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16) The Sahabah And The Ahl Al-Bayt: The Betrayal Was Predicted

The Prophet of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, named Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihi al-salam, as the first khalifah after him. He also indicated that all the other khalifahs will be from his offspring. In particular, he declared that all the khalifahs after him will be twelve in number, that they all would be royal Imams, and that their reign would continue uninterrupted till the Day of al-Qiyamah.

He further declared them the guides of this Ummah after him till the Hour, and that they never ever separate from the Qur'an – not even for one second. However, he equally prophesied that the Ummah would betray 'Ali (and, by extension, all the other khalifahs) once he was gone! Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 H) copies:

Al-Fadhl, Abu Na'im - Fitr b. Khalifah - Habib b. Abi Thabit - Tha'labah b. Yazid:

I heard 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, saying: "I swear by Allah, verily, the Ummi Prophet, peace be upon him, told me: "They will soon betray you after me." 1

The Salafi annotator, 'Abd Allah al-Shahri, comments:

It is dha'if with this chain, due to the status of Fitr b. Khalifah and Tha'labah b. Yazid, for both of them were very truthful and Shi'is and this hadith supports their bid'ah. Therefore, it is dha'if.2

So, al-Shahri's only problem with the sanad is the Shi'ism of Fitr and Tha'labah. Even though both were "very truthful", this hadith of theirs cannot be accepted only because it supports their Shi'ism. A "scientific" way of discrediting reports, isn't it?! Before examining the legitimacy of al-Shahri's methodology, let us first look at the narrators of hadith, in order to have a clearer view of the whole picture.

As an initial observation, a key merit of this sanad is that it is perfectly connected. There is no break whatsoever among its narrators, and each of them explicitly declared that he literally heard the hadith from the mouth of his shaykh. Moreover, all the narrators are completely reliable without question.

Al-Hafiz states about the first narrator:

Al-Fadhl b. Dukayn al-Kufi – and the name of Dukayn was 'Amr b. Hammad b. Zuhayr – al-Tamimi, their freed slave, al-Ahwal, Abu Na'im al-Mulai, well-known with his kunya: Thiqah (trustworthy), accurate.3

Concerning the second narrator, he further declares:

Fitr b. Khalifah al-Makhzumi, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-Hanat: Saduq (very truthful), accused of Shi'ism.4

What of the third narrator? Al-Hafiz says:

Habib b. Abi Thabit Qays – and it is said Hind – b. Dinar al–Asadi, their freed slave, al–Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a meritorious jurist. He used to do a lot of irsal and tadlis.5

Meanwhile, he has narrated with explicit sima' above. So, his irsal and tadlis are inapplicable and inconsequential here.

Finally, this is what al-Hafiz states about the last narrator:

ثعلبة بن يزيد الحماني بكسر المهملة وتشديد الميم كوفي صدوق شيعي

Tha'labah b. Yazid al-Himmani, a Kufan: Saduq (very truthful), a Shi'i.6

This chain, therefore, is absolutely hasan without a doubt! It is simply faultless and unassailable.

As for al-Shahri's rejection of the hadith on account of the Shi'ism of two of its narrators, we will let another Salafi hadith scientist, al-Mua'lami (d. 1386 H) reply him:

وقد وثق أئمة الحديث جماعة من المبتدعة واحتجوا بأحاديثهم وأخرجوها في الصحاح، ومن تتبع رواياتهم وجد فيها كثيراً مما يوافق ظاهرة بدعهم، وأهل العلم يتأولون تلك الأحاديث غير طاعنين فيها ببدعة راويها ولا في راويها بروايته لها

The Imams in the hadith sciences have declared as trustworthy a lot of the heretics, and have taken their (i.e. the heretics') ahadith as hujjah, and have recorded them (i.e. those reports) in their Sahih books. And whoever researches their (the heretics') narrations finds that a lot of them apparently agree with their heresies. The scholars give alternative interpretations for those ahadith without attacking them (i.e. the ahadith) on account of the heresy of their narrators, nor do they attack the narrators for narrating them.7

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) too seconds him:

فإن قال قائل: راوي هذا الشاهد شيعي، وكذلك في سند المشهود له شيعي آخر، وهو جعفر بن سليمان، أفلا يعتبر ! ذلك طعنا في الحديث وعلة فيه؟

فأقول: كلا لأن العبرة في رواية الحديث إنما هو الصدق والحفظ، وأما المذهب فهو بينه وبين ربه، فهو حسيبه

If someone says: "The narrator of this corroborative hadith (i.e. that of Ajlah) was a Shi'i, and also in the chain of the main hadith, there is another Shi'i, and he is Ja'far b. Sulayman. Does this not justify attack on the hadith and constitute a fault in it?"

So, I answer: "Not at all, because the requirements in the transmission of hadith are ONLY truthfulness and sound memory. As for the madhhab (of the narrator), that is between him and his Lord, and He is sufficient for him.8

A third Salafi hadith scientist, al-Turayfi, also traces the practice to the Sunni Imams:

والأصل في رواية المبتدع إذا كان ضابطاً ثقة القبول، سواء روى فيما يوافق بدعته أم لا، ما لم يكن قد كفر ببدعته،

The default position concerning the report of a heretic, if he was accurate and trustworthy, is to accept it, regardless of whether he narrated concerning what agrees with his bid'ah (heresy) or not, as long as he had not apostatized through his heresy. In such a case, it will be rejected due to his kufr (disbelief). This was the practice of the Imams who were hadith scientists, for they used to narrate from the heretic if he was trustworthy and accurate, and used to declare his report to be sahih.9

The bottomline is that al-Shahri's methodology of weakening the hadith is both unprofessional and crude.

Meanwhile, al-Hafiz copies a second, different chain for the hadith:

Al-Harith – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad, freed slave of Banu Hashim – Hushaym – Isma'il b. Salim – Abu Idris al-Awdi – 'Ali:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Verily, this Ummah will soon betray you after me." 10

Al-Shahri again comments:

It is dha'if with this chain because Abu Idris al-Awdi is majhul al-hal. 11

This time, he is unable to accuse any of the narrators of Shi'ism, or to find any other defect – real or imagined – in the chain other than Abu Idris. But then, is Abu Idris really majhul al–hal? 'Ali Shiri, in his tahqiq of Tarikh Madinah Dimashq – while commenting under the above riwayah – identifies who Abu Idris was for us:

He was Abu Idris Yazid b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Awdi. 12

Who then was he? Al-Hafiz has the answer:

Yazid b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. al-Aswad al-Awdi, Abu Dawud: Maqbul (accepted when seconded). 13

Obviously, he is NOT majhul al-hal, but maqbul. This means that whenever he is seconded in his report, it is established from his shaykh. However, if he is alone in narrating a riwayah, then it is dha'if. We know already that he was seconded by Tha'labah b. Yazid. Therefore, this second sanad of the hadith is also sahih or hasan.

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) has included the report of al-Awdi in his Mustadrak too:

حدثنا أبو حفص عمر بن أحمد الجمحي بمكة ثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا عمرو بن عون ثنا هشيم عن إسماعيل بن سالم عن أبي إدريس الأودي عن علي رضي الله عنه قال إن مما عهد إلي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن الأمة ستغدر بي بعده

Abu Hafs 'Umar b. Ahmad al-Jamhi – 'Ali b. 'Abd al-'Aziz – 'Amr b. 'Awn – Hushaym – Isma'il b. Salim – Abu Idris al-Awdi – 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

"Verily, part of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, told me is that the Ummah would soon betray me after him."14

Then, he declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain. 15

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

صحيح

Sahih₁₆

Al-Hakim has documented a further shahid:

عن حيان الأسدي سمعت عليا يقول قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الأمة ستغدر بك بعدي وأنت تعيش على ملتى وتقتل على سنتى من أحبك أحبنى ومن أبغضك أبغضنى وإن هذه ستخضب من هذا يعنى لحيته من رأسه

Narrated Hayyan al-Asadi:

I heard 'Ali saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to me: "Verily, the Ummah will

soon betray you after me; and you will live upon my religion, and you will be killed upon my Sunnah. Whoever loves you loves me, and whoever hates you hates me. Verily, this will soon be painted from this", he meant: his beard (will be drained with blood) from his head. 17

Al-Hakim declares:

صحيح

Sahih₁₈

Al-Dhahabi has the same verdict too:

صحيح

Sahih₁₉

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani has provided details of the sanad of this riwayah in his Itihaf:

Abu 'Ali al-Hafiz – al-Haytham b. Khalaf – Muhammad b. 'Umar b. Hayyaj – Yahya b. 'Abd al-Rahman – Yunus b. Abi Yafur – his father – from him (Hayyan al-Asadi) with it.20

As we have seen, both al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi declared it sahih. Obviously, it provides additional strength to the other chains of the riwayah. It is our firm belief, anyway, that the combined force of the three asanid leaves absolutely no doubt about the authenticity of the report. Even al-Shahri, despite his extreme bias, is unable to escape the fact in his final conclusion about the hadith:

That the hadith is dha'if by looking at each chain individually; however, by looking at the two chains together (i.e. those of Tha'labah b. Yazid and Abu Idris al-Awdi), then the hadith is hasan li ghayrihi.21

The Messenger of Allah prophesied that "the Ummah" would betray Amir al–Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib after him. The word "Ummah" was generalized by him. So, he was referring to the generality of the Ummah, and not just a small section of it. They would "betray" his chosen khalifah after his death. Of course, as history confirms, the generality of the Ummah – including the Sahabah – truly did betray Amir

al-Muminin after the death of the Rasul.

Despite that he had explicitly named 'Ali as his khalifah after him, they became traitors against the latter and installed a rebel leader in his place. Interestingly, Imam 'Ali identified both Abu Bakr and 'Umar as two among the traitors mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet of Allah. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) quotes 'Umar saying to him and 'Abbas:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وولى أبا بكر فرأيتماني كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, Abu Bakr said: "I am the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.".... So both of you ('Ali and 'Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest. And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly–guided and a follower of the truth. Abu Bakr died and I became the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the wali of Abu Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest.22

- 1. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-'Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: 'Abd Allah b. @afir b. 'Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 64, # 3919
- Ibid
- 3. 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 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 11, # 5418
- 4. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 16, # 5458
- 5. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 183, # 1087
- 6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 149, #849
- 7. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yahya b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Mu'alami al-'Atmi al-Yamani, al-Tankil bi ma fi Ta-anib al-Kawthari min al-Abatil (al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Zuhayr al-Shawish and 'Abd al-Razzaq Hamzah], vol. 1, p. 237
- 8. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 5, p. 262, # 2223
- 9. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Marzuq al-Turayfi, al-Tahjil fi Takhrij ma lam Yukhraj min al-Ahadith wa al-Athar fi Irwa al-Ghalil (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1422 H), p. 546
- 10. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-'Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: 'Abd Allah b. safir b. 'Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 65, # 3920
- **11.** Ibid
- 12. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 42, p. 447, footnote # 7
- 13. 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 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 328, # 7774
- 14. 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 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 150, # 4676
- 15. Ibid

- 16. Ibid
- 17. lbid, vol. 3, p. 153, # 4686
- 18. Ibid
- 19. Ibid
- 20. Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Itihaf al-Maharat (Madinah al-Munawwarah: Markaz Khidmah al-Sunnah wa al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 11, p. 296, # 14043. Al-Hafiz has cited Mustadrak of al-Hakim as his source for the chain, immediately after quoting the hadith, verbatim as above. In modern editions of Mustadrak, the sanad is missing. It is most likely that al-Hafiz had access to a extinct manuscript of Mustadrak which contained the full chain. Al-Hafiz too made a scribal error in copying the name of Hayyan al-Asadi. He has misspelt his name as Aban al-Asadi.
- 21. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-'Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: 'Abd Allah b. ©afir b. 'Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 67, # 3921
- 22. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1376, #1757

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