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## 2. Members of the House of Muhammad

Relying on the tacit agreement among the Muslims we assumed the Imam 'Ali his wife Fatimah and their two children Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are members of the blessed House of Muhammad. The most reliable evidence in this matter is the reported words of the Prophet Muhammad himself where he spoke of Ahlul Bayt, Muhammad or his Itrah. The reported words of the Messenger on this subject can be classified into two types:

1. The hadiths which contained descriptions that distinguish the House of Muhammad from others who would be excluded by the same descriptions.
2. The hadiths which specify these members.

### Descriptive Hadiths

From the first type are the following: Jaber Ibn Abdullah a famous companion reported that the Messenger of God said:

"O people I have left for you that which if you follow you will never go astray: the Book of God and the members of my House who are my "Itrah" (close relative and progeny)."<sup>[1](#)</sup>

Zayd Ibn Arqam a well known companion of Muhammad reported that the Messenger of God said:

"I have left for you that which if you hold fast you shall not go astray after me: The Book of God a rope extended between Heaven and Earth and the members of my House who are my Itrah. Certainly both (the Book of God and the members of my House) shall not part from each other until they join me on the Day of Judgement. Beware how you will treat both of them after me."<sup>[2](#)</sup>

Zaid Ibn Thabit reported that the Messenger of God said: "I am leaving among you two successors: The Book of God a rope extended between the Heaven and the earth and the members of my House who are my Itrah). Certainly they (the Book and the Itrah) will not part from each other until the Day of

Judgement." [3](#)

Zayd Ibn Arqam again reported that the Messenger of God said on the day of Ghadir Khum:

"I am about to be summoned by God and I shall respond. Certainly I have left for you the two most valuable legacies. One of them is bigger than the other: The Book of God and my "Itrah" members of my House. Beware how you will treat both of them after me. They will not part from each other until the Day of Judgement."

Then he said:

"Certainly God is my 'Mawla' (Guardian) and I am the Mawla of every believer."

Then he held 'Ali's hand and said:

'Whoever I am his Mawla this is his Mawla.' God love whoever loves him and cast out of Thy favor whoever antagonizes him." [4](#)

Accordingly the members of the House of the Messenger are the ones who possess the following qualifications:

1. To be of Muhammad's Itrah. Man's Itrah is his close relatives (by birth) and his progeny. By this definition the wives of the Prophet and his companions from the non-Hashimites are excluded.
2. Righteousness of the Highest Degree. The members of the House of the Prophet have been described in these hadiths as true allies of the Qur'an who will never part from it. Thus unpious men and women would be disqualified for the membership whether they are Hashimites or non-Hashimites.
3. To Possess the Highest Degree of Knowledge in the Contents of the Holy Qur'an and the Teachings of the Messenger. Those who have limited knowledge in religion are excluded even if they are closely related to Muhammad.

They are bound by their very lack of knowledge to fall intentionally or unintentionally into disagreement with all Qur'an. The members of the blessed House according to the hadiths are secured against disagreement with the Book of God. Such a security cannot exist without a profound knowledge in the Qur'an and all the Islamic teachings.

4. To Be in Agreement with Each Other. When there are persons or groups contradicting one another some of them will be wrong and in disagreement with the Qur'an.

Since all members of the House are in agreement with the Holy Qur'an they must be in full agreement with each other.

5. To Possess Certitude in all Religious Knowledge.

By this the Islamic scholars whom we call "Mujtahids" who are capable of conducting religious research and forming their own opinions are excluded even if they are Hashimites (related to the Prophet).

To understand this clearly a few points ought to be mentioned: When we try to know the Islamic rules of our devotional or non-devotional actions our main evidences come from the Qur'an or from the hadiths of the Prophet.

When we find clear and specific instructions in the Qur'an about a certain matter our knowledge reaches the degree of certitude whether we are Islamic scholars or laymen. When we do not have a clear Qur'anic instruction we solicit that from the hadiths of the Messenger. Some of the hadiths are clear in their indication and reported by numerous companions. Again our knowledge through this type of hadith attains certitude.

The difficulty is that hadiths of this type are not numerous and the majority of them are reported by one or two or a very few companions. Through such hadiths our knowledge concerning the rules which we try to know never reaches the level of certainty because the conveying companion did not report it to us directly because he is not living in our time nor did he record it in a book.

A person received a hadith from a companion. He in turn reported it to another and so on. Later the hadiths were recorded in a book after they passed through many hands. Thus our knowledge through this type of hadith would be at best conjectural.

There are other places at which instructions of the Messenger have been reported unclearly or in two opposite ways. The conclusion can be drawn in such cases only by professional scholars or "mujtahids."

The conclusion reached and the opinions formed by the scholars in any of the above mentioned cases are mostly conjectural. They do not usually reach the height of certainty nor do they certainly agree with the Book of God.

The probability of disagreement with it is very high considering only one of the opinions in each case. If we consider two opposite opinions of two scholars we would be certain that one of them is in disagreement with the Holy Qur'an because the two opinions contradict one another and the Qur'an cannot agree with two contradictory views.

From this it becomes clear that the Mujtahids whether Hashimites or non-Hashimites are not included in the particular membership of the House of Muhammad. This is because the knowledge of Mujtahids is mostly conjectural and in many cases does not agree with actual teaching of the Qur'an while the knowledge of the members of the House is securely in agreement with the Book of God.

This is because the aforementioned hadiths clearly indicate that the knowledge of the members of the House of Muhammad is knowledge of certainty rather than a knowledge of conjecture; otherwise they would have parted in many cases with the Holy Qur'an.

By this we ought to consider a mujtahid such as Abdullah Ibn Abbas (a cousin of the Prophet) out of the circle of the House in spite of his extensive knowledge in religion and his close relation to the Holy Prophet. The rest of the companions who were not closely related to Muhammad nor reached the degree of knowledge of Ibn Abbas are obviously excluded.

How Could It Be Possible for the Members of the House of Muhammad to Obtain a Knowledge of Certainty in All the Islamic Teachings?" Possession of certainty in religious teachings was very possible at the time of the Messenger.

It is very logical to assume that the Prophet taught a disciple of his such as 'Ali all the contents of the Holy Qur'an and informed him of all the Islamic laws which may number a few thousands. It is fair to assume that such a close disciple taught some of his disciples all that he received from the Prophet. These assumptions are supported by certain facts:

'Ali was with the Prophet from the time of his childhood until the time of the death of the Prophet. He was his trusted disciple and close associate. He was his keen-minded student who attended his public as well as his private teaching.

Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein (the grandsons of Muhammad and the sons of 'Ali) lived with their father many years. They were his close associates. They were his most brilliant disciples and the purest Muslims who resembled their teacher and his teacher. Thus we can say that the certainty of knowledge pertaining to the Holy Qur'an and the instructions of the Prophet was available and possible to some of the disciples of Muhammad.

## The Specific Hadiths

Several hadiths of the Prophet named the members of the house of Muhammad. Muslim recorded in his Sahih the following:

"When the (following) verse came down (at the time of a debate between the Messenger and Christians from Najran): 'If anyone disputes in this matter with thee now after full knowledge has come to thee say: Let us summon our sons and your sons our women and your women ourselves and yourselves; then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie.' The Messenger of God called 'Ali Fatimah Hassan and Hussein and said: God these are the members of my family."<sup>5</sup>

Al-Tirmidhi Ibn Manthoor Al-Hakim Ibn Mardawaih and Al-Bayhaqi in his Sunan all recorded the report of Om-Salemah wife of the Prophet in which she said:

"In my own house the (Quranic) verse (from chapter 33): 'Certainly God wants to keep away all abomination from you members of the House (of Muhammad) to make you pure and spotless.'" 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein were at my house. The Messenger of God covered them with a garment then said: "These are the members of my House. God keep away abomination from them and

make them pure and spotless."6

Muslim in his Sahih recorded that Ayesha Said: "The Messenger of God came out wearing a wide cloak made of black hair. Fatimah Hassan Hussein and 'Ali came successively then he covered them with his cloak and said:

'Certainly God wants to keep all abominations away from you ye members of the House of Muhammad and make you pure spotless."7

The two following hadiths are recorded in Al-Durr Al-Manthur by Al-Suyuti (his commentary on the Qur'an)

"Abu Al-Hamra (one of the companions of the Messenger) reported that the Messenger of God continued eight months in Medina coming to the door of 'Ali at every morning prayer putting his two hands on the two sides of the door and exclaiming: Assalat Assalat (prayer prayer). Certainly God only wants to keep away all abominations from you ye members of the House of Muhammad and to make you pure and spotless."8

Ibn Abbas reported:

"We have witnessed the Messenger of God for nine months coming every day to the door of 'Ali son of Abu Talib at the time of each prayer and saying: Assalamu Aleikum Wa-Rahmatullah Ahlul Bayt (peace and mercy of God be upon you ye members of the House of Muhammad). Certainly God wants only to keep away all abominations from you members of the House and to make you pure and spotless."9

These hadiths clearly indicate that each one of the four is a member of the House of Muhammad. They also exclude all other individuals who were living at the time of Muhammad the Hashimites as well as the non-Hashimites from the Arabs and non-Arabs.

### **Members Born After the Prophet Muhammad**

This restrictive statement however does not exclude all Hashimites who were born after the time of Muhammad. The first group of hadiths we advanced indicate that members of the House are to continue after his death and through numerous centuries because the members according to the hadiths shall exist as long as the Qur'an exists.

By commanding the Muslims to follow the Book of God and the members of his House and by declaring that 'Ali Fatimah Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are the members of his House the Holy Prophet actually placed 'Ali and his two sons at the seat of leadership of the nation.

Thus the two sons did not need to be appointed by their father and Al-Hussein did not need to be appointed by his brother Al-Hassan.

- [1.](#) Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p.328 (hadith No. 3874)
  - [2.](#) Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p. 329 (hadith No. 3876)
  - [3.](#) Imam Ahmad reported it in his Musnad by two authentic ways Part 5 p.181.
  - [4.](#) Al-Hakim in his Sahih Al-Mustadrak Part 3 p.109.
  - [5.](#) Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 15 p. 176.
  - [6.](#) Al-Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi Part 5 p. 328 (hadith No. 3875)
  - [7.](#) Muslim Sahih Muslim Part 15 p. 194.
  - [8.](#) Al-Suyuti Al-Durr Al-Manthoor Part 5 p.198 (Conveyed by Sayed Taqi Al-Hakeem Al-Ossol Al-Ammah for Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaram pp.155-156).
  - [9.](#) Al-Suyuti Al-Durr Al-Manthoor Part 5 p.198 (Conveyed by Sayed Taqi Al-Hakeem Al-Ossol Al-Ammah for Al-Fiqh Al-Muqaram pp.155-156).
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