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15. The Sunni Chase Of Shadows: The Mahdi And The Shi'i Communities

We know already that the "Mahdi" being expected by most Sunni Muslims – one Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al–Hasani – will *never* come. There is no reliable *hadith* to establish his existence or his coming, even in the Sunni books! As such, he is only a figment of their imagination. By contrast, the birth, existence and mission of the Mahdi, 'alaihi al–salam, that the Shi'ah Imamiyyah and some from the Ahl al–Sunnah await is firmly established by *sahih* Shi'i *ahadith*. It is equally our belief that all the authentic Sunni reports on the Mahdi are references to him.

One undeniable fact about the true Mahdi is that he will be upon the religion of the eleven Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, *'alaihim al-salam*, before him. There is simply no doubt about that. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records:

حدثنا نصر بن عبد الرحمن الكوفي حدثنا زيد بن الحسن هو الأنماطي عن جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم في حجته يوم عرفة وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب فسمعته يقول يا أيها الناس إنى قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتى أهل بيتى

Nasr b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kufi - Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anma®i - Ja'far b. Muhammad - his father - Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his *Hajj* on the Day of 'Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: "O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and MY OFFSPRING, my Ahl al-Bayt."1

Al-Tirmidhi comments:

وهذا حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه و زيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم

And this *hadith* is *hasan gharib* (i.e. has a *hasan* chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa'id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.2

And 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also says:

صحيح

Sahih.3

Meanwhile, Imam al-Mahdi himself is only from these same rightly guided offspring. Imam Abu Dawud (d. 275 H) has the *hadith*:

حدثنا أحمد بن إبراهيم ثنا عبد الله بن جعفر الرقي ثنا أبو المليح الحسن بن عمر عن زياد بن بيان عن علي بن نفيل عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أم سلمة قالت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول " المهدي من عترتي من " ولد فاطمة

Ahmad b. Ibrahim – 'Abd Allah b. Ja'far al-Raqqi – Abu al-Mulayh al-Hasan b. 'Umar – Ziyad b. Bayan – 'Ali b. Nufayl – Sa'id b. al-Musayyab – Umm Salamah:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: "The Mahdi is from MY OFFSPRING, from the descendants of Fasimah."4

Al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih.5

So, the Mahdi is from the same blood and *madhhab* as all the rest of the Ahl al-Bayt, starting with Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, 'alaihi al-salam.

Interestingly, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah do not follow the offspring of the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) confirms this with pride:

قال الرافضي و في الفقه الفقهاء يرجعون إليه

The Rafidhi said: "In figh (Islamic jurisprudence), the (Sunni) jurists used to reference him (i.e. 'Ali)."

The answer is that this is a plain lie. There was NONE among the four Imams and others from the Imams of the jurists who referenced him (i.e. 'Ali) in his *fiqh*.6

He also adds:

These are **books** of *hadith* and *tafsir*, filled with reports from the Sahabah and Tabi'in. **What is** recorded in them from 'Ali is VERY LITTLE.7

He equally proclaims:

و الجواب أن هنا كذب ظاهر فهذا موطأ مالك ليس فيه عنه و لا عن أحد أولاده إلا قليل جدا و جمهور ما فيه عن غيرهم فيه عن جعفر تسعة أحاديث و لم يرو مالك عن أحد من ذريته إلا عن جعفر و كذلك الأحاديث التي في الصحاح و السنن و المساند منها قليل عن ولده و جمهور ما فيها عن غيرهم

The Rafidhi said: "As for the Malikis, they took their knowledge from him (i.e. 'Ali) and from his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring."

The answer is that there is an apparent lie here. This is *Muwa* of Malik. What is recorded in it from him (i.e. 'Ali) or any of his offspring is VERY LITTLE. Most of what is in it is from other than them. There are nine *ahadith* from Ja'far (al–Sadiq) in it, and Malik did not record from ANY of his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring except from Ja'far. This is also the case with what is recorded in the *Sahih* books, the *Sunan* books, and the *Musnad* books. What is recorded in them from his (i.e. 'Ali's) offspring is LITTLE. The generality of what is recorded in them is from others.8

The mathematics, of course, is straightforward:

- 1. The Mahdi will follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- 2. The Sunnis do NOT follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- 3. Therefore, the Mahdi will NOT be on the same path as the Sunnis.

By contrast, at least 99% of the authentic *ahadith* in the Shi'i sources are from the Messenger of Allah and the Twelve Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt. In reality, however, *everything* is from the Prophet, since the words of the Imams are only narrations of his Sunnah. As such, it is obvious that:

- i. The Mahdi will follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- ii. The Shi'is follow the path of the Ahl al-Bayt.
- iii. Therefore, the Mahdi will be on the same part as the Shi'is.

The top linguists of the Ahl al–Sunnah have also admitted that the word "Shi'ah" is only the name of those in this *Ummah* who follow 'Ali and his offspring from the Ahl al–Bayt. For instance, the chief Sunni lexicographer, Ibn Manzur (d. 711 H), declares:

وقد غلب هذا الاسم على من يتوالى عليا وأهل بيته، رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين، حتى صار لهم اسما خاصا فإذا قيل: فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم. وفي مذهب الشيعة كذا أي عندهم. وأصل ذلك من المشايعة، وهي المتابعة . . والمطاوعة، قال الأزهري: والشيعة قوم يهوون هوى عترة النبى، صلى الله عليه وسلم، ويوالونهم

This name (i.e. "Shi'ah) has become synonymous with those who follow 'Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, pleasure of Allah be upon them all, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said "So-and-so is from the Shi'ah", it is known that he is from them; and "it is like that in the *madhhab* of the Shi'ah" means in their view. The root of that is from adherence, and that is followership and obedience. Al-Azhari said: "The Shi'ah are a group who love what the offspring of the Prophet love, peace be upon him, and also follow them."9

Imam Ibn al-'Athir (d. 606 H) is slightly aggressive. Yet, he too is principally of the same opinion:

وقد غلب هذ الاسم على كل من يزعم أنه يتولى عليا رضي اللهعنه وأهل بيته حتى صار لهم اسما خاصا فإاذ قيل فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم وفي مذهب الشية كذا أي عندهم

This name (i.e. "Shi'ah) has become synonymous with those who claim that they follow 'Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said "So-and-so is from the Shi'ah", it is known that he is from them; and "it is like that in the *madhhab* of the Shi'ah" means in their view. 10

Imam al-Zubaydi (d. 1205 H) also shares the submission of Ibn Manzur:

وقد غلب هذا الاسم على كل من يتولى عليا وأهل بيته، رضي الله عنهم أجمعين، حتى صار اسما لهم خاصا، فإذا قيل: فلان من الشيعة عرف أنه منهم، وفي مذهب الشيعة كذا، أي عندهم، أصل ذلك من المشايعة، وهي المطاوعة ... وقال الأزهري: الشيعة: قوم يهوون هوى عترة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، ويوالونهم

This name (i.e. "Shi'ah) has become synonymous with those who follow 'Ali and his Ahl al-Bayt, may Allah be pleased with them all, such that it has become their exclusive name. Therefore, when it is said "So-and-so is from the Shi'ah", it is known that he is from them; and "it is like that in the *madhhab* of the Shi'ah" means in their view. The root of that is from adherence, and that is followership and obedience ... And al-Azhari said: "The Shi'ah are a group who love what the offspring of the Prophet love, peace be upon him, and also follow them."11

This then brings our little mathematics exercise to its climax:

- 1. The Shi'is are the only group in the *Ummah* who follow 'Ali and his offspring.
- 2. The Prophet ordered his entire *Ummah* and all humanity to follow 'Ali and his offspring after him.
- 3. Imam al-Mahdi is from the offspring of 'Ali, and is also a follower of 'Ali and his offspring.
- 4. Therefore, the Mahdi will belong to the path of the Shi'is, and will call humanity to it.

Another point of interest is that Shi'is will be among the primary helpers of Imam al–Mahdi, even according to *sahih* Sunni *ahadith*. For instance, we read earlier how his first army will be from Khurasan – a region lying mainly in Iran, but also covering parts of southern Turkmenistan and northern Afghanistan. These areas, overall, contain substantial Shi'i populations in these times of ours; and there is no likehood of that changing anytime soon. Therefore, should the Imam come out today, his first troops would be substantially or largely Imami Shi'is. Meanwhile, there is every likelihood that Shi'ism will never cease to get stronger in Khurasan and all over the world as it has been rapidly doing since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Perhaps, even more interesting is the fact that the people who will become "the most fortunate" of mankind from the rise of the Mahdi are the Kufans; and they are overwhelmingly Shi'ah Imamiyyah. In the past, they betrayed Imam al–Husayn, 'alaihi al–salam. But, in the future, they will stand above all humanity in their devotion and loyalty. Obviously, they will earn Allah's Pleasure more than any others, through their ummatched sacrifices and support for the Awaited Mahdi. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) has the clear athar:

يعلى بن عبيد عن الأجلح عن عمار الدهني عن سالم عن عبد الله بن عمرو قال: يا أهل الكوفة، أنتم أسعد الناس بالمهدي

Ya'la b. 'Ubayd – al-Ajlah – 'Ammar al-Dahni – Salim – 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, he said:

"O people of Kufa! You are the MOST FORTUNATE of mankind with the Mahdi." 12

Dr. al-Bastawi also submits:

وأخرجه أيضا أبو عمرو الداني في سننه، قال: حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن عثمان، حدثنا قاسم، حدثنا أحمد بن زهير، حدثنا عبد الرحمن بن صالح، حدثنا عبد الله بن الأجلح، عن عمار الدهني، عن سالم بن أبي الجعد قال: خرجنا حجاجا، فجئت إلى عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص، فقال: ممن أنت يا رجل؟ قال: قلت: من أهل العراق. قال: فكن إذا من أهل الكوفة. قال: فقلت: أنا منهم، قال: فإنهم أسعد الناس بالمهدي

Abu 'Amr al-Dani also recorded it in his *Sunan*, saying: 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Uthman – Qasim – Ahmad b. Zuhayr – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Salih – 'Abd Allah b. al-Ajlah – 'Ammar al-Dahni – Salim b. Abi al-Ja'd:

We went on a *Hajj*, and we met 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As. Then he said, "Where are you from, O man?" I said, "From the people of Iraq." He said, "In that case, **make sure to be from the people of Kufa**." I said, "I am from them." He said, "For they are the MOST FORTUNATE of mankind with the Mahdi."13

Then, he says after examining the narrators:

وبعد دراسة تراجم رجال الإسناد تبين أن الإسناد الأول فيه الأجلح الكندي وأكثر الأئمة على تضعيفه. ولكن تابعه ولده في الإسناد الثاني وهو صدوق. وعمار الدهني روى عنه الأجلح وابنه عبد الله بن الأجلح كلاهما كما ذكر المذي في تهذيب الكمال في ترجمة عمار الدهني

After research into the biographical entries on the narrators of the chain, it is clear that in the first chain, there is al-Ajlah al-Kindi. The majority of the Imams declared him *dha'if*. However, he has been seconded by his son in the second chain, and he (the son, 'Abd Allah) is *saduq* (very truthful). As for 'Ammar al-Dahni, both al-Ajlah and his son, 'Abd Allah b. al-Ajlah, narrated from him, as stated by al-Mizzi in *Tahdhib al-Kamal* in the biographical entry on 'Ammar al-Duhni. 14

And he gives the final verdict:

إسناده حسن إلى عبد الله بن عمرو رضي الله عنهما. ولكنه رضي الله عنه كان ينظر في كتب أهل الكتاب ويروي عنهم. فقد يكون الخبر من الإسرائيليات. والله أعلم

Its chain is *hasan* up to 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, may Allah be pleased with them both. However, he, may Allah be pleased with him, used to look into the books of the *Ahl al–Kitab* and narrated from them. So, it is possible that the report is from the Israiliyat. And Allah knows best. 15

Of course, topics such as the city of Kufa and Imam al-Mahdi are completely unknown in, and absolutely unrelated to, *Israiliyyat*. As such, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr could only have heard the information from the Messenger of Allah, especially as it affected matters of the *ghayb* (unseen). With this, it is obvious that the *athar* has the *hukm* (status) of a *marfu' hadith*.

The people of Kufa, who have been Shi'is for 1400 years, will be the most fortunate of all mankind with the Awaited Imam. That really is an unequalled merit for them amongst all nations. Note especially how 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr b. al-'As urged Salim to be from the people of Kufa – which was already a Shi'i stronghold at that period! This highlights the good of being a Kufan even back then, due to the *barakah* of what unborn Kufans would do with the Mahdi in the distant future.

- 1. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 662 # 3786
- 2. Ibid
- 3. Ibid
- 4. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 509, # 4284
- 5. Ibid
- 6. 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. 7, pp. 529
- 7. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 43
- 8. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 531
- 9. Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Mukram b. Manzur al-Afriqi al-Misri, Lisan al-'Arab (Beirut: Dar Sadir; 1st edition), vol. 8, p. 188
- 10. Abu Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 1399 AH) [annotators: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. 2, p. 519-520
- 11. Muhibb al-Din Abu Faydh Sayyid Muhammad Murtadha al-Husayni al-Wasi⊡i al-Zubaydi al-Hanafi, Taj al-'Urus min Jawahir al-Qamus (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1414 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shirri], vol. 11, p. 257
- 12. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 8, p. 678, # 189
- 13. 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), pp. 215–216, # 13
- 14. Ibid, p. 218, # 13
- 15. lbid, pp. 218-219, # 13

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