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Who Are Ahlul-Bayt? Part 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Matrimonial Relationship

In the previous parts, we quoted extensive authentic traditions from Sahih Muslim and else, proving that during the lifetime of the Prophet, his Ahlul-Bayt constituted only Imam 'Ali, Fatimah al-Zahra (sa), al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, and also the purification sentence in Qur'an (the last sentence of Verse 33:33) was revealed on their virtue and NOT for the wives of the Prophet (S). These facts were proven based on the testimony of the Messenger of Allah as well as the testimony of his wives and his companions.

Here I would like to quote another interesting tradition from Sahih Muslim, in which another famous companion of the Prophet (S) swears in the name of Allah that wives of the Prophet are NOT included in his Ahlul-Bayt. The tradition explains the reasoning of this companion and his justification. Here is the tradition recorded in Sahih Muslim:

Narrated Yazid Ibn Hayyan:

We went to Zaid Ibn Arqam and said to him: You have found goodness (for you had the honor) to live in the company of the Prophet (S) and offered prayer behind him, and the rest of the Hadith is the same (as 3 traditions before) but the Prophet said: "Behold, for I am leaving amongst you two weighty things, one of them is the Book of Allah...", and in this (Hadith) these words are also found: We said: "Who are his Ahlul-Bayt (that the Prophet was referring to)? Are they his wives?"

Thereupon Zaid said: "No, by Allah! A woman lives with a man (as his wife) for a while; he then divorces her and she goes back to her parents and her people. The Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet are his lineage and his descendants (those who come from his blood) for whom the acceptance of charity (Sadaqah) is prohibited."

Reference:

- Sahih Muslim, Chapter of virtues of companions, section of the virtues of 'Ali, 1980 Edition Pub. in Saudi Arabia, Arabic version, v4, p1874, Tradition #37

For the English version of Sahih Muslim, please see Chapter CMXCVI,

Tradition #5923

Here is the Arabic text of the above tradition narrated by Sahih Muslim:

قلنا: "مَنْ أَهْلُ بَيْتِهِ؟ نَسَاؤُهُ؟" قَالَ: "لَا، وَأَيُّمُ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ الْمَرْأَةَ تَكُونُ مَعَ الرَّجُلِ الْعَصْرَ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ، ثُمَّ يُطْلَقُهَا فَتَرْجِعُ إِلَى أَبِيهَا وَقَوْمِهَا، أَهْلُ بَيْتِهِ: أَصْلُهُ وَعَصْبَتُهُ الَّذِينَ حَرَمُوا الصَّدَقَةَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

As we see, even some of the companions of the Prophet swear in the name of Allah that Ahlul-Bayt do NOT include the wives of the Prophet (S). However Sahih Muslim has another tradition from Zaid Ibn Arqam in the very same chapter which is:

Zaid Ibn Arqam said: I have grown old and have forgotten some of the things which I remembered in connection with Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him). So accept whatever I narrate to you, and which I do not narrate do not compel me to do that. He then said: One day, Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) stood up to deliver sermon at a watering place known as Khum (Ghadir Khum) which is situated between Mecca and Medina.

He praised Allah, Extolled Him and delivered the sermon and exhorted (us) and said: "Now to our purpose, O people, I am a human being. I am about to receive a messenger (the angel of death) from my Lord and I shall answer that call (would bid good-bye to you). But I am leaving among you two weighty things: the one being the Book of Allah... The second are the members of my household (Ahlul-Bayt). By Allah I remind you (of your duties) to the Members of my House (saying three times)."

He (Husayn Ibn Sabra) said to Zaid: Who are the members of his household? Aren't his wives the members of his family? Thereupon Zaid said: His wives are among Ahlul-Bayt but here Ahlul-Bayt are those for whom acceptance of Zakat is forbidden. And he said: Who are they? Thereupon he said: 'Ali and the offspring of 'Ali; Aqil and the offspring of Aqil, and the offspring of Ja'far and the offspring of Abbas.

Reference:

- Sahih Muslim, Chapter of the virtues of companions, section of the virtues of 'Ali, 1980 Edition Pub. in Saudi Arabia, Arabic version, v4, p1873, Tradition #36.

For the English version of Sahih Muslim, see Chapter CMXCVI, p1286, Tradition #5920

Please note that the second Paragraph of the above tradition is NOT the saying of the Prophet (S). It is the alleged opinion of Zaid Ibn Arqam. In contradiction to the previous tradition, here Zaid asserts that: "The wives of the Prophet are among his Ahlul-Bayt BUT HERE (what the Prophet meant by) Ahlul-Bayt (were some other people who) are 'Ali and his offspring,... and the offspring of Abbas."

My question is that: Should we obey the saying of the Prophet who specified who Ahlul-Bayt are, or we should accept the opinion of a companion which, in this case at least, is in contradiction with the opinion of the Prophet?

Besides, the history tells us that there were many tyrant rulers among the Abbasid (the descendants of Abbas). So how can we obey them and love them? Allah in Qur'an said:

"...and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one."(Qur'an 76:24).

Were Abbasid tyrants among Ahlul-Bayt who the Messenger of Allah put them beside Qur'an as one of the two precious thing that he left for his community to be obeyed after him?!

This shows Ahlul-Bayt are special individuals and do not cover all the relatives of the Prophet (S). The word Ahlul-Bayt, linguistically, does not cover all relatives at all. It means family who come from his blood as pointed in the first tradition of Zaid. Thus, even the Prophet's wives are not going to be included in Ahlul-Bayt.

Those of Sunni brothers who believe all the traditions in Sahih Muslim are authentic, can find a contradiction here between the two traditions which are in the same chapter and only three traditions away from each other.

In one tradition, Zaid said that the Prophet's wives are among Ahlul-Bayt, and in three traditions away from it, the very same person (Zaid) is swearing in the name of Allah that the Prophet's wives are NOT among his Ahlul-Bayt? What should we conclude?

- Should we disregard the clarification of the Prophet and stick to the opinion of a companion?
- If yes, then should we accept the saying of a companion who tells two contradicting opinion while he himself said in the second tradition that he has grown old and he does not remember too much?
- Should we accept such contradicting narrations as Sahih (authentic)?
- If yes, then should we accept the one in which he swears in the name of Allah, or the one in which he does not swear for?

When the Prophet clearly excludes his wives from Ahlul-Bayt, and when his wives such as Aisha, Umm Salama and Safiyya also testify to this fact (please see part I), and when Zaid Ibn Arqam swears by Allah that the wives of the Prophet are NOT among Ahlul-Bayt, then there will remain no choice but to

accept the fact that the wives of the Messenger of Allah were NOT included in the Ahlul-Bayt.

It might be possible to accept both narrations, if we carefully look at what Zaid said: "The wives are among his Ahlul-Bayt but here (what the Prophet meant by) Ahlul-Bayt (were some other people who) are 'Ali and his offspring, ..."

Zaid is saying that we may say (in general sense) the wives included in Ahlul-Bayt, BUT HERE the Prophet meant a special meaning for Ahlul-Bayt which does not cover the wives of the Prophet. It is with this meaning that the Prophet put Ahlul-Bayt beside the Qur'an. In this case, the contradiction between the two traditions can be reconciled.

Now, let us focus on the last part of saying of Zaid in the above tradition where he said:

"A woman lives with a man (as his wife) for a while; he then divorces her and she goes back to her parents and her people. The Ahlul-Bayt of the Prophet are his lineage and his descendants (those who come from his blood) for whom the acceptance of charity (Sadaqah) is prohibited."

This is a correct reasoning. The matrimonial relation between a man and a woman can never be considered permanent; it is only circumstantial and can be given up at any moment since the wife could be divorced. In fact two wives among the wives of the Prophet, namely Aisha (the daughter of Abu Bakr) and Hafsa (the daughter of Umar) were threatened to divorce by Qur'an, because of a secret news that they released to their parents. It is well-known that the following verses of Qur'an were revealed about Aisha and Hafsa:

When the Prophet disclosed a matter in confidence to one of his wives (i.e., Hafsa) and she then divulged it (to Aisha) and Allah made it known to him, he made known (to her) part thereof and passed over part. Then when he (i.e., the Prophet) told her thereof, she said: "Who told you this?" He said "He who knows and is well-aware (of all things) told me." (Qur'an 66:3)

If you two (i.e., Aisha and Hafsa) turn unto Allah repentant, (you have cause to do so) for your hearts indeed desired (against the order of the Prophet); and if you two aid one another against him (Muhammad) then lo! Truly Allah is his Protector and Gabriel and the righteous one among those who believe and furthermore the angels will back (him) up. (Qur'an 66:4)

If he divorces you, Allah may give him instead wives better than you who will be submissive (to Allah), believing, pious, penitent, inclined to fasting, widows and maids." (Qur'an 66:5)

Explanation Sahih Al-Bukhari On Verse 66:5

In the Volume 6 of the Arabic-English version of Sahih al-Bukhari, in a chapter titled: "It may be, if he divorces you, that his Lord (Allah) will give him, instead of you, wives better than you ... (66:5)," we read:

Sahih Bukhari Hadith: 6.438

Narrated Umar:

The wives of the Prophet out of their jealousy, backed each other against the Prophet, so I said to them, "It may be, if he divorced you all, that Allah will give him, instead of you wives better than you." So this Verse (66.5) was revealed.

Sahih Bukhari Hadith: 6.436

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

I intended to ask Umar so I said, "Who were those two ladies who tried to back each other against the Prophet?" I hardly finished my speech when he said, "They were Aisha and Hafsa."

If the Allah threatened the two wives of the Prophet by divorce, because they backed each other against the Prophet, then how can we render them as pure and sinless? Moreover, the following tradition states that the Prophet (S) deserted Aisha and Hafsa for one full month as punishment for revealing the secret news:

Sahih Bukhari Hadith: 7.119

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

I had been eager to ask Umar bin al-Khattab about the two ladies from among the wives of the Prophet regarding whom Allah said 'If you two (wives of the Prophet namely Aisha and Hafsa) turn in repentance to Allah, your hearts are indeed so inclined (to oppose what the Prophet likes). (66.4) till Umar performed the Hajj and I too, performed the Hajj along with him... Then I said to him, "O chief of the Believers! Who were the two ladies from among the wives of the Prophet regarding whom Allah said:

'If you two (wives of the Prophet) turn in repentance to Allah your hearts are indeed so inclined (to oppose what the Prophet likes)?' (66.4)

He said, "I am astonished at your question, O Ibn Abbas. They were Aisha and Hafsa."

Then Umar went on narrating the Hadith and said, "... I shouted at my wife and she retorted against me and I disliked that she should answer me back. She said to me, 'Why are you so surprised at my answering you back? By Allah, the wives of the Prophet answer him back and some of them may leave (do not speak to) him throughout the day till the night.'

The (talk) scared me and I said to her, 'Whoever has done so will be ruined!' Then I proceeded after dressing myself, and entered upon Hafsa and said to her, 'Does anyone of you keep the Prophet angry till night?' She said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You are a ruined losing person! Don't you fear that Allah may get angry for the anger of Allah's Apostle and thus you will be ruined?'

So do not ask more from the Prophet and do not answer him back and do not give up talking to him. Ask me whatever you need and do not be tempted to imitate your neighbor (i.e., Aisha) in her manners for she is more charming than you and more beloved to the Prophet."

Umar added, "At that time a talk was circulating among us that (the tribe of) Ghassan were preparing their horses to invade us. My Ansari companion, on the day of his turn, went (to the town) and returned to us at night and knocked at my door violently and asked if I was there. I became horrified and came out to him.

He said, 'Today a great thing has happened.' I asked, 'What is it? Have (the people of) Ghassan come?' He said, 'No, but (What has happened) is greater and more horrifying than that: Allah's Apostle; has divorced his wives. Umar added, "The Prophet kept away from his wives and I said "Hafsa is a ruined loser.' I had already thought that most probably this (divorce) would happen in the near future. So I dressed myself and offered the morning prayer with the Prophet and then the Prophet entered an upper room and stayed there in seclusion. I entered upon Hafsa and saw her weeping. I asked, 'What makes you weep? Did I not warn you about that? Did the Prophet divorce you all?' She said, 'I do not know. There he is retired alone in the upper room.' ...

I said (to Allah's Apostle) chatting, 'Will you heed what I say, O Allah's Apostle? We, the people of Quraish used to have power over our women, but when we arrived at Medina we found that the men (here) were overpowered by their women.'

The Prophet smiled and then I said to him, 'Will you heed what I say, O Allah's Apostle? I entered upon Hafsa and said to her, "Do not be tempted to imitate your companion (Aisha), for she is more charming than you and more beloved to the Prophet.' ... Then the Prophet kept away from his wives for twenty-nine days because of the story which Hafsa had disclosed to Aisha. The Prophet had said, 'I will not enter upon them for one month,' because of his anger towards them ... Some of his wives were the cause of him taking that decision, therefore he deserted them for one month. See Qur'an: (66.4)

Sahih Bukhari Hadith: 6.435

Narrated Ibn Abbas:

For the whole year I had the desire to ask Umar bin al-Khattab regarding the explanation of a Verse (in Surat al-Tahrim) ... Umar went aside to answer the call of nature by the Arak trees. I waited till he finished and then I proceeded with him and asked him. "O chief of the Believers! Who were the two wives of the Prophet who aided one another against him?" He said, "They were Hafsa and Aisha."...

Then Umar added, "Once while I was thinking over a certain matter, my wife said, "I recommend that you do so-and-so." I said to her, "What have you got to do with the is matter? Why do you poke your nose in a matter which I want to see fulfilled?"

She said, How strange you are, O son of al-Khattab! You don't want to be argued with whereas your daughter, Hafsa surely, argues with Allah's Apostle so much that he remains angry for a full day!" Umar then reported how he at once put on his outer garment and went to Hafsa and said to her, "O my daughter! Do you argue with Allah's Apostle so that he remains angry the whole day?" Hafsa said, "By Allah, we argue with him."

Umar said, "Know that I warn you of Allah's punishment and the anger of Allah's Apostle . . . O my daughter! Don't be betrayed by the one who is proud of her beauty because of the love of Allah's Apostle for her (i.e. Aisha)."... Umar added, (One day) my Ansari friend unexpectedly knocked at my door, and said, "Open Open!" I said, "Has the king of Ghassan come?" He said, "No, but something worse; Allah's Apostle has isolated himself from his wives." I said, "Let the nose of Aisha and Hafsa be stuck to dust (i.e., humiliated)!"

In the above tradition, Hafsa swears by Allah that she argues with the Messenger of Allah and keeps him angry for the whole day! Is this a sign of purity and righteousness? According to Qur'an (the last sentence of Verse 33:33), perfect purity and sinlessness is the characteristic of Ahlul-Bayt.

The above verses of Qur'an as well as the above traditions in Sahih al-Bukhari proves that some of the wives of the Prophet were not righteous and pure, otherwise Allah would not have threatened them in Qur'an by divorce.

This is the main reason why I preferred the reference from Sahih Muslim on the authority of Zaid Ibn Arqam in which he "swears by Allah "that the Prophet's wives are NOT among Ahlul-Bayt since they can be subject to divorce and being substituted with women better than them (Qur'an 66:5).

Another astonishing tradition in Sahih al-Bukhari is as follows:

Sahih al-Bukhari Hadith: 4.336

Narrated Abdullah:

The Prophet stood up and delivered a sermon, and pointed to the house of Aisha, and said: "Fitna (trouble/sedition) is right here," saying three times, "and from where the side of the Satan's head comes out."

قام النبي خطيباً فأشار نحو مسكن عائشة فقال: ها هنا الفتنة، ثلاثاً، من يطع قرن الشيطان

All these traditions give us more alarms not to include the wives of the Prophet into the Ahlul-Bayt who are spotless and sinless based on the testimony of the Messenger of Allah:

Ibn Abbas Narrated that:

The Messenger of Allah recited "Verily Allah intends to keep off from you every kind of uncleanness O' People of the House (Ahlul-Bayt), and purify you a perfect purification". (Qur'an, the last sentence of Verse 33:33) and then the Messenger of Allah said: "Thus Me and my Ahlul-Bayt are clear from the sins."

فأنا و أهل بيتي مطهرون من الذنوب

Sunni references:

- Sahih al-Tirmidhi, as quoted in:
- al-Durr al-Manthoor, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, v5, pp 605–606, 198 under the commentary of Verse 33:33 of Qur'an
- Dala'il al-Nabawiyah, by al-Bayhaqi
- Others such as al-Tabarani, Ibn Mardawayh, Abu Nu'aym, etc.

Please note the word "thus" in the highlighted part of the above tradition. It means the Prophet himself is CONCLUDING that the verse MEANS Ahlul-Bayt are sinless.

In his exegesis, Ibn Jarir Tabari quotes Qatadah who interpreted the sacred verse of Tat'hira that people of the Holy Prophet's family are those whom Almighty Allah has purified from every sin and showered special blessings on them. He also stated in explanation of the verse:

"It is this and nothing else that Allah willed to ward off every badness and indecency from the people of the family of Muhammad and to keep them clear from every contamination and **sin!**"

Sunni reference: Tafsir al-Tabari, v22, p5 under commentary of verse 33:33

Thus the Purification Verse (Ayah al-Tat'hira) and the Tradition of Mantle (Hadith al-Kisaa) confer a special distinction and honor upon the Holy Family that is: being free from every blemish and uncleanness, being infallible, and being kept purified by Allah and absolved of any sin.

They are therefore entitled to absolute obedience from the Muslim Ummah not only as a logical inference, but as a fulfillment of the very intention and utmost desire of the Prophet of Islam in pointing them and making them distinguished from the rest of the Muslim Ummah.

As we discussed earlier, in the special meaning that the Prophet elucidated in the previously mentioned traditions, Ahlul-Bayt even does NOT cover all those who come from his blood. Only those among them who are pure and sinless (Qur'an 33:33) are the Ahlul-Bayt. These are a very selected individuals among his progeny.

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