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8) Hadith Al-Wirathah, Establishing Its Authenticity

Allah informs us about two of His prophets in His Book:

وورث سليمان داوود

And Sulayman inherited Dawud. 1

In other words, it was Sulayman, 'alaihi al-salam, who inherited Dawud, 'alaihi al-salam. Explaining this verse, Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 H) states:

He, the Most High, says: Sulayman inherited **the knowledge** which Allah gave his father during his lifetime and **the kingdom** which He specially bestowed upon him above all of his people.2

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) also says:

قال الله تعالى: }وورث سليمان داود وقال يا أيها الناس علمنا منطق الطير وأوتينا من كل شئ إن هذا لهو الفضل المبين) {النمل: ١٦ (أي ورثه في النبوة والملك، وليس المراد ورثه في المال، لأنه قد كان له بنون غيره، فما كان ليمبين) المبين عبد المبين إلى النبوة والملك، وليس المراد ورثه في المال، لأنه قد كان له بنون غيره، فما كان

Allah the Most High said: {And Sulayman inherited Dawud, and he (Sulayman) said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and on us have been bestowed all things. This, verily, is an evident grace} [27:16], **that is, inheritance of prophethood and kingdom**. What was intended was not inheritance of material possessions. This is because he (Dawud) had several children apart from him

(Sulayman) and he (Sulayman) could not have been exclusively given the material possessions at their expense.3

Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has these words too:

Allah the Most High says {And Sulayman inherited Dawud}, that is: **he inherited his prophethood**, **knowledge and kingdom**. Dawud had nineteen sons. But, Sulayman was exclusively given that. If it had been inheritance of material possessions, all his children would have been equally entitled.4

There are a number of points from this verse:

- 1. Prophethood is an inheritable office.
- 2. Divine knowledge is inheritable.
- 3. Kingdom which is also called *khilafah*5 is inheritable.

Moreover, where someone, out of many possible heirs, is singled out as the only heir in any circumstance, then such inheritance could not have been about material possessions. Rather, it must have been with regards to knowledge, offices and ranks. Prophet Sulayman was *the* inheritor of his father, Prophet Dawud. As such, he became the prophet, the supreme scholar and the ruler after him. But, what about our dearest Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi*? Was he inherited by anyone? Did he name any inheritor?

Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) records a really interesting hadith in this regard:

أخبرنا الفضل بن سهل قال حدثني عفان بن مسلم قال حدثنا أبو عوانة عن عثمان بن المغيرة عن أبي صادق عن ربيعة بن ناجد أن رجلا قال لعلي يا أمير المؤمنين لم ورثت بن عمك دون عمك قال: جمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أو قال دعا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بني عبد المطلب فصنع لهم مدا من طعام قال فأكلوا حتى شبعوا وبقي الطعام كما هو كأنه لم يمس ثم دعا بغمر فشربوا حتى رووا وبقي الشراب كأنه لم يمس أو لم يشرب فقال يا بني عبد المطلب إني بعثت إليكم بخاصة وإلى الناس بعامة وقد رأيتم من هذه الآية ما قد رأيتم فأيكم يبايعني على أن يكون أخي وصاحبي ووارثي فلم يقم إليه أحد فقمت إليه وكنت أصغر القوم فقال اجلس ثم قال ثلاث مرات كل ذلك أقوم إليه فيقول اجلس حتى كان في الثالثة ضرب بيده على يدي ثم قال أنت أخي وصاحبي ووارثي مى دون عمى دون عمى دون عمى

Al-Fadhl b. Sahl - 'Affan b. Muslim - Abu 'Awanah - 'Uthman b. al-Mughirah - Abu Sadiq - Rabi'ah b. Najid:

A man said to 'Ali, "O Amir al-Muminin! Why is it you that have INHERITED your cousin (i.e. the Prophet) and not your uncle?"

He replied, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, gathered/summoned the Banu 'Abd al-Mutalib. He cooked some food for them, and they ate until they were satisfied while food was still remaining, as though they never touched it. Then he called for water, and they drank until their thirst was quenched, and the containers of the water remained as though they were never touched or drunk.

After that, he said, "O Banu 'Abd al–Mutalib! I have been sent to you specially, and to mankind generally. You have seen in this verse what you have seen. Therefore, which one of you will give me a bay'ah (oath of allegiance) to become my brother, my companion **and my inheritor**?" None stood up. So, I ('Ali) stood up, and I was the youngest of the people. So, he (the Prophet) said, "Sit down". On the third time, he hit his hand on my hand (for the bay'ah) and then said: "You are my brother, and my companion, and MY INHERITOR, and my wazir." So, through this, I have inherited my cousin, at the expense of my uncle.6

The above *hadith* has a *sahih* chain. All its narrators – without *any* exception – are *thiqah* (trustworthy), and it is well–connected. Strangely, this is what 'Allamah al–Albani (d. 1420 H) says about it:

I say: This chain is *dha'if*, **all its narrators are** *thiqah* (trustworthy), **except Rabi'ah b**. **Najid**. Al-Dhahabi said in *al-Mizan*:

"He is scarcely known, and Abu Sadiq narrated from him a *munkar* (repugnant) report, which contains: 'Ali is my brother and inheritor."

He was referring to this *hadith*. **He explicitly declared in** *al-Kashif* **that none else narrated from him other than this Abu Sadiq**. And he (al-Dhahabi) said in *al-Dhu'afa wa al-Matrukin*: "There is *jihalah* in him (he is not known)".7

So, the only narrator that the 'Allamah has problem with is Rabi'ah b. Najid, and his only evidence against him is Imam al-Dhahabi's (d. 748 H) overall verdict that he is "scarcely known". The 'Allamah places everything on the fact that only Abu Sadiq has narrated from him. It is also noteworthy that al-Dhahabi has called the above *hadith* "repugnant" without giving any proof or explanation.

But, does the fact that a narrator is "scarcely known" – where only a single person has transmitted from him – really affect his *ahadith*? Perhaps, the best way to answer that is to examine how the '*ulama* of the Ahl al–Sunnah have treated other similar cases.

A very clear example is Hasin b. Muhammad al-Ansari. Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about him:

Hasin b. Muhammad al-Ansari al-Salimi al-Madani: **He is relied upon as a** *hujjah* **in both** *Sahihs* (i.e. *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*). **He is scarcely known**. I say: Ibn Hibban has included him in *al-Thiqat*.8

He also adds:

Hasin b. Muhammad al-Ansari al-Salimi al-Madani: *Saduq al-hadith* (very truthful in *ahadith*), from the second (*tabaqat*). **None narrated from him except al-Zuhri**.9

He is exactly like Rabi'ah b. Najid! Yet, he is relied upon as a *hujjah* in both *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*, and is accepted as *saduq* (very truthful)!

Another case is that of Zayd b. Rabah. He too is like Rabi'ah; only one person as transmitted from him. Imam al-Dhahabi confirms:

Zayd b. Rabah, a resident of Madinah: He heard from Abu 'Abd Allah al-Aghrah. I could not find anyone who has transmitted from him except Malik. 10

Nonetheless, he is graded *thiqah* (trustworthy) by al-Hafiz:

Zayd b. Rabah al-Madani: Thiqah (trustworthy).11

In very simple words, whether or not only a single individual has transmitted from a narrator does not affect his standing as long as there is proof that he is trustworthy or very truthful. If there is no evidence for or against his reliability, then such a fact becomes relevant and makes him *majhul* (unknown). In the case of Rabi'ah, it is well–known that only his brother, Abu Sadiq, transmitted from him. Moreover, there is no evidence at all against his reliability. But, is there evidence to prove his trustworthiness or truthfulness?

Rabi'ah's surname is spelt in two ways in the books of *ahadith* and *rijal*: Najid (ناجد) and Najidh (ناجذ). Meanwhile, the *'ulama* have used the two words to refer to the same individual. As such, Imam al-'ljli (d. 261 H) says about Rabi'ah:

Rabi'ah b. Najidh: He was a Kufan, a Tabi'i, thiqah (trustworthy) 12

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) has also included him in his book of *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrators:

Rabi'ah b. Najidh al-Asadi al-Azdi al-Kufi: He narrated from 'Ali, and Abu Sadiq narrated from him. 13

Al-Hafiz confirms both of these in his *al-Tahdhib*:

Rabi'ah b. **Najid** al-Azdi, also called al-Asadi al-Kufi. He narrated from 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ud and 'Ubadah b. al-Samit, may Allah be pleased with them. Abu Sadiq al-Azdi narrated from him, and he is said to have been his brother. **Ibn Hibban mentioned him in** *al-Thiqat* ... and al-'Ijli said: A Kufan, Tabi'i, *thiqah* (trustworthy). 14

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also considers the chain of Rabi'ah to be *sahih*, thereby accepting him as *thiqah*:

Abu Qutaybah Salim b. al-Fadhl al-Adami –Muhammad b. 'Uthman b. Abi Shaybah – Abu Bakr – 'Ali b. Thabit al-Dihan – al-Hakam b. 'Abd al-Malik – al-Harith b. Hasirah – Abu Sadiq – **Rabi'ah b. Najid** – 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him.... **The chain is** *sahih*. 15

In his *al-Tagrib*, al-Hafiz personally grades him *thigah* (trustworthy) too:

Rabi'ah b. Najid al-Azdi al-Kufi: It is said that he was the brother of the narrator, Abu Sadiq. **He was** *thiqah* (trustworthy). 16

Intriguingly, 'Allamah al-Albani himself concurs to a good extent:

عن عبد الله بن سالم المفلوج حدثنا عبيدة بن الأسود عن القاسم بن الوليد عن أبي صادق عن ربيعة بن ناجذ عن مرفوعا

.قلت: وهذا إسناد جيد، رجاله ثقات غير ربيعة هذا فقد وثقه الحافظ فقط تبعا لابن حبان

'Abd Allah b. Salim al-Mafluj - 'Ubaydah b. al-Aswad - al-Qasim b. al-Walid - Abu Sadiq - **Rabi'ah b. Najidh** - 'Ubadah b. al-Samit, in a *marfu'* manner....

I say: **This chain is good**. Its narrators are trustworthy, except this Rabi'ah, for only al-Hafiz (Ibn Hajar) has declared him *thiqah*, copying Ibn Hibban. 17

The 'Allamah has reservations about the fact that –according to him – only al–Hafiz al–'Asqalani, imitating Ibn Hibban, has declared Rabi'ah to be *thiqah* (trustworthy). Nonetheless, that does not stop him from authenticating the chain. Needless to say, however, the 'Allamah's position contains an error: al–'Ijli, Ibn Hibban and al–Hakim actually declared him *thiqah* before al–Hafiz. If the latter copied anyone, it was at least both al–'Ijli and Ibn Hibban.

The bottom-line is that this hadith has a sahih chain:

You are my brother, and my companion, and MY INHERITOR, and my wazir.

The objections of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah and 'Allamah al-Albani to it are without basis.

We know from this authentic *hadith* that Amir al–Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib, 'alaihi al–salam, was the chosen inheritor of the Prophet's knowledge, power and divine *khilafah* after him. In fact, if prophethood had not ended with Muhammad, 'Ali would have inherited it too.

- 1. Qur'an 27:16
- 2. Abu Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur'an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-'Attar], vol. 19, p. 172
- 3. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 2, p. 22
- 4. Abu al-Faraj Jamal al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Jawzi al-Qurshi al-Baghdadi, Zad al-Masir fi 'Ilm al-Tafsir (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Abd Allah], vol. 6, p. 60

- 5. See Qur'an 38:26
- 6. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasai, Sunan al-Kubra (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411
- H) [annotator: Dr. 'Abd al-Ghaffar Sulayman al-Bandari and Sayyid Kasrawi Hasan], vol. 5, p. 125, # 8451
- 7. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdhu'ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 12, p. 646, # 5793
- 8. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 7, p. 199, # 2686
- 9. 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. 223, # 1391
- 10. 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. 2, p. 103, # 3004
- 11. 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. 328, # 2142
- 12. Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Salih al-'Ijli al-Kufi, Ma'rifat al-Thiqat (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; 1st edition, 1405 H), vol. 1, p. 359, # 471
- 13. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1398 H), vol. 4, p. 229
- 14. Shihab al-Din Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 3, p. 228, # 498
- 15. 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. 132, # 4622
- 16. 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. 298, # 1923
- 17. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, p. 582, # 1942

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