

20. Hadith Al-'Ilm, Some Further Shawahid

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

فحدثنا بشرح هذا الحديث الشيخ أبو بكر بن إسحاق أنا الحسن بن علي بن زياد السري ثنا حامد بن يحيى البلخي بمكة ثنا سفيان عن إسماعيل بن أبي خالد عن قيس بن أبي حازم قال كنت بالمدينة فبينما أنا أطوف في السوق إذ بلغت أحجار الزيت فرأيت قوما مجتمعين على فارس قد ركب دابة وهو يشتم علي بن أبي طالب والناس وقوف حواله إذ أقبل سعد بن أبي وقاص فوقف عليهم فقال : ما هذا ؟ فقالوا : رجل يشتم علي بن أبي طالب فتقدم سعد فأفرجوا له حتى وقف عليه فقال : يا هذا على ما تشتم علي بن أبي طالب ألم يكن أول من أسلم ألم يكن أول من صلى مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ألم يكن ازهد الناس ألم يكن أعلم الناس ؟ وذكر حتى قال : ألم يكن ختن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على ابنته ألم يكن صاحب راية رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في غزواته ؟ ثم استقبل القبلة ورفع يديه وقال : اللهم إن هذا يشتم وليا من أوليائك فلا تفرق هذا الجمع حتى تريبهم قدرتك قال قيس : فو الله ما تفرقنا حتى ساخت به دابته فرمته على هامته في تلك الأحجار فانفلق دماغه ومات

Abu Bakr b. Ishaq – al-Hasan b. ‘Ali b. Ziyad al-Sirri – Hamid b. Yahya al-Balakhi –Sufyan – Isma’il b. Abi Khalid – Qays b. Abi Hazim:

I was in Madinah. While I was moving around in the market, oil stones arrived. So, I saw some people crowding around a Persian man who was riding an animal and cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. People stood round him when Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas turned and stood in front of them and he asked, “What is this?” They replied, “A man cursing ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.” So, Sa’d moved forward and they made way for him until he stood before him and said, “O you! On what basis do you curse ‘Ali b. Abi Talib? Is he not the first to accept Islam? Is he not the first to perform *Salat* with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him? Is he not the most ascetic of mankind? **Is he not the most knowledgeable of mankind?**” He mentioned (the merits of ‘Ali) until he said, “Is he not the son-in-law of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, who married his daughter? Is he not the flagbearer of the Messenger of Allah in his battles?” Then he faced the Qiblah and raised his hand and said, “O Allah! This one curses one of your beloved friends. Therefore, do not let this crowd disperse before you show them Your Power.”

Qays said: “By Allah, we had not dispersed when the animal capsized him and threw him on his head

into those stones. So, his brain broke open and he died.”[1](#)

Al-Hakim declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain.[2](#)

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) confirms:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

(*Sahih*) upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim[3](#)

Of course, the context of Sa’d’s words is clear. After the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, *‘alaihi al-salam*, is the most knowledgeable of all mankind, from the beginning of existence till the Hour. That naturally includes both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. This is a very powerful testimony from one of the most senior Sahabah, and one of the earliest Muslims. Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) claims the *ijma’* of Sunni *‘ulama* that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were more knowledgeable than ‘Ali. Apparently, Sa’d b. Abi Waqqas, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*, was not part of that consensus, nor was the Messenger of Allah!

Imam Hasan b. ‘Ali, *‘alaihi al-salam*, is the best of the Ahl al-Bayt, *‘alaihim al-salam*, after the Prophet and Amir al-Muminin. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) records his opinion too:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا وكيع عن إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن عمرو بن حبشي قال خطبنا الحسن بن علي بعد قتل علي رضي الله عنهما فقال: لقد فارقكم رجل بالأمس ما سبقه الأولون بعلم ولا أدركه الآخرون

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Waki’ – Israil – Abu Ishaq – ‘Amr b. Habashi:

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali delivered a sermon to us after the killing of ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and said: “Verily, a man has left you yesterday. The *awwalun* (people of old)[4](#) never surpassed him in knowledge, **and the *akhirun* (later ones)[5](#) never reach his level (in knowledge).**[6](#)

Shaykh al-Arnau^ق says:

حسن

Hasan[7](#)

This confirms the words of Sa'd. None among those who had died among the Sahabah – including Abu Bakr and 'Umar – ever reached the level of Amir al-Muminin in knowledge. In fact, none among all past human generations from Adam was ever more knowledgeable than 'Ali. Moreover, apart from Muhammad himself⁸, no other human being in our Ummah has ever attained, and none will ever reach, 'Ali's level in knowledge till the Day of Resurrection. Apparently, al-Hasan too was not part of the so-called consensus of Sunni 'ulama!

Let us seal this with the words of a top-ranking Sunni scholar. His name was 'Aḩa. Imam al-Dhahabi proclaims about him:

عطاء بن أبي رباح، سيد التابعين علما وعملا وإتقانا في زمانه بمكة روى عن عائشة، وأبي هريرة، والكبار. وعاش تسعين سنة أو أزيد. وكان حجة إماما كبير الشأن، أخذ عنه أبو حنيفة وقال: ما رأيت مثله

'Aḩa b. Abi Rabah, **the master of the Tabi'in in knowledge, piety, and generosity during his era in Makkah**. He narrated from 'Aishah, Abu Hurayrah and the senior (Sahabah). He lived 90 years or a little over. **He was an *hujjah* (authority), an Imam of great significance**. Abu Hanifah learned from him, and said, "I have never seen anyone like him".⁹

Al-Hafiz also submits:

عطاء بن أبي رباح نزيل مكة واحد الفقهاء والأئمة

'Aḩa b. Abi Rabah.... He lived in Makkah. **He was one of the jurists and Imams**.¹⁰

So, was this great Imam part of the alleged "consensus"? Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) records:

حدثنا عبدة بن سليمان عن عبد الملك بن أبي سليمان قال: قلت لعطاء: كان في أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم أحد أعلم من علي؟ قال: لا، والله أعلمه

'Abdah b. Sulayman – 'Abd al-Malik b. Abi Sulayman:

I said to 'Aḩa: "Was there ANYONE among the Sahabah of the Messenger of Allah who was more knowledgeable than 'Ali?" He replied, "**I swear by Allah, I do NOT know any such person!**"¹¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about the first narrator:

عبدة بن سليمان الكلابي أبو محمد الكوفي يقال اسمه عبد الرحمن ثقة ثبت

‘Abdah b. Sulayman al-Kalabi, Abu Muhammad al-Kufi, it is said that his name was ‘Abd al-Rahman: **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**.¹²

Concerning the second narrator, he says:

عبد الملك بن أبي سليمان ميسرة العرزمي بفتح المهملة وسكون الراء وبالزاي المفتوحة صدوق له أو هام

‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi Sulayman Maysarah al-‘Arzami: **Saduq (very truthful)**, he had hallucinations.¹³

The chain is therefore *hasan* due to ‘Abd al-Malik.

^{1.} 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. 3, p. 571, # 6121

^{2.} Ibid

^{3.} Ibid

^{4.} This word normally refers to all the human generations since ‘Adam up till the beginning of the prophetic mission of the Messenger of Allah in Arabia. See, for instance, Qur’an 17:59, 23:81, 43:6 and 56:13.

^{5.} The term is a reference to all human generations since the start of our Ummah till the Qiyamah. See, among others, Qur’an 56:14. This is especially the case since it is used in contrast to *awwalun*. It therefore refers to all humans who are later in time than the *awwalun*, and that only refers to humanity since Muhammad.

^{6.} Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 199, # 1720

^{7.} Ibid

^{8.} Generalized statements like that of Imam al-Hasan were always made against the backdrop of an implied understanding that the Messenger of Allah was excluded. We already quoted in this book a *sahih* hadith with this wording: “We used to say that the best judge among the people of Madinah was ‘Ali b. Abi ‘Alib, may Allah be pleased”. Of course, Prophet Muhammad too was living in Madinah at those same times! However, this speaker intended to say “the people of Madinah apart from the Messenger of Allah” but dropped the last part because it was patently unnecessary.

^{9.} Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I’tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah; 1st edition, 1382 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, p. 70, # 5640

^{10.} Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muassasat al-‘A’lami li al-Matbu’at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 7, p. 305, # 4038

^{11.} ‘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. 7, p. 502, # 46

^{12.} 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. 1, p. 628, # 4283

^{13.} Ibid, vol. 1, pp. 615-616, # 4198

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