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# Fifth Session, Tuesday night, 27th Rajab 1345 A.H.

Hafiz: From your eloquent talk last night, I conclude that you wanted to prove that 'Ali was the immediate successor of the Prophet, though in fact this hadith has only a specific significance. It was narrated during the journey of Tabuk. There is no proof that it has general significance.

Well-Wisher: In this hadith the word "Manzila" (Rank) is used in the general sense. The word showing exception clearly proves that the reference is of general significance. The Prophet named 'Ali along with the word "prophet" and described his 'Manzila' using the phrase: "except that there shall be no prophet after me."

Most eminent ulama' and authors have quoted the hadith from the Prophet, who is reported to have said to 'Ali. "Are you not content that you are to me as Aaron was to Moses except that there shall be no prophet after me?"

During his absence of forty days, Moses did not leave matters to the discretion of his followers. He appointed Aaron, the best man among the Isra'ilis, to act as his Caliph and successor. Similarly the last prophet, whose religion is most perfect, had even greater reason to protect his people from the chaos of their free will. He preserved the code of religion so that it might not pass into the hands of the ignorant, those who would change it according to their whims.

The ignorant people would depend on their own conjecture and create divisions in the matter of law. So, in this sacred hadith the Prophet says: "'Ali is to me as Aaron was to Moses," confirming that 'Ali held the same levels of merit and authority as Aaron did. 'Ali was superior to the whole umma (community), and therefore the Prophet appointed him his helper and his successor.

Hafiz: What you have said about this hadith is above question. But if you just consider the matter carefully, you will admit that this hadith has no general significance. Its significance is confined to the Battle of Tabuk when the Prophet appointed 'Ali his Caliph for a fixed time.

#### Hadith of manzila narrated several times

Well-Wisher: You might have been justified in your remark if this hadith had been narrated at Tabuk only. But the Prophet repeated the same hadith on different occasions. It was narrated when brotherhood among different individuals among the muhajirs (refugees) was established in Mecca.

It was also narrated in Medina when brotherhood was established between the Muhajirin and the Ansar. On each occasion the Prophet selected 'Ali as his brother, saying, "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses except that there shall be no prophet after me."

Hafiz: So far as I have observed, the hadith of 'Manzila' was narrated only at the Battle of Tabuk. The Prophet left 'Ali in his place, which caused 'Ali to worry. The Prophet consoled him with these words. I think you have been misled.

Well-Wisher: No, I am not mistaken. Your own authentic books have narrated it. Among them are Mas'udi (a reliable reporter according to both sects) who writes in his 'Muruju'dh-Dhahab', Volume II, page 49, Halabi in 'Siratu'l-Halabiyya', Volume II, pages 26 and 120, Imam Abdu'r-Rahman Nisa'i in 'Khasa'isu'l-Alawiyya', page 19, Sibt Ibn Jauzi in his 'Tadhkira', pages 13–14, Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', chapter 9 and 17, and several others have narrated this 'hadith'.

They all say that, apart from the two occasions of establishing brotherhood, it has been narrated on many other occasions as well. Therefore, this hadith is not to be construed in a restricted sense or for a particular occasion only. Its general significance is an established fact. It was through this hadith that the Holy Prophet declared on appropriate occasions 'Ali's succession after him. One of those occasions was the Battle of Tabuk.

Hafiz: How is it possible that the companions of the Prophet heard this hadith in its general sense, knowing that it meant the succession of 'Ali was willed by the Prophet and yet, after the death of the Prophet, they became hostile and accepted another man as caliph?

Well-Wisher: I have many references in support of my answer to your question, but the best response for this occasion is to consider the trials of Aaron in a very similar situation. The Holy Qur'an states that when Moses appointed Aaron his successor, he gathered round him the Bani Isra'il (according to some reports, 70,000 people). Moses emphasized that in his absence they should obey Aaron, his Caliph and successor. Moses then went up the mountain to be alone with Allah. Before a month passed, Samiri incited dissension among the Isra'ilis.

He fashioned a golden calf and the Bani Isra'il, having left Aaron, gathered round the treacherous Samiri in large numbers. It had been only a short time before this that the same Bani Isra'il had heard Moses say that during his absence Aaron was to be his Caliph and that they should obey him.

Nevertheless, 70,000 people followed Samiri. The Prophet Aaron loudly protested this action and

forbade them from indulging in such sinful acts, but no one listened to him. The verse of Sura A'raf states that when Moses came back, Aaron said to him:

"Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and had well-nigh slain me..." (7: 150)

#### **Aaron was the ordained successor of Moses**

The Bani Isra'il themselves heard the clear instruction from Moses, but when Moses went up to the mountain, Samiri seized his opportunity. He fashioned a golden calf and misguided the Bani Isra'il.

### Similarity between the affairs of 'Ali and Aaron

Similarly, after the death of the Prophet, some people who had heard him say that 'Ali was his successor, turned against 'Ali. Imam Ghazali referred to this fact in the beginning of his fourth treatise in 'Sirru'l-'Alamin'. He states that some people returned to the state of their former ignorance. In this respect, there is great similarity between the situation of Aaron and that of 'Ali.

Like many of your own great scholars and historians, Abu Muhammad Abdullah Ibn Muslim Ibn Qutayba Bahili Dinawari, the well-known Qazi of Dinawar, in his 'Al-Imama Wa Siyasa', Volume I, page 14, narrates in detail the events of Saqifa. He says that they threatened to burn down 'Ali's house and they forcibly took him to the mosque and threatened to kill him unless he swore allegiance to them.

'Ali went to the sacred grave of the Prophet and repeated the same words of the Holy Qur'an which Aaron spoke to Moses:

"He (Aaron) said: Son of my mother! Surely the people reckoned me weak and had well-nigh slain me..." (7:150)

Nawab: When the succession of 'Ali had been established, why did the Prophet use words which only implied that sense? Why didn't he clearly announce that 'Ali was his successor, so that no objection could have been raised after him?

Well-Wisher: I told you that the Prophet expressed the truth in both ways. This is evident from your own books, which have recorded numerous hadith in this regard. Literary people know that allusion is more impressive than a mere statement, particularly when the allusion is so deep-rooted that it contains in it a world of meaning.

Nawab: You say that there are many clear hadith recorded by your ulama' concerning the succession of 'Ali. Will you please tell us more about this? We are told that there is no hadith which proves 'Ali's succession.

Well-Wisher: There are many hadith concerning the caliphate in your own authentic books.

## Hadith of invitation to relatives and the Prophet's appointing 'Ali as his successor

Of all the hadith concerning the vicegerency of 'Ali, the hadith of Invitation is the most important. On the day the Prophet proclaimed his prophethood, he also proclaimed that 'Ali was his successor. The ulama' of your sect, including Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Muwaffaq Ibn Ahmad Khawarizmi, Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Tabari, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid Mu'tazali and a host of others have reported that when verse 214 of the Chapter Shu'ara:

#### "And warn your nearest relations," (26:214)

was revealed, the Prophet invited forty of the Quraish, to Abu Talib's house.

He put before them a leg of goat, some bread, and a cup of milk. They laughed and said: "O Muhammad! you have not served enough food for even one man." The Holy Prophet said: "Begin eating in the name of Allah."

When they had eaten and were fully satisfied, they said to each other: "Muhammad has bewitched you with this food." The Prophet stood up among them and said: "O descendants of Abdu'l-Muttalib! Allah Almighty has sent me as a messenger to the whole of creation in general and to you in particular.

I invite you to make two statements which are light and easy for the tongue, but on the scale of action they are heavy. If you make the two statements, you will be masters of the lands of the Arabs and the non-Arabs. Through them you will go to Paradise and will obtain immunity from Hell.

These two expressions are: first, to bear witness to Allah's Oneness, and second, to bear witness to my prophethood. The one who first of all acknowledges my call and helps me in my mission is my brother, my helper, my heir, and my successor after me."

The Prophet repeated the last sentence three times, and each time none except 'Ali responded to him, saying, "I will aid and help you, O Prophet of Allah!" So the Prophet declared: "This 'Ali is my brother, and he is my successor and Caliph among you."

## Confirmation by Sunni ulama' and by European writers

Besides the Shi'as and Sunni ulama' of Islam, many impartial historians of other nations have given the details of this feast. They had no religious bias, being neither Shi'as nor Sunnis. One of these writers is the nineteenth-century British historian and philosopher, Thomas Carlyle. In his "Heroes and Heroworship" he described the details of the feast at Abu Talib's house. After the Prophet's statements, 'Ali stood and proclaimed his faith in the Prophet. Therefore, the caliphate was bestowed on him.

Other European writers have confirmed this fact, including George Sale of England and Hashim, a Christian of Syria, in his Maqalatu'l-Islam, and Mr. John Davenport in his Muhammad and the Qur'an. All agree that the Prophet, immediately after the proclamation of his prophethood, called 'Ali his brother, helper, successor, and Caliph. Moreover, several hadith confirm that the Prophet emphasized this fact on many other occasions.

### Clear hadith about the caliphate of 'Ali

- (1) Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his 'Musnad', and Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani Shafi'i in 'Mawaddati'l-Qurba' towards the end of the fourth 'Mawadda', have recorded that the Holy Prophet said, "O 'Ali! You shall discharge responsibilities on my behalf, and you are my Vicegerent over my following."
- (2) Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad', Ibn Maghazili Faqih Shafi'i in 'Manaqib' and Tha'labi in his 'Tafsir' (commentary) have reported that the Holy Prophet said to 'Ali: "O 'Ali! You are my brother, successor, vicegerent, and the payer of my debt."
- (3) Abu Qasim Husain Ibn Muhammad (Raghib Ispahani) in 'Mahadhiratu'l-Udaba wa Muhawaratu'sh-Shu'ara wa'l-Balagha' (printed in Amira al-Shazafiyya, Sayyid Husain Afandi, 1326 A.H.), part II, page 213, quotes from Ibn Malik that the Prophet said: "Verily, my friend, helper, Vicegerent, and the choicest of men whom I am leaving behind, who will pay my debt and fulfill my promise, is 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib."
- (4) Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 'Mawaddatu'l-Qurba', at the beginning of the sixth 'Mawadda', narrates from the second Caliph, 'Umar Ibn Khattab, that when the Prophet (S) established the relationship of brotherhood among the companions, he said: "This 'Ali is my brother in this world and in the Hereafter; he is my successor from among my kin and my Vicegerent among my umma; he is the heir of my knowledge and the payer of my debt; whatever he owes to me, I owe to him. His profit is my profit, and his loss is my loss; one who is his friend is my friend; one who is his enemy is my enemy."
- (5) In the same Mawadda', he quotes a hadith from Anas ibn Malik, which I have mentioned earlier. Toward its end he says that the Holy Prophet said, "He ('Ali) is my Vicegerent and helper."
- (6) Muhammad Ibn Ganji Shafi'i quotes a hadith from Abu Dharr Ghifari in his book, Kifayatu't-Talib, that the Prophet said, "The flag of 'Ali, the commander of the believers, the leader of the bright-faced people, and my Vicegerent, will come to me at the Fountain of Kauthar."
- (7) Baihaqi, Khatib Khawarizmi, and Ibn Maghazili Shafi'i write in their Manaqib that the Prophet said to 'Ali: "It is not proper that I depart from the people without you becoming my successor since you are the choicest of the believers after me."
- (8) Imam Abu Abdu'r-Rahman Nisa'i, one of the Imams of the Six Books of Traditions, narrates in detail from Ibn Abbas the virtues of 'Ali in connection with hadith 23 in Khasa'isu'l-Alawi. After describing the rank of the prophet Aaron, the Holy Prophet said to 'Ali: "You are my Vicegerent after me for every

believer."

This hadith and others in which the Holy Prophet used the phrase "after me" clearly prove that 'Ali was his immediate successor.

(9) There is the "Hadith of Creation," which has been narrated in different ways. Imam Ibn Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his 'Musnad', Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 'Mawaddatu'l-Qurba', Ibn Maghazili Shafi'i in 'Manaqib', and Dailami in 'Firdaus' have quoted the Prophet as saying: "I and 'Ali were created of the same Divine Light 14,000 years before Adam was created.

From the loins of the Prophet Adam and through his Holy progeny, the Light was inherited by Abdu'l–Muttalib, and from him it was divided and inherited by Abdullah, (father of the Prophet) and Abu Talib, (father of 'Ali). I was granted prophethood, and 'Ali was granted the caliphate."

- (10) Hafiz Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Jarir Tabari (d.310 A.H.) writes in his 'Kitabu'l-Wilaya' that the Prophet said in the beginning of his renowned address at 'Ghadir al-Khum': "The angel Gabriel has conveyed Allah's command to me that I stop at this place and inform the people that 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib is my brother, my successor, my Caliph (Vicegerent) after me. O men! Allah has made 'Ali your Wali (guardian), and Imam (guide). Obedience to him is obligatory on each one of you; his command is supreme; his utterance is truth; curse be on him who opposes him; Allah's mercy be on him who befriends him."
- (11) Sheikh Sulayman Balkhi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda' reports from the 'Manaqib' of Ahmad, and he from Ibn Abbas, a hadith which describes many of 'Ali's merits. I quote all of it. Ibn Abbas reports that the Prophet said: "O 'Ali, you are the bearer of my knowledge, my Wali and friend, my successor, the heir of my knowledge, and my Caliph. You are the trustee of the heritage of all the preceding prophets. You are the confidant of Allah on this earth and Allah's proof for the whole of creation.

You are a pillar of Iman (faith) and the guardian of Islam. You are a lamp in darkness, a light of guidance, and for the people of the world you are a raised standard. O 'Ali! He who follows you is delivered; he who disobeys you will perish; you are the luminous way, and a straight path; you are the leader of pure men, and the head of the believers; to whomsoever I am Master (Maula), you are also his Master (Maula), and I am the Master of every believer (man or woman).

Only he is your friend who is born of lawful wedlock. Allah did not transport me to the heavens to speak with me without telling me, 'O Muhammad! Convey my salutation to 'Ali and tell him that he is the Imam of my friends and the Light of worshippers.' Congratulations to you, O 'Ali, on this marvelous excellence."

(12) Abu Mu'ayyid Muwafiqu'd-Din, the best orator of Khawarizm, in his Faza'il of the Commander of the Faithful, printed in 1313 A.H., Chapter XIX, page 240, quotes the sources who reported that the Prophet said: "When I reached 'Sidratu'l-Muntaha' ('the farthest Lote Tree,' the highest station during the 'Mi'raj), I was addressed thus: 'O Muhammad! When you tested the people, whom did you find the most

#### obedient?'

I said 'Ali.' Allah then said, 'You have told the truth, Muhammad!' Further, he said, 'Have you selected a Vicegerent who will convey your knowledge to the people, and teach my servants from My Book those things which they do not know?' I said, 'O Allah! Whomever you select, I will select.' He said, 'I have selected 'Ali for you. I make him your Vicegerent and successor.' And He furnished 'Ali with His knowledge and forbearance. He is the Commander of the Faithful whom no one can equal in rank among his predecessors or successors."

There are many such 'hadith' in your authentic books. Some of your just ulama', like Nizzam Basri, have acknowledged this fact. Salahu'd-Din Safdi in his 'Wafa Bi'l-Wafiyya', in connection with the account of Ibrahim Ibn Sayyar Ibn Hani Basri, known as Nizzam Mu'tazali, says: "The Prophet of Allah confirmed the Imamate of 'Ali and appointed him the Imam (Guide). The companions of the Prophet were also fully aware of it, but 'Umar, for the sake of Abu Bakr, covered the Imamate of 'Ali with a curtain."

It is clear from your own books, hadith, and Qur'anic commentaries that 'Ali occupied the highest position of virtue. Khatib Khawarizmi reports from Ibn Abbas in 'Manaqib', Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ganji Shafi'i in his 'Kifayatu't–Talib', Sibt Ibn Jauzi in his 'Tadhkira', Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in 'Fusulu'l–Mawadda', Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in 'Yanabiu'l–Mawadda', and Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 'Mawaddatu'l–Qurba', 'Mawadda V', quotation from the second Caliph, 'Umar Ibn Khattab, – all confirming with slight variations of words – that the Prophet said: "If all the trees were pens, if the seas were ink, if all the jinn and men were recorders – even then the virtues of 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib could not be enumerated."

### **Characteristics of the companions**

Sheikh ABDU'S-SALAM: (Turning to Hafiz Muhammad Rashid Sahib) Allow me to say something briefly. (Turning to well-wisher). We never deny the high qualities of 'Ali, but to confine praise to him alone is not fair since the principal companions of the Holy Prophet were, one and all, men of virtue. You are indulging in one-sided talk, which misleads the people. Permit me to quote a hadith in their praise so that the truth of the matter may be revealed.

Well-Wisher: I'm not concerned with personalities. The Qur'anic verses and authentic hadith' lead us in one direction. I swear by Allah (S.W.T.) that I do not blindly love, or, hate anyone. I ask the audience to stop me if at any time I resort to anything which is against reason, or, common sense. The 'hadith' acknowledged by both ['Shi'as' and 'Sunni'] sects should be relied upon. I do not deny the good qualities of the upright companions of the Prophet (S), but we should search among them for one who is superior to the whole community.

Our discussion is not about virtuous men, as the virtuous were many [virtuous were more than one around Prophet Muhammad (S)]. We should find out who was the most meritorious person after the Prophet (S), so that we may follow him.

Sheikh: You make unnecessary restrictions. In your books there is not a single 'hadith' in praise of the caliphs. How can we argue on that basis?

Well-Wisher: On the first night of our discussions, you will recall that Hafiz Sahib himself agreed to a debate on the condition that our arguments be based on verses of the Holy Qur'an, and on 'hadith' accepted by both sects.

Since I have your authentic books, I agreed to it. As all of you will confirm, I have not deviated from that stand. In support of my points, I have cited only verses of the Holy Qur'an, and 'hadith' recorded in the authentic books of your own eminent scholars.

When you made this condition, you did not realize that you would be trapped later on. Still, I don't want this condition to be taken absolutely. I am prepared to hear even your one-sided 'hadith' if they are authentic. Then we can determine facts justly. I have no hesitation in accepting facts in comparing the merits of 'Ali (a.s.).

Sheikh: You cited a 'hadith' concerning 'Ali's (a.s.) vicegerency, but overlooked the fact that there are many 'hadith' about Caliph Abu Bakr.

Well-Wisher: Keeping in mind that your own prominent 'ulama', like Dhahabi, Suyuti, and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid have reported that the Amawi's and the followers of Abu Bakr have fabricated many 'hadith' in praise of Abu Bakr, you may cite a 'hadith' from many of those so that a just man may judge its authenticity.

### Hadith in praise of Abu Bakr

Sheikh: There is an authentic hadith narrated by 'Umar Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Khalid, who reports from Isa Ibn 'Ali Ibn Abdullah Ibn Abbas, and he from his father, and he from his grandfather, Abbas, that the Prophet of Islam told that gentleman, "O uncle! Allah has made Abu Bakr Caliph of his religion. So listen to him and obey him so that you may secure deliverance."

Well-Wisher: This is a rejected hadith.

Sheikh: How is it a rejected hadith?

Well-Wisher: Your own prominent ulama' have rejected it. Because the reporters of this hadith were notorious liars and forgers, your ulama' do not consider it worthy of acceptance. Dhahabi in his Mizanu'l-I'tidal, writing about Ibrahim Ibn Khalid, and Khatib Baghdadi, writing about 'Umar Ibn Ibrahim say, "He is a great liar." A hadith narrated by a liar is unacceptable.

Sheikh: It is reported from reliable sources that one of the pious companions of the Prophet, Abu Huraira, narrated that Gabriel appeared before the Holy Prophet and said, "Allah sends His salutation to you. He says, 'I am satisfied with Abu Bakr; ask him if he too is satisfied with me or not."

Well-Wisher: We should be very cautious about citing hadith. I draw your attention to a hadith which your own ulama', like Ibn Hajar (in Isaba) and Ibn Abdu'l-Bar (in Isti'ab) quote from Abu Huraira that the Prophet said, "There are many who misquote me, and one who misrepresents me has his abode in Hell. When a hadith is reported to you on my behalf, you should put it before the Holy Qur'an."

Another hadith acknowledged by both sects, narrated by Imam Fakhru'd–Din Razi in his Tafsir Kabir, Volume II, page 271, reports that the Prophet said, "When a hadith from me is reported to you, put it before the Book of Allah. If it agrees with the Holy Qur'an, accept it. Otherwise, reject it." The books of your own eminent ulama' state that one of those who fabricated hadith in the name of the Holy Prophet was this rejected man, Abu Huraira, whom you have called pious.

Sheikh: I didn't expect a man of your standing to make slanderous remarks about the Prophet's companions.

Well-Wisher: You want me to be in awe of the word "Sahabi" (companion), but you are mistaken if you think the word "Sahabi" necessarily conveys honor. True, the companionship of the Holy Prophet enhances one's virtue, but this is based on the condition that the companion is obedient to the Prophet. If he acts against the instructions of the Prophet, then surely he will be rejected. Weren't the munafiqin (hypocrites) companions of the Prophet? Yes, and they were all cursed.

Sheikh: It is not proved that they were rejected. If they were rejected, what is the proof that they will go to Hell? Is everyone who is rejected or cursed destined for Hell? A cursed person is one who, according to the explicit ordinance of the Holy Qur'an, or the saying of the Prophet, is declared as such.

### Abu Huraira's character and his condemnation

Well-Wisher: There are clear grounds to show that Abu Huraira was an unreliable man. Your own ulama' have confirmed this fact. One of the reasons for his being cursed is that, according to the words of the Prophet, he was an associate of the cursed son of the cursed Abu Sufyan.

Abu Huraira was one of the hypocrites. On some occasions in Siffin he offered prayers led by the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali. At other times he sat at the dining table of Mu'awiya to eat his fancy food.

As reported by Zamakhshari in 'Rabiu'l-Abrar' and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid in the commentary on 'Nahju'l-Balagha', when Abu Huraira was asked the reason for his double-dealing policy, he said, "Mu'awiya's food is very rich and savory, and prayers behind 'Ali are preferable."

Your own ulama', like Sheikhu'l-Islam Hamwaini in Fara'id, Chapter 37, Khawarizmi in 'Manaqib', Tibrani in 'Ausar', Ganji Shafi'i in 'Kifayatu't-Talib' (and a host of others) quote from this same Abu Huraira, and others that the Prophet said, "'Ali is with the Truth, and the Truth is with 'Ali."

When he left 'Ali and courted the favor of Mu'awiya, was he not damnable? If one not only keeps silent at seeing the vicious deeds of Mu'awiya, but actually cooperates with him and helps him in order to advance his own worldly position and to fill his belly, is he not to be condemned?

The same Abu Huraira himself narrates (as recorded by your own eminent ulama', like Hakim Nishapuri in 'Mustadrak', Volume II, page 124, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal Tibrani, and others) that the Prophet said, "'Ali is with the Qur'an and the Qur'an is with 'Ali.

These two shall not be separated until they reach me at the Fountain of Kauthar. 'Ali is from me, and I am from 'Ali. He who profanes 'Ali, profanes me. He who profanes me, profanes Allah." Mu'awiya, in his address of the Jum'a prayers, cursed 'Ali, Hasan, and Husain.

He ordered that in all congregations those revered people should be cursed. So if a man is so intimately associated with such damned people and is pleased with their actions, is he not to be condemned? And, while associating with such people, if he helps them by fabricating hadith and forces people to utter curses against revered people, is he not to be condemned?

Sheikh: Is it reasonable for us to accept these slanders, that a sincere companion of the Prophet, fabricating hadith, may force people to curse 'Ali?

Well-Wisher: Of course it is hard to believe that a sincere companion would do such a thing. If any of the companions has done such a thing, it means that he was not sincere. There are many hadith narrated by your own ulama' that the Holy Prophet said, "One who profanes 'Ali, profanes me and Allah."

Sheikh: To be frank, when you slander the companions of the Holy Prophet, saying that they fabricated hadith, how can we hope that you will not attribute evil motives to the high-ranking ulama' of the Sunnis? You Shi'as have a remarkable tendency for slandering great men.

Well-Wisher: You are unfair in attributing such things to us. Islamic histories of the past 1,400 years testify against it. From the beginning of the first century of Islam, the Umayyads abused the infallible Imams, the descendants of the Holy Prophet, and their adherents, the Shi'as. Even today, your prominent ulama' record slanderous reports against the Shi'as in their books in order to mislead the people.

Sheikh: Who of the Sunni ulama' has slandered the Shi'as?

## Ibn Abd Rabbih's slanders against the Shi'as

One of your great literary scholars, Shahabu'd-Din Abu 'Umar Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abd Rabbih Qartabi Andalusi Maliki (died 48 A.H.), in his 'Indu'l-Farid', Volume I, page 269, has called the Shi'as "the Jews of this Umma."

He says that, just as the Jews are enemies of the Christians, the Shi'as are enemies of Islam. He claims that the Shi'as, like the Jews, do not accept the fact that one may be divorced three times from the same person, nor do they accept the practice of 'idda (the prescribed period of chastity for women after divorce).

Both the Shi'as here and the Sunnis who are familiar with their Shi'as friends will laugh at these claims. You will find in all books on Shi'as jurisprudence stipulations regarding three divorces and idda after divorce.

He also alleges that the Shi'as, like the Jews, are the enemies of Gabriel, because Gabriel communicated Allah's commandment (wahi) to the Prophet, not to 'Ali. (Laughter among the Shi'as audience.) We Shi'as believe in the Holy Prophet. We believe that Allah's commandments were revealed to him through Gabriel, whose rank is far higher than that attributed to him by this worthless writer.

### Slanders by Ibn Hazm

Another of your great ulama' is Abu Muhammad 'Ali Ibn Ahmad Ibn Sa'id Ibn Hazm Andalusi (died 456 A.H.), who has recorded particularly queer notions about the Shi'as in his famous Kitabu'l–Fasl fi'l–Milal Wa'n–Nihal. For example, he says that the Shi'as are not Muslims. They are heretics, the followers of Jews and Christians.

In Volume IV, page 182, he writes that, "According to the Shi'as, it is lawful to marry nine women." This report can be disproved easily by consulting Shi'as books which clearly state that it is unlawful to keep more than four wives in permanent marriage at one time. There are many other similar unfounded allegations and filthy things attributed to Shi'as in this book, which you would be ashamed to hear.

### **Slanders by Abu Taimiyya**

One of your most irreligious ulama' is Ahmad Ibn Abdu'l-Halim Hanbali, known as Ibn Taimiyya (died 728 A.H.). He had extreme malice toward the Shi'as, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, and the descendants of the Prophet. His Minhaju's-Sunna is filled with his bitter enmity against 'Ali and the progeny of the Holy Prophet.

Anyone who is even slightly acquainted with the facts would be astounded to hear his lies. For example, he writes that "There is no larger group of liars than the Shi'as sect, and it is for this reason that the authors of Siha's did not include in their books hadith narrated by them."

In Volume X, page 23, he says that the Shi'as believe in four fundamentals of religion – tawhid (Oneness of God); adl (justice of Allah); nabuwat (prophethood); and imamate (vicegerency). In fact, in Shi'as books of faith, available everywhere, it is written that the Shi'as faith consists of three fundamentals: tawhid, nabuwat, and ma'ad (the Day of Judgement); adl is part of tawhid and the imamate is part of

#### nabuwat.

In Volume I, page 131, he states that the Shi'as do not gather in the mosques. They do not offer jum'a or congregational prayers. If they ever offer prayer, they do it individually. (Laughter among the Shi'as.) But of course we place great emphasis on congregational prayers. In many cities of Iraq and Iran, which are centers of the Shi'as, our mosques are crowded with worshippers offering congregational prayers. On the same page, he writes that the Shi'as do not make the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba.

"Their Hajj (pilgrimage) consists only in visiting the tombs, which they consider superior to the Pilgrimage to Mecca. They condemn those who do not go for ziarat to the tombs." (Laughter.) Shi'as books of prayer contain a special Chapter for the Hajj prayer (Kitabu'l-Hajj).

Shi'as theologians have written many books prescribing the rituals for the Hajj, wherein special instructions have been given to perform the Hajj rites. Many hadith from our Imams insist that if a Muslim (Shi'as or Sunni) has the means, and yet fails to perform the Hajj, he is excommunicated from Islam.

When he dies, he is told: "Die whatever death you can, be it the death of a Jew, a Christian, or a fire-worshiper." Can you believe that in the face of such instructions Shi'as would refrain from performing the Hajj?

In addition to these misrepresentations, this wicked man has said that a great Shi'as Scholar, Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Nu'man (Sheikh Mufid), wrote 'Manasikhu'l–Hajj Ii'l–Mashahid'. The correct title is 'Mansikhu'z–Ziarat', which is available everywhere, and which contains instructions about the visit to the places of ziarat, including the Holy shrines of the most revered Imams.

If you consult these books of ziarat, you will find that a visit to the tombs of the Holy Prophet and the Imams is commendable, not obligatory. The best proof against the allegation of this irreligious man is the practice followed by Shi'as, who make the pilgrimage by the thousands every year. Another false accusation of this liar can be found in Volume I, page 11, where he says that the Shi'as call their dogs by the name of Abu Bakr and 'Umar and always curse them (Abu Bakr and 'Umar). (Laughter among the Shi'as.) This is ridiculous.

According to the Shi'as belief, the dog is utterly polluted. A Muslim house with a dog is deprived of Allah's blessings. Therefore, Shi'as Muslims are strictly forbidden to domesticate dogs except under certain conditions (hunting, protecting the house, or herding sheep).

One of the many reasons for discord between Yazid and the grandson of the Prophet, Imam Husain, was that Yazid was fond of dogs and domesticated them without good reason. Ibn Taimiyya also writes that since the Shi'as are awaiting the reappearance of the last of their Imams, in many places, particularly in the sardab (underground hall) of Samarra (where the Holy Imam disappeared), they keep ready a horse.

They call for their Imam to appear, saying that they are fully armed to serve him. He also writes that the Shi'as turn toward the East during the last days of Ramadhan and call for the Imam to appear. Some of them even forego their ritual prayers, thinking that if they were busy saying their prayers and the Imam appeared; they might be deprived of their service to him (laughter by the Sunnis and the Shi'as). We are not so much surprised at this wicked man's ridiculous stories.

But we are surprised at the behavior of the present ulama' of Egypt and Damascus who, without asking the Shi'as with whom they live, follow the absurdities of men like Ibn Taimiyya. It would be tiring to give a long list of the inaccurate reports of Ibn Hajar Makki, Hafiz, and Qazi Ruzbahan. Their books are known, although from the point of view of authenticity, they have no value.

For instance, the Milal wa'n-Nihal of Muhammad Ibn Abdu'l-Karim Shahrastani (died 548 A.H.), in the eyes of scholars, has not the least value. One will not find anything in it except utterly false beliefs attributed to Shi'as, like the worship of 'Ali and belief in the transmigration of the soul. Obviously he was not a man of learning. Writing about Ithna Ashari Shi'as, he says that the tomb of 'Ali Ibn Hadi Muhammad Nagi, who came after Imam Muhammad Tagi, is in Qum.

But even children know that the Holy shrine of Imam 'Ali Naqi is located adjacent to the shrine of his son, Imam Hasan Askari, in Samarra. I don't think further references of this nature are necessary to prove that the Sunni ulama' have concocted false reports concerning the Shi'as. And I am not alone in levelling charges against the integrity of Abu Huraira. The Sunni ulama' have also exposed his bad character in their own books.

### Abu Huraira's character and hadith calling for his condemnation

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid Mu'tazali, in his commentary on the 'Nahju'l-Balagha', Volume I, page 358, and in Volume IV, reports from his Sheikh and teacher, Imam Abu Ja'far Asqalani, that Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufyan organized a group of companions of the Holy Prophet and the children of the companions for the purpose of fabricating hadith. Among those who concocted filthy hadith against 'Ali were Abu Huraira, Amir Ibn As, and Mughira Ibn Shaba.

Giving details of these stories, Ibn Abi<sup>I</sup>I-Hadid narrates that Abu Huraira once entered the Kufa mosque and saw a huge gathering of people who had come to welcome Mu<sup>I</sup>awiya. He shouted to the crowd: "O people of Iraq. Do you think that I would tell a lie in opposing Allah and His Prophet and buy Hellfire for myself? Hear from me what I have heard from the Prophet. Every Prophet has a Haram (sacred dwelling place) and my Haram is Medina.

One who is responsible for innovation in Medina is cursed by Allah, by His angels, and by all humanity.' I swear by Allah that 'Ali was responsible for an innovation." (That is, 'Ali incited dissension among the people and so, according to the Prophet, should be cursed). When Mu'awiya learned of this (that Abu Huraira did such a thing for him and did it in 'Ali's capital, Kufa), he sent for him, gave him a reward, and

made him the governor of Medina.

Aren't his misdeeds sufficient to prove that he deserves condemnation? Is it proper that a man who mistreats the most noble of the caliphs should be regarded as pious simply because he had once been a companion of the Prophet?

Sheikh: On what grounds do Shi'as consider him accursed?

Well-Wisher: There are many arguments in support of our view. One of them is that one who abuses the Prophet is, according to both sects, condemned. According to the hadith which I mentioned earlier, the Holy Prophet said, "One who abuses 'Ali, abuses me; one who abuses me, abuses Allah." It is clear that Abu Huraira was one of those who not only abused 'Ali Ibn Abu Talib, but who fabricated hadith to incite others to abuse him.

## Abu Huraira's collusion with Busr ibn Artat in the massacre of Muslims

We also condemn Abu Huraira for his collusion with Busr Ibn Artat in the massacre of thousands of Muslims. It has been reported by your own historians, including Tabari, Ibn Athir, Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Allama Samhudi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Khallikan, and others that Mu'awiya Ibn Abu Sufyan sent the cruel Busr Ibn Artat with 4,000 Syrian soldiers to Yemen via Medina to crush the people of Yemen and the Shi'as of 'Ali. The assailants murdered thousands of Muslims in Medina, Mecca, Ta'if, Tabala' (a city of Tihama), Najran, Safa, and its suburbs.

They did not spare the young or old of the Bani Hashim or the Shi'as of 'Ali. They even murdered the two small sons of the Holy Prophet's cousin, Ubaidullah Ibn Abbas, the governor of Yemen, who had been appointed by 'Ali. It is said that more than 30,000 Muslims were killed on the order of this tyrant.

The Bani Umayya and their followers committed these insane atrocities. Your beloved Abu Huraira witnessed this slaughter and was not only silent but actively supported it. Innocent people, like Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari, and Abu Ayyub Ansari sought refuge.

Even the house of Abu Ayyub Ansari, who was one of the Prophet's chief companions, was set on fire. When this army turned towards Mecca, Abu Huraira remained in Medina. Now I ask you to tell us, in the name of Allah, whether this deceitful man who had been in the company of the Holy Prophet for three years, and who narrated more than 5,000 hadith from the Prophet, had not heard those famous hadith regarding Medina.

The ulama' of both the sects (like Allama Samhudi in 'Ta'rikhu'l-Medina', Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad', Sibt Ibn Jauzi in 'Tadhkira', page 163) have quoted from the Holy Prophet (S), who said repeatedly: "He who threatens the people of Medina with oppression will be threatened by Allah and will be cursed by

Allah, by His angels, and by humanity.

Allah will not accept anything from him. May he be cursed who threatens the people of Medina. If anyone harms the people of Medina, Allah will melt him like lead in fire." So why did Abu Huraira join the army which devastated Medina? Why did he fabricate hadith in opposition to the rightful successor to the Prophet? And why did he incite people to revile the man about whom the Prophet had said: "To abuse him is to abuse me"? You decide whether a man who fabricated hadith in the name of the Prophet was not cursed.

Sheikh: It is unkind of you to call the most reliable companion of the Holy Prophet an irreligious fabricator.

### Condemnation of Abu huraira and 'Umar's beating him

Well-Wisher: It is not I alone who am "unkind" to Abu Huraira. The first man who was unkind to him was the second Caliph, 'Umar Ibn Khattab. Ibn Athir and Ibn Abi'l-Hadid in his 'Sharhe-Nahju'l-Balagha', Volume III, page 104 (printed in Egypt), and several others have reported that after Caliph 'Umar appointed Abu Huraira governor of Bahrain in 21 A.H., the people informed the Caliph that Abu Huraira had amassed great wealth and had purchased many horses.

'Umar therefore deposed him in 23 A.H. As soon as Abu Huraira entered the court, the Caliph said: "O enemy of Allah and enemy of His Book! Have you stolen Allah's property?" He replied, "I never committed theft, but the people have given me gifts."

Ibn Sa'ad in Tabaqat, Volume IV, page 90, Ibn Hajar Asqalani in Isaba, and Ibn Abd al-Rabbih in Iqdu'l-Farid, Volume I, write that the Caliph said: "When I made you the governor of Bahrain, you had not even shoes on your feet, but now I have heard that you have purchased horses for 1,600 dinars.

How did you acquire this wealth?' He replied, 'These were men's gifts which profit has multiplied much.' The Caliph's face grew red with anger, and he lashed him so violently that his back bled. Then he ordered the 10,000 dinars which Abu Huraira had collected in Bahrain be taken from him, and deposited in the account of the Baitu'-Mal."

This was not the first time that 'Umar beat Abu Huraira. Muslim writes in his 'Sahih', Volume I, page 34, that during the time of the Prophet, 'Umar Ibn Khattab beat Abu Huraira so severely that the latter fell down on the ground. Ibn Abi<sup>I</sup>I-Hadid writes in his commentary on 'Nahju<sup>I</sup>I-Balagha', Volume I, page 360: "Abu Ja<sup>I</sup>far Asqalani has said: 'According to our great men, Abu Huraira was a wicked fellow. The hadith narrated by him were not acceptable.

'Umar beat him with a lash and told him that he had changed hadith and had attributed false sayings to the Holy Prophet." Ibn Asakir in his 'Ta'rikh Kabir', and Muttaqi in his 'Kanzu'l-Umma' report that Caliph 'Umar lashed him, rebuked him, and forbade him to narrate hadith from the Holy Prophet.

'Umar said: "Because you narrate hadith in large numbers from the Holy Prophet, you are fit only for attributing lies to him. (That is, one expects a wicked man like you to utter only lies about the Holy Prophet.) So you must stop narrating hadith from the Prophet; otherwise, I will send you to the land of Dus." (A clan in Yemen, to which Abu Huraira belonged.)

Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, in his commentary on 'Nahju'l-Balagha', Volume I, page 360 (printed in Egypt) reports from his teacher, Imam Abu Ja'far Asqalani, that 'Ali said, "Beware of the greatest liar among the people, Abu Huraira Dusi." Ibn Qutayba, in 'Ta'wil al-Mukhtalifu'l-Hadith', and Hakim in 'Mustadrak', Volume III, and Dhahabi in 'Talkhisu'l-Mustadrak', and Muslim in his 'Sahih', Volume II, reporting about the characteristics of Abu Huraira, all say that A'ysha repeatedly contradicted him and said, "Abu Huraira is a great liar who fabricates hadith and attributes them to the Holy Prophet."

In short, it is not we alone who have rejected Abu Huraira. According to Caliph 'Umar, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha, and other companions and followers of the Prophet said that he was completely unreliable. Accordingly, the Sheikhs of the 'Mu'tazilite's and their Imams, and the 'Hanafi' ulama' generally reject the hadith narrated by Abu Huraira. Moreover, in his commentary on Muslim's 'Sahih', Volume IV, Nadwi emphasizes this point: "Imam Abu Hanifa said, 'The companions of the Prophet were generally pious and just.

I accept every hadith with evidence narrated by them, but I do not accept the hadith whose source is Abu Huraira, Anas Ibn Malik, or Samra Ibn Jundab."

We reject the same Abu Huraira, whom Caliph 'Umar lashed and called a thief and a liar. He was rejected by Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha, Imam Abu Hanifa, and by many companions and followers of the Holy Prophet.

We reject the same Abu Huraira who was rejected and called a liar by our master, the chief of the monotheists, 'Ali, and by the Holy Imams and descendants of the Prophet. We reject Abu Huraira who was a belly-worshiper, who, despite knowing the superiority of 'Ali, ignored him.

He preferred his patron, the damned Mu'awiya, sat at his table to relish dainty dishes, and concocted hadith in opposition to 'Ali. In view of our discussion so far, you and I are obliged to see to it that when a hadith from the Holy Prophet is under consideration, we should first refer it to the Holy Qur'an. If the hadith agrees with the Qur'an, we should accept it, otherwise not.

# Reply to the supposed hadith that Allah said "I am pleased with Abu Bakr – is he also pleased with me?"

The hadith which you narrated earlier (although it is one-sided) may be referred to the Holy Qur'an. If there is no hindrance, we will surely accept it. One ayat of the Qur'an, however, says:

"And certainly We created man and know what his mind suggests. We are nearer to him than his jugular vein." (50: 16)

You are aware that hablu'l-warid (jugular vein) is a common expression used to express extreme nearness. The meaning of this verse is that Allah is All-Knowing. Nothing is hidden from Him, however deep it may be in man's breast.

Allah knows the secrets of our hearts. And in the Chapter of "Yunus" He says:

"And you are not (engaged) in any affair, nor do you recite concerning it any portion of the Qur'an, nor do you do any work but We are witnesses over you when you enter into it. And there does not lie concealed from your Lord the weight of an atom in the earth or in heaven, nor anything less than that nor greater, but it is in a clear book." (10:61)

According to these verses, and according to common sense, nothing is hidden from Allah. He knows what man does or thinks.

Now compare this hadith with these two verses, and see whether they can be reconciled. How is it possible that Allah Almighty would not be aware of the pleasure of Abu Bakr, so that He Himself might be obligated to ask him whether he was pleased with Him or not? Common sense and the Holy Qur'an indicate that this "hadith" is false.

# Ahadith in praise of Abu Bakr and 'Umar and their disqualification

Sheikh: There is no doubt that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah will show Himself to all the people in general, and to Abu Bakr in particular." He also said, "Allah did not put anything into my breast that He did not put into Abu Bakr's breast." He also said: "I and Abu Bakr are like two horses who are equal to each other in a race." Again he said: "In the sky there are 80,000 angels who pray for blessings for him who is a friend of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. And in the next level of the sky there are 80,000 angels who curse him who is an enemy of Abu Bakr and 'Umar."

The Holy Prophet also said: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar are the best of all mankind from beginning to end." Abu Bakr's and 'Umar's rank can be assessed from the hadith in which the Holy Prophet said: "Allah made me from His light, Abu Bakr from my light, and 'Umar from Abu Bakr's light, and my followers from 'Umar's light. 'Umar is the lamp of the People of Paradise." There are many such hadith recorded in our authentic books. I have narrated only a few so that you may know the real position of the caliphs.

Well-Wisher: The meaning of these hadith leads to heresy and infidelity, which clearly proves that the Holy Prophet could not have said such things. The first hadith implies that Allah has a body and it is infidelity to believe that Allah has a body. The second hadith indicates that Abu Bakr shared in what was

revealed to the Holy Prophet. The third hadith implies that the Holy Prophet was in no way superior to Abu Bakr. The other hadith conflict with innumerable hadith, which are accepted by both sects, that the best people of the world are the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants.

Apart from these clear facts, your own distinguished ulama', like Muqaddasi in his 'Tadhkiratu'l-Muzu'a', Firuzabadi Shafi'i in his 'Safaru's-Sa'adat', Hasan Ibn Athir Dhahabi in 'Mizanu'l-I'tidal', Abu Bakr Ahmad Ibn 'Ali Khatib Baghdadi in his 'Ta'rikh', Abu'l-Faraj Ibn Jauzi in 'Kitabu'l-Muzu'a', and Jalalu'd-Din Suyuti in 'Al-Lu''Ali'l-Masnu'a fi'l-Abadusi'l-Muzu'a', all concluded that these hadith are fabricated. They all insisted that these hadith are forged. They conflict with The Holy Qur'an and with common sense.

Sheikh: But consider another hadith, which surely is authentic. The Holy Prophet said: "Abu Bakr and 'Umar are the masters of the old men of Paradise."

Well-Wisher: If you would examine this supposed hadith more closely, you might find that, apart from the fact that your own ulama' have rejected it, this hadith cannot possibly be from the Holy Prophet. Everyone knows that Paradise will not be inhabited by old people. There are no gradual changes there. There are many reports accepted by both sects which relate to this matter. One of them is the affair of Ashja'iyya, an old woman who came to the Prophet. In the course of his talk, the Prophet said: "Old women will not enter Paradise."

The woman was deeply saddened and she said, weeping, "O Prophet of Allah, this means I shall not enter Paradise." Saying this, she departed. The Prophet said: "Tell her that on that day she will be young and will enter Paradise." Then he recited the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"Surely We have made them to grow into a (new) growth, then We have made them virgins, loving, equals in age, for the sake of the companions of the right hand." (56:35–38)

In another hadith accepted by both you and us, the Holy Prophet said: "When the inhabitants of Paradise enter Heaven, they will be youthful with pure clean faces, curly hair, charming eyes, 33 years of age."

Sheikh: Your statements are true as they are, but this is a specific hadith.

Well-Wisher: I don't understand. What do you mean by a "specific hadith"? Do you mean that Allah will send a group of old men to Paradise so that Abu Bakr and 'Umar may be their masters? Besides, your own prominent ulama' regard this hadith as fabricated. The Prophet gave us a procedure for validating hadith. I stated earlier that any hadith which is not consistent with the Holy Qur'an is to be rejected.

Our own scholars reject several hadith purported to have originated with the Prophet or with the Holy Imams on the basis of the principle enunciated by the Prophet: "Whenever a hadith is reported as having come from me, refer it to the Holy Qur'an; if it is consistent with it, accept it; otherwise, reject it." Accordingly, our scholars do not accept hadith which are inconsistent with the Holy Qur'an. I stated earlier that your own ulama' have written treatises on the rejection of fabricated hadith.

For example, Sheikh Majdu'd-Din Muhammad ibn Yaqub Firuzabadi in 'Safaru's-Sa'ada' (p. 142), Jalalu'd-Din Suyuti in 'Kitabu'l-Lu''Ali', Ibn Jauzi in 'Muzu'a', Muqaddasi in 'Tadhkiratu'l-Muzu'a', and Sheikh Muhammad ibn Darwish (Mashhur be Hut al-Beiruti) in 'Asna'l-Talib' – all have said that the chain of narrators of the hadith stating that Abu Bakr and 'Umar are the masters of the old men of Paradise includes Yahya ibn 'Anbasa. Dhahabi says that this Yahya is an unreliable narrator, and Ibn Jan held that Yahya used to fabricate hadith.

Thus, apart from my previous arguments, even your own ulama' consider it a false hadith. In fact, it is probable that it was fabricated by the followers of Abu Bakr, the Umayya family. In order to humiliate the Bani Hashim and the progeny of the Holy Prophet, they used to fabricate hadith parallel to those authentically narrated in praise of the family of the Prophet.

Men like Abu Huraira, in order to gain access to the ruling coterie of the Bani Umayya, often fabricated hadith. Because of their hostility to the descendants of the Prophet, they concocted hadith parallel to those accepted by both Shi'as and Sunni ulama'.

Nawab: Which is the accepted hadith in this case?

## Hadith that both Hasan and Husain are the foremost of youth of paradise

Well-Wisher: The authentic hadith is that the Prophet said: "Hasan and Husain are the foremost of the youth of Paradise and their father is superior to them." Many ulama' have narrated this hadith. For example, Khatib Khawarizmi in 'Manaqib', Mir Sayyid 'Ali Abu Abdu'r-Rahman Nisa'i in Khasa'is-il-Alawi (three hadith), Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in 'Fusulu'l-Muhimma', page 159, Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', Chapter 54, Sibt Ibn Jauzi in 'Tadhkira', quoting from Tirmidhi, Ibn Maja, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal,

Sibt Ibn Jauzi on p. 133 of 'Tadhkiratu'l–Mawadda', Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad', Tirmidhi in 'Sunan', and Muhammad ibn Yusuf Ganji Shafi'i in 'Kifayatu't–Talib', Chapter 97, recorded this hadith and the latter added that the great narrator of hadith, Imam Abdu'l–Qasim Tibrani, also recorded this hadith in 'Mu'ajamu'l–Kabir', and listed all its various narrators, such as the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, 'Umar ibn Khattab (the second Caliph), Hudhaifa Yamani, Abu Sa'id Khadri, Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari, Abu Huraira, Usama ibn Zaid, and Abdullah ibn 'Umar.

Thereafter, Muhammad ibn Yusuf has commented that it is an unquestionably genuine hadith. The unbroken continuity of the chain of narrators of this hadith is a proof of its being authentic. Further, Hafiz Abu Nu'aim Isfahani in 'Hilyatu'l–Auliya', Ibn Asakir in 'Ta'rikh Kabir', Volume IV, page 206, Hikam in Mustadrak, Ibn Hajar Makki in 'Sawa'iq Muhriqa'. – in short, all of your eminent scholars have confirmed the authenticity of this hadith.

Sheikh: But consider this hadith, the authenticity of which no one will deny. The Holy Prophet said: "In whatever nation Abu Bakr lives, it is not proper that any other person be preferred to him." This hadith proves that Abu Bakr is superior to the whole umma.

Well-Wisher: I regret that you accept a hadith so uncritically. Had this hadith been narrated by the Prophet, he himself would have acted upon it. But he gave preference to 'Ali in the presence of Abu Bakr. Was Abu Bakr not present at the time of Mubahala when 'Ali was chosen as the Prophet's self?

In the Battle of Tabuk, when the older and more experienced Abu Bakr was there, why did the Prophet make Hazrat 'Ali his deputy and Caliph? Why was Abu Bakr deposed by divine command in favor of 'Ali when the older man had been sent to Mecca to preach Islam and to recite verses from the ninth Chapter of the Qur'an, "The Immunity"?

While Abu Bakr was present, why did the Prophet take 'Ali with him to Mecca to break the idols, letting him mount his own shoulders, ordering him to smash the idol Hubal? Why, in the presence of Abu Baker, did the Prophet send 'Ali to preach among the people of Yemen? Finally, why did the Prophet make 'Ali his successor and Vicegerent instead of Abu Bakr?

Sheikh: There is a very strong hadith from the Holy Prophet which cannot be contradicted. It is related by Amr ibn As who said: "One day I asked the Prophet: 'O Prophet of Allah! Whom do you love most among the women?' He replied, 'A'ysha.' I said: 'Whom do you love best among the men?' He replied, 'A'ysha's father, Abu Bakr." Since the Prophet preferred Abu Bakr over all other men, he was superior to the whole community. This fact in itself is the most compelling proof of the legitimacy of Abu Bakr's caliphate.

## Reply to supposed hadith that Abu Bakr and A'ysha were preferred by the Prophet

Well-Wisher: Apart from the fact that this hadith is concocted by Abu Bakr's supporters, it is inconsistent with authentic hadith which are accepted by both sects. This hadith should be considered from two points of view: from the side of Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha and from the side of Abu Bakr. The Prophet could not have said that of all women he loved A'ysha most. I have already stated earlier that this contradicts many authentic hadith in both Sunni and Shi'as books.

Sheikh: Which hadith does this tradition contradict?

Well-Wisher: There are many hadith about the mother of the Imams, Fatima Zahra, narrated by your own ulama', which contradict your statement. Hafiz Abu Bakr Baihaqi in his 'Ta'rikh', Hafiz Ibn Abdu'l-Bar in 'Isti'ab', Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 'Mawaddatu'l-Qurba', and others of your ulama' have reported that the Prophet said repeatedly: "Fatima is the best of all the women of my community."

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad' and Hafiz Abu Bakr Shirazi in 'Nuzulu'l-Qur'an Fi 'Ali' narrate from Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyya, and he from the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, Ibn Abdu'l-Barr in Isti'ab, in the account of Fatima, related from Ummu'l-Mu'minin Khadija, from Abdu'l-Warith Ibn Sufyan and from Abu Dawud, and Anas Ibn Malik, Sheikh Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in Chapter 55 of 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani in 'Mawaddatu'l-Qurba', Mawadda XIII – these and many other narrators of hadith have reported from Anas Ibn Malik that the Prophet said:

"There are four pre-eminent women of the world: Mary, daughter of Imran; Asiya, daughter of Mazahim; Khadija, daughter of Khalid; and Fatima, daughter of Muhammad." Khatib in his 'Ta'rikh' Baghdad narrates that the Prophet declared these four women the best of all the women of the world. Then he pronounced Fatima to be superior to them all in this world and in the hereafter.

Muhammad Ibn Isma'il Bukhari in his Sahih, and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad' narrate from A'ysha Bint Abi Bakr that the Prophet said to Fatima: "O Fatima, I give you the good tidings that Allah made you superior to all the women of the world, and made you the purest of all the women of Islam."

Also Bukhari in his Sahih, Part IV, page 64, Muslim in Sahih, Part II, in the Chapter "Merits of Fatima," Hamidi in his Jam'a Bainu's-Sahihain, Abdi in his Jam'a Bainu's-Sihahu's-Sitta – these and many others have reported on the authority of Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha that the Prophet said: "O Fatima! Are you not happy that you are the chief of the women of all the world?"

Ibn Hajar Asqalani has quoted the same passage in his Isaba in connection with the life of Fatima with the version: "You are the best of all the women of the world." Also, Bukhari, Muslim, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Tibrani, and Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi – all have recorded this hadith.

In addition, Bukhari and Muslim, each in his Sahih, Imam Tha'labi in his Tafsir, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in 'Musnad', Tibrani in 'Mu'jamu'l-Kabir', Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', Chapter 32, on the authority of the Tafsir of Ibn Abi Hatim, 'Manaqib' of Hakim, Wasit and Wahidi, the 'Hilyatu'l-Auliya' of Hafiz Abu Nu'aim Isfahani, and Fara'id of Hamwaini, Ibn Hajar Makki in 'Sawa'iq Muhriqa', under verse 14 on the authority of Ahmad, Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi'i in 'Matalibu's-Su'ul', page 8,

Tabari in Tafsir, Wahidi in 'Asbabu'n–Nuzul', Ibn Maghazili in 'Manaqib', Muhibu'd–Din Tabari in 'Riyazu'n–Nuzra', Mu'min Shablanji in 'Nuru'l–Absar', Zamakhshari in 'Tafsir', Imam Fakhru'd–Din Razi in 'Tafsir Kabir', Sayyid Abu Bakr Shahabu'd–Din Alawi in 'Rishfatu's–Sadi min Bahr al–Faza'il al–Baniu'l–Nabi'il–Hadi', Chapter 1, pages 22–23 on the authority of 'Tafsir' of Baghawi, 'Tafsir' of Tha'labi, 'Manaqib' of Ahmad, 'Kabir', and 'Ausat' of Tibrani, and Sadi, Sheikh Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amir Shabrawi Shafi'i in 'Al–'Ittihaf', page 5 on the authority of Hakim, Tibrani, and Ahmad, Jalalu'd–Din Suyuti in 'Ihya'u'l–Mayyit' on the authority of the 'Tafsir's of Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Mardawaih, and 'Mu'jamu'l–Kabir' of Tibrani; and Ibn Abi Hatim and Hakim.

In short, most of your eminent ulama' (barring a few staunch followers of the Bani Umayya and enemies of the Ahlul Bayt), have narrated from Abdullah ibn Abbas and others that when the following verse of

the Holy Qur'an was revealed:

"Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives; and whoever earns good, We give him more of good therein..." (42:23)

a group of companions asked "O Prophet of Allah, who are those of your relatives whose love has been made obligatory on us by Allah?" The Prophet replied, "They are 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husain." Some hadith contain the words "and their sons," meaning Hasan and Husain.

## Shafi'is acknowledgement that love for Ahlul Bayt is obligatory

Even Ibn Hajar (a very intolerant person) in his 'Sawa'iq Muhriqa', page 88, Hafiz Jamalu'd-Din Zarandi in 'Mi'raju'l-Rasul', Sheikh Abdullah Shabrawi in 'Kitabu'l-Ittihaf', page 29, Muhammad Ibn 'Ali Sabban of Egypt in 'As'afu'r-Ra'ghibin', page 119, and others have related from Imam Muhammad Ibn Idris Shafi'i, who is one of your four Imams and the religious head of the Shafi'is, that he used to say: "O Ahlul Bayt of the Prophet of Allah! Love for you has been made obligatory for us by Allah, as revealed in the Holy Qur'an (referring to the above verse).

It is sufficient for your dignity that if one does not send salutations to you in the ritual prayers, his prayers will not be accepted." Now I ask you, can the one-sided hadith reported by you stand against all these authentic hadith which have been accepted by both the Sunni and Shi'as sects?

## Misconception regarding Holy Prophet's love for A'ysha

In regard to the Prophet's love for you A'ysha, do you think that because of his sensual desires he loved A'ysha more than Fatima? It is true that A'ysha was his wife and therefore an Ummu'l-Mu'minin (mother of the believers) like the other wives of the Prophet.

But is it conceivable that he loved A'ysha more than he loved Fatima, whose love was made obligatory in the Holy Qur'an, for whom the verse of purity was revealed and who was included in the Mubahala? Surely you know that the Prophet and the vicegerents were not motivated by sensual desires, and that they looked only to Allah.

This dedication was particularly true for the last of the Prophets. He loved those whom Allah loved. Should we reject these authentic hadith which have been accepted by ulama' of both sects, and which agree with the verses of the Holy Qur'an, or should we regard the hadith that you have just narrated as fabricated?

You claim that the Prophet said that he loved Abu Bakr more than any other man. But this claim is also at variance with many other authentic hadith which have been narrated by your own ulama', who have insisted that, according to the Prophet, the most dearly loved man was 'Ali.

#### Holy Prophet preferred 'Ali to all other men

Sheikh Sulayman Balkhi in his 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', Chapter 55, narrates from Tirmidhi Buraida's hadith that, according to the Prophet, the most dearly loved woman was Fatima and the most dearly loved man was 'Ali. Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ganji Shafi'i in his 'Kifayatu't-Talib', Chapter 91, reports on the authority of Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha that she said: "Allah did not create any one whom the Holy Prophet loved more than 'Ali." He adds that this is the hadith which Ibn Jarir in his 'Manaqib', and Ibn Asakir Damishqi in his translation have narrated from 'Ali.

Muhyi'd-Din and Imamu'l-Haramain Ahmad Ibn Abdullah Shafi'i relates from Tirmidhi in 'Dhakha'iru'l-Uqba' that people asked A'ysha which woman was loved most by the Prophet, and she replied, "Fatima." Then she was asked about the man loved most by the Prophet and she replied, "Her husband, 'Ali bins Abu Talib."

Further, he related from the Mukhalis of Dhahabi and Hafiz Abu'l-Qasim Damishqi and he from A'ysha that she said: "I have not seen a man more loved by the Holy Prophet than 'Ali, nor a woman more loved than Fatima."

In addition, the Sheikh relates from Hafiz Khajandi and he from 'Ma'azatu'l-Ghifariyya' that she said: "I went to have an audience with the Prophet in A'ysha's house while 'Ali was outside the house. The Prophet said to A'ysha, 'This ('Ali) is the dearest to me, and the most honored among all men. Recognize his right and pay respectful regard to his position."

Sheikh Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn Amir Shabrawi Shafi'i, who is one of your prominent ulama', recorded in 'Kitabu'l-Ittihaf bi Hubbi'l-Ashraf', page 9, Sulayman Balkhi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', and Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi'i in 'Matalibu's-Su'ul', page 6, from Tirmidhi, and he from Jami' ibn 'Umar, all narrated the following: "I went to Ummu'l-Mu'minin A'ysha with my aunt (father's sister), and we inquired of her who was loved most by the Holy Prophet. She replied, 'Among women it was Fatima and among men, her husband, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib.""

This same hadith has been related by Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani Shafi'i in 'Mawaddatu'l-Qurba', 'Mawadda II', with the variation that Jami' ibn 'Umar said that he received this reply from his aunt.

Similarly, Khatib Khawarizmi has related this hadith from Jami' ibn 'Umar, and the latter from A'ysha at the end of Chapter 4 of his 'Manaqib'. Ibn Hajar Makki, in 'Sawa'iq Muhriqa', towards the end of Chapter 2, after recording 40 hadith on the merits of 'Ali, relates the following hadith from A'ysha: "Among women, Fatima was the woman most loved by the Holy Prophet of Allah and among men, her husband." Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi'i, in 'Matalib–us Su'ul', page 7, after recording several specific hadith on this issue, expresses his own conclusion in the following words:

<sup>&</sup>quot;These authentic and unequivocal narrations prove that Fatima was the most beloved of the Prophet

above all other women. She is the highest in rank of all the women of Paradise and also the foremost of women of this community as well as the foremost of the women of Medina."

These reliable hadith clearly establish that of all creatures, 'Ali and Fatima were the most loved by the Prophet. Another proof of the Prophet's preferring 'Ali to other men is the "Hadith of the Bird" (Hadith al-Ta'ir). This hadith is so well known and so commonly accepted that we need not mention all its sources. I will mention only some of them.

#### Hadith of the roasted bird

Most of your prominent ulama', like Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nisa'i, and Sijistani in their Siha, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in his 'Musnad', Ibn Abi'l-Hadid in his commentary on 'Nahju'l-Balagha', Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in 'Fusulu'l-Muhimma', and Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi in 'Yanabiu'l-Mawadda', Chapter 8, and a host of other reliable authors have recorded the 'hadith al-Ta'ir' in their works. They verify that this hadith was reported by 24 narrators of hadith from Anas Ibn Malik.

Ibn Sabbagh Maliki in his 'Fusulu'l-Muhimma' writes about it in these words: "In the books of authentic hadith and reliable narrations, the hadith al-Ta'ir from Anas Ibn Malik is indisputably correct." Sibt Ibn Jauzi, on page 23 of his 'Tadhkira', and 'Sunan' of Tirmidhi and Mas'udi on page 49 of Volume II of 'Muruju'dh-Dhahab', have focussed especially on the last part of this hadith which contains the Prophet's prayer and its acceptance by Allah.

Imam Abu Abdu'r-Rahman Nisa'i in the 9th hadith of his 'Khasa'isu'l-Alawi', and Hafiz Ibn Iqda and Muhammad Ibn Jarir Tabari have all referred to the unbroken chain of narrators, and to the authentic sources of this hadith, saying that it was narrated by 35 companions of the Holy Prophet from Anas Ibn Malik.

In short, all your distinguished ulama' have verified the authenticity of this hadith and have included it in their books. Allama Sayyid Hamid Husain has dedicated an entire volume of his 'Abaqatu'l–Anwar' to this hadith. He collected all reliable sources from your distinguished ulama' and clearly proved the authenticity of this hadith.

According to this hadith, one day a woman brought a gift of a roasted bird to the Prophet. Before eating it, the Prophet, raising his hands, invoked Allah thus: "O Allah! Of your whole creation, send the person who is the dearest to you and to me, so that he may partake of this roasted bird with me."

'Ali then came in and ate the roasted bird with the Holy Prophet.

Some of your books, such as Fusulu'l-Muhimma of Maliki, Ta'rikh of Hafiz Nishapuri, Kifayatu't-Talib of Ganji Shafi'i, and Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, etc., in which the hadith has been reported from Anas ibn Malik, have recorded that Anas said: "The Prophet had not finished his invocation when 'Ali came into the house, but I kept the matter secret. When 'Ali stamped his foot the third time, the Prophet

ordered me to let him in.

When 'Ali entered, the Prophet said: 'Allah's Mercy be upon you; what brings you to me?' 'Ali then told him that he came to him three times but was allowed entrance only this time. The Prophet asked what made me behave like that, and I replied: "The truth is that, on hearing your invocation, I wished that such an honor might fall to the lot of someone of my tribe." Now I ask you respected people whether the invocation of the Holy Prophet was accepted or rejected by Allah.

Sheikh: Obviously Allah accepted it since He has promised in the Holy Qur'an that He would accept the Prophet's invocation. Moreover, Allah knew that the Prophet would not make an inappropriate request. So Allah always accepted his invocation.

Well-Wisher: Allah sent 'Ali, the most deserving person in His creation, to the Prophet. Your own scholars have confirmed this event. Muhammad ibn Talha Shafi'i has in his Matalib-us Su'ul, Chapter 1, Part 5, page 15, established the high position of 'Ali as the beloved of Allah and of the Prophet on the basis of the hadith of Ensign (Rayat) and the hadith of the Bird (Ta'ir). In that connection he says: "The intention of the Prophet was that the people should understand the unique and high distinction of 'Ali, who attained the highest pinnacle to be reached by the pious."

Also Hafiz and Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Ganji Shafi'i (died 658 A.H.) writes in his Kifayatu't-talib, Chapter 33, referring to the virtues of 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib, that this hadith clearly proves that 'Ali was the dearest person in creation to Allah.

Later he says that Hakim Abu Abdullah Hafiz Nishapuri related this hadith al-Ta'ir of Anas from 86 narrators and also recorded the names of all 86 narrators. (See Kifayatu't-Talib, Chapter 32). That "hadith" quoted by you, in comparison with the hadith narrated by your own high-ranking ulama' (excepting a few stubborn fanatics), cannot be relied upon and would be rejected by learned men.

Sheikh: I'm afraid that you have made up your mind not to accept what we say.

Well-Wisher: How can you attribute such bias to me? Can you cite a single instance in which you have put forward a cogent argument and I have unreasonably rejected it? I swear that in religious debates with the Jews, the Christians, the Hindus, and the Brahmins, the ignorant Baha'is in Iran, the Qadanis in India, and the materialists – in all of these circumstances, I never acted obstinately in my argument. I never adopted a refractory attitude towards these unbelievers – how could I do so with you, my brothers in Islam?

Sheikh: We read the account of your debate with the Hindus and Brahmins of Lahore in the newspapers. We were greatly impressed by it. Although we had not met you, we felt we were morally affiliated with you. I hope that Allah will lead you and us to the right path. We believe that if there is any doubt about a certain hadith, we should, according to your proposal, refer it to the Holy Qur'an.

However, if you question the excellence of Caliph Abu Bakr and the mode of caliphate of the major caliphs, and if you consider the hadith dubious, will you also hesitate to believe an argument based on the verses of the Holy Qur'an?

Well-Wisher: May Allah not grant us the day when we doubt facts based on the Holy Qur'an or authentic hadith. However, when we have entered into a religious debate with any nation or community, they also argued from the verses of the Holy Qur'an to establish their point of view.

Since the verses of the Holy Qur'an have various levels of meaning, the last Prophet, in order to guard the people against misunderstanding, did not leave the Holy Qur'an as the sole source of guidance. As has been acknowledged by both sects (Shi'as and Sunnis), he himself said: "I leave with you two great things: the Book of Allah (Qur'an) and my descendants.

If you are attached to these two, never, never shall you go astray after me. Verily, these two shall never be separated from one another until they meet me at the Fountain of Kauthar." For this reason, the meaning of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an should be sought either from the Prophet, the primary interpreter of the Holy Qur'an, or after him, from the equals of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy descendants of the Prophet. The Holy Qur'an says:

"So ask you the people of the Remembrance if ye know not." (21:7)

# "People of the remembrance" are the Ahlul Muhammad, the descendants of the Holy Prophet

The 'Ahle'dh–dhikr' means the people of the Remembrance, 'Ali and the Holy Imams, his descendants, who are the equals of the Holy Qur'an. Sheikh Sulayman Balkhi Hanafi–in his 'Yanabiu'l–Mawadda', Chapter 39, quoting from the 'Tafsir al–Kashfu'l–Bayan' of Imam Tha'labi, narrates from Jabir Ibn Abdullah Ansari, who said: "'Ali said: 'We descendants of the Holy Prophet are the people of the Remembrance." Since Dhikr, "Remembrance," is one of the names of the Holy Qur'an, this family contains the people of the Qur'an.

As reported by your and our ulama', 'Ali said: "Ask me anything you like before I leave you. Ask me about the Holy Book (The Qur'an) since I know about every verse in it – whether it was revealed in the night or during the day, on a plain field or in the steep mountains.

By Allah, no verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed but I know about what it was revealed, where it was revealed, and about what person it was revealed. Allah Almighty has endowed me with an eloquent tongue and a wise mind."

Therefore, basing arguments upon verses of the Holy Qur'an should be in accordance with their authentic meaning and the interpretations given by those capable of reliable commentary. Otherwise,

everyone would give his own interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an, according to his scope of knowledge and faith, and that would only result in differences of opinion and conflicting ideas. With this in mind, I ask you to cite your verses.

# Citation of a verse of the Holy Qur'an about the appointment of the four caliphs, and a reply

Sheikh: Allah clearly says in the Holy Qur'an,

"Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah, and those who are with him are strong against 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, (being) the traces of their prostration." (48:29)

First, this verse proves the superiority of Abu Bakr. Second, it vindicates the position of the four caliphs as opposed to the claim of the Shi'as sect that 'Ali was the first caliph. This verse unequivocally states that 'Ali was the fourth caliph.

Well-Wisher: Certainly this verse does not give any obvious indication about the mode of appointment of the caliphs or about the excellence of Abu Bakr. Therefore, you must point out at what place of the verse this meaning is concealed.

Sheikh: In the beginning of this verse, the phrase "those who are with him" refers to that great man who was with the Prophet on the 'Night of the Cave.' The order of succession in the caliphate is also apparent from this verse. "Those who are with him" means Abu Bakr, who accompanied the Prophet in the Cave of Thawr on the night of Hijra. The phrase "strong against unbelievers" means 'Umar Ibn Khattab, who was very harsh with the unbelievers.

The phrase "compassionate to each other" refers to Uthman Ibn Affan, who was very kind. The phrase "on their faces are their marks, the traces of their prostration" refers to 'Ali. It is clear that 'Ali is the fourth Caliph, not the first, since Allah mentioned him in the fourth place.

Well-Wisher: I wonder how I should reply so that I may not be accused of self interest. No Qur'anic commentaries, including those of your great ulama' have interpreted these words as you have. Had this verse been about the order of the caliphate, the first day after the death of the Prophet, when 'Ali, the Bani Hashim, and the distinguished companions of the Prophet raised objections and refused to swear allegiance to the Caliph, baseless arguments would not have been put forward.

They could have given a silencing reply by citing this Holy verse there and then. Hence, it is clear that your interpretation is an afterthought. None of the great commentators of your sect, like Tabari, Imam Tha'labi, Fazil Nishapuri, Jalalu'd-Din Suyuti, Qazi Baidhawi, Jarullah Zamakhshari, Imam Fakhru'd-Din

Razi, or others have interpreted it thus. I fail to understand how you derive this meaning. Where and by whom was such a meaning given? This verse, from the literary and technical point of view, also goes against what you say.

Sheikh: I never expected that you would stand so boldly in opposition to the obvious meaning of such a verse. Of course if you have anything to say against this you may let us know so that the real position may be established.

Well-Wisher: Considering the grammatical construction of the verse, if we interpret its meaning as you have, it would either mean that Muhammad is Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Uthman, and 'Ali or that Abu Bakr, 'Umar, Uthman and 'Ali are Muhammad! Even beginning students know that this sort of interpretation is grammatically inaccurate. Besides, if this verse referred to the four caliphs, there would have been the conjunction "and" to coordinate words to give your meaning, but it is not so.

All the commentators of your own sect say that this verse refers to all the believers. Moreover, the qualities enumerated in this verse apparently refer to one person only, who remained with the Prophet from the very beginning, and not to four persons. And if we say that one person was the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, it would be more appropriate according to common sense and hadith than naming any others.

## Argument from the "verse of cave" and its reply

Sheikh: It is strange that you claim that you do not indulge in misleading arguments, although your views are quite perverse. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an, "If you will not aid him, Allah certainly aided him when those who disbelieved expelled him, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion:

'Grieve not, surely Allah is with us.' So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see..." (9:40)

First, this verse supports the previous verse and proves that the phrase "and those who are with him," refers to Abu Bakr who was with the Prophet in the cave on the night of the Hijra.

Second, the fact that he was with the Holy Prophet is in itself a great proof of Abu Bakr's merit and his superiority to the whole umma. The Prophet could foretell that Abu Bakr was his successor, and that the existence of the Caliph after him was necessary. Therefore, he realized that he should protect Abu Bakr as he would his own.

So, he took him with him so that Abu Bakr might not be caught by the enemy. Such treatment was not shown to any other Muslim. This clearly proves his right to the caliphate in preference to others.

Well-Wisher: If you would look at the verse more objectively, you would see that your conclusion is

wrong.

Sheikh: Can you advance reasons against the conclusions that we have drawn?

Well-Wisher: I should like you to pass over this issue at the moment because speech breeds speech. Some biased people may interpret our comments with ill will. I do not wish to incite hatred. One might conclude that we wish to dishonor the caliphs, though the position of each individual is fixed, and it is not necessary to make useless interpretations.

Sheikh: You are being evasive. Be assured that reasonable argument does not breed contempt; it removes misunderstandings.

Well-Wisher: Since you have used the word "evasive," I am constrained to reply, so that you may know that I am not avoiding the issue. I wanted to maintain the propriety of our debate. I hope that you will not find fault with me. You made a thoughtless assertion that the Prophet knew that Abu Bakr would be his Caliph after him. Therefore, it was necessary for him to save his life, and so he took him with him.

### Facts about Abu Bakr's accompanying the Holy Prophet

Reply to your statement is simple. If Abu Bakr had been the only Caliph after the Prophet, such a view could be possible, but you believe in four caliphs. If this argument of yours is correct, and if it had been necessary for the Prophet to safeguard the life of the caliph, then the Prophet should have taken with him all four caliphs in Mecca. Why would he leave three others there, one of them in the perilous position of sleeping in the Prophet's bed, which was dangerous on a night when his enemies had gathered to murder him?

According to Tabari (Part III of his History), Abu Bakr was not aware of the Prophet's movement from Mecca. When he went to 'Ali and asked him about the Prophet, he told him that the Prophet had gone to the cave. 'Ali told him that if he had any business with him, he should run up to him. Abu Bakr ran and met the Prophet on the way.

So he accompanied him. This series of events indicates that the Prophet did not intend to take Abu Bakr with him. The latter accompanied him from the middle of the way without the Prophet's permission.

According to other reports, Abu Bakr was taken on the journey for fear of his causing a disturbance and giving information to the enemy. Your own ulama' have admitted this fact. For instance, Sheikh Abu'l–Qasim Ibn Sabbagh, who is one of the well known ulama' of your sect, writing in his 'Al–Nur wa'l–Burhan' about the life of the Prophet, narrates from Muhammad Ibn Ishaq, and he from Hasan Ibn Thabit Ansari, that he went to Mecca to perform the Umra before the emigration of the Prophet. He saw that the Quraish unbelievers were railing at the Prophet's companions.

The Prophet ordered 'Ali to sleep in his bed, and, fearing that Abu Bakr would disclose this fact to the

unbelievers, the Prophet took Abu Bakr with him.

Finally, it would have been better if you had pointed out what evidence there is in this verse to show the superiority of Abu Bakr or whether accompanying the Prophet on a journey is proof that one is entitled to the caliphate.

Sheikh: The evidence is there. First, the companionship of the Prophet and that Allah called him the Prophet's companion is in itself a qualification. Second, the Prophet himself said: "Verily, Allah is with us." Third, the sending down of tranquility upon him from Allah, as mentioned in this verse, is the most compelling proof of Abu Bakr's excellence. Therefore, all of these points taken together indicate his superiority to others regarding the caliphate.

Well-Wisher: No one hesitates to acknowledge the position of Abu Bakr, an elderly Muslim, one of the distinguished companions and the father of the wife of the Prophet. However, these reasons do not prove his superiority of the caliphate. If you try to prove your point with such statements before impartial men, you will be courting strong criticism. They will say that companionship with virtuous people is no proof of merit or superiority.

For example, we often see that bad people accompany good ones, and hosts of infidels accompany Muslims on journeys. Perhaps you have forgotten what the Holy Qur'an says about the Prophet Yusuf (Joseph), who said:

"O my two companions of the prison (I ask you): are many lords differing among themselves better, or Allah, the One, the Supreme?" (12:39)

Regarding this verse, commentators have said that when Joseph was taken to the prison, on the same day the King's cook and the wine bearer, both of whom were unbelievers, were also put into the prison with him. For five years these three men (both believers and unbelievers) lived together as companions. When preaching to them Joseph, called them his companions.

Was this companionship of the Prophet ever made grounds for regarding the two infidels as virtuous or dignified? Did their companionship with the Prophet effect a change in their faith? The writings of the commentators and historians tell us that after five years of companionship, they were separated from each other in the same condition.

Another verse of the Qur'an states:

"His companion said to him while disputing with him: 'Do you disbelieve in Him who created you from dust, then from a small seed, then He made you a perfect man?" (18:37)

Commentators agree that this verse refers to two brothers: one was a believer, whose name was Yahuda. The other was an unbeliever whose name was Bara'tus. This fact has also been reported in the 'Tafsir al-Kabir' by Imam Fakhru'd-Din Razi, who is one of your ulama'.

These two talked to each other, the details of which cannot be given here. Allah has, however, called both of them (believer and unbeliever) "companions." Did the unbeliever derive benefit from his companionship with the believer? Obviously not. Thus, companionship alone is no basis for claiming one's excellence. There are many examples in support of this view.

# The Prophet's words "Allah is with us" no proof of excellence of Abu Bakr

You also said that since the Prophet said to Abu Bakr, "Allah is with us," that this is proof of Abu Bakr's excellence and his right to the caliphate! You might reconsider your views. People might ask, for example, "Does Allah remain with the believers and saints only, and not with the unbelievers?" Do you know any place where Allah does not exist? Isn't Allah with everyone? Suppose a believer and an unbeliever are together in a congregation.

The Qur'an says:

"See you not that Allah knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth? Nowhere is there a secret counsel between three (persons) but He is fourth of them, nor (between) five, but He is the sixth, nor less than that, nor more but He is with them wheresoever they may be." (58:7)

According to this verse and according to common sense, Allah is with everyone.

Sheikh: The expression "Allah is with us" meant that they were Allah's dearly loved ones because they traveled in the way of Allah for the purpose of preserving His religion. Allah's blessings were with them.

Well-Wisher: But surely this expression does not prove that one possesses an eternal blessing. Allah Almighty looks at people's deeds. It has often happened that at one time, people performed good deeds and were recipients of mercy from Allah.

Later they disobeyed Allah and were subjected to divine wrath. Satan, as you know, worshiped Allah for thousands of years and received kindness from Him. However, as soon as he disobeyed His Command, he was damned.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"He said: 'Then get out of it, for surely you are driven away. And surely upon you is a curse until the Day of Judgement."" (15:34–35)

Excuse me, there is no harm in citing examples. My purpose is to clarify the point. History contains many examples of those who were close to Allah but who, after being tested, were cursed. Bal'am Ibn Ba'ur, for example, a contemporary of Moses, became so close to Allah that Allah revealed to him the 'Ism al-

A'zam' (the greatest name of Allah, through which anything sought for is immediately granted by Allah).

He invoked Allah by means of the 'Ism al-A'zam' and caused Moses to suffer in the valley of Tia! But at the time of trial, Bal'am was overpowered by his love for the material world. He followed Satan and was condemned.

Commentators have given detailed accounts of this event. Imam Fakhru'd-Din Razi in his Commentary, Part IV, page 463, has reported this matter from Ibn Abbas, Ibn Mas'ud, and Mujahid. Allah in the Holy Qur'an tells us:

"And recite to them the narrative of him to whom We give Our revelations, but he withdraws himself from them; so Satan overtakes him, and he is of those who go astray." (7:175)

#### **Barsisa Abid**

Or consider the case of Barsisa Abid, who originally worshipped Allah so much that he became 'Mustajabu'd-da'wa' (one whose invocations are granted). However, when the time of trial came, he failed. Misled by Satan, he committed fornication with a girl, was sent to the gallows, and died an unbeliever. The Holy Qur'an refers to him in these words:

"Like Satan when he says to man: 'Disbelieve,' but when he disbelieves, he says; 'I am surely quit of you; surely I fear Allah, the Lord of the worlds.' Therefore, the end of both of them is that they are both in the fire to abide therein, and that is the reward of the unjust." (59: 16–17)

So if man has done good deeds at one time, it does not follow that his end will be good. It is for this reason that we are instructed to say in our invocation: "Let all our actions end in good."

Sheikh: I really didn't expect an honorable man like you to cite the examples of Satan, Bal'am al-Ba'ur, and Barsisa.

Well-Wisher: Excuse me, I have already stated that there is no harm in citing examples. In fact, we must cite them in learned debates to prove facts. Let Allah be my witness: I never intended to defame anyone by citing these examples. My purpose is to prove my point.

Sheikh: This verse clearly proves Abu Bakr's excellence because it says:

"So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him..." (9:40)

The pronoun here refers to Abu Bakr, which proves his superiority.

Well-Wisher: You have misunderstood it. The pronoun used after 'Sakina' (peace) refers to the Prophet. Peace was sent to him and not to Abu Bakr, as is evident from the later sentence in which Allah says:

#### "...and strengthened him with hosts which you did not see." (9:40)

The fact is that the hosts of unseen angels were to aid the Prophet, not Abu Bakr.

Sheikh: I admit that the divine help was for the Prophet, but Abu Bakr, being in company of the Prophet, was not without blessings.

### The sending down of peace was on the Prophet of Allah

Well-Wisher: If the bestowal of divine blessings referred to two people, Arabic grammar would require that pronouns be used designating two people in all the phrases of this verse. But the pronouns refer to one person, the Prophet, and Allah's blessings were for him. If through him the bestowal had been intended for others as well, their names would have been mentioned. Hence, the sending down of peace in this verse is for the Prophet alone.

Sheikh: The Prophet of Allah was independent of the divine bestowal of peace. He did not need it because he was assured of divine blessings. Hence, the bestowal of peace was for Abu Bakr.

Well-Wisher: On what grounds do you say that the Prophet was independent of divine blessings? No person – Prophet, Imam, or saint – is independent of divine blessings. Perhaps you have forgotten what the Holy Qur'an says about the incident of Hunain. "Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Apostle and upon the believers." The same thing has been said in chapter 48 (Fath) verse 26, of the Holy Qur'an. The believers are included after the Prophet in this verse, just as in the "verse of the cave."

If Abu Bakr had been a believer who deserved the bestowal of peace, either the pronoun for two persons would have been used, or his name would have been mentioned separately. This matter is so clear that your own ulama' admit that the pronoun connected with peace does not refer to Abu Bakr.

You might consult 'Naqzu'l-Uthmaniyya', compiled by Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Iskafi, who is one of the prominent ulama' and Sheikhs of the 'Mu'tazilite's. That scholar completely refutes the absurdities of Abu Uthman Jahiz. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid also recorded some of those replies in his 'Sharh Nahju'l-Balagha', Volume III, pages 253–281.

In addition, there is a phrase in this verse, the implication of which is contrary to your point. The Prophet said to Abu Bakr: "Fear you not." The phrase indicates that Abu Bakr was frightened. Was this fear praiseworthy or not?

If it was, the Prophet would not prohibit anyone from doing a good deed. A vicegerent of Allah possesses certain qualities. The most important of them, as pointed out in the Holy Qur'an, is that he never fears the vicissitudes of life. He exercises patience and fortitude. The Holy Qur'an says:

"Now surely the friends of Allah – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve."(10:62)

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