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Home > On The Khilafah Of 'Ali Over Abu Bakr > 3) Hadith Al-Wilayah, Al-Arnaut's Rescue Attempts

3) Hadith Al-Wilayah, Al-Arnaut's Rescue Attempts

Shaykh al-Arnaut is a hard-line follower of his "Shaykh al-Islam" Ibn Taymiyyah. Seeing the latter's helplessness on *Hadith al-Wilayah*, he decides to come to his rescue. Although he falls short of calling the *hadith* "a lie" like Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H), Shaykh al-Arnaut nonetheless makes frantic but fragile efforts to cast a shadow of doubt over its head.

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H), in his Sahih, records the hadith:

Verily, 'Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali, and he is the wali of every believer after me. 1

The riwayah is through this chain:

Abu Ya'la – al-Hasan b. 'Umar b. Shaqiq – **Ja'far b. Sulayman – Yazid al-Rishk** – **Mutarrif b. 'Abd Allah b. Shikhir** – 'Imran b. Hasin.2

Shaykh al-Arnaut says about the hadith:

إسناده قوى

Its chain is strong.3

This indicates the reliability of all the narrators. 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) confirms this when he

says about the very same report, with the same chain:

صحيح

Sahih4

The hadith is also recorded in Musnad Ahmad with this chain:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق وعفان المعنى وهذا حديث عبد الرزاق قالا ثنا جعفر بن سليمان قال حدثني يزيد الرشك عن مطرف بن عبد الله عن عمران بن حصين قال ... رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم دعوا عليا دعوا عليا ان عليا منى وأنا منه وهو ولى كل مؤمن بعدي

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Abd al-Razzaq and 'Affan al-Ma'ni, and this is the *hadith* of 'Abd al-Razzaq – Ja'far b. Sulayman – Yazid al-Rishk – Mutarrif b. 'Abd Allah – 'Imran b. Hasin:

.... The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: ".... Leave 'Ali alone! Leave 'Ali alone! Verily, 'Ali is from me and I am from 'Ali and he is the *wali* of every believer after me."5

Al-Arnaut already testifies to the reliability of Ja'far, Yazid and Mutarrif above. So, we are left with only 'Abd Allah, son of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal; and both of them are highly authoritative *hadith* scientists and compilers in the eyes of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Like his father, Ahmad b. Hanbal, 'Abd Allah needs no introduction and his trustworthiness is absolutely beyond question. 'Abd al-Razzaq too is like that. His *Musannaf* is a prominent *hadith* source among Sunni *'ulama*, and he is a major narrator in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. So, ordinarily, Shaykh al-Arnaut should have absolutely no problem with the *sanad*. However, he does:

إسناده ضعيف

Its chain is *dha'if* (weak).6

He gives no excuse at all, apparently because there is none! Or, is it that he has problem with 'Abd Allah, his father Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H) or 'Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H)? Elsewhere in the same *Musnad*, this is how al-Arnaut comments about another chain of theirs:

....حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبى ثنا عبد الرزاق قال ثنا سفيان عن الأعمش عن أبى وائل عن أم سلمة

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Abd al-Razzaq – Sufyan – al-A'mash – Abu Wail – Umm Salamah....

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs (i.e. al-Bukhari and Muslim).7

So, even Shaykh al-Arnaut is well-aware that the chain of *Hadith al-Wilayah* in *Musnad Ahmad* is reliable. Yet, he does what he does!

Or, wait a minute! Is there not a break in the chain between 'Abd al-Razzaq and Ja'far? It is one thing for all the narrators of a chain to be trustworthy and truthful. It is another for it to be well-connected, such that each narrator transmits from the one he really met. If there is a break in the chain, then it is indeed weak. Shaykh al-Arnaut has authenticated the transmission from 'Abd Allah – Ahmad b. Hanbal – 'Abd al-Razzaq. He has equally authenticated the transmission from Ja'far – Yazid – Mutarrif. As such, there is only the question of the link between 'Abd al-Razzaq and Ja'far.

In the *riwayah* of *Hadith al–Wilayah* in *Musnad Ahmad* above, two people have narrated from Ja'far: 'Abd al–Razzaq and 'Affan al–Ma'ni. If only one of them is reliable and is fully connected to Ja'far, then the entire *sanad* is impeccable. But, look at this chain and al–Arnaut's comment on it:

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Affan – Ja'far b. Sulayman – Thabit – Anas b. Malik

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of (Imam) Muslim, its narrators are trustworthy.8

Similarly, Shaykh al-Arnaut says about another chain:

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – '**Abd al-Razzaq** – **Ja'far b. Sulayman** – Thabit al-Banani – Anas b. Malik

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of (Imam) Muslim, its narrators are trustworthy.9

Obviously, two trustworthy narrators have narrated *Hadith al–Wilayah* from Ja'far b. Sulayman. Moreover, all its narrators are trustworthy, and the *sanad* is fully–connected. Therefore, it is a doubly *sahih* chain without any doubt, even by the standards of Shaykh al–Arnaut! Yet, he knowingly grades the *sanad* as *dha'if* without any justification! However, Allah has made him admit the truth about the noble *hadith* in his *tahqiq* of *Sahih Ibn Hibban*. So, his own words will continue to refute him till the Hour!

The second version of *Hadith al–Wilayah*, narrated by Buraydah, is equally documented in *Musnad Ahmad*:

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Ibn Numayr – **Ajlah al-Kindi** – 'Abd Allah b. Buraydah – his father Buraydah, who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Do not attack 'Ali, for he is from me and I am from him, and he is your *wali* after me; and he is from me and I am from him, and he is your *wali* after me. 10

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

Its chain is dha'if (weak) with this context due to Ajlah al-Kindi. 11

Really?! But, this is what this same al-Arnaut says about the same Ajlah in the same book:

Al-Ajlah – and he is Ibn 'Abd Allah **al-Kindi** – al-Bukhari has narrated from him in *al-Adab*, and the authors of the *Sunan* too (i.e. al-Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and al-Nasai). **And he is** *saduq* (very truthful). 12

How then can anyone grade his hadith as dha'if? Interestingly, elsewhere, al-Arnaut's verdict changes:

صحيح لغيره وهذا إسناد حسن

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Mus'ab b. Salam – my father – **al-Ajlah** – al-Zayal b. Harmalah – Jabir b. 'Abd Allah....

Sahih li ghayrihi, and this chain is hasan. 13

Therefore, the version of *Hadith al–Wilayah* narrated by Ajlah is actually *hasan* by the standards of Shaykh al–Arnaut.

- 1. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad b. Hibban b. Mu'adh b. Ma'bad al-Tamimi al-Darimi al-Busti, Sahih Ibn Hibban bi Tartib Ibn Balban (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 15, pp. 373–374, # 6929
- 2. Ibid, vol. 15, p. 373, # 6929
- 3. Ibid, vo. 15, p. 374, # 6929
- 4. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Ta'liqat al-Hisan 'ala Sahih Ibn Hibban (Jeddah: Dar Ba Wazir li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1424 H), vol. 10, p. 67, # 6890
- 5. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 437, # 19942
- 6. Ibid
- 7. Ibid, vol. 6, p. 322, # 26782
- 8. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 267, # 13847
- 9. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 164, # 12698
- 10. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 356, # 23062
- **11.** Ibid
- 12. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 305, # 14313
- 13. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 310, # 14372

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