, they were rulers.

But, certainly, they were neither khalifahs nor Imams. The difference between political or military rule and khilafah is highlighted in the story of Harun, 'alaihi al-salam. His blessed brother appointed him as his khalifah over his Ummah during the former's absence from them:

Musa said to his brother, Harun: "Be my khalifah over my people."2

Meanwhile, al-Samiri overthrew Harun and installed himself, with the help of the masses, as the ruler of Israel:

He (Allah) said: "Verily! We have tried your people in your absence, and al-Samiri has led them astray."

We also read:

He (Harun) said, "O son of my mother! Indeed the people judged me weak, and were about to murder me."4

Yet, Harun remained the true khalifah of Israel, even though al-Samiri had seized power. This is how things work in Islam. What confers legitimacy is not power, but divine appointment. The Prophet appointed the Book of Allah and his offspring as his joint khalifahs till the Day of al-Qiyamah.

Imagine if all Muslims the world over rejected the authority of the Qur'an, would that cancel out its khilafah? Of course, its khilafah continues over the Ummah, whether they recognize it or not! It is the same with the Ahl al-Bayt. They are the joint khalifahs over humanity along with the Kitab – and remain so till the Hour – whether anyone obeys them or none does:

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

Another error of our dear Shaykh is his confusion of these two sentences:

- Islam is strong.
- The Ummah is strong.

This is why he declares:

وهذا تصديق ما أخبر به النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم حيث قال لا يزال هذا الدين عزيزا ما تولى اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش وهؤلاء الاثنا عشر خليفة هم المذكورون في التوراة حيث قال في بشارته بإسماعيل وسيلد اثنى عشر عظيما

ومن طن أن هؤلاء الاثنى عشر هم الذين تعتقد الرافضة إمامتهم فهو في غاية الجهل فإن هؤلاء ليس فيهم من كان له سيف إلا علي بن أبي طالب

This is a confirmation of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, had prophesied when he said: "This

religion will never cease to be strong as long as twelve khalifahs rule, all of them from Quraysh". These twelve khalifahs are those mentioned in al–Tawrah, when He (Allah) said in His glad tiding concerning Isma'il: "He will give birth to twelve great people". Whoever these that these twelve are those who are accepted as Imams by the Rafidhah is in the worst level of ignorance, for there was none among them who held military authority except 'Ali b. Abi Talib.5

Ibn Taymiyyah apparently equates the might of the Ummah with that of its religion. Meanwhile, it is perfectly possible to have a strong Islam but a weak Ummah. The strength of the Ummah is obviously in its unity and military prowess. However, that of the religion lies only in its ability to "stand" on the surface of the earth. This has been explicitly stated in another hadith:

The religion will never cease to STAND until the establishment of the Hour or as long as there are twelve khalifahs over you, all of them from Quraysh.6

There are always forcing struggling to push Islam to the ground. However, it will never fall. It shall remain standing on the earth till al–Qiyamah. This is the meaning of its strength. The inability of its enemies to terminate it is its invincibility. This is also indicated in yet another hadith documented by Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H):

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا حماد بن أسامة ثنا مجالد عن عامر عن جابر بن سمرة السوائي قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول في حجة الوداع إن هذا الدين لن يزال ظاهرا على من ناوأه لا يضره مخالف ولا مفارق حتى يمضى من أمتى اثنا عشر خليفة قال ثم تكلم بشىء لم أفهمه فقلت لأبى ما قال قال كلهم من قريش

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Hammad b. Usamah – Mujalid – 'Amir – Jabir b. Samurah al-Suwai:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying during the Farewell Hajj: "Verily, this religion will never cease to be victorious over whoever opposes it – no opponent or defector will be able to harm it – as long as twelve khalifahs pass from my Ummah." Then, he said something which I did not understand. So, I said to my father, "What did he say?" He replied, "All of them will be from Quraysh."7

Al-Arnaut says:

حديث صحيح

It is a sahih hadith8

All praise be to Allah: our religion has continued to stand upon its two feet since the departure of our Prophet, despite the persistent aggression and subversion of its hardened foes to bring it down. Interestingly, as long as Islam breathes on our planet, there is one of the twelve khalifahs from the offspring of Muhammad, placed over humanity by Allah as their master and guide.

Contrary to the hallucinations of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, the first of the true royal khalifahs of this Ummah was none other than Imam 'Ali b. Abi Talib. Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) records:

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."9

Dr. al-Jawabirah says:

.اسناده حسن

Its chain is hasan. 10

And 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) backs him:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is hasan. 11

A quick question that comes to mind here is: was 'Ali from the offspring of Muhammad?

The answer is simple: there are instances where a person or thing is included within a foreign category for a specific purpose. For instance, Iblis was counted among the angels by Allah in His Order to them to prostrate to Prophet Adam, 'alaihi al-salam12. However, he was only a jinn13. So, for the purpose of that Divine Command, Iblis was regarded as an angel, even though he was not.

A similar situation existed between Prophet Ibrahim, 'alaihi al-salam, and Prophet Lut, 'alaihi al-salam. Allah savs:

وتلك حجتنا آتيناها إبراهيم على قومه نرفع درجات من نشاء إن ربك حكيم عليم وهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب كلا هدينا ونوحا هدينا من قبل ومن ذريته داوود وسليمان وأيوب ويوسف وموسى وهارون وكذلك نجزي المحسنين وزكريا ويحيى وعيسى وإلياس كل من الصالحين وإسماعيل واليسع ويونس ولوطا وكلا فضلنا على العالمين

And that was Our Hujjah which We gave Ibrahim against his people. We raise whom We will in ranks. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Ishaq and Ya'qub, each of them We guided – and We guided Nuh before (him) – and among his offspring were Dawud, Sulayman, Ayub, Yusuf, Musa, and Harun – thus do We reward the good-doers – and Zakariyyah, Yahya, 'Isa and Ilyas – each one of them was of the righteous – and Isma'il, al-Yasa', Yunus and Lut; and each one of them We made superior above the worlds. 14

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

فالضمير في قوله ومن ذريته عائد على إبراهيم على المشهور. ولوط وإن كان ابن أخيه إلا أنه دخل في الذرية تغليبا. وهذا هو الحامل للقائل الآخر إن الضمير على نوح كما قدمنا في قصته والله أعلم.

The pronoun in his statement "and among his offspring" refers to Ibrahim according to the popular opinion. As for Lut, even though he was his nephew, he was part of the offspring as a minority entry. This is the problem of those who hold the second opinion that the pronoun refers to Nuh, as we have explained in his story. And Allah knows best. 15

Imam al-Qurtubi (d. 671 H) says a similar thing:

ومن ذريته {أي ذرية إبراهيم .وقيل: من ذرية نوح، قاله الفراء وأختاره الطبري وغير واحد من المفسرين ومن ذريته إبن عطية وغيرهما .والأول قاله الزجاج، واعترض بأنه عد من هذه الذرية يونس ولوط وما كانا من ذرية إبراهيم .وكان لوط ابن أخيه .وقيل :ابن أخته .وقال ابن عباس :هؤلاء الأنبياء جميعا مضافون إلى ذرية إبراهيم، وإن كان فيهم من لم تلحقه ولادة من جهته من جهة أب ولا أم، لأن لوطا ابن أخي إبراهيم .والعرب تجعل العم أبا كما أخبر} الله عن ولد يعقوب أنهم قالوا نعبد إلهك وإله آبائك إبراهيم وإسماعيل وإسحاق (وإسماعيل عم يعقوب. وعد عيسى من ذرية إبراهيم وإنما هو ابن البنت. فأولاد فاطمة رضي الله عنها ذرية النبي صلى الله عليه .وسلم

{And among his offspring}, that is the offspring of Ibrahim. It is also said: among the offspring of Nuh – this opinion belonged to al–Fara and was adopted by al–Tabari and many of the mufassiroon like al–Qushayri, Ibn 'Atiyyah and others. Al–Zajjaj held the first opinion, and he is opposed with the statement that part of those counted among the offspring were Yunus and Lut, and they both were not from the offspring of Ibrahim. Lut was his nephew. And Ibn 'Abbas said: "All of these prophets are counted among the offspring of Ibrahim, even though there are among them who were not his descendants, for Lut was the nephew of Ibrahim."

The Arabs consider the uncle to be a father too, as Allah informs concerning the children of Ya'qub, when they said (to Ya'qub), "We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers – Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Ishaq – One God, and to Him we submit." [2: 133] Isma'il was the uncle of Ya'qub. Also, 'Isa is counted among the offspring of Ibrahim, while he was only the son of the daughter. Therefore, the offspring of Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her, are offspring of the Prophet, peace be upon him. 16

So, Lut was counted among the offspring of Ibrahim for some specific purposes, most likely alnubuwwah. In this same manner, this hadith apparently includes 'Ali within the offspring of Muhammad, for the specific purposes of khilafah and Imamah:

You are my khalifah over every believer after me.

- 1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 238
- 2. Qur'an 7:142
- 3. Qur'an 20:85
- 4. Qur'an 7:150
- 5. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 240-241
- 6. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1453, # 1822 (10)
- 7. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 87, # 20833
- 8. Ibid
- 9. 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
- **10.** Ibid
- 11. 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
- 12. See Qur'an 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:71-74,
- 13. See Qur'an 18:50
- 14. Qur'an 6:83-86
- 15. 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. 1, p. 192
- 16. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Ansari al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1405 H), vol. 7, p. 31

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