

Preface

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Let us imagine that an authentic *hadith* of the Prophet, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*, reads:

أبو بكر خلیفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي

Abu Bakr is my *khalifah* over every believer after me.

How would the Ahl al-Sunnah have interpreted it?

What about this one:

أبو بكر ولي كل مؤمن بعدي

Abu Bakr is the *wali* of every believer after me.

Or this:

أبو بكر أخي وصاحبي ووارثي ووزيري

Abu Bakr is my brother, and my companion, and my inheritor and my *wazir*.

We have absolutely no doubt that the Ahl al-Sunnah would cite these statements as unassailable proofs of Abu Bakr’s legitimate *khilafah* over the *Ummah* immediately after the Messenger of Allah. However, as we have discussed in our second book, *On the Khilafah of ‘Ali over Abu Bakr*, the above *ahadith* and similar others actually exist with reliable chains in the Sunni books – except that instead of “Abu Bakr”, it is the name of Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, *‘alaihi al-salam*, that is mentioned in them. This is why

the Ahl al-Sunnah do not like, and always struggle against, them.

When we quote the actual *ahadith* with the name of ‘Ali to our Sunni brothers, they usually instinctively respond with a tired counterargument: the Prophet deputized Abu Bakr to lead the *salat* during his fatal illness. To them, that, in a weird way, is a stronger, and more explicit, proof of *khilafah* than any of the *ahadith* about ‘Ali! Apparently, the world is indeed a very strange place. When the Messenger of Allah said “ ‘Ali is my *khalifah* over every believer after me”, Sunnis think he was NOT naming ‘Ali as his *khalifah*! But, when he *allegedly* appointed Abu Bakr to lead *salat* as he had similarly appointed many others before him – to our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah – he was somehow naming him his *khalifah*!

In this book, we are thoroughly investigating the Sunni reports on the alleged leadership of *salat* by Abu Bakr during the fatal illness of the Messenger. We will be analyzing the bewildering contradictions between the so-called “sahih” Sunni *ahadith* on the claim; and we will be questioning the historicity of the whole episode. In particular, we will be examining the correct implications of leadership in *salat*, according to orthodox Sunni Islam. Does it indicate superiority? Does it confer the *khilafah*? Do our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah really have any case, even if the tale about Abu Bakr had been true?

We seek Allah’s Help in this effort, and we implore Him to forgive us all our mistakes in it, and to accept it as a worthy act of *‘ibadah*. And may Allah send His *salawat* and *barakat* upon our master, Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah, and upon his purified offspring.

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