

21) Hadith Al-Manzilah, the Golden Hadith

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

....قال الرافضي الثالث قوله أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه لا نبي بعدي

والجواب أن هذا الحديث ثبت في الصحيحين بلا ريب وغيرهما

The Rafidhi said: The third (point) is his statement (to 'Ali), “**You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa**, except that there is no prophet after me.”....

The reply is: **This *hadith* is authentic** in the two *Sahihs* **without any doubt**, and in other books too. [1](#)

This is one of the *very* few, miraculous instances when our Shaykh submits to the truth about the authenticity of a pro-‘Ali *hadith*! As he has conceded, the *hadith* is certainly *sahih*. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) too recorded it in his *Sahih* in confirmation of this:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى التميمي وأبو جعفر محمد بن الصباح وعبيدالله القواريري وسريج بن يونس كلهم عن يوسف بن الماجشون (واللفظ لابن الصباح) حدثنا يوسف أبو سلمة الماجشون حدثنا محمد بن المنكدر عن سعيد بن المسيب عن عامر بن سعد ابن أبي وقاص عن أبيه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه لا نبي بعدي

Yahya b. Yahya al-Tamimi, Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. al-Sabah, 'Ubayd Allah al-Qawariri and Surayj b. Yunus – Yunus b. al-Majishun – Yusuf Abu Salamah al-Majishun – Muhammad b. al-Munkadar – Sa'id b. al-Musayyab – 'Amir b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas – his father (Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas):

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to 'Ali: “**You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa**, except that there is no prophet after me.”[2](#)

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) as well documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن موسى الجهني قال دخلت على فاطمة بنت علي فقال لها رفيقي أبو سهل كم لك قالت ستة وثمانون سنة قال ما سمعت من أبيك شيئاً قالت حدثني أسماء بنت عميس ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لعلي أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى الا أنه ليس بعدي نبي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Sa’id – Musa al-Juhani – Fatimah bint ‘Ali – Asma bint ‘Umays:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to ‘Ali: **“You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me.”**³

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*⁴

We need not extend our research on the authenticity of the *hadith*, since there is no denial of it. So, we will simply cap the above with these words of Imam al-Kattani (d. 1345 H) about the *hadith*:

وقد تتبع ابن عساكر طرقه في جزء فبلغ عدد الصحابة فيه نيفا وعشرين وفي شرح الرسالة للشيخ جسوس رحمه الله ما نصه وحديث أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى متواتر جاء عن نيف وعشرين صحابيا

Ibn Asakir investigated its chains in a volume, and the number of the Sahabah who narrated it (in his research) reached more than twenty. In *Sharh al-Risalah* of Shaykh Jasus, may Allah be merciful to him, he states: **“And the *hadith* ‘You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa’ is *mutawatir*. It has been narrated by more than twenty Sahabah.”**⁵

So, does Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah accept that Amir al-Muminin, *‘alaihi al-salam*, was to Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, of the *status* of Prophet Harun, *‘alaihi al-salam*, to Prophet Musa, *‘alaihi al-salam*? Of course, he does! However, he has limited the circumstance and the scope to just a one-off event:

كان النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال له ذلك في غزوة تبوك وكان صلى الله عليه و سلم كلما سافر في غزوة أو عمرة أو حج يستخلف على المدينة بعض الصحابة

وبالجملة فمن المعلوم انه كان لا يخرج من المدينة حتى يستخلف وقد ذكر المسلمون من كان يستخلفه فقد سافر من المدينة في عمرتين عمرة الحديبية وعمرة القضاء وفي حجة الوداع وفي مغازيه اكثر من عشرين غزاة وفيها كلها استخلف وكان يكون بالمدينة رجال كثيرون يستخلف عليهم من يستخلفه فلما كان في غزوة تبوك لم يأذن

لاحد في التخلف عنها وهي آخر مغازيه صلى الله عليه و سلم ولم يجتمع معه أحد كما اجتمع معه فيها فلم يتخلف عنه إلا النساء و الصبيان أو من هو معذور لعجزه عن الخروج أو من هو منافق و تخلف الثلاثة الذين تيب عليهم و لم يكن في المدينة رجال من المؤمنين يستخلف عليهم كما كان يستخلف عليهم في كل مرة بل كان هذا الاستخلاف اضعف من الاستخلافات المعتادة منه لأنه لم يبق في المدينة رجال من المؤمنين أقوىاء يستخلف عليهم أحدا كما كان يبقى في جميع مغازيه

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said it (i.e. the *hadith*) to him (i.e. ‘Ali) during the Battle of Tabuk. Meanwhile, whenever he (the Prophet) made a journey for battle, or for ‘*Umrah* or *Hajj*, he used to make one of the Sahabah his *khalifah* over Madinah....

In summary, **it is well-known that he (the Prophet) never left Madinah without appointing a *khalifah* over it.** Muslims have mentioned those whom he appointed as *khalifahs*. He made journeys out of Madinah during two ‘*Umrahs* – ‘*Umrah al-Hudaybiyyah* and ‘*Umrah al-Qadha* – and during the Farewell *Hajj*, as well as in more than twenty battles.

On all of them (i.e. these occasions), he appointed *khalifahs* and there used to be several men in Madinah (on all these occasions) over whom the *khalifah* was given authority. However, during the battle of Tabuk, he (the Prophet) did not permit anyone to stay behind from it (i.e. the battle). It was his last battle, peace be upon him, and he never conscripted (for any battle) as he conscripted for it (i.e. Tabuk). **Therefore, none was left (in Madinah) except women, children, those who were exempted due to inability, hypocrites, and three men who (later) repented.**

There were no believing men in Madinah over whom to appoint a *khalifah* (during Tabuk), unlike the case on all other occasions. **Rather, this appointment (of ‘Ali) as *khalifah* was inferior to the other, several *khilafah* appointments,** because there were no strong believing men in Madinah (during Tabuk) over whom he (the Prophet) could have placed (‘Ali as) a *khalifah*, unlike the case in all his (the Prophet’s) other battles.⁶

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah obviously interprets the *hadith* as referring solely to Amir al-Muminin’s *khilafah* over Madinah during the battle of Tabuk. So, he was like Harun to Musa only for the duration of the battle. Once the battle ended, and the Messenger took over control of Madinah once again, ‘Ali ceased to be his Harun.

In the simplest terms, in the view of our Shaykh, the status of Imam ‘Ali as the Harun of Prophet Muhammad was temporary and shortlived and never extended beyond the Battle of Tabuk. Moreover, it was limited *exclusively* to ‘Ali’s governorate of Madinah while the battle lasted. It is very apparent that our Shaykh considers *Hadith al-Manzilah* to be specifically linked with the words of Musa in this verse:

وقال موسى لأخيه هارون اخلفني في قومي

Musa said to his brother, Harun: **“Be my *khalifah* over my people.”**⁷

Explaining the connection, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah says:

و قيل أن بعض المنافقين طعن فيه و قال أنما خلفه لانه يبغضه فبين له النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم اني إنما استخلفتك لأمانتك عندي و أن الاستخلاف ليس بنقص و لا غرض فإن موسى استخلف هارون على قومه فكيف يكون نقصا و موسى ليفعله بهارون فطيب بذلك قلب علي

It is said that some hypocrites condemned him (i.e. ‘Ali), and said that he (the Prophet) only made him (i.e. ‘Ali) a *khalifah* because he (the Prophet) hated him (i.e. ‘Ali). So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, explained to him, saying: “I have only made you a *khalifah* due to my trust in you, and that *khilafah* is neither a belittling step nor a demotion, **for Musa appointed Harun as his *khalifah* over his people**. How then could that have been a belittling step, while Musa did it with Harun?” Through that the mind of ‘Ali became clear.⁸

This logic of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah suggests that all the governors of Madinah during the Prophet’s numerous absences were like Harun too. Therefore, it was not a merit *at all* for ‘Ali, much less an exclusive one! In fact, the *khilafah* of Amir al-Muminin was the most “inferior” of all, as submitted by our Shaykh! After all, his governorate was only over women, children, mutineers and hypocrites. By contrast, all the other governors had ruled over believers among the men and the women. It is at this point that things get really messy.

Khilafah can be temporary, permanent, restricted or total, depending on the circumstances. There is no doubt that the *khilafah* of Amir al-Muminin *during Tabuk* was both *temporary* and *restricted*. He was the governor of Madinah only, and not of the entire Islamic state. What Imam ‘Ali controlled during that time was merely a small percentage of the *Ummah* of Muhammad. By contrast, the *khilafah* of Prophet Harun was *total*. He was the *khalifah* of Prophet Musa over the *entirety* of “his people”. Therefore, there was simply no connection or comparison between the two *khilafahs*. Meanwhile, the Messenger of Allah specifically mentioned that ‘Ali was *exactly* like Harun!

In fact, the Prophet further specifically explained the *khilafah* component of the Harun–‘Ali comparison in a way that knocks out Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah! Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. 287 H) records:

ثنا محمد بن المثنى، حدثنا يحيى بن حماد، عن أبي عوانة، عن يحيى بن سليم أبي بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي: أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت خليفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu ‘Awanah – Yahya b. Sulaym **Abu Balj** – ‘Amr b. Maymun – **Ibn ‘Abbas**: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to ‘Ali: “You are to me of the

status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a prophet. **And you are my *khalifah* over EVERY BELIEVER after me.**"[9](#)

Dr. Al-Jawabirah says:

أسناده حسن.

Its chain is *hasan*.[10](#)

‘Allamah al-Albani agrees:

أسناده حسن.

Its chain is *hasan*.[11](#)

Of course, the *khilafah* of Harun too was over the *entirety* of Musa’s *Ummah*, and the same thing was intended for ‘Ali in this *hadith*! The Messenger of Allah was announcing him as the *khalifah* over all believers – in exactly the *same* way that Harun was – in any case of *total* absence of Muhammad from his *Ummah* – as Musa did.

Meanwhile, although Prophet Musa was able to keep away from his entire *Ummah* during his lifetime, the Messenger of Allah was unable to do that except through death. This apparently explains why he mentioned “after me” with the *khilafah*. It is also solely in this context that the phrase “except that there will be no prophet after me” makes any sense. If the Prophet had intended *Hadith al-Manzilah* to be limited to the duration of Tabuk only, on what logical basis would he have added those two expressions?

What is more? The Messenger of Allah never restricted the comparison between Harun and ‘Ali to mere *khilafah*, to begin with! ‘Allamah al-Albani, for instance, states:

أخرجه أحمد في " المسند " (1/170) : حدثنا أبو سعيد مولى بنى هاشم حدثنا سليمان بن بلال حدثنا الجعيد بن عبد الرحمن عن عائشة بنت سعد عن أبيها: " أن عليا رضى الله عنه خرج مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى جاء ثنية الوداع , وعلى رضى الله عنه يبكى , يقول: تخلفنى مع الخوالم؟ فقال: أما ترضى أن تكون منى بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا النبوة؟ "

قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح على شرط البخارى

Ahmad recorded it in *al-Musnad* (1/170): Abu Sa’id, freed slave of Banu Hashim – Sulayman b. Bilal – al-Ja’id b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – ‘Aishah bint Sa’d – her father:

Verily, ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, WENT OUT WITH THE PROPHET, peace be upon him, UNTIL HE (THE PROPHET) REACHED THANIYYAH AL-WADA’, and ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was weeping, saying: “You are leaving me behind with the women and children?” So, he (the Prophet) replied, “**Are you not pleased that you are to me of the status of Harun to Musa EXCEPT PROPHETHOOD?**”

I say: This chain is *sahih* upon the standard of al-Bukhari. [12](#)

Shaykh al-Arnaut agrees with him about the same *hadith*:

إسناده صحيح على شرط البخاري

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of al-Bukhari. [13](#)

In other words, all the components of Harun’s status to Musa were present in ‘Ali too. The *only* exception was that Harun was a co-prophet with Musa while ‘Ali was not a prophet at all. Needless to say, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s restriction of the comparison to *khilafah* contradicts this authentic Sunnah! Amir al-Muminin was to the Prophet *everything* that Harun was to Musa with the sole exception of co-prophethood.

What further kills our Shaykh’s attempted diversion is the fact that the Messenger of Allah repeated that *hadith* to Imam ‘Ali *outside* the context or period of Tabuk! In the last *hadith* above, we read that ‘Ali *went out* of Madinah with the Prophet during Tabuk, till the Muslim army reached Thaniyyah al-Wada’. It was there that the Messenger mentioned the *hadith* to him. There were no women around. The women and children were all in Madinah, while only men were in the army at Thaniyyah al-Wada’. In the light of this, let us examine this *hadith* documented by Imam Ahmad:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الله بن نمير قال ثنا موسى الجهني قال حدثني فاطمة بنت علي قالت حدثني أسماء بنت عميس قالت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول يا علي أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه ليس بعدي نبي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Abd Allah b. Numayr – Musa al-Juhani – Fatimah bint ‘Ali – Asma bint ‘Umayyad:

I HEARD the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, “O ‘Ali! You are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, except that there is no prophet after me.” [14](#)

Al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih* [15](#)

Apparently, Asma (a wife of Abu Bakr) did not “hear” this *hadith* at Thaniyyah al-Wada’. She certainly must have heard it *inside* Madinah, either before or after Tabuk. This fact alone completely defeats all of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah’s efforts at reinterpreting *Hadith al-Manzilah* out of its intended purpose. Meanwhile, things get really much worse for him with Ibn ‘Abbas’ claim, *radhiyallahu ‘anhu*, that the “merit” in the *hadith* belonged *exclusively* to ‘Ali! Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) records:

أخبرنا أبو بكر أحمد بن جعفر بن حمدان القطيعي ببغداد من أصل كتابه ثنا عبد الله بن أحمد بن حنبل حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن حماد ثنا أبو عوانة ثنا أبو بلج ثنا عمرو بن ميمون.... قال ابن عباس:.... وقعوا في رجل له بضع عشرة فضائل ليست لأحد غيره.... وخرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في غزوة تبوك وخرج بالناس معه قال فقال له علي: أخرج معك قال: فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا فبكي علي فقال له: أما ترضى أن تكون مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنه ليس بعدي نبي إنه لا ينبغي أن أذهب إلا وأنت خليفة

Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ja’far b. Hamadan al-Qati’i – ‘Abd Allah b. Ahmad b. Hanbal – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu ‘Awanah – Abu Balj – ‘Amr b. Maymun Ibn ‘Abbas said:

.... **They are attacking a man who has ten EXCLUSIVE merits....** The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, went out for the battle of Tabuk, and the people went out with him. So, ‘Ali said to him, “Let me go out with you.” Therefore, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “Do not weep, ‘Ali. **Are you not pleased that you are to me of the status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that there is no prophet after me?** Verily, it is not right that I depart except with you as my *khalifah*.” [16](#)

Al-Hakim says:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain. [17](#)

Al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) backs him:

صحيح

Sahih. [18](#)

Was ‘Ali then the only governor ever appointed over Madinah during the Prophet’s lifetime?! Obviously, the *hadith* is very, very far from what Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah claims!

[1.](#) Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 325–326

- [2.](#) 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. 4, p. 1870, # 2404 (30)
- [3.](#) Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 6, p. 369, # 27126
- [4.](#) Ibid
- [5.](#) Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ja'far al-Idrisi al-Kattani, Nazam al-Mutanathir min al-Hadith al-Mutawatir (Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-Salafiyah; 2nd edition), p. 195, # 233
- [6.](#) Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 326-328
- [7.](#) Qur'an 7:142
- [8.](#) Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 328-329
- [9.](#) Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (Dar al-Sami'i li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi') [annotator: Dr. Basim b. Faysal al-Jawabirah], vol. 1, pp. 799-800, # 1222
- [10.](#) Ibid
- [11.](#) Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188
- [12.](#) Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Irwa al-Ghalil fi Takhrij Ahadith Manar al-Sabil (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1405 H), vol. 5, p. 11, # 1188
- [13.](#) Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 170, # 1463
- [14.](#) Ibid, vol. 6, p. 438, # 27507
- [15.](#) Ibid
- [16.](#) 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. 143, # 4652
- [17.](#) Ibid
- [18.](#) Ibid

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