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# Chapter 3: The Companions and Miscellaneous Issues

# Question 21: Are Shias hostile to all the companions (the "sahabah")?

### **Definition of companions**

The majority of the Muslims are obsessed with the companions, (sahabah) – but who are they exactly? How many of them are there? There is no point in Ahlul Sunnah falsely accusing Shias of cursing or rejecting all the companions, if we cannot first agree on who the true companions of the Holy Prophet were.

Allama Ibn Hajar Asqalani, the Sunni scholar, writes in his famous book al-Isabah: "Every one who has narrated a hadith or a word from the Prophet, or seen him while believing in him, is counted among the Sahabah. Also, (the sahabah) is anyone who has met the Prophet (S) while believing in him, and died as a Muslim, whether his meeting with him being long or short, narrating from him or not...or who has seen him without sitting with him, or has not seen him due to an excuse."

This is a very, very wide definition and "companions" defined in this broad and loose way could number more than 100,000 people!

In fact, some Sunni Muslim scholars even include their children as sahabah as well. How can all these "companions" be accepted as being beyond scrutiny? How can anyone accept that all such companions were rightly guided and made no mistakes.

The word itself, sahaba or companion, has become a label of distinction, of nobility and honour. But there is nothing holy or pure about the title 'companion'; it has been elevated beyond its meaning.

### **Evidence from the Holy Qur'an**

For example, the word is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an in the following verses:

Surah Zukhruf:

"And whoever turns himself away from the remembrance of the Beneficent Allah, We appoint for him a Qareen, (a devil, a shaitan), so he becomes his associate, his comrade, his intimate companion." (43:36)

According to Islam's holy book, your own personal shaitan is called a companion.

Then there is the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), contained in Surah Yusuf, where the latter, while in prison, questions the disbelief and idolatry of two fellow prisoners:

"O my two companions of the prison! (I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or is the One Allah, Supreme and better?" (12:39) [Surah Yusuf].

The Holy Qur'an mentions the following three types of companions:

### The good

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against the unbelievers, (but) compassionate amongst each other. Thou wilt see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer), seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks, the traces of their prostration." (48:29) [Surah Fateh]

These are companions that Shias have no problem with and no objection to. Indeed, these are companions that Muslims today, Sunni and Shia, should adore and try and emulate. Men like Abu Dharr al-Ghafari, Ammar ibn Yasir and Salman Farsi.

Allama Ibn Hajar Makki, the Sunni scholar, narrates that the Prophet (S) said, "Verily, Allah has commanded me to love four persons and has told me that He loves them." When the people asked who these four persons were, he said: "Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Dharr, Migdad, and Salman."

Sunan Tirmidhi: "The blue sky has not sheltered, nor has the earth borne a man more honest than Abu Dharr; he lives upon earth with the same austerity and simplicity since the days of Isa ibn Maryam [Jesus, son of Mary]."

Such sahabah are respected and admired by all Shias, who have no objections in following them, quoting them and emulating their behaviour.

### Not so good

"O you who believe! What is the matter with you, that when ye are asked to go forth in the Cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth? Do you prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter?" (9:38) [Surah Baraat]

"O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of Prophet ... lest your deeds become null while you do not perceive." (49:2) [Surah Al Hujarat]

The companions referred to here are those who were Muslims but did not always follow the rules and/or did not always follow the Prophet (S). History is full of such examples:

- When the Treaty of Hudabiya was signed, the second caliph Umar and others were reluctant to agree to the treaty and questioned the Prophet's judgement. From Sahih Bukhari: "Umar ibn Khattab said, 'I went to the Prophet and said, "Aren't you truly the messenger of Allah (SwT)?" The Prophet said, "Yes, indeed." I said, "Isn't our cause just and the cause of the enemy unjust?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Then why should we be humble in our religion?" He said, "I am Allah's (SwT) messenger and I do not disobey Him, and He will make me victorious." [Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 3, Book 50, No. 891]
- During the battle of Ohud, a number of leading companions fled the battlefield, leaving the Prophet (S) on his own. Their names appear in the history books, both Muslim and non–Muslim and include the first and second caliphs of the Ahlul Sunnah.
- As has been discussed on the previous pages, before he died, the Holy Prophet (S) asked for a pen and paper to write a will. The companions did not oblige to this request and raised their voices of his, upsetting and angering him. He asked them to leave his room.

### The hypocrites

There is a whole chapter in the Holy Qur'an addressed to such "companions": Surah Al-Munafiqun, "The Hypocrites"

"When the hypocrites come to you, O' Prophet, they say: "We bear witness that you are the Messenger of Allah." Allah knows that you are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars. They have made their oaths as a shield and turn people away from Allah. Evil indeed is what they do!" (63:1-2)[Surah Al-Munafiqun]]

Read and ponder over the verse in this chapter. Who is Allah (SwT) referring to? Some ask: why did the Prophet (S) not identify these evil hypocrites? The Holy Qur'an replies:

"And of the people of Madinah are those who are bent on hypocrisy. You know them not, but we know them. Twice we will punish them, and then they will be case into severe punishment."

(9:101) [Surah Baraat].

### 21.3 References from books of Ahlul Sunnah

It isn't just the Holy Qur'an but the ahadith, which refer to the hypocrites around the Prophet (S), whom the Prophet (S) was unaware of! "Some men from my companions will come to me by the Fountain and they will be driven away from it, and I will say, 'O Lord, my companions!' It will be said, 'You have no knowledge of what they innovated after you left: they turned apostate as renegades (reverted from Islam)." [Sahih Bukhari, volume 8, book 76, Tradition 586]

Sahih Bukhari narrates several versions of this particular hadith, Volume 8, Book 76: 578, 585, 586, 587 and 592, translated by Mohammed Muhsin Khan and available, in full, in English, online.

# Question 22: Why don't Shias follow all the companions? What about the "hadith of the stars"?

The famous Sunni tradition says: "Verily, my companions are like the stars (nujum) in the sky; whichever of them you follow, you shall be guided rightly."

The authenticity of this hadith is questioned by many Sunni scholars, including Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, the founder, of one of the four main Sunni schools of fiqh and law, but let us not dwell on this. Instead, let us use our common sense. After all, history tells us that the various companions fought each other in various battles, after the death of the Prophet – including the battles of Siffin and Jamal.

So, if some Muslims say we have to "unite "around the companions, the response is: which companions? How do we unite around Imam Ali (as) and Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan, when the latter went to war against the former at Siffin?

How do we follow both Abu Dharr and Uthman ibn Affan, the third caliphate of the Ahlul Sunnah, when the latter had the former beaten and exiled from Madinah after Abu Dharr accused Bani Ummaya of corruption and excess?

Muslims today should unite around the Holy Qur'an and the Ahlul Bayt, not around the various companions, good, not-so-good and hypocritical, who could not even unite themselves.

# Question 23: Why do the Shias criticise Aisha, wife of the Prophet?

There is no denying the fact that Shias are hostile towards Aisha bint Abu Bakr, the wife of the Prophet who is often described as "Ummul Momineen," mother of the believers.

### Aisha must be respected

However, most educated Shias do not believe in abusing the name or reputation of Aisha not just because she is someone of great importance to our Sunni Muslim brethren but because she was, whether we like it or not, a wife of the Holy Prophet. Even in the Battle of Jamal, when she went to war with Imam Ali (as), the latter treated her with respect. He sent her half-brother Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr to catch her when she fell from her camel, after Malik Ashtar had cut off its hind legs. Imam Ali (as) did not humilate Aisha – so who are we to curse and humilate her?

#### **Battle of Jamal**

Nonetheless, it is because of events like the Battle of Jamal that we Shias will always be opposed to Aisha and critical of her actions. Shias are those who follow the Holy Prophet (S). And what did he say at Ghadeer Khumm? The Prophet (S) declared: "O Allah! Love him who loves Ali, and be enemy of he who is the enemy of Ali; help him who helps Ali and forsake him who forsakes Ali."

How can we then love, respect or admire a woman who chooses to become an enemy of Ali? Who tries to persuade others to "forsake" Ali? The fact that she was married to the Holy Prophet is irrelevant here; the issue is whether or not she obeyed the Prophet (S) and adhered to the truth.

Taha Husayn, the famous Egyptian Sunni scholar, in his book 'Ali wa banuh' (Ali and His Sons), tells the story of a man during the Battle of Jamal (Battle of Camel) who is confused as to which of the two sides is in the right. He says to himself, "How is it possible that such personalities as Talha and Zubair should be at fault?" He tells Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) about his dilemma and asks him whether it is possible that such great personalities and men of established repute should be in error. Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) answers him: "You are seriously mistaken and reversed the measure! Truth and falsehood are not measured by the worth of persons. Firstly find out what is truth and which is falsehood, then you will see who stands by truth and who with falsehood."

Sadly, the Ahlul Sunnah scholars these days tend not to engage in the debate around the rights and wrongs of the Battle of the Camel. They maintain that the Prophet told us to follow all his companions, because they are like stars, but cannot explain or justify how "stars" like Talha and Zubayr went up against a star like Ali ibn Abu Talib (as)? And what was the widow of the Holy Prophet doing on the battlefield, fighting Ali (as) and leaving her house to do so, despite the Holy Qur'an saying in Surah Ahzab (Ch.33 V:33) that the wives of the Prophet should "stay quietly in their houses"?

It is a rather simple question: which of them was correct at Jamal? Ali (as) or Aisha? Who was right and who was wrong? It is illogical, irrational and disingenuous to claim that both were "right".

One Sunni researcher, Ather Khan, an aide to Dr Zakir Naik of India, has claimed that "the Battle of Jamal that was fought between the Mother of the Believers, Aisha and Ali. took place as a result of difference of opinion on a political issue. We respect and revere both the companions of the Prophet (S).

However, with regards to the Battle of Jamal, we neither favour one nor are we against the other."

This is an abdication of moral responsibility. How can you avoid taking a position? What about the people, the Muslims on both sides, killed in that fateful battle? According to the Western historian William Muir at least 10,000 people died in the Battle of Jamal. Others estimate the death toll to be 20,000 or so. What will these souls be told on the Day of Judgement when they are resurrected? Were they on the right side or wrong side? Did they die in vain?

The fundamental fact is: Aisha took up arms against Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), despite the Prophet (S) warning against such a move. And if some Ahlul Sunnah scholars of the Wahhabi or Salafi variety in places like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan today can criticise Imam Husayn (as) for going against Yazid ibn Muawiya, the self-proclaimed caliph, how can they try and silence Shias who try and point out how Aisha bint Abu Bakr wrongly took up arms against Imam Ali (as), about whom the Holy Prophet (S) said: "Love him who loves Ali, and be the enemy of he who is the enemy of Ali", and in doing so caused the deaths of between 10,000 and 20,000 Muslims.

#### References from books of Ahlul Sunnah

In fact, such was her enmity, her hatred for Imam Ali (as) that the famous and classical Sunni historian Allama Tabari writes, in the History of al–Tabari Volume 17, page 224 (English translation), that Aisha was delighted when the news of Imam Ali's (as) death in the mosque of Kufa reached her in 661 ad.

One last tradition worth mentioning on the subject of the Battle of Jamal and the "Mother of the Believers", Aisha bint Abu Bakr, comes from the Sunni book al-Iqd al- Fareed, in which it is narrated: "After the battle of Jamal a woman comes to Aisha and asked her: 'What shall be the punishment if a woman murders her child?' (Aisha) replied: 'The fire'. Then the woman asked: 'What is the punishment [then] for a woman that kills twenty thousand of her children at one place?' (Aisha), angry and outraged, said: 'How dare she say this? Arrest and apprehend this enemy of Allah."

### Question 24: Why don't Shias respect Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan?

There are many reasons that explain and justify the Shia hostility and hatred towards Muawiya. Here are just three of them:

### He killed Imam Hasan (as)

Muawiya was the man who had the Prophet's grandson Imam Hasan (as) poisoned and killed. This is a historical fact: more than a dozen of the most famous, most respected classical scholars and historians of the Ahlul Sunnah – including Ibn Abdul Barr, Zamakshari, Abul Fida and Masudi – write that Muawiya offered Juda, wife of Imam Hasan, 100,000 dirhams, as well as his son Yazid's hand in marriage, as a reward for poisoning the second Shia Imam, which she agreed to do.

### He killed Ammar ibn Yasir

Muawiya was the man, the "rebel", who the Prophet prophesied would kill the famous companion Ammar ibn Yasir.

Sahih Muslim, Book 41 Hadith, 6966: "Allah's Messenger (S) said to Ammar as he was digging the ditch (on the occasion of the Battle of the Ditch) wiping over his head: O son of Summayya you will be involved in trouble and a group of rebels will kill you."

There are four more such ahadith in Sahih Muslim: numbers 6967 to 6970. And classical Sunni scholars Allama ibn Hajar Asqalani and Hafiz Jalaluddin as–Suyuti have both written that this hadith is mutawaatir, which means there can be no doubt about its chain of narration, it is 100% authentic.

So, if any more conclusive historical proof was needed to show the infidelity and hypocrisy of Muawiya then this particular authentic hadith is it. No historian, Sunni or Shia, Muslim or non–Muslim, denies the fact that Ammar was killed by none other than Muawiya in the Battle of Siffin, which was launched by Muawiya and his Syrian army against Imam Ali (as) and his allies.

The famous and contemporary English translator of Sahih Muslim, Abdul Hamid Siddiqui, has written in the footnote of his translation of this hadith that not only was Ammar killed in the Battle of Siffin but he goes on to add that "this hadith is clearly indicative of the fact that in the conflict between Hazrat Ali and his opponents, Hazrat Ali was on the right as Ammar ibn Yasir was killed in the Battle of Siffin fighting in the camp of Hazrat Ali."

Ironically, a desperate and conniving Muawiya recognized the damage done to his status and standing from the death of Ammar and the prediction of the Prophet (S). He subsequently tried to claim that Imam Ali (as) was to blame for Ammar's death as it was he who had brought Ammar to fight in the Battle of Siffin in his army. Imam Ali (as), however, reminded the people that if that was the case, then the Prophet of Islam was to blamed for the death of his uncle Hamza as it was the Prophet (S) who had brought Hamza to fight in the Battle of Ohud!

### He began the cursing of Ali ibn Abu Talib (as)

According to Sunan Tirmidhi, the Holy Prophet (S) once said: "Loving Ali is the sign of belief, and hating Ali is the sign of hypocrisy."

And the companions are quoted by Tirmidhi as saying: "We used to identify the hypocrites by their hatred for Ali."

Yet Muawiya not only fought against Imam Ali (as), at Siffin, he cursed Imam Ali (as) as well and demanded, during his rule of the ummah, that everyone who spoke from the pulpit (mimbar) curse Ali (as) also. To prove it, let us begin with Sahih Muslim, Book 31, Tradition 5915:

Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas narrated that: Muawiya, the son of Abu Sufyan, gave order to Sa'd, and told him: "What prevents you that you are refraining from cursing Abu Turab (nickname of Imam Ali)?" Sa'd replied: "Don't you remember that the Prophet said three things about (the virtue of) Ali? So I will never curse Ali."

Hafiz Jalaluddin as Suyuti, the Egyptian Sunni scholar, narrates in al-Durr al-Mansur: "That it was in the days of Bani Umayyah, there were more than seventy thousand pulpits (mimbar) in mosques upon which they cursed Ali ibn Abu-Talib – Muawiya made it a sunnah for them."

Allama Shibli Numani, the dean of India's Sunni historians, writes in his famous biography of Prophet Muhammad, Sirat-un-Nabi: "Among all those extraneous forces which affect and influence the writing of history, none is more powerful than the government...For full 90 years, from Sind in India (Indo-Pakistan) to Asia Minor and Andalusia in Spain, Ali and the children of Fatima were cursed from every pulpit in every mosque after every Friday sermon. Thousands and thousands of hadith glorifying Muawiya, were manufactured, and were put into circulation."

This official media bias, this propaganda, this demonization of Ali (as) is what created the conditions for the later massacre of the Prophet and Ali's (as) family at Karbala, and what set the tone for the humiliations of the Prophet's granddaughters at the hands of Muawiya's son, Yazid, in the court of Damascus in 680 ad.

Rememebr: hatred of the Prophet's household, his Ahlul Bayt, did not appear overnight: it came from Muawiya, who was in power for almost two decades.

### Question 25: Why don't Shias accept Abu Hurayrah's traditions?

The "companion" Abu Hurayrah is one of the key sources for the traditions contained in the books of the Ahlul Sunnah. The Shias reject him and his traditions for the following reasons:

#### **Content**

Perhaps the major reason why Abu Hurayrah is rejected and shouldn't be trusted is because of the bizarre and often offensive content of the ahadith which are ascribed to him. For example, the ludicrous story of Prophet Musa (Moses) and the stone, from Sahih Bukhari, Volume 1, Book 5, Number 277:

Narrated by Abu Hurayrah: The Prophet (S) said, "The (people of) Bani Israel used to take baths naked (all together) looking at each other. The Prophet Moses used to take a bath alone. They said, 'By Allah! Nothing prevents Moses from taking a bath with us except that he has a scrotal hernia.' So once Moses went out to take a bath and put his clothes over a stone and then that stone ran away with his clothes. Moses followed that stone saying, 'My clothes, O stone! My clothes, O stone!' till the people of Bani Israel saw him and said, 'By Allah, Moses has got no defect in his body.' Moses took his clothes and began to beat the stone." Abu Hurayrah added, "By Allah! There are still six or seven marks present on

the stone from that excessive beating."

Are we really supposed to believe such nonsense? About Prophet Musa?

Internal contradictions in his ahadith

Abu Hurayrah said: "Once I entered the house of Ruqayya, the Prophet's daughter and Uthman's wife.

She had a comb in her hand. She said: "The Prophet left just a little while ago. I combed his hair. He

said to me: "How do you find Abu Abdullah (Uthman)?" I said: "He is good." He said to me: "Grace him!

He is the most similar to me, among my companions, in morals."

Now Imam al-Hakim, famous Ahlul Sunnah transmitter of ahadith, narrates this and says: "This tradition

has a true series of narrators but untrue text, [the content is untrue] because Rugayya had died in the

third year of hijra during the battle of Badr, whereas Abu Hurayra came and became a Muslim after the

battle of Khaybar [four years later]." So how did Abu Hurayrah have this conversation that he claims?

One which helped the third caliphate Uthman's reputation, conveniently?

Common sense

Abu Hurayrah narrated over 5,000 traditions after converting to Islam in 629 ad, just three years before

the death of the Holy Prophet (S).

Can it be possible to accept that such a large number of traditions were narrated by this single person in

such a short space of time? And could an illiterate and uneducated man, late to became a Muslim and

therefore late in the period of his companionship with the Holy Prophet (S) narrate more traditions and

sayings from the Prophet than his wives, relatives and lifelong friends and companions?

Remember: he narrated more than 5,000 ahadith in this time. Compare this with the far fewer ahadith

narrated by Aisha, Abu Baker, or Umar and the rest.

In fact, in his book, "Hadith Literature: It's Origin, Development, & Special Features", the Sunni writer

Muhammed Zubayr Siddigui sets out the following details:

• Abu Hurayrah narrated : 5,374 hadiths

• Aisha Umm al-Mo'mineen: 2,210 hadiths

• Umar ibn Khattab: 537 hadiths

• Ali ibn Abu Talib (as): 536 hadiths

Abu Bakr al-Siddig: 142 hadiths

Excluding Abu Hurayrah, that is a total between them of 3,425. Abu Hurayra narrated more ahadith than

all of them put together!

Can any sensible or impartial person believe that Abu Hurayrah, despite his obscurity, his illiteracy and his lack of time alongside the Holy Prophet (S), managed to somehow narrate more traditions than the first four caliphs, with all their status, their authority, their presence alongside the Prophet (S) during his 22-year mission and their high profile in the decades following his death in 632 ad? Is this what we are expected to believe? It just isn't plausible.

### Companions' testimony

Consider the verdict of Umar ibn Khattab on Abu Hurayrah: Allama Muttaqi al-Hindi in his Kanzul Ummal reports that when he was caliph, Umar lashed Abu Hurayrah, rebuked him and forbade him to narrate ahadith from the Holy Prophet. When asked why he did so, Umar said: "Because you narrate hadith in [such] large numbers from the Holy Prophet, you are fit only for attributing lies to him. So you must stop narrating hadith from the Prophet, otherwise, I will send you back to your tribe in Yemen."

Then there's the verdict of Aisha: Sunni scholars Ibn Qutayba, Hakim and al-Dhahabi say that Aisha repeatedly contradicted Abu Hurayrah and said, "Abu Hurayra is a great liar who fabricates hadith and attributes them to the Holy Prophet."

Allama Ibn Qutayba records the story of Aisha telling Abu Hurayrah: "You tell ahadith about the Prophet Muhammad that we never heard them from him" He answered; "You (Aisha) were busy with your mirror and make up" She (Aisha) answered him; "It is you who were busy with your stomach and hunger. Your hunger kept you busy, you were running after the people in the alleyways, begging them for food, and they used to avoid you and get away from your way, and finally you would come back and pass out in front of my room and the people think you were crazy and step all over you."

In fact, Imam al-Hakim counted up those who narrated traditions from Abu Hurayrah. He found that 28 leading companions, including Imam Ali (as), Umar, Uthman, Talha and Zubayr were not among them.

But Abu Hurayrah had a huge impact on the history and direction of Islam. Ahlul Sunnah Islam, in fact, is built on his narrations, many of them false, unreliable, odd, offensive and contradictory. There is nothing wrong or objectionable with Sunnis calling themselves the followers of the sunnah, but it depends which sunnah.

The sunnah as interpreted and narrated by an unreliable narrator who spent less than three years with the Prophet; or the sunnah as interpreted and narrated by a man like Ali ibn Abu Talib (as) who grew up in the lap of the Prophet, in the home of Prophet and who was by his side from the very first day, from the very first invitation to the Quraysh to join Islam, to the moment he passed away with his head in Imam Ali's (as) lap.

### Question 26: Why don't Shias accept Sahih Bukhari and the authentic Ahlul Sunnah collections of ahadith?

### **Content**

Some of the ahadith in Bukhari are shocking, including many of the ones from Abu Hurayrah cited earlier. Not only are physical attributes ascribed to Allah (SwT); for example, Allah puts His foot in Hell (!), but what is said about the Holy Prophet (S) is too disgusting and defamatory and sickening to repeat here in detail. It is sufficent to say that there are traditions contained in Sahih Bukhari which relate to the Prophet (S) falling asleep and forgetting the prayer time, forgetting to perform the necessary ablution (wudhu) for prayer, sitting with Aisha to watch a dance with music; taking off his clothes and being naked in public; and discussing his nightly sexual activities with his wives with his companions. These are outrageous claims and slurs that Muslims today would not tolerate from Danish cartoonists or from Salman Rushdie yet we tolerate such offensive nonsense from the supposedly "sahih" book of Bukhari. Why?

The irony is that if Bukhari were alive today, and published his book now containing the claims that it does about the Holy Prophet of Islam, those same Ahlul Sunnah scholars who praise him would be the first to issue fatwas declaring him an apostate and ordering for him to be ex- communicated and/or killed.

Indeed, by any objective assessment, how can one say that Salman Rushdie is guilty of defaming the Prophet and "Imam" Bukhari is not?

### Bukhari's agenda:

Of his 7,000 or so ahadith, Bukhari narrates around 1,100 ahadith from Abu Hurayrah, roughly the same number from Abdullah ibn Umar and 900 from Anas ibn Malik. None of these three men can be considered front– rank or long–standing or senior companions, by Sunni or Shia standards. What kind of book of "sahih", or authentic and correct, hadith from the Prophet does not narrate from the person who was described by the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet himself as the "self of the Prophet", the "nafs" of the Prophet? How could he claim to be compiling sayings of the Prophet without narrating from the gateway to the knowledge of the Prophet, as Ali (as) was once so famously referred?

He also failed to narrate traditions from other Imams who you might expect him to have quoted from, like Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), the 5th and 6th Imams of the Ahlul Bayt and well-known for their scholarship and knowledge of the Prophet's traditions.

And it wasn't just Imam Sadiq (as) that Bukhari refrained from taking ahadith from: he did not take any from four of the Ahlul Bayt Imams who were actually alive during his lifetime: Imam al-Ridha (as), Imam at-Taqi (as), Imam an- Naqi (as) and Imam al-Askari (as).

Why is Sahih Bukhari devoid of ahadith narrated by these Imams? Or from Ali ibn Abu Talib (as), despite the Prophet (S) saying that the two weighty things he was leaving us with were the Holy Qur'an and his Ahlul Bayt, his household? Can you then blame the Shias for rejecting the so-called Sahih Bukhari?

### Question 27: What is "taqiyah"? Is it not lying, deception and deceit?

"Tagiyah" means dissimulation: concealing or disguising one's beliefs or intentions.

Today, lots of Islamophobes and Muslim-haters say the traditional Shia belief in Taqiyah makes us Muslims, Sunni and Shias alike, dishonest, untrustworthy people. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Islam takes a hard line against lying in general, and stresses the importance of truth and honesty. But like every other ethical system on earth, whether religious or secular, there are certain exceptions to rules in certain, often extreme scenarios.

So, if your life is at risk, or your family's life is at risk, you are allowed to conceal the fact that you are a Muslim – just as, for example, the Jews tried to conceal their faith from the Nazis in the 1930s and 1940s to avoid being sent to the Nazi gas chambers.

Taqiyah is a form of self-defence, of self-preservation and it is referred to in the Holy Qur'an and the books of the Ahlul Sunnah.

### References from books of Ahlul Sunnah

Imam Fahkruddin Razi, one of the greatest of classical Ahlul Sunnah scholars, writes in his famous Tafseer al– Kabeer, volume 4: "Taqiyyah is permissible till the day of Qayamah...because it is Wajib (compulsory) to protect our life from any harm."

In fact, he goes even further than this and writes: "Taqiyyah is permissible for self-protection, but is it permissible for the protection of wealth?" he asks. Your property? Your money? Your wealth and income? "It probably is permissible," he concludes.

### **Evidence from the Holy Qur'an**

Forget for a moment the verdicts of the Sunni and Shia scholars; look at the verdict of Allah (SwT). The key verse from the Holy Qur'an which states:

"Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah (SwT), utters disbelief (save under compulsion and even then his heart remains firm in faith) on them is Wrath from Allah (SwT) and theirs will be a dreadful Penalty." (16:106) [Surah An-Nahl].

All Muslim scholars agree that this verse descended in relation to the suffering of Ammar ibn Yasir at the

hands of the Quraysh in Makkah. Allamah Hafiz Jalaludeen as Suyuti of Egypt, in his commentary on this verse states: "The non- believers once caught Ammar ibn Yasir and they forced him to praise their false gods and to condemn Prophet Muhammad (S). They forced him to an extent that Ammar ibn Yasir gave in, and conceded to their demands. After that, when he returned to the Prophet Muhammad (S), Ammar narrated the whole story to him. The Prophet (S) asked him:

"How do you feel in your heart?" To which Ammar replied: "I am fully content with Allah's religion in my heart". To this the Prophet (S) said: "If non-believers ask you to say the same again, say it". Then the following verse (ayat) was revealed:

"Anyone who, after accepting faith in Allah, utters disbelief (save under compulsion and even then his heart remains firm in faith) on them is Wrath from Allah and theirs will be a dreadful Penalty". [Surah Al Nahl, 16:106]

There are several other verses of the Holy Qur'an which speak of the importance and legitimacy of taqiyah if the situation demands it: one example worth noting is from Surah Yusuf:

"When Yusuf said to his father: O my father! Surely I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon
- I saw them bowing down to me. "He said: O my son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers,
lest they devise a plan against you; surely the Shaitan is an open enemy to man." (12:4-5)

Here, Prophet Jacob (Yaqub) is telling Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) to do taqiyah with his own brothers. Why? Because he's worried they'll turn against him and try and get rid of him – which is what they then do when they discover the truth!

#### Common sense

Taqiyah isn't lying or deception, and nor is lying or deception allowed, let alone encouraged or promoted, in Islam. Taqiyah is, in extreme situations, and for the purposes of self-preservation, the concealing of one's beliefs, beliefs that deep down you still hold and haven't abandoned but have been forced to conceal against your will – and, on this basis, it is not only an Islamic principle or concept, but, let's be honest, it's common sense.

# Question 28: What is "muta"? How can you justify such temporary marriages?

### What is Muta?

Muta, or temporary marriage, is a controversial subject in any community and, some might say, rightly so. This publication does not promote muta; muta is something which is permissible in Islam; again, only under certain, specific, strict and extreme circumstances.

Permanent marriage, not temporary marriage, is the norm in Shia Islam, recommended and encouraged in the Holy Qur'an and in the traditions of the Prophet (S) and his Ahlul Bayt.

Temporary marriage is the exception to the rule and is supposed to be used as a last resort whenever permanent marriage cannot be afforded or things become extremely difficult to bear (for one who cannot get married). In certain circumstances it is allowed and avoids committing adultery, which is a major sin.

What is ironic is that while disagreeing on the matter of temporary marriage, the scholars of some other Islamic schools of thought agree that if a man intends to marry a lady for a short period of time without telling her that he will be divorcing her after a period of time and hides his intentions then the marriage is still valid. In such a case, temporary marriage might, to some, seem more logical and just since the couple can actually agree on the terms and conditions beforehand with full honesty and transparency.

### **Evidence from the Holy Qur'an**

"And all married women (are forbidden unto you) save those (captives) whom your right hands possess. It is a decree of Allah for you. Lawful unto you are all beyond those mentioned, so that ye seek them with your wealth in honest wedlock, not debauchery. And those of whom ye seek content (by marrying them), give unto them their portions as a duty. And there is no sin for you in what ye do by mutual agreement after the duty (hath been done). Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Wise." (4: 24) [Surah Nisa]

Al-Tabari, in his Tafsir, says this verse and the reference to "mutual agreement" is a reference to muta.

The only real debate is whether the Holy Prophet (S) abolished it during his lifetime or whether it was Umar, the second caliph, who abolished it much later on? Some Ahlul Sunnah scholars say Umar only reinforced what the Prophet had done. But the fact is that temporary marriage existed during the time of the Prophet and, at the very minimum, it was allowed by the Prophet for a time.

The key point about muta is not its theological basis, because it is exception to the rule, rather than the rule, but the fact that so few Shias actually engage in it.

Sadly, muta is used as a battering ram, as something to attack the Shias with, yet it is no less unappealing, no less odd, than the idea of four wives, which is also an exception to the rule, an exception to the norm, which is one wife.

### Question 29: Why do Shias pay khums in addition to zakat?

### **Evidence from the Holy Qur'an**

Khums is one of the pillars of Islam which was ordained by Allah (SwT) and practiced during the life of the Prophet (S). Khums means "one-fifth" and indicates that one- fifth of a person's excess income has

to be dedicated, according to the Holy Qur'an, for the following:

"And know that whatever profit you make, verily, one-fifth of it is assigned to Allah and to the Messenger and to his family and also the orphans, the destitute, and the wayfarer, if you have believed in Allah, and in that which We sent down to our servant Muhammad." (8:41) [Surah Anfaal].

Khums, in brief, means paying one-fifth of the surplus of one's income, after taking away the expenses of the person and his dependents. It consists of two equal parts: one being the share of the Imam, meaning that this part goes towards constructing mosques, Islamic seminaries, Islamic schools, libraries, hospitals or clinics, orphanages, the printing of the Holy Qur'an, hadith books, Islamic books and lectures and others things which might benefit, defend, or propagate Islam. The second part is the portion for the poor sayyids (descendants of the Prophet), since they are banned from receiving zakat (charity).

### References from books of Ahlul Sunnah

Many historical references from different schools of thought mention that khums existed during the time of the Prophet (S) and was banned during the time of the first and second caliphs – see reference books like the Sunan of Bayhaqi, the Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal and the Tafsir of Tabari.

The interpretation by the Ahlul Bayt of the word "ghanimtum" in the Holy Qur'an, Ch.8: V 41 is "Everything you gained" – whether from war, work, trade, or other sources, since history testifies that the Prophet (S) took out one–fifth from the war booty, and also from assets other than the war booty during peacetime. Again, see, among other books, the Musnad of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, one of the leading Sunni scholars of figh.

The importance given by the Prophet (S) to the issue of khums can also be seen in his advice to the delegation of Bani Abdul Qays. It seems that Bani Abdul Qays (which was a branch of Rabiah) was not a very strong tribe.

In order to travel to Madinah, they had to cross an area inhabited by the Muzar tribe, which was opposed to Islam and the Muslims. Consequently, the Bani Abdul Qays could not travel safely to Madinah except during the months in which warfare was forbidden, according to the Arab custom.

Here's the relevant hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari: Volume 1, Book 10, No. 501: Ibn Abbas narrates: "The delegates of the tribe of Abdul Qays came and said: `O Allah's Apostle! We are from the tribe of Rabia and between us and you stand the infidels of the tribe of Mudar, so we cannot come to you except in the Haram Months. So please order us some instructions that we may apply it to ourselves and also invite our people left behind us to observe as well. 'The Prophet (S) said: "I order you to believe in Allah, that is, to testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah (the Prophet pointed with his hand); to offer prayers perfectly, to pay Zakat, to fast the month of Ramadhan, and to pay the Khums."

# Question 30: What is this "taqlid"? Why do Shias follow "marjas" and "mujtahids"?

### What is taglid?

Taqlid literally means "to follow (someone)", "to imitate". In Islamic legal terminology it means to follow a "marja at–taqlid", literally a "source of emulation", a source of imitation, when it comes to religious laws and rulings. A marja is the senior–most mujtahid and a mujtahid is a person who is an expert on Islamic jurisprudence (figh); he is also called a fagih.

The orthodox Shia position is that a person should either be a mujtahid or a muqallid – a follower of a mujtahid.

It should be noted that taqlid pertains only to the realm of the shariah and the furu ud-deen; there can be no taqlid whatsoever in the matters of core belief (or usul ud-deen). The Holy Qur'an condemns such un-Islamic types of taglid.

### **Evidence from the Holy Qur'an**

The Holy Qur'an says in Surah Al Anbiya in relation to taglid and ijtihad and mujtahids:

"Question the people of remembrance if you do not know." (21:7)

It also says, very clearly in Surah Tawba:

"But why should not a party from every section of them (the believers) go forth to become learned in the religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, that they may beware?" (9:124).

This is about creating groups of scholars, aalims; not priests or clerics. Mujtahids are not priests – there are no Catholic–style priests or priesthood in Islam – they are scholars, engaged in much–needed ijtihad (literally: intellectual struggle).

In Shia Islam, the gate to ijtihad is not closed – whereas in the Ahlul Sunnah, the gate to ijtihad was largely closed a thousand or so years ago, with the formalisation of the four schools of fiqh, Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali.

#### **Common sense**

One of the problems plaguing modern Sunni Islam, which many Sunni intellectuals have identified, is the crisis of intellectual and theological leadership. Among the Ahlul Sunnah, it is now possible for any person to issue a fatwa on this or that aspect of Islamic law or morality. Self– proclaimed shaykhs have

proliferated! This problem does not exist in Shia Islam, where the ulema have to have studied for decades and won the respect of their peers before they can start issuing fatwas.

We seek expert guidance in every aspect of our lives – from accountants when we're doing our taxes, to doctors when we have health problems, to dentists when we have toothache, to engineers when we want to build something, to economists and financiers and stockbrokers when we want to make money – and yet when it comes to religion, our faith, our holy texts, the most important thing in our life, then we're told we should say, "No, I don't need any expert guidance, I'll work it out for myself".

If you've read and understood all the 6,000-odd verses of the Holy Qur'an, if you've read and understand all of the hundreds of Muslim and non-Muslim, Shia and Sunni, commentaries on the Holy Qur'an; if you've been through the hundreds and thousands of books of tradition, and the hundreds of thousands of ahadith from the Prophet, from the 12 Imams, from their companions and followers and students; if you've studied the biographies and the backgrounds of all the narrators of ahadith to work out who is reliable and who is unreliable; if you've studied, in full and in depth, Islamic law, theology, philosophy, history, ethics, then fine, go for it, do everything on your own, decide everything on your own. But if not, then why not take advantage of the fact, the blessing, that there is a group of people who have done all of those things and are offering us their services and their wisdom and their knowledge in the form of taglid.

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