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7) Hadith Al-Tawliyah

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

قوله أنت وليي في كل مؤمن بعدي فإن هذا موضوع باتفاق أهل المعرفة بالحديث

His statement, "You are my *wali* over every believer after me". **Verily, this is a fabrication** (*mawdu'*), by the consensus of the *hadith* scholars.1

This is a very big claim. It means that every single *hadith* scholar, from the start of Prophet Muhammad's mission, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, till the days of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah – without any exception – explicitly declared this *Hadith al-Tawliyah* to be mawdu'. At a specific level, our dear Shaykh claims that Malik b. Anas (d. 179 H), Ibn al-Mubarak (d. 181 H), al-Shafi'i (d. 204 H), al-Tayalisi (d. 204 H), 'Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani (d. 211 H), al-Humaydi (d. 219 H), Ibn Ja'd (d. 230 H), Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 H), Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H), Ibn Rahwayh (d. 238 H), Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241 H), al-Darimi (d. 255 H), al-Bukhari (d. 256 H), Muslim (d. 261 H), Ibn Majah (d. 273 H), Abu Dawud (d. 275 H), Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 H), al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H), Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H), al-Nasai (d. 303 H), Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H), al-'Aqili (d. 322 H), Ibn Abi Hatim (d. 327 H), Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H), al-Tabarani (d. 360 H), al-Darqutni (d. 385 H), Ibn Shahin (d. 385 H), al-Hakim (d. 403 H), al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 H), al-Baghdadi (d. 463 H), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H), al-Khawarazmi (d. 568 H), Ibn Asakir (571 H), al-Nawawi (d. 676 H), among others – each of them has an express statement about the hadith in which he grades it as mawdu'. However, the reverse is actually the truth! No scholar before Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) ever classed the hadith to be mawdu' or even dha'if. By contrast, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) actually calls its chain sahih2! What drove Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah into such reckless fallacy must have been something very huge!

Imam Ahmad has documented *Hadith al-Tawliyah* in his *Musnad*:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن حماد ثنا أبو عوانة ثنا أبو بلج ثنا عمرو بن ميمونقال بن عباس وخرج بالناس في غزوة تبوك قال فقال له على أخرج معك قال فقال له نبي الله لا فبكى على فقال له أما ترضى أن تكون منى بمنزلة هارون من موسى الا أنك لست بنبي انه لا ينبغي أن أذهب الا وأنت خليفتي قال وقال له رسول الله أنت وليى في كل مؤمن بعدي

'Abd Allah – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu 'Awanah – Abu Balj – 'Amr b. Maymun Ibn 'Abbas said:

.... He (the Messenger of Allah) went out for the battle of Tabuk. So, 'Ali said to him, "Let me go out with you." Therefore, the Prophet of Allah, 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 you are not a prophet? Verily, it is not right that I depart except with you as my *khalifah*. You are my *wali* over every believer after me."3

'Allamah Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (d. 1377 H) declares:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.4

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1412 H) also states:

وأخرجه أحمد 1/330: ثنا يحيى بن حماد به مطولا وفيه: قال: وخرج صلى الله عليه وسلم بالناس في غزوة تبوك قال: فقال علي أخرج معك قال: فقال له نبي الله: "لا". فبكى علي قال له: " أما ترضى أن تكون منى بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست بنبي انه لا ينبغي أن أذهب الا وأنت خليفتي". قال: وقال له رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "أنت وليي في كل مؤمن بعدي". الحديث وأخرجه الحاكم بطوله 3/132-134 من طريق أحمد ثم قال: صحيح "أنت وليي في كل مؤمن بعدي".

Ahmad (1/330) recorded it from Yahya b. Hamad in detail, and part of it is:

He (the Messenger of Allah) went out with the people for the battle of Tabuk. So, 'Ali said to him, "Let me go out with you." Therefore, the Prophet of Allah, 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 you are not a prophet? Verily, it is not right that I depart except with you as my *khalifah*. You are my *wali* over every believer after me." ... the *hadith*.

Al-Hakim recorded it in full (3/132–134) through the route of Ahmad, and said, "Its chain is *sahih*" and al-Dhahabi concurred with him.5

The 'Allamah himself adds concerning its chain:

إسناده حسن.

Its chain is hasan.6

Commenting on this same chain of Hadith al-Tawliyah, Dr. Al-Jawabirah says:

اسناده حسن.

Its chain is hasan.7

Imam al-Busiri too grades the chain as follows:

سند صحيح

A sahih chain.8

So, one wonders: why is Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah so panicky about this *hadith*? There must be a reason he is so desperate about it, to the extent of attributing patent fallacies to all the Sunni *muhadithun* – perhaps dozens or hundreds of them – before his time in order to bring it down. What is the scary secret?

It is apparent that *wali* in *Hadith al–Tawliyah* cannot possibly mean "friend", "helper" or "supporter" in any logical sense. 'Ali, 'alaihi al–salam, was the friend, helper and supporter of the believers during the lifetime of the Prophet and after his death, *in his presence* and in his absence. Besides, changing *wali* in the *hadith* to "friend", or "helper" or supporter" would only produce incoherent and insensible statements:

"You are my friend over every believer after me."

"You are my lover over every believer after me."

"You are my supporter over every believer after me."

"You are my friend over every believer after me."

The Messenger of Allah was absolutely above making such kinds of statements. Moreover, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah himself cautions:

If he had intended friendship, he did not need to say "after me".9

But, can we interpret "my wali" in the hadith to mean "my ruler"? This depends on the exact intended meaning. For instance, Allah says about His Prophet:

Say: "O mankind! Verily, I am the Messenger of Allah to you all." 10

He was the Messenger appointed by Allah. The Qur'an also states about him:

Or, do you want to ask your Messenger as Musa was asked before?11

Does this mean that the people appointed the Messenger? Of course, they never did! Rather, he was appointed by Allah – hence, the Messenger of Allah – and sent to the people – and thereby their Messenger. This is a similar verse:

Or is it that they did not recognize their Messenger so they deny him?12

In the light of the above, the following conclusions can be drawn about the word "messenger":

- 1. "The Messenger of Allah" means the messenger appointed by Allah.
- 2. "Your Messenger" means the Messenger sent to you.
- 3. "Their Messenger" means the Messenger sent to them.

In the same manner:

- 1. The *wali* of the Prophet over his *Ummah* is the *wali* appointed by him over them.
- 2. The wali of the Ummah is the wali appointed over them or by them.

As such, the *hadith* "You are my *wali* over every believer after me" may mean "You are the *wali* I have appointed over every believer after me". This is perfectly in line with *Hadith al-Wilayah* too.

Another probable meaning of "my *wali*" in the *hadith* is "my heir". One of the rarer meanings of *wali* is "heir". Prophet Zakariyah, 'alaihi al-salam, prayed to Allah, while he was still barren, with these words:

"So give me from Yourself **a wali**, **who shall inherit me** and inherit the family of Ya'qub. And make him, my Lord, one with whom You are well-pleased". (Allah said): "O Zakariyah! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, his name will be **Yahya**."13

Zakariyah was a prophet. His *wali*, who was his son Yahya, *'alaihi al-salam*, inherited his prophethood and knowledge, and thereby became the next master of his father's *Ummah* after his death. Professor Ibn Yasin also states in his *tafsir*:

'Abd al-Razzaq records with his sahih chain from Qatadah, that al-Hasan said concerning the verse {who shall inherit me and inherit the family of Ya'qub}: [who shall inherit] his prophethood and knowledge. 14

Hadith al-Tawliyah therefore makes 'Ali the wali – the heir – of the Messenger of Allah. Meanwhile, this inheritance was declared to be "over every believer" after the Prophet. Apparently, it concerned only matters and affairs between the Messenger and his *Ummah*. These, without doubt, included his powers, rights responsibilities, obligations, and duties *over* them. All of these were inherited by Amir al-Muminin after him.

A shahid that has been documented by Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) gives this same impression as well:

ثنا الحسين بن علي وأحمد بن عثمان قالا: ثنا محمد بن خالد بن عثمة، حدثنا موسى بن يعقوب، حدثني المهاجر بن مسمار، عن عائشة بنت سعد، عن أبيها قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول يوم الجحفة وأخذ بيد علي، فخطب فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ثم قال: أيها الناس إني وليكم. قالوا: صدقت يا رسول الله، وأخذ بيد علي رضي . الله عنه فرفعها فقال: هذا وليى، والمؤدي عنى

Husayn b. 'Ali and Ahmad b. 'Uthman – Muhammad b. Khalid b. 'Athmah – Musa b. Ya'qub – al-Muhajir b. Mismar – 'Aishah bint Sa'd – her father:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying on the Day of al-Juhfah while holding the hand of 'Ali, and he delivered a sermon, and thanked Allah and praised Him, and then said: "O mankind! I am your wali". They replied, "You have said the truth, O Messenger of Allah." Then he held the hand of 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, and raised it up, and said, "This is my wali, and the

one to discharge on my behalf."15

'Allamah al-Albani says:

It is sahih because it has shawahid. 16

'Ali was the *wali* appointed by the Messenger of Allah over his *Ummah*, and the one to discharge on his behalf among them after him. It is further noteworthy that the responsibility of discharge granted to Amir al–Muminin was unqualified. Therefore, *anything* that was the responsibility of the Prophet among his *Ummah*, no one else has the right to do it *for him* except 'Ali. As such, after the death of the Messenger of Allah, all his obligations, responsibilities and liabilities – with regards to the *Ummah* – naturally passed onto 'Ali by inheritance.

'Allamah al-Albani has equally copied a further shahid:

'Ali will repay my debts. 17

And he gives this verdict about it:

حسن

Hasan. 18

In other words, 'Ali – being the heir – inherited the liabilities of the Messenger of Allah, including his debts to members of his *Ummah*. So, the liabilities became his personal responsibilities after the death of his Prophet.

But, some unthinkable things happened in Islamic history. Although the Prophet had declared 'Ali to be his *wali* over his whole *Ummah* after him, the one to discharge on his behalf and the one to repay his debts, some other people precluded Amir al–Muminin and arrogated these ranks to themselves! With support from their kinsmen and associates, they even proceeded to militarily install themselves in 'Ali places. For instance, Imam al–Bukhari (d. 256 H) records that 'Umar b. al–Khattab said:

توفى الله نبيه صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم توفى الله أبا بكر فقلت أنا ولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وأبى بكر

Allah caused His Prophet, peace be upon him, to die. So, Abu Bakr said, "I am the *wali* of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him".... Allah (also) caused Abu Bakr to die. So, I (too) said, "I am the *wali* of the Messenger of Allah and Abu Bakr." 19

Elsewhere, al-Bukhari also records:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى أخبرنا هشام عن ابن جريج قال أخبرني عمرو بن دينار عن محمد بن علي عن جابر بن عبد الله رضي الله عنهم قال: لما مات النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم جاء أبا بكر مال من قبل العلاء بن الحضرمي فقال أبو بكر من كان له على النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم دين أو كانت له قبله عدة فليأتنا . قال جابر وعدني رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أن يعطيني هكذا وهكذا وهكذا فبسط يديه ثلاث مرات قال جابر فعد في يدي خمسمائة ثم خمسمائة ثم خمسمائة ثم خمسمائة ثم

Narrated Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, died, Abu Bakr received some property from al-'Ala b. al-Hadhrami. So, Abu Bakr said, "Whoever has a debt claim against the Prophet, peace be upon him, or was promised something by him, should come to us." I said, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, promised me that he would give me this much, and this much, and this much". And I spread my hands three times. So, he (Abu Bakr) counted for me and handed me five-hundred, then five hundred and then five-hundred.20

What?! Abu Bakr was the *wali* of the Prophet over every believer after him? Abu Bakr was the one to repay the Messenger's debts? What in the world was happening exactly! Wonders really never end! Besides, why was Abu Bakr repaying the Prophet's *personal* debts and promises with *state* funds? Would the Messenger have misappropriated the Muslim treasury in such a manner?

Imam 'Ali was apparently terribly disappointed by this turn of events. Therefore, despite his extraordinary patience, his shock made him to voice out angrily. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) quotes 'Umar as having said the following words to both 'Ali and 'Abbas:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وولى أبا بكر فرأيتماني كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, Abu Bakr said: "I am the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.".... So both of you ('Ali and 'Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, treacherous and dishonest. And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. Abu Bakr died and I became the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the wali of Abu Bakr. So both of you thought me to be

a liar, sinful, treacherous and dishonest.21

Due to Abu Bakr's surprising claim that he was the *wali* of the Messenger of Allah – among others – 'Ali declared him "a liar, sinful, treacherous and dishonest". When 'Umar made the same claim later, 'Ali repeated those same words for him too. This is what Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah fears; the truth of 'Ali's accusations against them both. If his words about them were correct, then Sunni Islam crashes headlong! It cannot stand without the alleged saintly status of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Moreover, the fallacy of some "ahadith" circulated to highlight their "merits" becomes exposed as well. The cost is simply too much. So, our dear Shaykh seeks to save his Sunni sect by desperately and recklessly denying *Hadith al-Tawliyah*. The truth, however, never dies.

- 1. 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. 5, pp. 35-36
- 2. 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
- 3. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Dar al-Hadith; 1st edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Ahmad Muhammad Shakir], vol. 1, p. 330, # 3062
- 4. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 331, # 3062
- 5. 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. 566, # 1189
- 6. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188
- 7. 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
- 8. 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
- 9. 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, p. 391
- 10. Qur'an 7:158
- 11. Qur'an 2:108
- 12. Qur'an 23:69
- 13. Qur'an 19:5-7
- 14. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 3, p. 332
- 15. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1410 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1189
- 16. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 566, # 1189
- 17. 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. 2, p. 754, # 4092
- **18.** Ibic
- 19. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2048, # 5043
- 20. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 953, # 2537
- 21. 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. 3, p. 1376, #1757

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