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2. The Amir Over ‘Isa B. Maryam

The Masih, *‘alaihi al-salam*, obviously, is a member of our *Ummah*, under the *Shari’ah* of Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah, *sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi*. This is explicitly indicated in this chapter-heading by Imam Muslim (d. 261 H):

> باب نزول عيسى بن مريم حاكما بشريعة نبينا محمد صلى الله عليه و سلم

Chapter on the Descent of ‘Isa b. Maryam to Judge with the *Shari’ah* of our Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him.[1]

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) also records this *hadith*:

> حدثنا إسحاق أخبرنا يعقوب بن إبراهيم حدثنا أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب أن سعيد بن المسيب سمع أبا هريرة رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم والذي نفسي بيده ليوشكن أن ينزل فيكم ابن مريم حكما عدلا

Ishaq – Ya’qub b. Ibrahim – my father – Salih – Ibn Shihab – Sa’id b. al-Musayyab – Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I swear by Him in Whose Hand my life is, surely the son of Maryam will soon descend amongst you **as a just judge**.”[2]

Explaining this *riwayat*, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

> والمعنى أنه ينزل حاكما بهذه الشريعة فان هذه الشريعة باقية لا تنسخ بل يكون عيسى حاكما من حكام هذه الأمة

The meaning is that he will descend **to judge with this *Shari’ah***, for this *Shari’ah* is eternal. It will never be abrogated. **In fact, ‘Isa will be one of the judges of this *Ummah***.[3]

Meanwhile, it is an undisputable fact that whosoever follows the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad is from his *Ummah*. This clearly is why al-Hafiz has proceeded to give him an entry in his book on the biographies of **the Sahabah**:

عيسى المسيح بن مريم الصديقة بنت عمران بن ماهان بن الغار رسول الله وكلمته ألقاها إلى مريم

ذكره الذهبي في التجريد مستدركا على من قبله فقال عيسى بن مريم رسول الله رأى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلة الاسراء وسلم عليه فهو نبي وصحابي وهو آخر من يموت من الصحابة

وألغزه القاضي تاج الدين السبكي في قصيدته في آخر القواعد له فقال من باتفاق جميع الخلق أفضل من خير الصحاب أبي بكر ومن عمر ومن علي ومن عثمان وهو فتى من أمة المصطفى المختار من مضر

'Isa the Masih b. Maryam the Siddiqah bint 'Imran b. Mahan b. al-Ghar, the messenger of Allah and His Word which He said to Maryam.

Al-Dhahabi mentioned him in *al-Tajrid*, supporting those before him, and said: "'Isa b. Maryam, the messenger of Allah. **He saw the Prophet**, peace be upon him, on the night of *al-Isra* and said *salam* to him. **Therefore, he is a prophet AND A SAHABI; and he will be the last of the Sahabah to die**."

Al-Qadhi Taj al-Din al-Subki indirectly referred to him in his poem at the end of his *al-Qawaid*, and said: "He, who by consensus of all creatures, is better than the best of the Sahabah, Abu Bakr; and he is better than 'Umar, 'Ali and 'Uthman. **He is a young man from the *Ummah* of the Chosen Mustafa** from Mudhar."[4]

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) further says in his *Siyar*:

ولم يسم الله تعالى في كتابه صحابيا باسمه إلا زيد بن حارثة وعيسى بن مريم عليه السلام الذي ينزل حكما مقسطا

Allah the Most High has not mentioned in His Book **any Sahabi by name except Zayd b. Harithah and 'Isa b. Maryam**, *'alaihi al-salam*, who will descend as a just judge.[5]

Basically, 'Isa b. Maryam is the best of the Sahabah – by Sunni reckoning – and not Abu Bakr (contrary to the popular Sunni myth). He will follow and enforce the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad, and will be the last of the Sahabah to die. Since the advent of our Prophet, the Masih became a member of our *Ummah*, and will die as one of our own.

Interestingly, after 'Isa's descent, he will not be the supreme leader of the *Ummah*. Of course, he will be a judge who will enforce our *Shari'ah*. However, he will, in doing that, be taking orders from a higher

authority, the *khalifah* of his time. Imam al-Bukhari records:

> حدثنا ابن بكير حدثنا الليث عن يونس عن ابن شهاب عن نافع مولى أبي قتادة الأنصاري أن أبا هريرة قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم كييف أنتم إذا نزل ابن مريم فيكم وإمامكم منكم .

Ibn Bukayr – al-Layth – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – Nafi', freed slave of Abu Qatadah al-Ansari – Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "How will you be when the son of Maryam descends amongst you **while your Imam will be from you?**"[6]

Dr. al-Bastawi interprets that in this manner:

> فإمامكم منكم " أي أن الإمام يكون غير عيسى، رجل من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ".

"while your Imam will be from you", that is: **the Imam will NOT be 'Isa**, he will be a man from the *Ummah* of Muhammad, peace be upon him.[7]

Of course, 'Isa too is from this *Ummah*. However, he is a naturalized member while the Imam will be someone born into it. Well, by divine decree, only people from the Arab tribe of Quraysh can be *khalifahs*; and this rule will never change till the Hour. Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) confirms:

> ثنا أبو صالح هدبة بن عبد الوهاب، حدثنا النضر بن شميل، ثنا شعبة، عن حبيب بن الزبير، عن عبد الله بن أبي الهذيل قال: كنا نجالس عمرو ابن العاص نذاكره الفقه فقال رجل من بكر لتنتهين قريش أو ليجعلن الله هذا الأمر في جمهور من جماهير العرب فقال عمرو بن العاص: كذبت سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: الخلافة في قريش إلى قيام الساعة.

Abu Salih Hudbah b. 'Abd al-Wahhab – al-Nadhr b. Shumayl – Shu'bah – Habib b. al-Zubayr – 'Abd Allah b. Abi al-Hudhayl:

We were sitting with 'Amr b. al-'As, discussing *al-fiqh*. Then, a man from Bakr, said, "If Quraysh do not desist, Allah will place this affair in another group among Arabs." So, 'Amr b. al-'As replied, "You lied! I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: '**The *khilafah* is in Quraysh till the establishment of the Hour**.'"[8]

And 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) says:

> إسناده جيد

Its chain is good.[9]

Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H) also records:

> حدثنا الحسن بن إسماعيل أبو سعيد بالبصرة حدثنا إبراهيم بن سعد عن أبيه عن أنس رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : الأئمة من قريش

Al-Hasan b. Isma'il Abu Sa'id – Ibrahim b. Sa'd – his father – Anas, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "**The Imams are from Quraysh**."[10]

Shaykh Dr. Asad says:

> إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *sahih*[11]

Since the Masih is an Israilite, he is automatically disqualified from running the *khilafah*. He can only pledge allegiance to and take orders from a supreme royal ruler from Quraysh. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) documents too:

> حدثنا أحمد بن منيع حدثنا زيد بن حباب حدثنا معاوية بن صالح حدثنا أبو مريم الأنصاري عن أبي هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم الملك في قريش

Ahmad b. Mani' – Zayd b. Hubbab – Mu'awiyah b. Salih – Abu Maryam al-Ansari – Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "**The kingdom is in Quraysh**."[12]

Al-Albani comments:

> صحيح

Sahih[13]

The descent of 'Isa will create a huge potential for confusion within the *Ummah*. Would it be proper for a prophet to take orders from a non-prophet? In order to forestall the possibility of disarray, both the Masih and the *khalifah* of his time will explain the matter clearly by deeds. Normally, the Imam of the *Ummah* cannot be led in *salat* by any of his subjects. Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) records:

أخبرنا إبراهيم بن محمد التيمي قال حدثنا يحيى بن سعيد عن شعبة عن إسماعيل بن رجاء عن أوس بن ضمعج عن أبي مسعود قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لا يؤم الرجل في سلطانه ولا يجلس على تكرمته إلا بإذنه

Ibrahim b. Muhammad al-Taymi – Yahya b. Sa'id – Shu'bah – Isma'il b. Raja – Aws b. Dham'aj – Abu Mas'ud:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "**No one can lead a man in *salat* in his place of authority**, and no one can sit in his place of honour except with his permission."[14]

And al-Albani declares:

صحيح

Sahih[15]

Knowing this, the then *amir* of the believers will nonetheless offer leadership of the *salat* to 'Isa b. Maryam. If the Masih accepts it and leads the *amir*, then he (the Masih) confirms himself as the overall master of the *Ummah*. However, if he rejects it, in that case he submits to the authority and leadership of the *khalifah*. Imam Muslim here presents how this will be resolved:

حدثنا الوليد بن شجاع وهارون بن عبدالله وحجاج بن الشاعر قالوا حدثنا حجاج (وهو ابن محمد) عن ابن جريج قال أخبرني أبو الزبير أنه سمع جابر بن عبدالله يقول سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول لا تزال طائفة من أمتي يقاتلون على الحق ظاهرين إلى يوم القيامة قال فينزل عيسى بن مريم صلى الله عليه و سلم فيقول أميرهم تعال صل لنا فيقول لا إن بعضكم على بعض أمراء تكرمة الله هذه الأمة

Al-Walid b. Shuja', Harun b. 'Abd Allah and Hajjaj b. al-Sha'ir – Hajjaj b. Muhammad – Ibn Jurayj – Abu al-Zubayr – Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: "There will never cease to be a group within my *Ummah* who will be fighting upon the Truth, victorious till the Day of *al-Qiyamah*. Then, 'Isa b. Maryam, *sallallahu 'alaihi wa salam*, will descend, and **their *amir*** will say, 'Come and lead us in *salat*.' But, he ('Isa) will reply, '**No. Verily, some of you are the *amirs* of the others**. This is the honour of Allah to this *Ummah*.'"[16]

The Masih rejects the offer and performs *salat* behind the *amir*. Al-Albani records that the Prophet said:

منا الذي يصلي عيسى بن مريم خلفه

The one behind whom 'Isa b. Maryam will perform *salat* is from us.[17]

Then, he comments:

> فالحديث عندي صحيح

The *hadith*, in my view, is *sahih*[18]

Therefore, the authority of the *khalifah* over Prophet ‘Isa is perfectly established. No one can lead a man in *salat* in his place of authority; and the son of Maryam will be led. As such, he will not be the one in overall authority over the *Ummah*.

Who then will this *amir* be, who will give commands to ‘Isa?

Dr. al–Bastawi has copied a *hadith* which identifies for us the Imam of the *Ummah* during ‘Isa’s Second Coming:

> عن جابر قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :ينزل عيسى بن مريم فيقول أميرهم المهدي: تعال صل بنا. فيقول: لا، إن بعضهم أمير بعض. تكرمة الله لهذه الأمة .

Narrated Jabir:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “‘Isa b. Maryam will descend and **their *amir*, the Mahdi** will say, ‘Come and lead us in *salat*.’ But, he will reply, ‘No. Verily, some of them are the *amirs* over others. It is the honour of Allah to this *Ummah*.’”[19]

After quoting its sources and extensively examining its narrators, he concludes:

> إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is *sahih*[20]

He also documents:

> عن ابن سيرين قال :المهدي من هذه الأمة وهو الذي يؤم عيسى بن مريم .

Ibn Sirrin said: “**The Mahdi** is from this *Ummah*, **and he will be the Imam of ‘Isa b. Maryam**.”[21]

And he has this verdict on it:

> إسناده صحيح. رجاله كلهم ثقات.

Its chain is *sahih*. Its narrators are trustworthy.[22]

So, he will be the Mahdi, *'alaihi al-salam*. He will be the *amir* and Imam of the *Ummah*, before and after Prophet 'Isa joins it. This fact reveals that the coming out of the Mahdi will occur during the very last part of life on earth, as 'Isa will come at that time. Something to note also is that the Mahdi will actually rule the last section of our *Ummah*, as Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) documents:

> أخبرني أبو العباس محمد بن أحمد المحبوبي بمرو ثنا سعيد بن مسعود ثنا النضر بن شميل ثنا سليمان بن عبيد ثنا أبو الصديق الناجي عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : يخرج في آخر أمتي المهدي يسقيه الله الغيث وتخرج الأرض نباتها ويعطى المال صحاحا وتكثر الماشية وتعظم الأمة يعيش سبعا أو ثمانيا يعني حججا

Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Mahbubi – Sa'id b. Mas'ud – al-Nadhr b. Shumayl – Sulayman b. 'Ubayd – Abu al-Siddiq al-Naji – Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, "**The Mahdi will come out at the END of my *Ummah*. Allah will provide rain to him**, and the earth will bring out its vegetation, and he will give wealth correctly. Livestock will become abundant **and the *Ummah* will become great**. He will witness seven or eight *Hajjs*.[23]

Al-Hakim comments:

> هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *hadith* has a *sahih* chain[24]

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agrees:

> صحيح

Sahih[25]

Al-Albani also says about the *hadith* in his *Sahihah*:

> قلت: وهذا سند صحيح

I say: This chain is *sahih*[26]

Dr. al-Bastawi has the same verdict on it:

إسناده صحيح.

Its chain is *sahih*.[27]

1. 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. 1, p. 134, chapter # 71
2. 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. 3, p. 1272, # 3264
3. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah li al-Taba'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 6, p. 356
4. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh 'Adil Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Mawjud and Shaykh 'Ali Muhammad Ma'udh], vol. 4, pp. 633-634, # 6164
5. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the first volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and Husayn al-Asad], vol. 1, p. 220, # 36
6. 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. 3, p. 1272, # 3265
7. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 283
8. 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. 527, # 1109
9. Ibid
10. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 6, p. 321, # 3644
11. Ibid
12. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 727 # 3936
13. Ibid
14. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasai, al-Mujtaba min al-Sunan (Halab: Maktab al-Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 77, # 783
15. Ibid
16. 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. 1, p. 137, # 156 (247)
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. 5, p. 371, # 2293
18. Ibid
19. Dr. 'Abd al-'Alim 'Abd al-'Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-'Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 180, # 6
20. Ibid, p. 182
21. Ibid, p. 219, # 14
22. Ibid, p. 220
23. 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. 4, p. 601, # 8673
24. Ibid
25. Ibid
26. 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. 2, p. 328, # 711

27. Dr. ‘Abd al-‘Alim ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Bastawi, al-Mahdi al-Muntazar fi Dhaw-i al-Ahadith wa al-Athar al-Sahihah wa Aqwal al-‘Ulama wa Ara al-Firaq al-Mukhtalifah (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm; 1st edition, 1420 H), p. 165

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