

5. Hitting The Final Nail: The Wisayah And The Raj'ah

The aim of those who ceaselessly peddle the Ibn Saba fables is primarily to prove:

1. that he was the origin of the claim that Amir al-Muminin 'Ali, '*alaihi al-salam*, was declared *khalifah* by his Prophet, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*; and
2. that he founded the claim that *khalifah* belongs exclusively to 'Ali and the offspring of Muhammad; and
3. that he was the first to express belief in *al-raj'ah*.

However, even in the authentic Sunni *ahadith*, evidence can be produced to establish that belief in the *khalifah* of the Ahl al-Bayt, '*alaihim al-salam*, as well as in *al-raj'ah*, was part of the *original* teachings of Islam. For instance, Imam 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.**”¹

Dr. al-Jawabirah says:

اسناده حسن. رجاله رجال الشيخين غير أبي بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج، قال الحافظ: صدوق ربما أخطأ. وله شواهد

Its chain is *hasan*. Its narrators are narrators of the two Shaykhs, except Abu Balj, and his name is Yahya b. Sulaym b. Balj. Al-Hafiz said: “*Saduq* (very truthful), *maybe* he made mistakes.” **There are witnesses for it (i.e. the *hadith*).**[2](#)

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) also comments on the *sanad*:

إسناده حسن. ورجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين غير أبي بلج واسمه يحيى بن سليم بن بلج قال الحافظ: صدوق ربما أخطأ.

Its chain is *hasan*. Its narrators are trustworthy, and are narrators of the two Shaykhs (i.e. al-Bukhari and Muslim) except Abu Balj. His name is Yahya b. Sulaym b. Balj. Al-Hafiz said: “*Saduq* (very truthful), *maybe* he made mistakes.”[3](#)

Assessing the same chain, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a ***sahih* chain**.[4](#)

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

صحيح

Sahih.[5](#)

‘Allamah Ahmad Shakir (d. 1377 H) too has the same verdict on same *isnad*:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is ***sahih***.[6](#)

And Imam al-Busiri (d. 840 H) holds the same view, concerning the chain:

سند صحيح

A ***sahih* chain**.[7](#)

This *hadith* is explicit, straightforward, and authentic[8](#). It leaves no room for doubt or manipulation. It

absolutely establishes that Imam ‘Ali was indeed the designated *khalifah* of Muhammad, the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds.

‘Allamah al–Albani has a second *hadith* for our research:

إني تارك فيكم خليفتين: كتاب الله حبل ممدود ما بين السماء والأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

I am leaving behind over you two *khalifahs*: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth – **and my offspring, my Ahl al–Bayt**. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake–Font.[9](#)

Then, the ‘Allamah comments:

صحيح

[Sahih10](#)

On the same page, al–Albani copies another similar *hadith*:

إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي أحدهما أعظم من الآخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي ولن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما

I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it you will never go astray after me, one of them both is greater than the other: **the Book of Allah** – a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth – **and my offspring, my Ahl al–Bayt**. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake–Font. Therefore, watch carefully how you treat them in my absence.[11](#)

Again, ‘Allamah al–Albani says:

صحيح

[Sahih12](#)

This *hadith* too grants and limits the *khilafah* to ‘Ali and his offspring through Sayyidah Fatimah[13](#).

We therefore ask our brothers from the Ahl al–Sunnah, especially the Salafiyah: are you going to play your “Ibn Saba” card against the Messenger of Allah too?!

With regards to the second issue, there is need for some little explanations in order to make the matter clearer. The word *al-raj'ah* literally means “the return”. Any “return” to anything is a *raj'ah*. For instance, an ex-Muslim who “returns” to Islam has done a *raj'ah* back to the true faith. In the same manner, a traveller who “returns” home has done a *raj'ah*. Technically, however, *al-raj'ah* is the “return” of *any* dead person into this world *through resurrection*. It is therefore completely different from other concepts such as rebirth or reincarnation. It is the same body, with the same soul, that returns to this world from *Barzakh* by Allah’s Command. At a more specific level, *al-raj'ah* – in Shi’i theology – is the “return” after death of certain people to this earth – through resurrection – during the “End Times” period. Another word for this, in Shi’i terminology, is *al-karrah*¹⁴.

There is, without doubt, a general rule set in the Book of Allah:

حتى إذا جاء أحدهم الموت قال رب ارجعون لعلي أعمل صالحا فيما تركت كلا إنها كلمة هو قائلها ومن ورائهم برزخ إلى يوم يبعثون

Until when death comes to one of them, he says, “My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!” No! It is but a word that he speaks, **and behind them is *Barzakh* until the Day when they will be resurrected.**¹⁵

So, anyone who dies is prevented from ever returning to this world. He is rather locked behind the *Barzakh* till *al-Qiyamah*. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) states under the above verse:

وقال مجاهد : البرزخ : الحاجز ما بين الدنيا والآخرة. وقال محمد بن كعب : البرزخ : ما بين الدنيا والآخرة. ليسوا مع أهل الدنيا يأكلون ويشربون ، ولا مع أهل الآخرة يجازون بأعمالهم. وقال أبو صخر : البرزخ : المقابر ، لا هم في الدنيا ، ولا هم في الآخرة ، فهم مقيمون إلى يوم يبعثون

Mujahid said: “The *Barzakh* is a barrier between this world and the Hereafter.” Muhammad b. Ka’b said, “The *Barzakh* is what is between this world and the Hereafter. They are not from the people of this world who eat and drink, and are not with the people of the Hereafter who are rewarded according to their deeds.” Abu Dhakhr said, “**The *Barzakh* refers to the graves. They are not in this world and they ARE NOT in the Hereafter. They will remain there till the Day of Resurrection.**”¹⁶

However, Allah has provided some exceptions to this general rule – and those are the instances of *al-raj'ah*. Examples of them are given in His Book. For instance, Allah states:

وإذ قلتم يا موسى لن نؤمن لك حتى نرى الله جهرة فأخذتكم الساعة وأنتم تنتظرون ثم بعثناكم من بعد موتكم لعلكم تشكرون

And when you said, “O Musa! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah plainly.” But you were seized with a thunderbolt while you were looking. **Then, We resurrected you after your death**, so that you may be grateful. [17](#)

And:

ألم تر إلى الذين خرجوا من ديارهم وهم ألوف حذر الموت فقال لهم الله موتوا ثم أحياهم

Did you not see those who went forth from their homes in thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, “Die”. **Then, He resurrected them.** [18](#)

And:

أو كالذي مر على قرية وهي خاوية على عروشها قال أنى يحيي هذه الله بعد موتها فأماته الله مائة عام ثم بعثه

Or like he who passed by a town and it had tumbled over its roofs. He said: “Oh! How will Allah ever bring it to life after its death?” **So, Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, and then resurrected him.** [19](#)

The Qur’an also quotes Allah as having said to ‘Isa, one of the Israilite prophets:

وإذ تخرج الموتى بإذني

And when **you resurrect the dead** with My Permission [20](#)

Prophet ‘Isa himself said this to his people, as reported by the Book of Allah:

وأحيي الموتى بإذن الله

And **I resurrect the dead** by Allah’s Permission. [21](#)

These are all instances of people “returning” from *Barzakh* into this world through resurrection. They are all instances of *al-raj’ah*.

We see from these verses that *al-karrah* occurred in the previous *Ummahs* before ours, especially among the Israilites. There is significance in this fact for our research. This is on account of this *hadith*, documented by Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H):

حدثنا محمود بن غيلان حدثنا أبو داود الحفري عن سفیان الثوري عن عبد الرحمن بن زياد الأفريقي عن عبد الله بن يزيد عن عبد الله بن عمرو قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ليأتين على أمتي ما أتى على بني إسرائيل حذو النعل بالنعل حتى إن كان منهم من أتى أمه علانية لكان في أمتي من يصنع ذلك وإن بني إسرائيل تفرقت على ثنتين وسبعين ملة وتفرق أمتي على ثلاث وسبعين ملة كلهم في النار إلا ملة واحدة قالوا ومن هي يا رسول الله قال ما أنا عليه وأصحابي

Mahmud b. Ghilan – Abu Dawud al-Hafari – Sufyan al-Thawri – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad al-Afriqi – ‘Abd Allah b. Yazid – ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “**Verily, everything that occurred to the offspring of Israil will occur to my *Ummah* in identical manners, such that if any of them had sexual intercourse with his mother publicly, there will certainly be in my *Ummah* someone who will do that.** Verily, the offspring of Israil divided into seventy-two religions; and my *Ummah* will divide into seventy-three religions, all of them will be in the Fire except one religion.” They said, “Who are those, O Messenger?” He replied, “That which I and my Sahabah follow.”[22](#)

‘Allamah al-Albani comments:

حسن

Hasan[23](#)

Of course, *al-raj’ah* occurred to the offspring of Israil too. Therefore, it *certainly* is part of our *Ummah* as well.

The Qur’an too proclaims:

سنة الله في الذين خلوا من قبل ولن تجد لسنة الله تبديلا

That was the *Sunnah* of Allah in the case of those passed away of old, **and you will not find any change in the *Sunnah* of Allah.**[24](#)

And:

سنة الله التي قد خلت من قبل ولن تجد لسنة الله تبديلا

That has been the *Sunnah* of Allah already with those who passed away before. **And you will not find any change in the *Sunnah* of Allah.**[25](#)

Al-Raj'ah was without doubt part of the *Sunnah* of our Lord with the previous *Ummahs*. Obviously, it is compulsorily part of His *Sunnah* with our *Ummah* too. There is never any change in the *Sunnah* of Allah with the various *Ummahs*.

1. 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
2. Ibid
3. 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
4. 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
5. Ibid
6. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir], vol. 1, p. 331, # 3062
7. Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Isma'il al-Busiri, *Itihaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-'Ashara* (Riyadh: Dar al-Watan; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 7, p. 184, # 6630
8. This author has published an entire book entitled *On the Khilafah of 'Ali over Abu Bakr: A Dictionary of Sahih Sunni Ahadith* in which he has explored the above hadith and several similar others in great detail.
9. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, *Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu* (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, p. 482, # 2457
10. Ibid
11. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 482, # 2458
12. Ibid
13. This author has a book on the two hadiths, entitled *Hadith al-Thaqalayn: The Deposed Will of the Last Prophet to Humanity*. In it, he has done an extensive research on the authenticity, meaning and history of the hadiths.
14. The word *al-karrah* has been used in the Book of Allah to mean the return of a dead person to life on the earth through resurrection after death. See Qur'an 2: 167, 26: 102 and 39: 58
15. Qur'an 23: 99-100
16. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurshi al-Dimashqi, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 5, p. 494-495
17. Qur'an 2: 55-56
18. Qur'an 2: 243
19. Qur'an 2: 259
20. Qur'an 5: 110
21. Qur'an 3: 49
22. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 26, # 2641. This authentic hadith establishes some fundamental principles. First, it shows that the similar occurrences between our Ummah and that of the Israilites may not be 100% identical. What matters most is the basic fact common to both examples as well as the substantial similarity between them. For instance, the offspring of Israil divided into 72 religions. However, our own Ummah will divide into 73 religions. 73, of course, is not the same as 72, even though they are close together. Yet, the basic fact remains: the Israilites divided, and we too are divided. Another crucial principle from this hadith is that anything that a Sahabi said or did – which was never said or done by the Prophet – is misguidance, from one of the 72 heretical religions. The Messenger was careful to emphasise that the truth is not what his Sahabah alone were upon, but what he and his Sahabah followed together.
23. Ibid
24. Qur'an 33: 62
25. Qur'an 48: 23

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