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16. Hadith Saluni, Implications Of The Reports

The first and only creature to have *ever* made claims and offered challenges similar to those in *Hadith Saluni* was the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa wa alihi*. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records:

وحدثني حرملة بن يحيى بن عبدالله بن حرملة بن عمران التجيبي أخبرنا ابن وهب أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب أخبرني أنس بن مالك أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم خرج حين زاغت الشمس فصلى لهم صلاة الظهر فلما سلم قام على المنبر فذكر الساعة وذكر أن قبلها أمورا عظاما ثم قال من أحب أن يسألني عن شيء فليسألني عنه فوالله لا تسألوني عن شيء إلا أخبرتكم به ما دمت في مقامي هذا

قال أنس بن مالك فأكثر الناس البكاء حين سمعوا ذلك من رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وأكثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أن يقول سلوني فقام عبدالله بن حذافة فقال من أبي ؟ يا رسول الله قال أبوك حذافة فلما أكثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم من أن يقول سلوني برك عمر فقال رضينا بالله ربا وبالإسلام دينا وبمحمد رسولا قال فسكت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم حين قال عمر ذلك ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أولى والذي نفس محمد بيده لقد عرضت على الجنة والنار آنفا في عرض هذا الحائط فلم أر كاليوم في الخير والشر

Harmala b. Yahya b. 'Abd Allah b. Harmala b. 'Imran al-Tajibi – Ibn Wahb – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – Anas b. Malik:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came out when the sun had passed the meridian, and led them in *Salat al—Euhr*. When he said the *salam*, he stood upon the pulpit, and mentioned the Hour, and mentioned great affairs that would occur before it. Then he said, "Whosoever wishes to ask me about *ANYTHING*, let him ask me. I swear by Allah, you will not ask me about *ANYTHING* except that I will inform you of it as long as I remain in this position of mine." So, the people wept a lot when they heard that from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, repeatedly said "Ask me!" several times. So, 'Abd Allah b. Hudhafah stood up and said, "Who is my father, O Messenger of Allah?" He (the Prophet) replied, "Your father is Hudhafah." When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, continuously repeated "Ask me!" several times, 'Umar knelt down and said, "We are well–pleased with Allah as Lord, and with Islam as religion, and with

Muhammad as Messenger." So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, kept quiet so long as 'Umar was saying that. Then the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "It is near. I swear by the One in Whose Hand the life of Muhammad is, there was presented to me the Paradise and the Hellfire in the nook of this enclosure, and I did not see as much good and evil as I have seen today."1

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) also records:

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Ibn Abi 'Adi – Hamid – Anas:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "You will not ask me about *ANYTHING* (that will occur) up till the Day of Resurrection except that I will tell you." So, 'Abd Allah b. Hudhafah said, "O Messenger of Allah, who is my father?" He replied, "Your father is Hudhafah".2

Shaykh al-Arnau® comments:

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.3

These were momentous words. He offered them a challenge that was clearly beyond human capability. The Sahabah were awed. They never fathomed the existence of a man who could answer *any* question about *anything* – *any* verse in *any* revealed scripture, *any* Sunnah of *any* prophet, *any* private secrets of anyone, science, medicine, technology, astronomy, and so on. Anything! Nothing whatsoever was excluded. They were challenged to ask *anything* about *anything*! 'Abd Allah b. Hudhafah exploited the opportunity to verify his paternity – which, of course, was part of "anything". The other Sahabah were too overwhelmed with awe to ask any question. The Prophet kept challenging them. But, all that they could do was weep. If anyone makes a similar challenge today, he would be humiliated immediately with very simple questions. The only creature that was capable of making the same challenge as the Messenger of Allah had done was none other than Amir al–Muminin, *'alaihi al–salam*.

This relevant athar is documented in Fadhail al-Sahabah of Imam Ahmad:

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad b. Hanbal) - 'Uthman b. Abi Shaybah - Sufyan - Yahya b. Sa'id - Sa'id: "There

was never anyone among the Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, who used to say "Ask me!" except 'Ali b. Abi Talib.4

Dr. 'Abbas comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih5

As for Abu Bakr and 'Umar, both of them did not even have sufficient knowledge of either the Qur'an or Sunnah – much less anything else! For instance, 'Umar did not know the basic Islamic ruling on *tayammum*. Imam Muslim records:

حدثني عبدالله بن هاشم العبدي حدثنا يحيى (يعني ابن سعيد القطان) عن شعبة قال حدثني الحكم عن ذر عن سعيد بن عبدالرحمن بن أبزي عن أبيه أن رجلا أتى عمر فقال :إنى أجنبت فلم أجد ماء فقال لا تصل

'Abd Allah b. Hisham al-'Abdi – Yahya b. Sa'id al-Qassan – Shu'bah – al-Hakam – Dharr – Sa'id b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abza – his father:

A man came to 'Umar and said: "I have seminal discharges and I cannot find water (to do the *ghusl*)". **He** ('Umar) said, "Do not perform *Salat*."6

Meanwhile, this is the answer to that question in the Qur'an:

وإن كنتم مرضى أو على سفر أو جاء أحد منكم من الغائط أو لامستم النساء فلم تجدوا ماء فتيمموا صعيدا طيبا فامسحوا بوجوهكم وأيديكم

And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes after answering the call of nature, or **you have** had sexual intercourse with women and you cannot find water, perform *tayammum* with clean soil and rub therewith your faces and hands.7

'Umar apparently did not know the verses, or even the explicit Prophetic traditions which also explain the matter. As such, it was naturally impossible for him to have issued *any* challenge to *any* people to ask him *anything*! He completely lacked the capability, and would have been instantly humiliated with such beginner's topics as *tayammum*. Moreover, as Imam al–Bukhari (d. 256 H) records below, 'Umar also lacked knowledge of some other topics in Islamic jurisprudence:

حدثنا أحمد بن أبي رجاء حدثنا يحيى عن أبي حيان التيمي عن الشعبي عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال :خطب عمر على منبر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال إنه قد نزل تحريم الخمر وهي من خمسة أشياء العنب والتمر

والحنطة والشعير والعسل والخمر ما خامر العقل. وثلاث وددت أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لم يفارقنا حتى يعهد إلينا عهدا الجد والكلالة وأبواب من أبواب الربا

Ahmad b. Abi Rajah – Yahya – Abu Hayyan al-Tamimi – Shu'bi – Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both:

'Umar delivered a sermon on the pulpit of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, "Verily, there was revealed an order making alcohol *haram*, and it is made from five things: grape, date, wheat, barley and honey. Alcohol is whatsoever clouds the mind. I wish the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, had not left us before he could explain three matters to us: the inheritance of the grandfather, *kalalah* and various types of *riba* (usury)."8

But, it was not only 'Umar. Abu Bakr too, as the *khalifah* – and therefore the chief religious authority of the Muslims, was asked a beginner's question by one of his subjects. It however turned out that the *khalifah* actually had no clue! Allah states:

That We pour forth water in abundance, and We split the earth in clefts, and We cause therein the grain to grow, and grapes and clover plants, and olives and date-palms, and gardens, dense with many trees, and fruits and **herbage**, a benefit for you and your cattle.9

The above verse is in plain Arabic. Allah reveals about His Book:

This (Qur'an) is a **clear** Arabic tongue. 10

We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand. 11

Verily, We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that you may be able to understand. 12

Therefore, anyone with a proficient knowledge of the Arabic language will always understand the verses

of the Qur'an – at least in their literal senses – perfectly. During the *khilafah* of Abu Bakr, a man came to him about the word "herbage" in the above passage. He did not understand what it meant. Perhaps, the man was a Persian, Roman or African. It is also possible that he was an Arab, but one without a sound knowledge of his native language. So, how did the *khalifah* explain to him?

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 H) records:

ومن وجه آخر عن إبراهيم النخعي قال قرأ أبو بكر الصديق وفاكهة وأبا فقيل ما الأب فقيل كذا وكذا فقال أبو بكر ان هذا له التكلف أي أرض تقلني أو أي سماء تظلني إذا قلت في كتاب الله بما لا أعلم وهذا منقطع بين النخعي والصديق وأخرج أيضا من طريق إبراهيم التيمي ان أبا بكر سئل عن الأب ما هو فقال أي سماء تظلني فذكر مثله وهو منقطع أيضا لكن أحدهما يقوي الآخر

And it is narrated from another chain on the authority of Ibrahim al-Nakha'i:

Abu Bakr al-Siddiq recited "and fruits and herbage". So, someone asked, "What is herbage?" Another person answered, "It is so-and-so". Therefore, Abu Bakr said, "This one (i.e. this question) is overburdensome. Which earth will carry me and which sky will shield me if I say concerning the Book of Allah THAT WHICH I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF."

This is *munqati*' (disconnected) between al-Nakha'i and al-Siddiq. It is also recorded through the route of Ibrahim al-Tamimi that **Abu Bakr was asked about herbage, what it was**, and he replied, "Which sky would shield me...." and he mentioned the like of it (i.e. what Ibrahim al-Nakha'i narrated). This one too is *munqati*'. **However, each one of the two (reports) STRENGTHENS the other**. 13

So, Abu Bakr, despite being from Quraysh – who spoke the purest Arabic dialect – did not know what "herbage" meant in the Qur'an! Apparently, though an Arab, the first Sunni *khalifah* had deficient knowledge of his own native language. Considering that the Book of Allah was revealed in "clear" Arabic, that fact alone naturally made him an incompetent interpreter of the divine Scripture.

'Umar too had a similar condition. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

حدثنا أبو عبد الله بن يعقوب ثنا إبراهيم بن عبد التميمي أنبأ يزيد بن هارون أنبأ حميد عن أنس وحدثنا أبو عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا إسحاق أنبأ يعقوب بن إبراهيم بن سعد ثنا أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب أن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أخبره أنه سمع عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه يقول - { فأنبتنا فيها حبا * وعنبا وقضبا * وزيتونا ونخلا * وحدائق غلبا * وفاكهة وأبا } قال : فكل هذا قد عرفناه فما الأب ثم نقض عصا كانت في يده ؟ فقال : هذا لعمر الله الكتاب

Abu 'Abd Allah b. Ya'qub – Ibrahim al-Tamimi – Yazid b. Harun – Hamid – Anas:

And Abu 'Abd Allah - my father - Ishaq - Ya'qub b. Ibrahim b. Sa'd - my father - Salih - Ibn Shihab -

Anas b. Malik, may Allah be pleased with him:

I heard 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reciting {And We cause therein the grain to grow, and grapes and clover plants, and olives and date-palms, and gardens, dense with many trees, and fruits and herbage}. He said, "We have known all of this. But, what is "herbage"? Then, he broke a stick which was in his hand. So, he said, "This, I swear by the Life of Allah, IS OVERBURDENSOME.
Follow (only) what is clear to you from this Book."14

Al-Hakim says:

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs. 15

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs:

(Sahih) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim 16

For Allah's sake, was it possible for Abu Bakr or 'Umar to issue a challenge like this:

You will not ask me about *ANY* verse in the Book of Allah, or about *ANY* Sunnah from the Messenger of Allah, except that I will inform you of that.

- 1. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, 🗈 ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1832, # 2359 (136)
- 2. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 107, # 12063
- 3. Ibid
- 4. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Fadhail al-shabah (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Dr. Wasiyullah Muhammad 'Abbas], vol. 2, p. 646, # 1098
- 5. Ibid
- 6. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, 🗈 ahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 280, #112
- 7. Qur'an 4:43 and 5:6
- 8. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-J'ufi, al-Jami' al-Tahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2122, # 5266
- 9. Qur'an 80:25-32
- 10. Qur'an 16:103

- 11. Qur'an 12:2
- 12. Qur'an 43:3
- 13. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh ©ahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-©aba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 13, pp. 229-230
- 14. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-⊡ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 559, # 3897
- **15.** Ibid
- **16.** Ibid

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