

Hadith Al-Thaqalayn, the Deposed Will of the Last Prophet to Humanity



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This research work addresses all four Sunni positions on the hadiths, with particular emphasis on the claims and submissions of Ibn Taymiyyah. This work prove, with abundant references, the existence and authenticity of Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn, in the most authentic Sunni books – including Sahih Muslim – with perfectly authentic chains of narration!

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

هو الحبيب الذي ترجي شفاعته

لكل هول من الأهوال مقتحم

مولاي صلي وسلم دائماً ابدا

على حبيبك وعترته أهل بيته

خير خلقك كلهم

**This book is dedicated to Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn,
peace be upon them both.**

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The Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah generally boycott the teachings of the Twelve Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, 'alaihim al-salam. In fact, our Shaykh, Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H), seems to be very proud about this:

قال الرافضي و في الفقه الفقهاء يرجعون إليه

و الجواب أن هذا كذب بين فليس في الأئمة الأربعة و لا غيرهم من أئمة الفقهاء
من يرجع إليه في فقهه

أما مالك فان علمه عن أهل المدينة و أهل المدينة لا يكادون يأخذون بقول علي
بل اخذوا فقههم عن الفقهاء السبعة عن زيد و عمر و ابن عمر و نحوهم

أما الشافعي فإنه تفقه أولاً على المكيين أصحاب ابن جريج كسعيد بن سالم
القдах و مسلم بن خالد الزنجي و ابن جريج اخذ ذلك عن أصحاب ابن عباس
كعطاء و غيره و ابن عباس كان مجتهداً مستقلاً و كان إذا أفتى بقول الصحابة
أفتى بقول أبي بكر و عمر لا بقول علي و كان ينكر على علي أشياء ثم أن
الشافعي اخذ عن مالك ثم كتب كتب أهل العراق و اخذ مذاهب أهل الحديث و
اختار لنفسه

و أما أبو حنيفة فشيخه الذي اختص به حماد بن أبي سليمان و حماد عن
إبراهيم و إبراهيم عن علقمة و علقمة عن ابن مسعود و قد اخذ أبو حنيفة عن
عطاء و غيره

و أما الإمام أحمد فكان على مذهب أهل الحديث اخذ عن ابن عيينة و ابن
عيينة عن عمرو بن دينار عن ابن عباس و ابن عمر و اخذ عن هشام بن بشير و
هشام عن أصحاب الحسن و إبراهيم النخعي و اخذ عن عبد الرحمن بن مهدي
و وكيع بن الجراح و أمثالهما و جالس الشافعي و اخذ عن أبي يوسف و اختار
لنفسه قولاً و كذلك إسحاق بن راهويه و أبو عبيد و نحوه

و الاوزاعي و الليث اكثر فقهما عن أهل المدينة و أمثالهم لا عن الكوفيين

The Rafidhi said: "In fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), the (Sunni) jurists used to reference him (i.e. 'Ali)."

The answer is that this is a plain lie. There was none among the four Imams and others from the Imams of the jurists who referenced him (i.e. 'Ali) in his fiqh.

As for Malik, his knowledge was from the people of al-Madinah, and the people of al-Madinah barely took the words of 'Ali. Rather, they took their fiqh from the seven jurists: from Zayd, 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, and their likes.

As for al-Shafi'i, he learnt fiqh primarily came from the Makkans, the companions of Ibn Jurayj, such as Sa'id b. Salim al-Qadah and Muslim b. Khalid al-Zanji. Meanwhile, Ibn Jurayj took that from the

companions of Ibn ‘Abbas, like ‘Ata and others; and Ibn ‘Abbas was an independent mujtahid who used to rely upon the words of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and not upon those of ‘Ali, whenever he passed fatwas with the words of the Sahabah. Moreover, he (Ibn ‘Abbas) used to reject things from ‘Ali. Besides, al-Shafi’i took from Malik, (and) then wrote the books of the people of Iraq, and followed the schools of the Ahl al-Hadith, and chose (them) for himself.

As for Abu Hanifah, his special shaykh was Hammad b. Abi Sulayman; and Hammad learnt from Ibrahim; and Ibrahim learnt from ‘Alqamah; and Alqamah learned from Ibn Mas’ud. Abu Hanifah also took from ‘Ata and others.

As for Imam Ahmad, he followed the school of the Ahl al-Hadith. He took from Ibn ‘Uyaynah; and Ibn ‘Uyaynah took from ‘Amr b. Dinar, who took from Ibn ‘Abbas and Ibn ‘Umar. He (i.e. Ahmad) also took from Hisham b. Bashir; and Hisham took from the companions of al-Hasan (al-Basri) and Ibrahim al-Nakha’i. He (i.e. Ahmad) further took from ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Mahdi, Waki’ b. al-Jarrah and similar people. He (i.e. Ahmad) equally attended the assemblies of al-Shafi’i, and took from Abu Yusuf and adopted a statement for himself, and also Ishaq b. Rahwayh, Abu ‘Ubayd and others like them.

As for al-Awza’i and al-Layth, most of their fiqh was from the people of al-Madinah and their likes, and not from the people of Kufah.¹

In simpler words, none of the Sunni schools of jurisprudence contains the teachings of ‘Ali, al-Hasan, al-Husayn and the other Imams from the offspring of the Prophet, ‘alaihim al-salam ajma’in. The Sunni Imams generally shunned their inputs and riwayat in al-fiqh.

But, the Sunni boycott was not limited to al-fiqh. Even in the reportage of tafasir and ahadith, the Ahl al-Sunnah boycott the Ahl al-Bayt. Ibn Taymiyyah confirms:

وهذه كتب الحديث والتفسير مملوءة بالآثار عن الصحابة والتابعين والذي فيها
عن علي قليل جدا

These are books of hadith and tafsir, filled with reports from the Sahabah and Tabi’in. What is recorded in them from ‘Ali is **very little**.²

He also submits:

قال الرافضي أما المالكية فاخذوا علمهم عنه و عن أولاده

و الجواب أن هنا كذب ظاهر فهذا موطأ مالك ليس فيه عنه و لا عن أحد أولاده
إلا قليل جداً و جمهور ما فيه عن غيرهم فيه عن جعفر تسعة أحاديث و لم يرو
مالك عن أحد من ذريته إلا عن جعفر و كذلك الأحاديث التي في الصحاح و
السنن و المساند منها قليل عن ولده و جمهور ما فيها عن غيرهم

The Rafidhi said: “As for the Malikis, they took their knowledge from him (i.e. ‘Ali) and from his (i.e. ‘Ali’s) offspring.”

The answer is that there is an apparent lie here. This is Muwatta of Malik. What is recorded in it from him (i.e. ‘Ali) or any of his offspring is **very little**. Most of what is in it is from other than them. There are nine ahadith from Ja’far (al-Sadiq) in it, and Malik did not record from ANY of his (i.e. ‘Ali’s) offspring except from Ja’far. This is also the case with what is recorded in the Sahih books, the Sunan books, and the Musnad books. What is recorded in them from his (i.e. ‘Ali’s) offspring is little. The generality of what is recorded in them is from others.³

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah still has more words about the Ahl al-Bayt:

والمتقدمون منهم كعلي بن الحسين وابنه أبي جعفر وابنه جعفر بن محمد قد
نقل عنهم من العلم قطعة معروفة وأخذ عن غيرهم أكثر من ذلك بكثير كثير
وأما من بعدهم فالعلم المأخوذ عنهم قليل جداً

The early ones among them, such as ‘Ali b. al-Husayn (Zayn al-‘Abidin) and his son, Abu Ja’far (al-Baqir), and his son, Ja’far b. Muhammad (al-Sadiq), a known FRACTION of knowledge was transmitted from them. However, what is recorded from other than them is far, far more than that. As for those after them (from the Ahl al-Bayt), the knowledge that was taken from them was **very little**.⁴

It was indeed a very widespread, and very deep, boycott of the Ahl al-Bayt by the Ahl al-Sunnah. Meanwhile, even if a Sunni today decided to follow the Ahl al-Bayt, he would be unable to do so through the Sunni books. There is “very little” of their teachings and narrations in the books of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

The dilemma here gets even more serious when one considers that the Messenger of Allah had ordered his whole Ummah – including all his Sahabah, the Tabi’in, the Tabi’ al-Tabi’in – to take ‘Ali and his offspring – his Ahl al-Bayt – as khalifahs after him, and to follow them in absolutely everything, in order to remain truly upon the Kitab and the Sunnah. But, how does a Sunni adhere to these Prophetic decrees without abandoning the Sunni school? The answer seems impossible to determine. Sunni

Islam, apparently, feeds upon disobedience of the said decrees. So, what does a Sunni do in this confusion?

The ‘ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah have adopted four different attitudes to the decrees – contained in Hadith al-Thaqalayn and its branch, Hadith al-Khalifatayn. Some of them, such as our own Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, have taken the easy way by denying the authenticity of the ahadith in the Sunni books. This seemingly saves them the trouble of dealing with the consequences of the apparent Sunni boycott of the Ahl al-Bayt. Some other Sunni ‘ulama however accept the authenticity of the riwayat but prefer to rather re-interpret “hold fast to” in them as meaning to simply “love” the Messenger’s offspring and to “be kind to” them!

The third category of Sunni scholars agree that the ahadith are sahih, and that they really command the whole Ummah to obey and follow the blessed offspring of Muhammad. But, they insist that the Ahl al-Sunnah are actually followers and subjects of the Ahl al-Bayt! The fourth group within the Sunni clergy, meanwhile, calmly ply the cheapest route: dead silence on the ahadith. They simply never mention, talk or write about Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn under any circumstance! This obviously reduces the “threat” posed by the riwayat and keeps the Sunni ride smooth and steady.

This research work of ours addresses all four Sunni positions on the hadiths, with particular emphasis on the claims and submissions of Ibn Taymiyyah. We prove, with abundant references, the existence and authenticity of Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn, in the most authentic Sunni books – including Sahih Muslim – with perfectly authentic chains of narration! We thoroughly investigate the various chains of the riwayat, and also quote certifications of their authenticity by top Sunni hadithists like ‘Allamah al-Albani, Shaykh al-Arnaut and others. We equally carefully analyze the texts of the two hadiths, as well as those of relevant others, in order to determine their true messages. Our aim, obviously, is to leave no one with any excuse before Allah on the Day of al-Qiyamah.

We sincerely hope that this work will be highly beneficial to every human being who is truthfully searching for the only correct Path to Allah. In this book, we have used the same strict investigative and transparent research methodology which we employed in our first, second and third books. We implore Allah to forgive us all our mistakes, and to accept this as a worthy act of ‘ibadah. And may Allah send His salawat and barakat upon our master, Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah, and upon his purified offspring.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muassasat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, pp. 529–531

2. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 43

3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 531

4. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 108

It was 10 H (632 CE), during the last Hajj of the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi. Muslims from all corners of the then Islamic world had gathered together at ‘Arafat for the prescribed pilgrimage

rites, under his leadership and guidance. It was here that the Prophet delivered one of the most significant sermons in the entire history of humankind. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records what happened:

حدثنا نصر بن عبد الرحمن الكوفي حدثنا زيد بن الحسن هو الأنماطي عن
جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال رأيت رسول الله صلى الله
عليه و سلم في حجته يوم عرفة وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب فسمعتة يقول يا
أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي أهل
بيتي

Nasr b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kufi – Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati – Ja’far b. Muhammad – his father –
Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah:

I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his Hajj on the Day of ‘Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: “O mankind! I have left behind over you¹ that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.”²

Al-Tirmidhi says on the riwayah:

وهذا حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه و زيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد
بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم

And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa’id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.³

‘Allamah al-Albani also has a simple comment:

صحيح

Sahih⁴

In his al-Sahihah, the ‘Allamah further states:

"يا أيها الناس! إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا، كتاب الله

وعترتي أهل بيتي".

أخرجه الترمذي (2 / 308) والطبراني (2680) عن زيد بن الحسن الأنماطي عن جعفر عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال: "رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حجته يوم عرفة، وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب، فسمعتة يقول: "فذكره، وقال: "حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه، وزيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم".

قلت: قال أبو حاتم، منكر الحديث، وذكره ابن حبان في "الثقات". وقال الحافظ: "ضعيف".

قلت: لكن الحديث صحيح، فإن له شاهدا من حديث زيد بن أرقم

"O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt."

Al-Tirmidhi (2/308) and al-Tabarani (2680) recorded it from Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati from Ja'far from his father from Jabir b. 'Abd Allah, who said: "I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his Hajj on the Day of 'Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying" Then he (al-Tirmidhi) quoted it (i.e. the hadith), and said: "And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa'id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him."

I (al-Albani) say: Abu Hatim said: "Munkar al-hadith" and Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat (The Trustworthy Narrators). Al-Hafiz said: "Dha'if".

I (al-Albani) say: But the hadith is sahih, for – verily – it has a witness (shahid) in the hadith of Zayd b. Arqam.5

These words of al-Albani explain his methodology in grading the hadith as sahih. Unlike al-Tirmidhi, he considers the chain of the report to be dha'if (weak), due to Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati. However, he believes that the Messenger did truly utter those words – as evidenced by the report of Zayd b. Arqam – at a location other than 'Arafat.

The claim that the Prophet delivered the hadith at 'Arafat, in addition to other places, comes only through the sanad of al-Anmati. As such, if his chain is dha'if, then it would be impossible to prove that those words were ever uttered at 'Arafat – even though there is no doubt that he said them at another place. Meanwhile, Imam al-Tirmidhi believed that the Messenger of Allah declared the hadith at 'Arafat, and later at Ghadir Khumm⁶. 'Allamah al-Albani explains how:

أقول: وجه ذلك أن جمع الترمذي بين لفظتي " غريب " و " حسن " إنما يعني في اصطلاحه أنه حسن لذاته

I say: The reason for that is whenever al-Tirmidhi says “hasan gharib”, he only means in his terminologies that its chain is independently hasan.⁷

So, basically, al-Tirmidhi considers al-Anmati to be reliable, and his sanad to be hasan.

We could then conclude the following from the research up to this level:

Al-Tirmidhi considers the chain of al-Anmati to be independently hasan while al-Albani grades the same sanad as dha'if.

It is only the sanad of al-Anmati which establishes that the hadith was pronounced at 'Arafat too, in addition to Ghadir Khumm. Therefore, if the chain is dha'if, then there would be no evidence that the Prophet of Allah ever said those words at 'Arafat.

To al-Tirmidhi, the Messenger uttered delivered the hadith at 'Arafat, and later at Ghadir Khumm. However, in the opinion of al-Albani, it is NOT established that the Prophet made the statement at 'Arafat, even though it is true that he said them later at Ghadir Khumm.

In rejecting the reliability of Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati, 'Allamah al-Albani has only Abu Hatim (d. 277 H) as his principal authority:

“وزيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم.”

قلت: قال أبو حاتم، منكر الحديث، وذكره ابن حبان في "الثقات". وقال الحافظ: "ضعيف".

(Al-Tirmidhi said): "As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa'id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him."

I (al-Albani) say: Abu Hatim said: "Munkar al-hadith" and Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat (The Trustworthy Narrators). Al-Hafiz said: "Dha'if".

We therefore know the following about al-Anmati:

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) considers him thiqah (trustworthy), and has therefore included him in his al-Thiqat.

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) accepts al-Anmati's ahadith as being independently hasan. This shows that he considers him reliable, most probably saduq (very truthful) in status.

Imam Abu Hatim (d. 277 H) calls him munkar al-hadith, meaning that his ahadith are "rejected", very weak.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (d. 852 H) also declares al-Anmati to be dha'if.

Needless to say, Abu Hatim was the only classical scholar who deemed al-Anmati to be unreliable. Therefore, al-Hafiz – a much later scholar – apparently only adopted this negative rating.

As such, the primary, uncorroborated source of the criticism against al-Anmati was Abu Hatim only.

Al-Hafiz relied upon the statements of the classical scholars to classify narrators. Since Abu Hatim was the sole classical critic of al-Anmati, then al-Hafiz had certainly relied only upon the former for his "dha'if" grading.

All these point in one direction only: Abu Hatim is the sole, unsupported primary critic of al-Anmati. We confirm absolutely too that no other classical Sunni hadith scientist levelled any criticism against al-Anmati apart from Abu Hatim. Therefore, if the criticism of Abu Hatim falls, then everything against al-Anmati collapses with it. So, we ask: what is the probative value of uncorroborated testimonies of Abu Hatim concerning narrators? Imam al-Dhahabi provides the apposite answer:

إذا وثق أبو حاتم رجلاً فتمسك بقوله، فإنه لا يوثق إلا رجلاً صحيح الحديث، وإذا
لين رجلاً، أو قال فيه: لا يحتج به. فتوقف حتى ترى ما قال غيره فيه، فإن وثقه
أحد، فلا تبني على تجريح أبي حاتم، فإنه متعنت في الرجال

When Abu Hatim declared a narrator to be thiqah (trustworthy), then hold fast to his statement, because he never declared a narrator to be thiqah except a narrator whose ahadith are sahih. When he weakened a narrator, or said about him “he is not accepted as a hujjah”, then pause until you have seen what others also said about him (i.e. that narrator). If there was A SINGLE other person who declared him (i.e. the narrator) to be thiqah (trustworthy), then do NOT adopt the criticism of Abu Hatim, because he was pigheaded in rijal.⁸

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani also says about a narrator:

وفي الميزان أن أبا حاتم قال لا يحتج به فينتظر في ذلك وأبو حاتم عنده عنت
وقد احتج به الجماعة

In al-Mizan, it is stated that Abu Hatim said “He is not accepted as a hujjah”. But, watch that carefully. There was pigheadedness in Abu Hatim. He (the narrator) has been accepted as a hujjah by the majority.⁹

This is self-explanatory and straightforward:

Whenever Abu Hatim was the only classical critic against a narrator, then investigation must be conducted to find out if any other classical hadithist contradicted him.

If there was a single classical hadith scientist who contradicted Abu Hatim, then the latter’s criticism must be rejected.

Abu Hatim was the only classical critic of al-Anmati, and he was contradicted by both al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban.

As such, the criticism of Abu Hatim is worthless, and al-Anmati is indeed reliable – whether thiqah (trustworthy) or saduq (very truthful) – as indicated by Ibn Hibban and al-Tirmidhi.

With these findings, it is neatly established that the chain of al-Anmati is sahih, or at least hasan, as declared by Imam al-Tirmidhi. This in turn proves that the Prophet of Allah did truly deliver Hadith al-Thaqalayn at ‘Arafat, among other places.

1. The word used in the hadith is fikum. This author himself previously translated it as “among you” or “amongst you”. However, upon further research, he concluded that the main preposition used – fi – has the following definitions in classical Arabic: “above”, “over”, “on”, “among”, “amongst”, and “in”. For instance, ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) has stated concerning the phrase “fi” in his al-Sahihah, vol. 2, p. 715, # 925–12 (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1415 H):

قوله تعالى: {أَأَمِنْتُمْ مِنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ}؛ أي: على السماء؛ أي: فوق العرش، وبذلك فسرهما علماء السلف والخلف – ومنهم ابن عبد البر في “التمهيد”، والبيهقي في كتابيه: “الأسماء” و“الاعتقاد”

The Statement of Allah the Most High: {Do you feel secure that He Who is over [fi] the heaven} [67:16], meaning: over the sky; meaning: above the Throne. This is how the scholars of the Salaf and the Khalaf – among them Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in al-Tamhid and al-Bayhaqi in his books – al-Asma and al-I’tiqad – have interpreted it.

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) also writes in his Mukhtasar al-‘Uluw li al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azim (al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1412 H)[annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], pp. 245–246, #298:

قال أبو عبد الله الحاكم: قال الفقيه أبو بكر أحمد بن إسحاق الضبي النيسابوري: قد تضع العرب "في" موضع "على" قال الله تعالى: {فسبحوا في الأرض} وقال: {ولأصلبكم في جذوع النخل} ومعناه على الأرض وعلى النخل، فكذلك قوله: {من في السماء} أي من على العرش، كما صحت الأخبار عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim said: The jurist, Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ishaq al-Dhab’i al-Naysaburi said: “The Arabs have used fi to mean ‘ala (above, over). Allah the Most High says: {So travel freely [fi] over the earth} [9:2]. He also says: {I will surely crucify you [fi] above the trunks of date-palms} [20:71]. Its meaning is ‘over the earth’ and ‘over the date-palms’. This is also the case with His Statement {Who is over [fi] the heaven}, meaning, Who is over the Throne, as sahih reports have indicated from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.”

The same term has been used in Hadith al-Thaqalayn. We now believe that it means “over” and “above” in the hadith because the Messenger of Allah was NOT placing the Qur’an and his offspring on equal footing with us in it. Rather, he was ordering us to “adhere” to them – thereby placing them above us, making them our leaders.

2. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 662 # 3786

3. Ibid

4. Ibid

5. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, pp. 355–356, # 1761

6. We will later in this book present sahih Sunni reports – by Zayd b. Arqam and others – of the pronouncement of the hadith at a place called Ghadir Khumm.

7. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdu’ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 2, p. 185, # 764

8. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H), vol. 13, p. 260, # 129

9. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani al-Shafi’i, Hadi al-Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 4th edition, 1408 H), p. 441

As we have established, it is without doubt that the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, said these words to the people at ‘Arafat during his last Hajj:

يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي
أهل بيتي

O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book

of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.

So, what exactly was he trying to tell the world? Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H) quotes this under his commentary of the hadith:

قال القاري والمراد بالأخذ بهم التمسك بمحبتهم ومحافظة حرمتهم والعمل بروايتهم والاعتماد على مقالتهم وهو لا ينافي أخذ السنة من غيرهم لقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم أصحابي كالنجوم بأيهم اقتديتم اهتديتم ولقوله تعالى فاسألوا أهل الذكر إن كنتم لا تعلمون

Al-Qari said: “The meaning of holding fast to them is to adhere to their love, to protect their honour, to follow their narrations, and to rely upon their opinions. This does not negate the taking of the Sunnah from other than them, due to his statement, peace be upon him “My Sahabah are like the stars. Whichever of them you follow, you will be rightly guided” and due to His Statement, Exalted be He: “Ask the people of al-Dhikr if you do not know.”¹

Al-Qari apparently admits that Hadith al-Thaqalayn commands the Ummah to follow the offspring of the Prophet, ‘alaihim al-salam, after him. His argument, however, is that we should also follow the Sahabah in addition to the Ahl al-Bayt. There are two fatal problems with his submission. First, the hadith he is relying upon is unreliable.

It is graded mawduhu (fabricated) by ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H)². Secondly, Hadith al-Thaqalayn is addressed to all “mankind” – and that naturally included all the Sahabah, the Tabi’in, the Tabi’ al-Tabi’in, the Four Imams, al-Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Taymiyyah, Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab, Ibn Baz, Ibn al-‘Uthaymin and others. All of them, without a single exception, were under a strict divine obligation to follow the offspring of Muhammad in everything. The hadith has a general wording, and nothing has been excluded under its order.

Therefore, all humanity from the moment our Prophet left this world till the Last Hour must follow his Ahl al-Bayt in absolutely everything. So, basically, the Sahabah are not supposed to be followed. Rather, they were ordered too to be followers of the Ahl al-Bayt. Meanwhile, in case someone insists that he must still follow the Sahabah, then obedience in Islam is only in al-ma’ruf – in obedience to Allah. In that case, only those Sahabah who complied with the Decree of Allah in Hadith al-Thaqalayn can be followed.

But, al-Mubarakfuri still has one more quote:

وقال ابن الملك التمسك بالكتاب العمل بما فيه وهو الائتمار بأوامر الله
والانتها عن نواهيه ومعنى التمسك بالعتره محبتهم والاهتداء بهديهم وسيرتهم
زاد السيد جمال الدين إذا لم يكن مخالفا للدين

Ibn al-Malik said: “Adherence to the Book of Allah is to follow whatever is in it – and that is to follow the Orders of Allah and desist from His Prohibitions. The meaning of adherence to the offspring (of the Prophet) is to love them, and to seek guidance through their guidance and their way of life.” Sayyid Jamal al-Din added, “if it does not contradict the religion.”³

Ibn al-Malik too concedes that the offspring of Muhammad must be followed, under Hadith al-Thaqalayn. He makes no attempts to explain it away or fix artificial conditions. But, Sayyid Jamal al-Din moves a step forward: he could only follow the Ahl al-Bayt if their guidance or way of life did not contradict the religion! So, he believes that the designated offspring of the Prophet intended in the hadith can go astray too and oppose Islam. This weird opinion of Sayyid Jamal al-Din however directly contradicts the explicit text of the riwayat:

يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي
أهل بيتي

O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will NEVER go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.

You will “never” go astray while following the Ahl al-Bayt. It is a clear guarantee from Allah and His Messenger. This, in turn, means that the offspring of the Messenger – those meant in the hadith among them – are never misguided, and they never misguide. They are always upon the true teachings of the Qur’an and the correct Sunnah of Muhammad, in all their thoughts, sayings, deeds, actions and omissions. Whosoever follows them in absolutely everything will never miss the way.

There is however an opinion within the Ahl al-Sunnah, especially the young Salafiyyah, which insists that the hadith commands to follow the Qur’an only, and nothing else. They cite the use of “it” in it – which is nominally singular – in support of their submission:

إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به

I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to IT

To them, if the Messenger had intended that both the Book and his offspring must be followed, he would have said: “that which if you hold fast to THEM.” But, there are explicit signs of ignorance in this argument. The “it” (هـ) in the hadith is a reference to the “which” (ما) before it. In Arabic, a combination of both is possible even if the allusion is to billions of items. For instance, Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ
يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تَقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

As for those who disbelieve, lo! If all that WHICH is in the earth were theirs, and the likeness of IT with IT, to ransom them with IT from the torment of the Day of al-Qiyamah, it would not be accepted from them. Theirs will be a painful torment.⁴

We see that “it” here refers to everything in the earth – all the animals, all the constructions, all the minerals, all the lands and so on. Let us see another example:

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكَرَ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنَدْخَلَكُمْ مَدْخَلَ كَرِيمٍ

If you avoid major sins, that WHICH you have been forbidden from IT, We shall remit from you your sins and admit you to a noble entrance.⁵

“It” is a direct reference to the “major sins”. With these, obviously, nothing stops the same expression from working for both the Qur’an and the Ahl al-Bayt in Hadith al-Thaqalayn! How do these people reason?!

Interestingly, the alternative hadith which our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah love to quote has the same wording too. Imam al-Bayhaqi (d. 458 H) records:

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحَافِظُ أَخْبَرَنِي إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْفَضْلِ الشَّعْرَانِيُّ ثَنَا
جَدِّي ثَنَا بْنُ أَبِي أُوَيْسٍ ثَنَا أَبِي عَنْ ثَوْرِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ الدِّيلِيِّ عَنْ عِكْرَمَةَ عَنْ بَنِي عَبَّاسٍ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَطَبَ النَّاسَ فِي حُجَّةِ
الْوَدَاعِ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنِّي قَدْ تَرَكْتُ فِيكُمْ مَا إِنْ اعْتَصَمْتُمْ بِهِ فَلَنْ تَضِلُّوا أَبَدًا
كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَسُنَّةَ نَبِيِّهِ

Uways – my father – Thawr b. Zayd al-Dayli – ‘Ikrimah – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, delivered a sermon to mankind during the Farewell Hajj, and said: “O mankind! I have left behind over you that WHICH if you hold fast to IT, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.”⁶

Without a doubt, every single Sunni Muslim – including every single Salafi – understands the “it” in the riwayat to be a reference to both the Qur’an and the Sunnah together! So, why the double standards against Hadith al-Thaqalayn?!

Unfortunately for Sunnis though, this hadith of al-Bayhaqi has a dha’if chain, due to Ibn Abi Uways. He had a poor memory, as al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

إسماعيل بن عبد الله بن أويس بن مالك بن أبي عامر الأصبحي أبو
عبد الله بن أبي أويس المدني صدوق أخطأ في أحاديث من حفظه

Isma’il b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Uways b. Malik b. Abi ‘Amir al-Asbahi, Abu ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Uways al-Madani: Saduq (very truthful), he made mistakes in ahadith due to his memory.⁷

His memory crisis was, of course, very critical. Al-Hafiz provides further details:

إسماعيل بن أبي أويس عبد الله بن عبد الله بن أويس بن مالك بن أبي عامر
الأصبحي ... قلت وروينا في مناقب البخاري بسند صحيح أن إسماعيل أخرج
له أصوله وأذن له أن ينتقى منها ... ما أخرجه البخاري عنه هو من صحيح
حديثه لأنه كتب من أصوله وعلى هذا لا يحتج بشيء من حديثه غير ما في
الصحيح من أجل ما قدح فيه النسائي وغيره إلا أن شاركه فيه غيره فيعتبر فيه

Isma’il b. Abi Uways ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Uways b. Malik b. Abi Amir al-Asbahi ... I say: We recorded in Manaqib al-Bukhari (Merits of al-Bukhari) with a sahih chain that Isma’il gave his manuscript to him (i.e. al-Bukhari) and allowed him to select from it ... Whatever al-Bukhari narrated from him was from the sahih among his ahadith, because he (al-Bukhari) wrote (them) from his (i.e. Ibn Uways’) manuscripts. As such, nothing from his ahadith is accepted as a hujjah except what is in the Sahih (of al-Bukhari), due to the criticisms of al-Nasai and others against him – unless he has been seconded in it, in which case he is accepted as a support in it.⁸

So, his mistakes in ahadith were severe. As such, whatsoever he narrated from memory – unless he was seconded in it by another person – is dha'if. Interestingly, in the hadith of al-Bayhaqi above, he is not seconded in its reporting from his father, Abu Uways. Moreover, all his (i.e. Isma'il's) ahadith were transmitted by him from memory, except those in Sahih al-Bukhari. Since the hadith of al-Bayhaqi is not from Sahih al-Bukhari, and Isma'il is not seconded in it, then it is dha'if without a doubt.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (d. 1420 H) also copies the hadith:

اني تارك فيكم ما لن تضلوا إن اعتصمتم به :كتاب الله و سنتي

I am leaving behind over you that WHICH you will never go astray if you hold fast to IT: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah.⁹

Then, in a rather weird move, he says about it:

أخرجها الحاكم بسند جيد

Al-Hakim recorded it with a good (jayyid) chain.¹⁰

Really? In that case, let us check the report as documented by Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) himself:

حدثنا أبو بكر أحمد بن إسحاق الفقيه أنبأ العباس بن الفضل الأسفاطي ثنا
إسماعيل عن أبي أويس وأخبرني إسماعيل بن محمد بن الفضل الشعراني ثنا
جدي عن ثور بن زيد الديلي عن عكرمة عن ابن عباس أن رسول الله صلى الله
عليه وسلم خطب الناس في حجة الوداع فقال : قد يئس الشيطان بأن يعبد
بأرضكم ولكنه رضي أن يطاع فيما سوى ذلك مما تحاقرون من أعمالكم
فاحذروا يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن اعتصمتم به فلن تضلوا أبدا :
كتاب الله وسنة نبيه صلى الله عليه وسلم

Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ishaq al-Faqih – al-'Abbas b. al-Fadhl al-Asfati – Isma'il – Abu Uways:

and Isma'il b. Muhammad b. al-Fadhl al-Sha'rani – my grandfather – Isma'il – Abu Uways:

Thawr b. Zayd al-Dayli – 'Ikrimah – Ibn 'Abbas:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, delivered a sermon to mankind during the Farewell Hajj, and said: “Verily, Shaytan has lost hope of being worshipped in your land. However, he is pleased to be obeyed in other than that from your despicable deeds. So, beware! O mankind! Verily, I have left behind over you that WHICH if you hold fast to IT you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, peace be upon him. 11

The Salafi scholar, Shaykh Muqbil, states concerning this hadith in his tahqiq of al-Mustadrak:

حديث ضعيف لأنه من طريق إسماعيل بن أبي أويس عن أبيه وفيهما كلام وشاهده من طريق صالح بن موسى الطالحي وهو متروك.

It is a dha'if hadith, because it is narrated through the route of Isma'il b. Abi Uways from his father, and there is criticism against both of them. Its shahid is narrated through the route of Salih b. Musa al-Talihi, and he is matruk (rejected). 12

Unfortunately, Sunni 'ulama never cease to substitute the genuine hadith with the fake one. In their sermons and publications, they never tell their followers about the true decree of the Prophet to his Ummah. Instead, they frequently quote the counterfeit riwayat as his parting command to us. A well-known contemporary Sunni hadith scientist who is deeply troubled by this ugly situation is Sayyid Hasan al-Saqqaf. He expresses his grave unhappiness about the situation in these sharp words:

وأما حديث [تركت فيكم ما إن تمسكتم بهما لن تضلوا بعدي أبدا كتاب وسنتي
[الذي يردده الناس فيما بينهم ويقولوه الخطباء على المنابر فحديث موضوع
مكذوب وضعه الأمويون وأتباعهم ليصرفوا الناس عن هذا الحديث الصحيح
في العترة، فانتبه لذلك جد!! وقد ذكرت جميع طرقه وبينت ما في أسانيده من
الكذابين والوضاعين في آخر كتابي} صحيح صفة صلاة النبي صلى الله عليه
وآله وسلم {ص (289)

As for the hadith [I have left over you that which if you adhere to them both you will never go astray after me: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah] which people repeat among themselves, and which the lecturers quote on the pulpits, it is a fabricated, false hadith. It was fabricated by the Umayyads and their followers to turn people away from this sahih hadith about the offspring of the Prophet. So, be very careful due to that!! I have mentioned all its chains and exposed the liars and fabricators in its chains at the end of my book Sahih Sifat Salat al-Nabi, peace be upon him and his family, page 289. 13

In any case, what matters most to our research here is the Sunni understanding of the dha'if hadith. To them – and to everyone who understands at least some Arabic – it directs all humanity to unconditionally obey the Qur'an and the Sunnah together in all situations and circumstances, as the only way to remain upon the true guidance. In the same manner, the genuine hadith – with an almost identical wording to the fake one – obviously orders us all to obey the Qur'an and the offspring of Muhammad, his Ahl al-Bayt, together, at all times, in all cases and under all circumstances. Whoever fails to do this loses his way, and becomes a heretic.

1. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 10, p. 196
2. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdu'ah wa Athariha al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 1, p. 144, # 58
3. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami' al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 10, p. 196
4. Qur'an 5:36
5. Qur'an 4:31
6. Abu Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Musa al-Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra (Makkah: Maktabah Dar al-Baz; 1414 H) [annotator: Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 10, p. 114, # 20123
7. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 96, # 461
8. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Hadi al-Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H), p. 388
9. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd Allah b. Baz, Majmu' Fatawa al-'Allamah 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Baz, vol. 24, p. 182
10. Ibid
11. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 171, # 318
12. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Dar al-Haramayn li Taba'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muqbil b. Hadi al-Wadi'i], vol. 1, p. 161, # 318
13. Hasan b. 'Ali al-Saqqa al-Qurashi al-Hashimi al-Husayni, Sahih Sharh al-'Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah (Amman: Dar Imam al-Nawawi; 1st edition, 1416 H), p. 654, footnote # 385

Immediately after his last Hajj, on his way back to Madinah – his capital city, at a place called Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, repeated his instruction at 'Arafat to mankind. Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H) documents:

حدثنا سليمان بن عبيد الله الغيلاني، حدثنا أبو عامر، حدثنا كثير بن زيد، عن محمد بن عمر بن علي، عن أبيه، عن علي رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: إني تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا: كتاب الله، سببه بيد الله، وسببه بأيديكم، وأهل بيتي.

Sulayman b. ‘Ubayd Allah al–Ghilani – Abu ‘Amir – Kathir b. Zayd – Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Ali – his father – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in the Hand of Allah and the other in your hands – and my Ahl al–Bayt.”¹

Concerning the first narrator, al–Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

سليمان بن عبيد الله بن عمرو بن جابر الغيلاني المازني أبو أيوب البصري
صدوق

Sulayman b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Amr b. Jabir al–Ghilani al–Mazini, Abu Ayub al–Basri: Saduq (very truthful).²

As for the second narrator, this is what al–Hafiz has to say:

عبد الملك بن عمرو القيسي أبو عامر العقدي بفتح المهملة والقاف ثقة

‘Abd al–Malik b. ‘Amr al–Qaysi, Abu ‘Amir al–‘Aqadi: Thiqah (trustworthy).³

The third narrator is reliable too, as declared by al–Hafiz:

كثير بن زيد الأسلمي أبو محمد المدني بن مافنه بفتح الفاء وتشديد النون
صدوق يخطئ

Kathir b. Zayd al–Aslami, Abu Muhammad al–Madani b. Mafannah: Saduq (very truthful), made mistakes.⁴

He did not make “a lot” of mistakes. Therefore, his mistakes were not serious, were minimal and did not affect the quality of his ahadith.

Al–Hafiz tells us about the fourth narrator as well:

محمد بن عمر بن علي بن أبي طالب صدوق

Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib: Saduq (very truthful).5

And this is the status of the fifth narrator, according to al-Hafiz:

عمر بن علي بن أبي طالب الهاشمي ثقة

‘Umar b. ‘Ali b. Abi Talib al-Hashimi: Thiqah (trustworthy).6

So, all the narrators are fully reliable, and the sanad is well-connected. As such, it is a hasan chain, at the least. This is what Shaykh al-Arnaut concludes as well:

وثالث من حديث علي عند ابن أبي عاصم في "السنة" (1558) ، والطحاوي في "شرح مشكل الآثار" (1760) من طريقين عن أبي عامر العقدي، عن كثير بن زيد، عن محمد بن عمر بن علي، عن أبيه، عنه، مرفوعاً، بلفظ: "إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا: كتاب الله، سببه بيد الله، وسببه بأيديكم، وأهل بيتي"، وإسناده حسن.

The third is the hadith of ‘Ali, recorded by Ibn Abi ‘Asim in al-Sunnah (1558), and by al-Tahawi in Sharh Mushkil al-Athar (1760) from two routes from Abu ‘Amir al-‘Aqadi, from Kathir b. Zayd, from Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Ali, from his father, from him (i.e. ‘Ali) from the Prophet, with the wording: “I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in the Hand of Allah and the other in your hands – and my Ahl al-Bayt.” And its chain is hasan.7

The above riwayat is only an abridged version of a more detailed hadith. Imam Ishaq b. Rahwayh (d. 238 H) and some other classical Sunni scholars recorded the full version. For instance, Imam al-Tahawi (d. 321 H) documents:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن مرزوق قال : حدثنا أبو عامر العقدي قال : حدثنا كثير بن زيد، عن محمد بن عمر بن علي ، عن أبيه ، عن علي ، أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حضر الشجرة بخم فخرج آخذا بيد علي فقال : يا أيها الناس، أستم تشهدون أن الله عز وجل ربكم؟ قالوا: بلى، قال: أستم تشهدون أن الله ورسوله أولى بكم من أنفسكم، وأن الله عز وجل ورسوله مولياكم؟ قالوا: بلى، قال: فمن كنت مولاه فإن هذا مولاه، أو قال: فإن عليا مولاه – شك ابن مرزوق – إني قد

تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا :كتاب الله سببه بأيديكم، وأهل بيتي.

Ibrahim b. Marzuq – Abu ‘Amir al-‘Aqadi – Kathir b. Zayd – Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Ali – his father – ‘Ali:

Verily, the Prophet, peace be upon him, came to a tree at (Ghadir) Khumm. Then he came out, holding the hand of ‘Ali, and saying: “O mankind! Do you not testify that Allah the Almighty is your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we do.” He said, “Do you not testify that Allah and His Messenger are more entitled to you than yourselves and that Allah the Almighty and His Messenger are your Mawla?” They said, “Yes, we do”. He said, “So, whosoever Allah and His Messenger are his Mawla, verily this one – or ‘Ali – is his mawla. I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in your hands – and my Ahl al-Bayt.”⁸

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is hasan.⁹

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani also copies the riwayat of Ishaq b. Rahwayh:

وقال إسحاق: أنا أبو عامر العقدي، عن كثير بن زيد، عن محمد بن عمر بن علي، عن أبيه، عن علي، قال: إن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حضر الشجرة بكم، ثم خرج آخذا بيد علي قال: أستم تشهدون أن الله ربكم؟ قالوا: بلى، قال: أستم تشهدون أن الله ورسوله أولى بكم من أنفسكم، وأن الله ورسوله أولياؤكم؟ فقالوا: بلى، قال: فمن كان الله ورسوله مولاه، فإن هذا مولاه، وقد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا: كتاب الله سببه بيده، وسببه بأيديكم، وأهل بيتي

Ishaq said: Abu ‘Amir al-‘Aqadi – Kathir b. Zayd – Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. ‘Ali – his father – ‘Ali:

Verily, the Prophet, peace be upon him, came to a tree at (Ghadir) Khumm. Then he came out, holding the hand of ‘Ali, and saying: “Do you not testify that Allah is your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we do.” He said, “Do you not testify that Allah and His Messenger are more entitled to you than yourselves and that

Allah and His Messenger are your Awliya?” They said, “Yes, we do”. He said, “So, whosoever Allah and His Messenger are his Mawla, verily this one (i.e. ‘Ali) is his mawla. I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in His Hand and the other in your hands – and my Ahl al-Bayt.”¹⁰

Then, al-Hafiz comments:

هذا إسناد صحيح

This chain is sahih.¹¹

Imam Ahmad al-Busiri (d. 840 H) as well documents:

عن علي بن أبي طالب، رضي الله عنه: أن النبي صَلَّى الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ حضر الشجرة بخم ثم خرج آخذاً بيد علي فقال: أَلستم تشهدون أن الله ربكم؟ قالوا: بلى قال: أَلستم تشهدون أن الله ورسوله أولى بكم من أنفسكم وأن الله ورسوله مولاكم؟ قالوا: بلى قال: فمن كان الله ورسوله مولاة فإن هذا مولاة وقد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله سببه بيده وسببه بأيديكم وأهل بيتي.

Narrated ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, came to a tree at (Ghadir) Khumm. Then he came out, holding the hand of ‘Ali, and saying: “Do you not testify that Allah is your Lord?” They said, “Yes, we do.” He said, “Do you not testify that Allah and His Messenger are more entitled to you than yourselves and that Allah and His Messenger are your Mawla?” They said, “Yes, we do”. He said, “So, whosoever Allah and His Messenger are his Mawla, verily this one (i.e. ‘Ali) is his mawla. I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in His Hand and the other in your hands – and my Ahl al-Bayt.”¹²

And al-Busiri has this simple verdict about it:

رواه إسحاق بسند صحيح

Ishaq recorded it with a sahih chain.¹³

‘Allamah al-Muttaqi al-Hindi (d. 975 H) too records the hadith:

عن علي أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم حضر الشجرة بخم ثم خرج آخذا بيد
علي فقال : أيها الناس أستم تشهدون أن الله ربكم ؟ قالوا : بلى قال : أستم
تشهدون أن الله ورسوله أولى بكم من أنفسكم وأن الله ورسوله مولاكم ؟ قالوا :
بلى قال : فمن كان الله ورسوله مولاه فإن هذا مولاه وقد تركت فيكم ما إن
أخذتم به لن تضلوا بعده : كتاب الله سببه بيده وسببه بأيديكم وأهل بيتي

Narrated ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, came to a tree at (Ghadir) Khumm. Then he came out, holding the hand of ‘Ali, and saying: “Do you not testify that Allah is your Lord?” They said, “We do.” He said, “Do you not testify that Allah and His Messenger are more entitled to you than yourselves and that Allah and His Messenger are your Mawla?” They said, “Yes, we do”. He said, “So, whosoever Allah and His Messenger are his Mawla, verily this one (i.e. ‘Ali) is his mawla. I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray while following it: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in His Hand and the other in your hands – and my Ahl al-Bayt.”

Then al-Hindi says about it:

ابن راهويه وابن جرير وابن أبي عاصم والمحاملي في أماليه وصححه

Narrated by (Ishaq) Ibn Rahwayh, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi ‘Asim, and by al-Muhamali in his Amali, and he (al-Muhamali) declared it sahih. 14

The messages in these reports are very powerfully conveyed:

Muslims can acquire true guidance after their Prophet only by holding fast to both the Qur’an and his Ahl al-Bayt together.

Muslims can remain upon true guidance after their Prophet only by holding fast to both the Qur’an and his Ahl al-Bayt together.

Muslims automatically lose the true guidance after their Prophet any moment they fail to hold fast to the Qur’an and his Ahl al-Bayt together.

1. Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, pp. 644-645, # 1558

2. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 389, # 2598
3. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 617, # 4213
4. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 38, # 5628
5. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 117, # 6190
6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 724, # 4967
7. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal b. Hilal b. Asad al-Shaybani, Musnad (Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1421 H) [annotators: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut, 'Adil Murshid and others], vol. 17, p. 172, # 11104
8. Abu Ja'far Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Salamah b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Salmah al-Azdi al-Hajari al-Misri al-Tahawi, Sharh Mushkil al-Athar (Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 13, # 1760
9. Ibid
10. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah; 1414 H) [annotator: Prof. Shaykh Habib al-Rahman al-A'zami], vol., 4, p. 65, # 3972
11. Ibid
12. Ahmad b. Abi Bakr b. Isma'il al-Busiri, Itihaf al-Khiyarah al-Maharah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-'Ashra (Riyadh: Dar al-Watan; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 7, p. 210, # 6683
13. Ibid
14. 'Ali b. Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-'Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa Af'al (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1989 H), vol. 13, p. 121, # 36441

In order to ensure that his followers never missed his messages, the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, further repeated his instruction in some other words, at the same Ghadir Khumm. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records what he did:

حدثني زهير بن حرب وشجاع بن مخلد جميعا عن ابن عليّ قال زهير حدثنا
إسماعيل بن إبراهيم حدثني أبو حيان حدثني يزيد بن حيان قال انطلقت أنا
وحصين بن سبرة وعمر بن مسلم إلى زيد بن أرقم فلما جلسنا إليه قال له
حصين لقد لقيت يا زيد خيرا كثيرا رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
وسمعت حديثه وغزوت معه وصليت خلفه لقد لقيت يا زيد خيرا كثيرا حدثنا
يا زيد ما سمعت من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يا ابن أخي والله لقد
كبرت سني وقدم عهدي ونسيت بعض الذي كنت أعي من رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم فما حدثتكم فاقبلوا وما لا فلا تكلفوني ثم قال قام رسول الله
صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما فينا خطيبا بماء يدعى خما بين مكة والمدينة فحمد
الله وأثنى عليه ووعظ وذكر ثم قال أما بعد ألا أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك
أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى
والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ثم قال
وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في

أهل بيتي فقال له حصين ومن أهل بيته؟ يا زيد أليس نساؤه من أهل بيته؟ قال
نساؤه من أهل بيته ولكن أهل بيته من حرم الصدقة بعده قال وهم؟ قال هم آل
علي وآل عقیل وآل جعفر وآل عباس قال كل هؤلاء حرم الصدقة؟ قال نعم

Zuhayr b. Harb and Shuja' b. Mukhlid – Ibn 'Ulayyah: Zuhayr – Isma'il b. Ibrahim – Abu Hayyan – Yazid b. Hayyan:

I went along with Hasin b. Sabra and 'Umar b. Muslim to Zayd b. Arqam. When we sat with him, Hasin said to him:

“You have earned, O Zayd, a lot of good. You saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and you heard his hadith, and you fought by his side, and you offered Salat behind him. You have earned, O Zayd, a lot of good. Narrate to us, O Zayd, what you heard from the Messenger of Allah.”

He replied, “O son of my brother, I swear by Allah, I have grown old and my time has passed, and I have forgotten some of that which I remembered from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. So, whatever hadith I narrate to you, accept (it). And whatever I do not narrate, do not compel me to do that.”

He then said:

“One day, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, stood up to deliver a sermon at a watering place known as (Ghadir) Khumm situated between Makkah and Madinah. He praised Allah and extolled Him, and advised (us), and reminded us (of Allah and His revelations). Then, he said:

‘Then, verily, O mankind! I am only a human being. The messenger of my Lord (i.e. the angel of death) will soon reach me and I will answer (the call of death). But, I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. So hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it.” So, he exhorted (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and encouraged concerning it. Then, he said: “and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!”

So, Hasin said to him, “So, who are his Ahl al-Bayt? O Zayd, are his wives not from his Ahl al-Bayt?” He (Zayd) replied, “His wives are from his Ahl al-Bayt. But, his Ahl al-Bayt are (also) those to whom sadaqah is forbidden apart from him.” He (Hasin) asked, “And who are those?” He (Zayd) replied, “They are the family of ‘Ali, the family of ‘Aqil, the family of Ja’far, and the family of ‘Abbas”. He (Hasin) said, “Sadaqah is forbidden for all these people?” He (Zayd) answered, “Yes”.¹

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) has recorded this same exact report², and Shaykh al-Arnaut has this comment about it:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of Muslim.³

So, there is no doubt about the authenticity of the riwayah.

There is however a crucial fact about it that must be taken into consideration in understanding its meaning. There is an interpolation by Yazid b. Hayyan into the text of the Prophet's words in the hadith:

أما بعد ألا أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك
فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به
فحث على كتاب الله ورغب فيه ثم قال وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي
أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي

“Then, verily, O mankind! I am only a human being. The messenger of my Lord (i.e. the angel of death) will soon reach me and I will answer (the call of death). But, I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. So hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it.” So, he exhorted (to hold fast) to the Book of Allah and encouraged concerning it. Then, he said: “and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!”

The highlighted parts are NOT part of the words of the Messenger of Allah. Rather, they are commentaries upon the actual hadith. Since what matters to us are the instructions of our Prophet, then we must remove these interpolations in order to reach the real Sunnah. So, after deleting the foreign words, this is what we have:

أما بعد ألا أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك
فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به
وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي
أهل بيتي

“Then, verily, O mankind! I am only a human being. The messenger of my Lord (i.e. the angel of death) will soon reach me and I will answer (the call of death). But, I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. So hold fast to

the Book of Allah and adhere to it and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!"

The Sunni mufasssir, Mulla Huwaysh Al Ghazi 'Abd al-Qadir, confirms this as well:

وروى مسلم عن زيد بن أرقم أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال إني تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور فخذوا بكتاب الله واستمسكوا به وأهل بيتي، أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي، أذكركم في أهل بيتي

(Imam) Muslim recorded from Zayd b. Arqam that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

"I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. So hold fast to the Book of Allah and adhere to it and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!"⁴

The message here is unmistakable: all mankind – including all the Sahabah, Tabi'in and Tabi' al-Tabi'in – are ordered to "adhere" to both the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt.

What further solidifies this submission, is that the same hadith has been narrated from Zayd – in the book of Imam 'Abd b. Humayd (d. 249 H) – without the commentaries, and it is straightforward. 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) records that the Prophet said at Ghadir Khumm:

"أما بعد ألا أيها الناس! فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتيني رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور من استمسك به وأخذ به كان على الهدى ومن أخطأه ضل فخذوا بكتاب الله تعالى واستمسكوا به وأهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي".

"Then, verily, O mankind! I am only a human being. The messenger of my Lord (i.e. the angel of death) will soon reach me and I will answer (the call of death). But, I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. Whoever adheres to it and holds fast to it, he will be upon guidance; and whosoever belittles it, he will go astray. So hold fast to the Book of Allah the Most High and adhere to it and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt! I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!"⁵

Commenting on it, the 'Allamah states:

(صحيح) ... [حم عبد بن حميد م] عن زيد بن أرقم.

(Sahih) ... [recorded by ‘Abd b. Hamid] from Zayd b. Arqam.6

‘Allamah al-Hindi (d. 975 H) too has copied the same report:

أما بعد أيها الناس فإنما أنا بشر يوشك أن يأتي رسول ربي فأجيب وأنا تارك
فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور من استمسك به وأخذ به كان
على الهدى ومن أخطأه ضل فخذوا بكتاب الله تعالى واستمسكوا به وأهل بيتي
أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي

“Then, verily, O mankind! I am only a human being. The messenger of my Lord (i.e. the angel of death) will soon reach me and I will answer (the call of death). But, I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. Whoever adheres to it and holds fast to it, he will be upon guidance; and whosoever belittles it, he will go astray. So hold fast to the Book of Allah the Most High and adhere to it and my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, with Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt!”⁷

Giving the source, he too says:

حم وعبد بن حميد م عن زيد بن أرقم

Recorded by ‘Abd b. Humayd, from Zayd b. Arqam⁸

This was the report of Zayd from the Messenger of Allah without the interpolations of Yazid b. Hayyan. This took place at Ghadir Khumm, after the first declaration at ‘Arafat. The message is explicit, clear and unambiguous. It leaves no room for manipulation or distortion. We all must “adhere” to the Book of Allah and the Ahl al-Bayt of his Prophet after him. Strangely though, Zayd defines the “Ahl al-Bayt” meant in the hadith as the wives of the Prophet, and the families of ‘Ali, ‘Aqil, Ja’far, and al-‘Abbas. Yet, it is the same Zayd who narrated – as we shall examine in the next chapter – that the Messenger specifically named the “Ahl al-Bayt” intended in Hadith al-Thaqalayn as being only his “offspring”.

1. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi)

[annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1873, # 2408 (36)

2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut],

vol. 4, p. 366, # 19285

3. Ibid
4. Mulla Huwaysh Al Ghazi ‘Abd al-Qadir, Bayan al-Ma’ani (Damascus: Matbu’at al-Turki; 1382 H), vol. 4, p. 37
5. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami’ al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, pp. 286–287, # 1351
6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 287, # 1351
7. ‘Ali b. Husam al-Din al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, Kanz al-‘Ummal fi Sunan al-Aqwal wa Af’al (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 1989 H), vol. 1, p. 315, # 898
8. Ibid

The Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, conveyed Hadith al-Thaqalayn in different words to absolutely ensure that the message was not lost on his audiences. At ‘Arafat, he declared:

يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي
أهل بيتي

O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.

Later, at Ghadir Khumm, he again statements:

أنا تارك فيكم ثقلين أولهما كتاب الله فيه الهدى والنور من استمسك به وأخذ به
كان على الهدى ومن أخطأه ضل فخذوا بكتاب الله تعالى واستمسكوا به وأهل
بيتي

I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things (thaqalayn). The first of them is the Book of Allah. In it there is guidance and light. Whoever adheres to it and holds fast to it, he will be upon guidance; and whosoever belittles it, he will go astray. So hold fast to the Book of Allah the Most High and adhere to it and my Ahl al-Bayt.

Then, at that same Ghadir Khumm, he made some other pronouncements, which were clearly intended to drive home the point more forcefully. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) affirms this in his Tafsir:

و في الصحيح: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال في خطبته بغدير خم:
"إني تارك فيكم الثقلين: كتاب الله وعترتي، وإنهما لم يفترقا حتى يردا علي

الحوض"

In the sahih report, it is recorded that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said in his sermon at Ghadir Khumm: "I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."¹

Meanwhile, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) has equally recorded this riwayat which identifies the main narrator of the hadith:

حدثنا أبو بكر محمد بن الحسين بن مصلح الفقيه بالري ثنا محمد بن أيوب ثنا يحيى بن المغيرة السعدي ثنا جرير بن عبد الحميد عن الحسن بن عبد الله النخعي عن مسلم بن صبيح عن زيد بن أرقم رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وأهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Husayn b. Musalih al-Faqih – Muhammad b. Ayub – Yahya b. al-Mughirah al-Sa'di – Jarir b. 'Abd al-Hamid – al-Hasan b. 'Abd Allah al-Nakha'i – Muslim b. Subayh – Zayd b. Arqam, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."²

Al-Hakim states:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد على شرط الشيخين

This hadith has a sahih chain upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.³

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

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

Upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim⁴

Imam al-Tabarani (d. 360 H) too has an additional sanad for the hadith:

حدثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا عمرو بن عون الواسطي ثنا خالد بن عبد الله عن الحسن بن عبيد الله عن أبي الضحى عن زيد بن أرقم قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz – ‘Amr b. ‘Awn al-Wasiti – Khalid b. ‘Abd Allah – al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah – Abu al-Dhuha – Zayd b. Arqam:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”⁵

Shaykh al-Arnaut says about this hadith:

وهو صحيح

It is sahih⁶

This is an authentication of all the parts of the hadith by our typically reluctant Shaykh. This, of course, means a lot.

Meanwhile, there is no sin in independently verifying the authenticity of the hadith. As such, al-Dhahabi says about the first narrator:

علي بن عبد العزيز ابن المرزبان ابن سابور: الامام، الحافظ، الصدوق، أبو الحسن البغوي

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. al-Marzaban b. Sabur: the Imam, the hafiz (hadith scientist), the saduq (very truthful) narrator, Abu al-Hasan al-Baghwi.⁷

Elsewhere, he adds:

علي بن عبد العزيز البغوي الحافظ المجاور بمكة. ثقة، لكنه يطلب على
التحديث، ويعتذر بأنه محتاج. قال الدارقطني: ثقة مأمون.

‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz al-Baghwi: the hafiz (hadith scientist), adjacent to Makkah: Thiqah (trustworthy).
However, he used to request (payments) for narrating ahadith, and he is excused on the ground that he
was needy. Al-Daraqutni said: “He was thiqah (trustworthy) and totally reliable.”⁸

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about the second narrator:

عمرو بن عون بن أوس الواسطي أبو عثمان البزاز البصري ثقة ثبت

‘Amr b. ‘Awn b. Aws al-Wasiti, Abu ‘Uthman al-Bazzaz al-Basri: Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate).⁹

Concerning the third narrator, al-Hafiz also says:

خالد بن عبد الله بن عبد الرحمن بن يزيد الطحان الواسطي المزني مولاهم ثقة
ثبت

Khalid b. ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Yazid al-Tahan al-Wasiti al-Muzni, their freed slave: Thiqah
(trustworthy), thabt (accurate).¹⁰

The fourth narrator is thiqah (trustworthy) too, as affirmed by al-Hafiz:

الحسن بن عبيد الله بن عروة النخعي أبو عروة الكوفي ثقة فاضل

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Urwah al-Nakha’i, Abu ‘Urwah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), fadhil
(virtuous).¹¹

Finally, al-Hafiz proclaims about the last narrator:

مسلم بن صبيح بالتصغير الهمداني أبو الضحى الكوفي العطار مشهور بكنيته
ثقة فاضل

Muslim b. Subayh al-Hamdani, Abu al-Dhuha al-Kufi al-‘Attar, well-known with his kunya: Thiqah (trustworthy), fadhil (virtuous). 12

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) also states concerning him:

أبو الضحى مسلم بن صبيح سمع ابن عباس والنعمان بن بشير وزيد بن أرقم
روى عنه الأعمش وحبيب بن أبي ثابت

Abu al-Dhuha, Muslim b. Subayh: He heard (ahadith from) Ibn ‘Abbas, al-Nu‘man b. Bashir and Zayd b. Arqam. Al-A‘mash and Habib b. Abi Thabit narrated from him. 13

So, all the narrators are thiqah (trustworthy), and the sanad, of course, is fully connected. As such, it is a perfectly sahih chain.

But, there is more! Imam al-Tabarani again documents:

حدثنا معاذ بن المثنى ثنا علي بن المديني ثنا جرير بن عبد الحميد عن الحسن
بن عبيد الله عن أبي الضحى عن زيد بن أرقم قال قال رسول الله : إني تارك
فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي
الحوض

Mu’adh b. al-Muthanna – ‘Ali b. al-Madini – Jarir b. ‘Abd al-Hamid – al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah – Abu al-Dhuha – Zayd b. Arqam:

The Messenger of Allah said: “I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.” 14

There are only three new names in this chain.

Al-Dhahabi says about the first narrator:

معاذ بن المثنى أبو المثنى: ثقة، متقن.

Mu’adh b. al-Muthanna, Abu al-Muthanna: Thiqah (trustworthy), extremely precise. 15

About the second narrator, al-Hafiz states:

علي بن عبد الله بن جعفر بن نجيح السعدي مولاهم أبو الحسن بن المديني
بصري ثقة ثبت إمام أعلم أهل عصره بالحديث وعلمه

‘Ali b. ‘Abd Allah b. Ja’far b. Najih al-Sa’di, their freed slave, Abu al-Hasan b. al-Madini Basri: Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate), an Imam, the most knowledgeable of his time in hadith and its ‘ilal.¹⁶

The third narrator is like that too, as al-Hafiz submits:

جرير بن عبد الحميد بن قرط بضم القاف وسكون الراء بعدها طاء مهملة
الضبي الكوفي نزيل الري وقاضيه ثقة صحيح الكتاب قيل كان في آخر عمره
يهم من حفظه

Jarir b. ‘Abd al-Hamid b. Qurt al-Dhabi al-Kufi, a resident of al-Rayy and its judge: Thiqah (trustworthy), sahih al-kitab (i.e. whatever he narrated from his books was sahih). It is said that he used to hallucinate due to his memory during the last part of his lifetime.¹⁷

Al-Hafiz refers to the criticism against Jarir with “it is said”, which is a term employed to express doubt. In other words, al-Hafiz does NOT confirm that Jarir really used to hallucinate during the last part of his lifetime. Secondly, even if the allegation were accepted, it would still not harm Jarir. The claim was that he hallucinated, but not “a lot”. That shows that his memory problem was not serious, and therefore would not affect his ahadith. In any case, there is a mutaba’ah for Jarir by Khalid b. ‘Abd Allah.

Therefore, this second chain is impeccably sahih too, in any case.

1. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. ‘Umar b. Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 7, p. 201
2. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 3, p. 160, # 4711
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-Tabarani, Mu’jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-‘Ulum wa al-Hukm; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. ‘Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 5, p. 169, # 4980
6. Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Wazir al-Yamani, al-‘Awasim wa al-Qawasim fi al-Dhabb ‘an Sunnah Abi al-Qasim (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 178, footnote # 1
7. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and ‘Ali Abu Zayd], vol. 13, p. 348, # 164
8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Mizan al-I’tidal fi Naqd al-Rijal (Beirut: Dar al-Ma’rifah) [annotator: ‘Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi], vol. 3, p. 143, # 5882

9. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 742, # 5104
10. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 259, # 1652
11. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 206, # 1258
12. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 179, # 6653
13. Muslim b. al-Hajjaj, al-Kuna wa al-Asma (Madinah al-Munawwarah: al-Jami'ah al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Ahmad al-Qushqari], vol. 1, P. 455, 1722
14. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman b. Ahmad b. Ayub al-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir (Mosul: Maktabah al-'Ulum wa al-Hukm; 2nd edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Hamadi b. 'Abd al-Majid al-Salafi], vol. 5, p. 170, # 4981
15. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and 'Ali Abu Zayd], vol. 13, p. 527, # 259
16. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 697, # 4776
17. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 158, # 918

The Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, proclaimed at Ghadir Khumm to all humanity:

إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا
علي الحوض

I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.

The Qur'an and the offspring of the Prophet are referred to as "the Two Weighty Things" (al-thaqalayn) in the ahadith. Both of them are "left behind over" us by him, and are further described as being eternally inseparable till the Day of al-Qiyamah. What exactly did the Rasul intend with these statements?

When the leader of a nation or community tells his people "I will die soon. But, I have left behind over you so-and-so", what possibly could he be telling them? It is clear, of course. The designated person – "left behind over" his people – is to take his place and perform his role among them. Hadith al-Thaqalayn, obviously, is in this sense too. The Prophet was declaring the Qur'an and his offspring as his substitutes over his Ummah after him. Shaykh al-Arnaut too has something for us in this regard:

قال السندي: قوله: "إني تارك فيكم"، أي: بعد موتي.

الثَّقَلين: الثقل، بفتحتيْن: كل شيء نفيس مصون، ومنه هذا الحديث، كذا في
"القاموس".

أحدهما أكبر: هو الكتاب، لأنه إمام الكل: العترة، وغيرهم...

وعترتي: كأنه صلى الله عليه وسلم جعلهم قائمين مقامه، فكما كان في حياته
القرآن والنبي، كذلك بعده القرآن وأهل بيته، ولكن قيامهم مقامه في وجوب
المحبة والمراعاة والإحسان، لا في العمل بأقوالهم وآرائهم، بل المرجع في
العمل: الكتاب والسنة، والله تعالى أعلم.

Al-Sindi said: "His statement {I am leaving behind over you}: that is, after me death.

{The Two Weighty Things}: every priceless treasure is called a 'weighty thing', and this hadith is from it, as stated in al-Qamus.

{One of them is greater}: that is the Book, because it is the Imam for everyone – whether the offspring (of the Prophet) or others...

{and my offspring}: it is like he, peace be upon him, appointed them TO STAND IN HIS PLACE, such that just as it was the Qur'an and the Prophet during his lifetime, it was the Qur'an and his Ahl al-Bayt after him. However, their standing in his place is (only) with regards to the (Ummah's) obligation of love, kindness and care (to them), not in adherence to their words and opinions. Rather, the reference for actions are the Book and the Sunnah, and Allah the Most High knows best."¹

This is further strengthened by the fact that he called them both "the Two Weighty Things", al-thaqalayn. Imam Ibn Manzur (d. 711 H), the leading classical Sunni linguist, explains what this means:

وروي عن النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم، أنه قال في آخر عمره: إني تارك فيكم
الثقلين: كتاب الله وعترتي، فجعلهما كتاب الله عز وجل وعترته، وقد تقدم ذكر
العترة. وقال ثعلب: سميا ثقلين لأن الأخذ بهما ثقل والعمل بهما ثقل، قال:
وأصل الثقل أن العرب تقول لكل شيء نفيس خطير مصون ثقل، فسماهما ثقلين
إعظاما لقدرهما وتفخيما لشأنهما

It is narrated from the Prophet, peace be upon him, that he said during the end of his lifetime: “I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring.” So, he identified them both as the Book of Allah the Almighty and his offspring. The word “itrah (offspring)” has already been explained. Tha’lab said: “He named them thaqalayn because holding fast to them both and following them both are weighty (responsibilities).” He said: “The origin of (the word) thaqaal is that Arabs referred to every priceless weighty thing as a thaqaal. Therefore, he named them thaqalayn to highlight their significance and to extol their importance 2

Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. 606 H), an ace Sunni hadith linguist, has the same submission:

[إني تارك فيكم الثقلين : كتاب الله وعترت] سماهما ثقلين لأن الأخذ بهما والعمل بهما ثقل . ويقال لك خطير نفيس ثقل فسماهما ثقلين إعظاما لقدرهما وتفخيما لشأنهما.

[I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my offspring], he named them both thaqalayn because holding fast to them both and following them are weighty (responsibilities). And every priceless weighty thing is called thaqaal. Therefore, he named them thaqalayn to highlight their significance and to extol their importance.³

Another leading Sunni linguist, al-Zubaydi (d. 1205 H), backs him:

وكذلك الحديث { إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله وعترتي } جعلهما ثقلين إعظاما لقدرهما وتفخيما لهما. وقال ثعلب: سماهما ثقلين؛ لأن الأخذ بهما والعمل بهما ثقل.

And it is like that in the hadith: “I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah and my offspring”. He called them thaqalayn to highlight their significance and to extol them both. Tha’lab said: “He named them thaqalayn because holding fast to them both and following them both are weighty (responsibilities).”⁴

Yet another leading Sunni linguist, Abu Mansur al-Azhari (d. 370 H), confirms them:

روي عن النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) أنه قال في مرضه الذي مات فيه: (إني تارك فيكم الثقلين: كتاب الله وعترتي، ولن يفترقا حتى يرث علي الحوض)،

فسَّر النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) الثقلين فجعلهما كتاب الله جلَّ وعزَّ وعِترته عليه السلام؛ وقد فسَّرت العترة فيما تقدَّم وهم جماعةُ عشيرته الأَدْنَوْنَ. وقال أبو العباس أحمد بن يحيى: سميا ثقلين لأنَّ الأخذ بهما ثَقِيل، والعمل بهما ثَقِيل.

It is narrated from the Prophet, peace be upon him, that he said in his fatal illness: (I am leaving behind over you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my offspring. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake–Fount). The Prophet, peace be upon him, explained the Two Weighty Things and identified them both as the Book of Allah the Almighty and his offspring, peace be upon him. The word “itrah (offspring)” has already been explained, and they are his closest blood relatives. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. Yahya said: “They are named thaqalayn because holding fast to them both is a weighty (responsibility), and following them both is also a weighty (responsibility).”⁵

Imam al-Nawawi (d. 676 H), the well-known hadith scientist, tables the view of the classical Sunni scholars as well:

قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم) وانا تارك فيكم ثقلين (فذكر كتاب الله وأهل بيته قال العلماء سميا ثقلين لعظمهما وكبير شأنهما وقيل العمل بهما

His statement, peace be upon him (I am leaving behind over you Two Weighty Things) and he mentioned the Book of Allah and his Ahl al-Bayt. The ‘ulama said: He named them thaqalayn due to their magnificence and the greatness of their significance. It is also said: (they are named thaqalayn due to the fact that) both are to be followed.⁶

And Shaykh ‘Abd al-Baqi, in his annotation of Sahih Muslim, writes these words under Hadith al-Thaqalayn:

(ثقلين) قال العلماء سميا ثقلين لعظمهما وكبير شأنهما وقيل لثقل العمل بها

(Two Weighty Things [thaqalayn]): The ‘ulama said: He named them thaqalayn due to their magnificence and the greatness of their significance. It is also said: (they are named thaqalayn due to the fact that) both are to be followed.⁷

So, our Prophet indicated that he was leaving behind the Qur’an and his offspring as his replacements over us after him. He equally very strongly emphasized that we must “adhere to” and “follow” both the Qur’an and his offspring after him, by naming them “the Two Weighty Things” (al-thaqalayn). It is thus

impossible to miss his message in any circumstance: the offspring of the Messenger of Allah are his khalifahs and the masters and guides over his Ummah after him.

Meanwhile, the Rasul also described his offspring as being eternally inseparable from the Qur'an until the Day of Resurrection:

وانهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض

Verily, both shall NEVER separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.

What does this mean?

There is no doubt: the Messenger of Allah is the most eloquent of all of his Lord's creation. This is why he was able to convey some of his most significant messages through that single statement. He absolutely ruled out the possibility of any form of separation between the Qur'an and his offspring at any moment in the lifetime of this earth. So, we ask:

Does sin cause a separation between us and the Qur'an in our sinful acts? Of course, there is no doubt about this! This means then that the offspring of the Prophet never commit sinful acts. Otherwise, they would be separated from the Qur'an, at least for the duration of their sinful acts.

Does heresy – whether in beliefs or actions – cause a separation between us and the Qur'an? There is no doubt about this too. Heresies of all sorts contradict the Qur'an, and whoever possesses any heresy is in contradiction to the Book of Allah.

Therefore, whatsoever the offspring of the Prophet believe, say, do or teach is the true, pure guidance from Allah and His Messenger. It is absolutely impossible for the offspring to be heretical in absolutely anything. Otherwise, they would be separated from the Qur'an, at least for the duration of the heresy.

Allah and His Messenger have joined together the Qur'an and the offspring, and have made them eternally inseparable till the Day of al-Qiyamah. This is also a command to every believer not to ever separate them in any circumstance. If you love the Qur'an, you must love the offspring too. If you respect the Qur'an, you must respect the offspring too. If you follow the Qur'an, you must follow the offspring too. If you obey the Qur'an, you must obey the offspring too. If you consider the Qur'an to be your Imam, you must take the offspring too as your Imams. If you consider the Qur'an to be your supreme guide in any affair, you must take the offspring too as your supreme guides in all your affairs.

This last point is re-emphasized by 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) in these words while writing about the Qur'an and Sunnah:

بل يجب اعتبار الكتاب والسنة مصدرا واحدا لا فصل بينهما أبدا كما أشار إلى ذلك قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "ألا إني أتيت القرآن ومثله معه" يعني السنة وقوله: "لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض"

Rather, it is obligatory to consider the Book and the Sunnah as a single source, with no difference between them both, AS INDICATED IN THE STATEMENT of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him: "I have been given the Qur'an and its likeness with it", that is the Sunnah, AND HIS STATEMENT, "Both shall never separate until they meet me at the Lake-Fount."⁸

The 'Allamah considers the phrase "both shall never separate from each other" to be an order against discrimination between the two. Of course, he has applied the phrase to the Sunnah, even though its only reliable chains link with the offspring of the Prophet and nothing else. Yet, we understand from al-Albani's submission that it is "obligatory" to consider the Qur'an and the offspring as a single source of guidance and knowledge in Islam, with no difference between them both, as indicated in the words of the Prophet: "both shall never separate from each other". As such, whosoever follows the Qur'an in all matters, but does not obey the offspring in all matters, has defied the Order of Allah and His Messenger, and has thereby become a plain heretic.

1. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Hanbal b. Hilal b. Asad al-Shaybani, Musnad (Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1421 H) [annotators: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut, 'Adil Murshid and others], vol. 17, pp. 174-175, # 11104. Al-Sindi's submission is indeed very weird. The Ahl al-Bayt stand in the place of the Prophet in his Ummah after him. Yet, none is obliged to follow them! Moreover, al-Sindi seems to think that following the Ahl al-Bayt leads away from the Kitab and Sunnah! Alas, they are actually the purest route to the Qur'an and the original teachings of Muhammad.
2. Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Mukram b. Manzur al-Afriqi al-Misri, Lisan al-'Arab (Beirut: Dar Sadir; 1st edition), vol. 11, p. 85
3. Abu Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 1399 AH) [annotator: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. 1, p. 216
4. Muhibb al-Din Abu Faydh Sayyid Muhammad Murtadha al-Husayni al-Wasiti al-Zubaydi al-Hanafi, Taj al-'Urus min Jawahir al-Qamus (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1414 H), vol. 14, p. 85
5. Abu Mansur Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Azhari, Tahdhib al-Lughah (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 2001 CE), vol. 9, p. 78
6. Abu Zakariyyah Yahya b. Sharaf al-Nawawi, Sharh Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi; 1407 H) vol. 15, p. 180
7. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1873, # 2408 (36)
8. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Manzilah al-Sunnah fi al-Islam (Kuwait: Dar al-Salafiyyah; 4th edition, 1404 H), p. 22

There are reports of Hadith al-Thaqalayn which do not name the locations where it was delivered. It is therefore possible that the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, also uttered them at Ghadir Khumm, in addition to his other pronouncements. Meanwhile, it is equally probable that the sermons were given at other places, before or after Ghadir Khumm. Let us start with this riwayah by Imam al-Fasawi (d. 277 H):

حدثنا يحيى قال :حدثنا جرير عن الحسن بن عبيد الله عن أبي الضحى عن زيد بن أرقم قال: النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم :إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله عز وجل وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

Yahya – Jarir – al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah – Abu al-Dhuha – Zayd b. Arqam:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah the Almighty and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states concerning the first narrator:

يحيى بن يحيى بن بكير بن عبد الرحمن التميمي أبو زكريا النيسابوري ثقة ثبت
إمام

Yahya b. Yahya b. Bukayr b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Tamimi, Abu Zakariyyah al-Naysaburi: Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate), an Imam.²

What about the second narrator? Al-Hafiz submits:

جرير بن عبد الحميد بن قرط بضم القاف وسكون الراء بعدها طاء مهملة
الضبي الكوفي نزيل الري وقاضيا ثقة

Jarir b. ‘Abd al-Hamid b. Qurt al-Dhabi al-Kufi, a resident of al-Rayy and its judge: Thiqah (trustworthy).³

The third narrator is thiqah (trustworthy) as well, according to al-Hafiz:

الحسن بن عبيد الله بن عروة النخعي أبو عروة الكوفي ثقة فاضل

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Urwah al-Nakha’i, Abu ‘Urwah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), fadhil (virtuous).⁴

And the last narrator is like that too, as affirmed by al-Hafiz:

مسلم بن صبيح بالتصغير الهمداني أبو الضحى الكوفي العطار مشهور بكنيته
ثقة فاضل

Muslim b. Subayh al-Hamdani, Abu al-Dhuha al-Kufi al-‘Attar, well-known with his kunya: Thiqah (trustworthy), fadhil (virtuous).⁵

All the narrators are thiqah (trustworthy), and the chain is fully connected. So, it is an absolutely sahih chain!

Meanwhile, Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) has also recorded a shahid for it:

حدثنا علي بن المنذر كوفي حدثنا محمد بن فضيل قال حدثنا الأعمش عن
عطية عن أبي سعيد و الأعمش عن حبيب بن أبي ثابت عن زيد بن أرقم رضي
الله عنهما قالا : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إني تارك فيكم ما إن
تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي أحدهما أعظم من الآخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من
السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي ولن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض
فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما

‘Ali b. al-Mundhir Kufi – Muhammad b. Fudhayl – al-A’mash – ‘Atiyyah – Abu Sa’id (al-Khudri): AND al-
‘Amash – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Zayd b. Arqam, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it you will never go astray after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount. Therefore, watch carefully how you treat them after me.”⁶

Al-Tirmidhi says:

وهذا حديث حسن غريب

And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain).⁷

And ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) states:

صحيح

Sahih8

Sayyid Hasan al-Saqqaf also has this comment:

ورواه الترمذي (663/5) برقم (3788) بسند صحيح بلفظ إني تارك فيكم ما إن تمسكتم به لن تضلوا بعدي أحدهما أعظم من الآخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي ولن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا كيف تخلفوني فيهما

Al-Tirmidhi (5/663, # 3788) recorded it WITH A SAHIH CHAIN, with this wording:

“I am leaving behind over you that which if you adhere to it you will never go astray after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount. Therefore, watch carefully how you treat them after me.”⁹

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) further documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا بن نمير ثنا عبد الملك بن أبي سليمان عن عطية العوفي عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إني قد تركت فيكم ما أن أخذتم به لن تضلوا بعدي الثقلين أحدهما أكبر من الآخر كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي إلا وإنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Ibn Numayr – ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi Sulayman – ‘Atiyyah al-‘Awfi – Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray after me: the Two Weighty Things (al-thaqalayn). One of them both is

greater than the other: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching from the heaven to the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Take note: verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹⁰

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

حديث صحيح دون قوله " وإنيهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض "

It is a sahih hadith, with the exception of the statement “And, verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount”.¹¹

Apparently, al-Arnaut rejects the authenticity of the last phrase of the hadith, and accepts all the others. But, this is strange, indeed! We have already quoted absolutely sahih chains – in the reports of Zayd b. Arqam – in this book which establish the authenticity of that phrase. Shaykh al-Arnaut apparently rushed to his conclusion without adequate research. Besides, the chain of this last riwayat above is reliable as well, as ‘Allamah al-Albani declares, after quoting that exact same report from Musnad Ahmad:

وهو إسناده حسن في الشواهد.

And it is a chain that is hasan through the shawahid (corroborating evidences).¹²

Interestingly, this is what al-Arnaut himself says about the same hadith of ‘Atiyyah above from the same Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, with the same chain, in another book:

سنده حسن بالشواهد.

Its chain is hasan through the shawahid.¹³

So, indeed, all the parts of the hadith are firmly established through this sanad and the sahih others.

1. Abu Yusuf Ya’qub b. Sufyan al-Fasawi, al-Ma’rifah wa al-Tarikh (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah) [annotator: Khalil al-Mansur], vol. 1, p. 294
2. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 318, # 7696
3. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 158, # 918. We have already mentioned his trustworthiness previously in this book.
4. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H)

[annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 158, # 918, vol. 1, p. 206, # 1258

5. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 179, # 6653

6. Abu ‘Isa Muhammad b. ‘Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 663 # 3788

7. Ibid

8. Ibid

9. Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Saqqaf al-Qurashi al-Hashimi al-Husayni, Sahih Sharh al-‘Aqidah al-Tahawiyyah (Amman: Dar Imam al-Nawawi; 1st edition, 1416 H), p. 654

10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 59, # 11578

11. Ibid

12. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma‘arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, p. 357, # 1761

13. Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Wazir al-Yamani, al-‘Awasim wa al-Qawasim fi al-Dhabb ‘an Sunnah Abi al-Qasim (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1416 H) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 178, footnote # 1

Imam al-Fasawi (d. 277 H) records:

حدثنا عبيد الله قال: أخبرنا شريك عن الركين عن قاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إني تارك فيكم خليفتي كتاب الله عز وجل وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

‘Ubayd Allah – Sharik – al-Rukayn – Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I am leaving behind over you MY KHALIFAH: the Book of Allah the Almighty and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states about the first narrator:

عبيد الله بن موسى بن أبي المختار بازام العبسي الكوفي أبو محمد ثقة كان
يتشيع

‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa b. Abi al-Mukhtar al-‘Ubsi al-Kufi, Abu Muhammad: Thiqah (trustworthy), he was a Shi‘i.²

Concerning the second narrator, Sharik, Imam al-Mizzi (d. 742 H) submits:

استشهد به البخاري في "الجامع" وروى له في "رفع اليدين في الصلاة" وغيره. وروى له مسلم في "المتابعات"، واحتج به الباقر.

Al-Bukhari uses him as a witness in al-Jami' (i.e. Sahih al-Bukhari), and narrates from him under the Chapter "Raising both Hands in Salat" and others. Muslim too narrates from him in mutaba'at (supporting narrations), and others rely upon him as a hujjah.³

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) makes a similar statement about him:

قلت: استشهد به البخاري، وخرج له مسلم متابعة، واحتج به النسائي، وغيره.

I (al-Dhahabi) say: Al-Bukhari uses him as a witness, and Muslim narrates from him in mutaba'at. Al-Nasai and others rely upon him as a hujjah.⁴

So, the overwhelming majority of classical Sunni hadith scientists considered him a hujjah in his own right. Meanwhile, Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) has a completely different view of Imam Muslim's (d. 261 H) treatment of Sharik. For instance, he states about a riwayat:

وله شاهد على شرط مسلم فقد احتج بشريك بن عبد الله النخعي

It has a shahid (witness), which is upon the standard of Muslim, for he (Muslim) has relied upon Sharik b. 'Abd Allah al-Nakha'i as a hujjah.⁵

He repeats elsewhere:

وقد احتج مسلم بشريك بن عبد الله وهو أن يحتج به

(Imam) Muslim has relied upon Sharik b. 'Abd Allah as a hujjah, and he is to be relied upon as a hujjah.⁶

And, again:

وهو غريب صحيح فإن مسلماً قد احتج بشريك بن عبد الله

It is gharib sahih, for Muslim has relied upon Sharik b. ‘Abd Allah has a hujjah.⁷

In simpler terms, the ahadith of Sharik are sahih upon the standard of Imam Muslim, according to al-Hakim!

Al-Hafiz, on his part, gives us some additional information about Sharik, which may explain the reluctance of al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) – and possibly Imam Muslim too – concerning his reports:

شريك بن عبد الله النخعي الكوفي القاضي بواسط ثم الكوفة أبو عبد الله
صدوق يخطئ كثيرا تغير حفظه منذ ولي القضاء بالكوفة وكان عادلا فاضلا
عابدا وشديدا على أهل البدع

Sharik b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha’i al-Kufi al-Qadi, (resided) first at Wasit and then Kufah, Abu ‘Abd Allah: Saduq (very truthful), made a lot of mistakes. His memory deteriorated since he became the judge in Kufah. He was just, excellent, a great worshipper of Allah, and he was severe against the people of bid’ah.⁸

He developed a memory problem when he became the judge of Kufah. Before this period, he was a completely accurate narrator. However, Imam Ibn ‘Adi (d. 365 H) makes an important observation about him in this regard, which must be taken into consideration:

والغالب على حديثه الصحة والاستواء والذي يقع في حديثه من النكرة إنما أتى
فيه من سوء حفظه

The overwhelming majority of his ahadith are sahih and accurate (from his shuyukh). As for the repugnancy in his ahadith, that occurred only due to his poor memory.⁹

This puts things into their proper perspective. Despite his memory problems, most of his ahadith are still sahih and accurate. So, when it is said that he made “a lot” of mistakes, this was relative. His many mistakes affected only a small minority of his ahadith. To get a clearer picture, this is what Imam al-‘Ijli (d. 261 H) states:

شريك بن عبد الله النخعي القاضي كوفي ثقة وكان حسن الحديث وكان أروى
الناس عنه إسحاق بن يوسف الأزرق الواسطي سمع منه تسعة آلاف حديث

Sharik b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha’i, the judge, Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), and he was hasan al-hadith (i.e. his ahadith are hasan). The one who narrated most from him was Ishaq b. Yusuf al-Azraq al-Wasiti. He heard 9000 (nine thousand) ahadith from him.¹⁰

Apparently, Sharik was indeed a very prolific narrator. He narrated 9000 ahadith to Ishaq alone! How many more then did he transmit to others? Obviously, there were more! Meanwhile, let us assume – for the sake of argument – that Sharik narrated only those 9000 throughout his lifetime. So, in what percentage of them did he make mistakes due to his poor memory? Imam Ibn ‘Adi records the answer:

حدثنا عمر بن سنان سمعت إبراهيم بن سعيد الجوهري يقول أخطأ شريك في
أربع مائة حديث

‘Umar b. Sinan narrated to us that he heard Ibrahim b. Sa’d al-Jawhari saying: “Sharik made mistakes in 400 (four hundred) ahadith.”¹¹

In other words, Sharik made mistakes – due to his poor memory – in 4 out of every 90 ahadith; and he authentically and accurately transmitted 86 out of every 90 ahadith from his shuyukh. For Allah’s sake, is this enough to call for his head and abandon all his ahadith as some from the Ahl al-Sunnah have done? What are all these bloated statements about him then?

This revelation obviously lays the exaggerations and the exaggerated positions concerning him to rest. His case was not as serious as some make it out to be. No wonder, most of the classical Sunni hadith collectors relied upon him as a hujjah in their books. Imam al-Dhahabi too concludes about him:

قلت: كان شريك حسن الحديث إماماً فقيهاً ومحدثاً كثيراً ليس هو في الاتقان
كحماد بن زيد. وقد استشهد به البخاري وخرج له مسلم متابعه. ووثقه يحيى بن
معين ... وحديثه من أقسام الحسن.

I (al-Dhahabi) say: Sharik was hasan al-hadith (i.e. his ahadith are hasan). He was an Imam, a jurist, a prolific hadith narrator. He was not as precise as Hammad b. Zayd. Al-Bukhari has used him as a witness, Muslim has narrated mutaba’at reports from him, and Yahya b. Ma’in declared him thiqah (trustworthy) ... His ahadith are in the hasan categories.¹²

Imam al-‘Ijli has a similar submission:

شريك بن عبد الله النخعي القاضي كوفي ثقة وكان حسن الحديث

Sharik b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha’i, the judge, Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), and he was hasan al-hadith (i.e. his ahadith are hasan).¹³

Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) also says:

رواه كله أحمد ورجال الروايتين رجال الصحيح غير شريك بن عبد الله النخعي
وهو حسن الحديث

It is entirely recorded by Ahmad, and the narrators of the two reports are narrators of the Sahih, except Sharik b. ‘Abd Allah al-Nakha’i who is hasan al-hadith (i.e. his ahadith are hasan).¹⁴

So, Sharik was a thiqah (trustworthy) narrator who made many mistakes in 4 out of every 90 of his ahadith. He was taken as a hujjah by most of the classical Sunni hadith collectors, including possibly Imam Muslim. However, due to his errors, his ahadith are only of the hasan grading, according to some top Sunni hadith scientists. In our humble view, making mistakes in 4 out of every 90 ahadith is not enough to degrade his ahadith from the level of sahih reports or to reject them altogether as some Sunnis do!

The third narrator, al-Rukayn (previously mistakenly mis-transliterated as al-Rakin), is thiqah (trustworthy), as quoted by Imam Ibn Shahin (d. 385 H):

الركين بن الربيع ثقة قاله أحمد

Al-Rukayn b. al-Rabi’: Thiqah (trustworthy). Ahmad said so.¹⁵

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) has also included his name among the thiqah (trustworthy) narrators.¹⁶ More interestingly, al-Rukayn is relied upon as a hujjah by Imam Muslim in his Sahih.¹⁷ This, apparently, is also why Shaykh al-Arnaut has graded the chain of an independent report by al-Rukayn as being “sahih upon the standard of (Imam) Muslim”.¹⁸

Lastly, the fourth narrator is al-Qasim. He too is thiqah (trustworthy). Imam Ibn Shahin again states:

القاسم بن حسان الذي روى عن زيد بن ثابت ثقة قاله أحمد بن صالح

Al-Qasim b. Hassan¹⁹ who narrated from Zayd b. Thabit is thiqah (trustworthy). Ahmad b. Salih said so.²⁰

He is equally mentioned by Imam Ibn Hibban among the thiqah (trustworthy) narrators.²¹ Besides, Imam al-‘Ijli further submits:

القاسم بن حسان كوفي تابعي ثقة

Al-Qasim b. Hassan, a Kufi Tabi'i: Thiqah (trustworthy).²²

Imam al-Dhahabi also says:

القاسم بن حسان العامري، عن زيد بن ثابت، وجماعة، وعنه الركين بن الربيع،
والوليد بن قيس، وثق.

Al-Qasim b. Hasan al-‘Amiri: He narrated from Zayd b. Thabit and some others, and al-Rukayn b. al-Rabi' and al-Walid b. Qays narrated from him. He was declared thiqah (trustworthy).²³

In addition, both al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi have declared a sanad containing the name of al-Rukayn b. al-Rabi' narrating independently from al-Qasim b. Hassan – who, in turn, also narrated independently from his shaykh – to be sahih.²⁴ Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H), as well, has relied upon this chain in his Sahih:

وحدثني الركين بن الربيع عن القاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت عن النبي
صلى الله عليه و سلم

Al-Rukayn b. al-Rabi' – al-Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit – the Prophet, peace be upon him.²⁵

Obviously, Ibn Khuzaymah considers them both to be thiqah (trustworthy) or, at least, saduq (very truthful). Shaykh Dr. al-A'zami, in his tahqiq of the above chain, comments:

إسناده صحيح

So, all the narrators are thiqah (trustworthy), and the chain is fully connected. Therefore, the sanad of Hadith al-Khalifatayn is sahih, or at least hasan.

In the hadith, the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, explicitly identified the Qur’an and his offspring to be “my khalifah.” This means that they are his khalifahs. The word “khalifah” – though singular – may be used to refer to a single individual, or to a group, as Imam al-Raghib al-Isfahani (d. 501 H) explains:

والخليفة يقال للواحد والجمع ، وهاهنا [هو] جمع ، فإن الخليفة لم يرد به آدم عليه السلام فقط ، بل أريد هو وصالحو أولاده ، فهم خلفاؤه

The word khalifah is used to refer to a single person or to a group. Here (under Qur’an 2:30), it is plural. This is because the word Khalifah (there) does not refer to Adam, peace be upon him, alone. Rather, it refers to him and the righteous ones among his offspring. So, they are His (i.e. Allah’s) Khalifahs.²⁷

Of course, the implication is the same – whether “khalifah” (singular) is used, or “khulafa” (plural).

Besides, the khalifah is the one who takes the place of another one, who is physically absent for one reason or another. Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. 606 H), the grand Sunni hadith lexicographer, submits:

الخليفة من يقوم مقام الذاهب ويسد مسده

The khalifah is whoever stands in the position of the one who is physically absent and substitutes for him.²⁸

So, it is the Qur’an and the Prophet’s offspring that have been “left behind” by him to stand in his position, and to substitute for him, over his Ummah after him.

1. Abu Yusuf Ya’qub b. Sufyan al-Fasawi, al-Ma’rifah wa al-Tarikh (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah) [annotator: Khalil al-Mansur], vol. 1, p. 294
2. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 640, # 4361
3. Jamal al-Din Abu al-Hajjaj Yusuf al-Mizzi, Tahdhib al-Kamal fi Asma al-Rijal (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 2nd edition, 1413 H), vol. 12, p. 475, # 2736
4. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tarikh al-Islam wa Wafiyat al-Mashahir wa al-A’lam (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salam Tadmuri], vol. 11, p. 169
5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 65, # 45
6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 193, # 377

7. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 539, # 1412
8. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 417, # 2795
9. Abu Ahmad 'Abd Allah b. 'Adi al-Jirjani, al-Kamil fi Dhu'afa al-Rijal (Dar al-Fikr li al-Taba'at wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 3rd edition, 1409 H), vol. 4, p. 22, # 888/8
10. Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Salih al-'Ijli al-Kufi, Ma'rifat al-Thiqat (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; 1st edition, 1405 H), vol. 1, p. 453, # 727
11. Abu Ahmad 'Abd Allah b. 'Adi al-Jirjani, al-Kamil fi Dhu'afa al-Rijal (Dar al-Fikr li al-Taba'at wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 3rd edition, 1409 H), vol. 4, p. 8, # 888/8
12. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Tadhkirat al-Huffaz (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1419 H) [annotator: Zakariyyah 'Umayrat], vol. 1, p. 170
13. Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Salih al-'Ijli al-Kufi, Ma'rifat al-Thiqat (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; 1st edition, 1405 H), vol. 1, p. 453, # 727
14. Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma' al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 9, p. 164, # 14712
15. Abu Hafs 'Umar b. Shahin, Tarikh Asma al-Thiqat (Dar al-Salafiyyah; 1st edition, 1404 H), p. 88, # 369
16. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1398 H), vol. 4, p. 243
17. See Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1685, # 2136 (11)
18. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 69, # 16696
19. Previously mistakenly mis-transliterated as al-Qasim b. Hisan.
20. Abu Hafs 'Umar b. Shahin, Tarikh Asma al-Thiqat (Dar al-Salafiyyah; 1st edition, 1404 H), p. 189, # 1148
21. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1398 H), vol. 7, p. 335
22. Abu al-Hasan Ahmad b. 'Abd Allah b. Salih al-'Ijli al-Kufi, Ma'rifat al-Thiqat (Madinah: Maktabah al-Dar; 1st edition, 1405 H), vol. 2, p. 210, # 1495
23. Shams al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad b. al-Dhahabi al-Dimashqi, al-Kashif fi Ma'rifat Man Lahu Riwayat fi al-Kutub al-Sittah (Jeddah: Dar al-Qiblah li al-Thaqafat al-Islamiyyah; 1st edition, 1413 H), vol. 2, p. 127, # 4506
24. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 216, # 7418
25. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Sulami al-Naysaburi, Sahih (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 2, p. 294, # 1345
26. Ibid
27. Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn b. Muhammad b. al-Mufadhdhal al-Raghib al-Isfahani, Tafsir al-Raghib al-Isfahani wa Muqadimmatuh (Kulliyat al-Adab, Jami'ah Tanta; 1st edition, 1412 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad 'Abd al-'Aziz Basyuni], vol. 1, p. 139
28. Ibn al-Athir, Abu Sa'adat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Qum: Muassasat Isma'iliyyan) [annotator: Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi and Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi], vol. 2, p. 69

The Prophet of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, further named the Qur'an and his offspring as the two khalifahs (al-khalifatayn) over the Ummah after him. This means that the Book of Allah is one khalifah, and the offspring is another khalifah.

As we established at the end of the last chapter, the word "khalifah" may be employed in reference to a group, to indicate the khilafah of each one of them. So, the Qur'an is the khalifah of Muhammad over his

Ummah, and members of his offspring are also his khulafa (successors) over them.

Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) records one of these ahadith naming the two khalifahs:

أبو داود عمر بن سعد عن شريك عن الركين عن القاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت يرفعه قال : إني تركت فيكم الخليفتين كاملتين : كتاب الله وعترتي، وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

Abu Dawud ‘Umar b. Sa’d – Sharik – al-Rukayn – al-Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit – the Prophet:

“I have left behind over you the two all-comprehensive khalifahs: the Book of Allah and my offspring. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹

The annotators declare:

والحديث صحيح، له شواهد

The hadith is sahih. It has witnesses (shawahid).²

The only new name here that needs verification is ‘Umar b. Sa’d, the first narrator. Concerning him, al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) states:

عمر بن سعد بن عبيد أبو داود الحفري بفتح المهملة والفاء نسبة إلى موضع بالكوفة ثقة عابد

‘Umar b. Sa’d b. ‘Ubayd, Abu Dawud al-Hafari: Thiqah (trustworthy), a great worshipper of Allah.³

So, the chain is sahih, or at least hasan.

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) too documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا الأسود بن عامر ثنا شريك عن الركين عن القاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم انى تارك فيكم خليفتين كتاب الله حبل ممدود ما بين السماء والأرض أو ما بين السماء

إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا على الحوض

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – al-Aswad b. ‘Amir – Sharik – al-Rukayn – al-Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “I am leaving behind over you two khalifahs: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth or from the heaven to the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”⁴

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

حديث صحيح بشواهده دون قوله : "وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض"
وهذا إسناد ضعيف لسوء حفظ شريك

The hadith is sahih through its shawahid (witnesses), except his statement “Both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.” This chain is dha’if due to the poor memory of Sharik.⁵

So, his only problem with the chain is Sharik. However, the hadith of Sharik is either sahih or hasan, as we have established in the last chapter. The position of al-Arnaut is therefore nothing but an unnecessary exaggeration.

There is only one narrator in this chain of Ahmad that needs to be investigated: al-Aswad b. ‘Amir. This is what al-Hafiz says about him:

الأسود بن عامر الشامي نزيل بغداد يكنى أبا عبد الرحمن ويلقب شاذان ثقة

Al-Aswad b. ‘Amir al-Shami, a resident of Baghdad, his kunya was Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman and his laqab was Shadhan: Thiqah (trustworthy).⁶

Therefore, the chain is sahih, or at least hasan due to Sharik.

Ahmad further records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا أبو أحمد الزبيري ثنا شريك عن الركين عن

القاسم بن حسان عن زيد بن ثابت قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
إني تارك فيكم خليفتين كتاب الله وأهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا على
الحوض جميعا

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Abu Ahmad al-Zubayri – Sharik – al-Rukayn –
al-Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I am leaving behind over you two khalifahs: the
Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me
together at the Lake-Fount.”⁷

Al-Arnaut again says:

حديث صحيح بشواهده دون قوله : " وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض
جميعا "

The hadith is sahih through its shawahid, except his statement, “Both shall never separate from each
other until they meet me together at the Lake-Fount.”⁸

The sole unverified narrator here is al-Zubayri, and this is what al-Hafiz submits concerning him:

محمد بن عبد الله بن الزبير بن عمر بن درهم الأسدي أبو أحمد الزبيري
الكوفي ثقة ثبت إلا أنه قد يخطئ في حديث الثوري

Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr b. ‘Umar b. Dirham al-Asadi, Abu Ahmad al-Zubayri al-Kufi:
Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate), except that he made mistakes in the hadith of al-Thawri.⁹

Well, this is not an hadith of al-Thawri. As such, the chain is sahih – or at least, hasan. Through it, all
the parts of the hadith, including those denied by al-Arnaut, are firmly established.

Imam Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. 287 H) has documented the hadith too:

ثنا أبو بكر، ثنا عمرو بن سعد أبو داود الحفري، عن شريك، عن الركين عن
القاسم بن حسان، عن زيد بن ثابت قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:

إني تارك فيكم الخليفين من بعدي، كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي وإنهما لن
يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض.

Abu Bakr – ‘Amr b. Sa’d Abu Dawud al-Hafari – Sharik – al-Rukayn – al-Qasim b. Hassan – Zayd b. Thabit:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “I am leaving behind over you the two khalifahs after me: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹⁰

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) declares:

حديث صحيح. وإسناده ضعيف لسوء حفظ شريك وهو ابن عبد الله القاضي والقاسم بن حسان مجهول الحال. والحديث أخرجه أحمد 182-5/181 و189 و190 من طريقين آخرين عن شريك به. وإنما صححته لأن له شواهد تقوية

It is a sahih hadith. But, its chain is dha’if due to the poor memory of Sharik, and he was Ibn ‘Abd Allah the Judge. Also, al-Qasim b. Hassan is majhul al-hal (i.e. his status is unknown). The hadith is recorded by Ahmad (5/181–182, 189, and 190) through two other chains from Sharik with it. I have only declared it sahih because it has witnesses (shawahid) that strengthen it.¹¹

Obviously, our ‘Allamah too was infected by the anti-Sharik fallacy. In any case, Sharik was hasan al-hadith. Moreover, al-Qasim b. Hassan is not majhul al-hal. His status is known, and he is thiqah (trustworthy), as we have proved.

The new name here is Abu Bakr, and this is what al-Hafiz says about him:

عبد الله بن محمد بن أبي شيبه إبراهيم بن عثمان الواسطي الأصل أبو بكر بن
أبي شيبه الكوفي ثقة حافظ صاحب تصانيف

‘Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. ‘Uthman, of Wasiti origin, Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, author of books.¹²

So, the chain is either sahih or hasan.

1. Abu Bakr ‘Abd Allah b. Abi Shaybah, Musnad Ibn Abi Shaybah (Riyadh: Dar al-Watan; 1st edition, 1418 H) [annotators:

‘Adil b. Yusuf al-‘Azazi and Ahmad b. Farid al-Mazidi], vol. 1, p. 108

2. Ibid

3. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 718, # 4920

4. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 181, # 21618

5. Ibid

6. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 102, # 504

7. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 189, # 21697

8. Ibid

9. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 2, p. 95, # 6036

10. Abu Bakr b. Abi ‘Asim, Ahmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, pp. 350–351, # 754

11. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 351, # 754

12. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa ‘Abd al-Qadir ‘Ata], vol. 1, p. 528, # 3586

In every Ummah, there exists a prophetic family. This is the family of its prophet. On a more specific note, the family of Nuh, ‘alaihi al-salam, were the prophetic family of his Ummah. In the same manner, the family of Ibrahim, ‘alaihi al-salam were the prophetic family of his own Ummah too.

In our own case, Muhammad, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, is our Prophet, and his family are our prophetic family. This fact is recognized by ‘ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah as well. For instance, al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) states:

ويستفاد من قصة العباس استحباب الاستشفاع بأهل الخير والصلاح وأهل بيت النبوة

It is learnt from the story of al-‘Abbas that it is recommended to seek the intercession of righteous people and the Prophetic Family.¹

Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H) too, while commenting on a hadith, submits:

{ما أختصنا {أي أهل البيت يريد به نفسه وسائر أهل بيت النبوة

{What has been bestowed to us exclusively}, meaning the Ahl al-Bayt. He meant with it himself and the

other members of the Prophetic Family.²

Concerning the family of Prophet Ibrahim, Imam al-Zamakhshari (d. 538 H) says as well:

وإلى ذلك أشارت الملائكة صلوات الله عليهم في قولهم {رحمت الله وبركاته
عليكم أهل البيت} أرادوا أن هذه وأمثالها مما يكرمكم به رب العزة ويخصكم
بالإنعام به يا أهل بيت النبوة

It was towards this that the angels, peace of Allah be upon them, indicated in their statement {***Mercy of Allah and His Blessings be upon you, O Ahl al-Bayt***} [11:73]. They meant that this and its likes are part of what the Lord of Honour has honoured you with, and He has specially bestowed good unto you with it, O Prophetic Family.³

Here, the family of Prophet Ibrahim are referred to as an “Ahl al-Bayt” by the angels. They were the Prophetic Family of his Ummah too.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) also mentions a report about the family of Prophet Dawud, ‘alaihi al-salam:

وروي عنه أيضا أنه قال: وقف سائل على باب داود عليه السلام، فقال: يا أهل
بيت النبوة تصدقوا علينا بشئ رزقكم الله

It is also narrated from him that he said: “A beggar stopped at the door of Dawud, peace be upon him, and said, ‘O Prophetic Family! Give to us something that Allah has granted you.’”⁴

Expectedly, prophetic families hold special positions in their respective Ummahs. For instance, Allah informs us about two of them in these verses:

إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين ذرية بعضها
من بعض والله سميع عليم

Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds. (They are) offspring, one of the other, and Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.⁵

There are two crucial points here:

The prophetic families of Ibrahim and Imran were chosen above all the worlds. This means that none outside those families can exercise authority or leadership over them. Naturally, therefore, all masters and leaders over all others must come from them.

Members of the prophetic families are “offspring” of one another. As a result, anyone outside the offspring of a prophet can never be part of his chosen family.

Concerning the families of Prophet Nuh and Prophet Ibrahim, Allah informs us of how He chose them:

ولقد أرسلنا نوحا وإبراهيم وجعلنا في ذريتهما النبوة والكتاب فمنهم مهتد
وكثير منهم فاسقون

And indeed, We sent Nuh and Ibrahim, and We placed prophethood and the Book in their offspring. Among them was he who was guided, but many of them were disobedient to Allah.⁶

Explaining this verse, al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir states:

وقال فيه وفي إبراهيم (وجعلنا في ذريتهما النبوة والكتاب) [الحديد: 26] أي كل
نبي من بعد نوح فمن ذريته. وكذلك إبراهيم

He (Allah) says concerning him (i.e. Nuh) and Ibrahim {**And We placed prophethood and the Book in the offspring**} [*al-Hadid: 26*], meaning: all prophets after Nuh were from his offspring. That was the case of Ibrahim too.⁷

Imam al-Tabari (d. 310 H) too says:

{وجعلنا في ذريتهما النبوة والكتاب} وكذلك كانت النبوة في ذريتهما، وعليهم
أنزلت الكتب: التوراة، والإنجيل، والزبور، والفرقان، وسائر الكتب المعروفة

{**And We placed prophethood and the Book in the offspring**} in the same manner, prophethood was in their offspring, and to them were revealed the divine scriptures: al-Tawrat, al-Injil, al-Zabur, al-Furqan, and the other well-known scriptures.⁸

With regards to Prophet Ibrahim specifically, we read:

ووهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب وجعلنا في ذريته النبوة والكتاب وآتيناه أجره في الدنيا وإنه في الآخرة لمن الصالحين

And We bestowed on him Ishaq and Ya'qub, and We placed prophethood and the Book in his offspring, and We granted him his reward in this world, and verily, in the Hereafter he is indeed among the righteous.⁹

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir has this exegesis:

{وجعلنا في ذريته النبوة والكتاب...} وجعل في ذريته النبوة والكتاب فكل نبي بعث بعده فهو من ذريته وكل كتاب نزل من السماء على نبي من الانبياء من بعده فعلى أحد نسله وعقبه

{***And We placed prophethood and the Book in his offspring...***} and He placed prophethood and the Book in his offspring. Therefore, all prophets sent after him were from his offspring. Also, every scripture revealed from heaven to any prophet after him was sent to someone from his offspring and progeny.¹⁰

This is expected, of course. None from outside the family of Nuh was qualified to exercise authority or leadership over them. Allah placed him and his family above all the worlds. So, all prophets, messengers, leaders and guides must naturally be from them. The same goes for the family of Ibrahim. His family was above all others, by Allah's Decree. Therefore, all his successors, and all masters of mankind after him, were automatically from his offspring, his family.

This process started with Adam, 'alaihi al-salam, the first prophet. The Qur'an states:

أولئك الذين أنعم الله عليهم من النبيين من ذرية آدم

Those were they unto whom Allah bestowed His Grace among the prophets from the offspring of Adam.¹¹

Logically, the immediate khalifahs of Adam would be from his children. The line of prophets continued among his descendants until the time of Nuh. It was Nuh who then founded a new dynasty – chosen above all creation – by Allah's Decree, and the line of prophets shifted to his offspring alone. Ibrahim was from the descendants of Nuh, and he too founded a new dynasty – which was placed over the worlds; and all subsequent prophets naturally emerged from it.

Meanwhile, the family of Ibrahim had some minor branches. One of them was founded by his grandson, Ya'qub, 'alaihi al-salam – who was also known as Israil. Commenting about his branch of the Ibrahimic tree, Allah states:

ولقد آتينا بني إسرائيل الكتاب والحكم والنبوة ورزقناهم من الطيبات
وفضلناهم على العالمين

And indeed, We gave the offspring of Israil the Book, and authority and prophethood, and We provided them with good things, AND WE MADE THEM SUPERIOR ABOVE THE WORLDS.¹²

We equally read about the families of Musa and Harun, 'alaihima al-salam, also from the offspring of Ibrahim:

وقال لهم نبيهم إن آية ملكه أن يأتكم التابوت فيه سكينة من ربكم وبقية مما
ترك آل موسى وآل هارون تحمله الملائكة

And their Prophet said to them, “Verily! The sign of his (i.e. Talut’s) kingdom is that there shall come to you a wooden box, wherein is al-sakinah from your Lord, and a remnant of that which was left behind by the family of Musa and the family of Harun, carried by the angels.”¹³

This verse shows the high spiritual status of the families of Musa and Harun. Their relics were protected in a box, and kept by angels. One may conclude that members of these families too were high prophets, or at least some very great saints of Allah. Otherwise, angels had no business keeping their relics.

Moreover, the angels were made to bring these relics to the Israelites as a proof of the legitimacy of Talut’s divine kingdom. This fact alone establishes that the Israelites held the families of Musa and Harun in the highest spiritual regards, and obviously considered them as masters as well.

The family of Dawud, 'alaihi al-salam, was another branch of the Ibrahimic lineage. Allah says:

آل داوود شكرا وقليل من عبادي الشكور

“Work you, O family of Dawud, with thanks.” But few of My slaves are grateful.¹⁴

Dawud, the founder of this branch, was a prophet, and a king. He was succeeded by his son, Sulayman,

‘alaihi al-salam, who was also a prophet and king.

Then, there are two other branches of the tree of Ibrahim that we have not mentioned. Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records about them:

{إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين – إلى قوله – يرزق من يشاء بغير حساب} قال ابن عباس {وآل عمران} المؤمنون من آل إبراهيم وآل عمران وآل ياسين وآل محمد صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول {إن أولى الناس بإبراهيم للذين اتبعوه} وهم المؤمنون .

{Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds ... Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills, without limit.} Ibn ‘Abbas said: “{and the family of Imran} They are the believers from the family of Ibrahim, the family of ‘Imran, the family of Yasin AND THE FAMILY OF MUHAMMAD, peace be upon him. He (Allah) says: {**Verily, the most entitled to Ibrahim are those who followed him**} They are the believers”.¹⁵

Prof. Ibn Yasin also submits:

{إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين }

أخرج الطبري وابن أبي حاتم بسنديهما الحسن عن علي بن أبي طلحة عن ابن عباس قال: هم المؤمنون من آل إبراهيم وآل عمران: آل ياسين وآل محمد يقول الله عز وجل (إن أولى الناس بإبراهيم للذين اتبعوه).

{**Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds**}

Al-Tabari and Ibn Abi Hatim record with their hasan chain from ‘Ali b. Abi Talhah from Ibn ‘Abbas that he said, “They are the believers from the family of Ibrahim, the family of ‘Imran, the family of Yasin AND THE FAMILY OF MUHAMMAD. Allah the Most Glorious say: {**Verily, the most entitled to Ibrahim are those who followed him**}. ”¹⁶

As authentically transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbas, radhiyallahu ‘anhu, the family of Muhammad is part of the family of Ibrahim mentioned in this verse:

إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين ذرية بعضها من بعض والله سميع عليم

***Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds.
(They are) offspring, one of the other, and Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 17***

In fact, the family of Muhammad is the only family in our entire Ummah that is included as part of the family of Ibrahim in that verse. Ibn ‘Abbas has mentioned none other. As such, we know from the ayah that:

The family of Muhammad have been chosen by Allah above all of His other creatures of their times.

The family of Muhammad are offspring of one another. Therefore, anyone who is not from the offspring of Muhammad is automatically excluded by Allah Himself.

The direct implication of the verse is that none from outside the family of Muhammad can legitimately exercise authority or leadership over them. Moreover, all masters, leaders and guides of the Ummah must always be from them. This way, the master, leader or guide would be able to exercise authority over them, and over everyone else.

1. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah li al-Taba‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 413
2. Abu al-‘Ala Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami’ al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 5, p. 288
3. Abu al-Qasim Jarullah Mahmud b. ‘Umar al-Zamakhshari, al-Kashaf (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi; 1407 H), vol. 2, p. 411
4. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 9, p. 326
5. Qur’an 3:33–34
6. Qur’an 57:26
7. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 1, p. 120
8. Abu Ja’far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur’an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-‘Attar], vol. 27, p. 308
9. Qur’an 29:27
10. Abu al-Fida Isma’il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: ‘Ali Shiri], vol. 1, p. 172
11. Qur’an 19: 58
12. Qur’an 45:16
13. Qur’an 2:248
14. Qur’an 34:13
15. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1263
16. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu’at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li

The family of Muhammad, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, in our Ummah mainly mirrors the family of Ibrahim, 'alaihi al-salam, in his Ummah. This fundamental fact is explicitly mentioned in authentic Sunni ahadith. Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H), for instance, records:

حدثنا قيس بن حفص وموسى بن إسماعيل قالا حدثنا عبد الواحد بن زياد
حدثنا أبو قرّة مسلم بن سالم الهمداني قال حدثني عبد الله ابن عيسى سمع عبد
الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال : لقيني كعب بن عجرة فقال ألا أهدي لك هدية سمعتها
من النبي صلى الله عليه و سل؛ فقلت بلى فأهدا لي فقال سألتنا رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم فقلنا يا رسول الله كيف الصلاة عليكم أهل البيت فإن
الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليكم؟ قال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل
محمد كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجي اللهم بارك على
محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

Qays b. Hafsa and Musa b. Isma'il – 'Abd al-Wahid b. Ziyad – Abu Qurrah Muslim b. Salim al-Hamdani –
'Abd Allah b. 'Isa – 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli:

Ka'b b. 'Ujrah met me and said, "Shall I not give you a present I got from the Prophet, peace be upon him?" I said, "Yes, give it to me." He said, "We asked the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! What is the manner of the salat upon you, Ahl al-Bayt, for Allah has taught us how to send salam you (Ahl al-Bayt)?' He replied, 'Say: O Allah! Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent salat upon Ibrahim and upon the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.'"1

This is the mutawatir version of the hadith, as anyone who has done research on this matter can easily confirm2. There are a few shadh reports which either removes or replaces the phrase "the family of Muhammad". However, such odd riwayat cannot in any way harm a mutawatir hadith.

Al-Bukhari also documents:

حدثنا آدم حدثنا شعبة حدثنا الحكم قال سمعت عبد الرحمن بن أبي ليلى قال :

لقيني كعب بن عجرة فقال ألا أهدي لك هدية؟ إن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم
خرج علينا فقلنا يا رسول الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليك فكيف نصلي عليك؟
قال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما صليت على آل إبراهيم إنك
حميد مجيد .اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت على آل إبراهيم
إنك حميد مجيد

Adam – Shu’bah – al-Hakam – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Layli:

Ka’b b. ‘Ujrah met me and said, “Shall I not give you a present? Verily, the Prophet, peace be upon him, came to us and we said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, we already know how to make salam on you. But, how do we make salat on you?’ He replied, ‘Say: O Allah! Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent salat upon the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.’”³

He again records:

حدثني سعيد بن يحيى حدثنا أبي حدثنا مسعر عن الحكم عن ابن أبي ليلى عن
كعب بن عجرة رضي الله عنه قيل: يا رسول الله أما السلام عليك فقد عرفناه
فكيف الصلاة؟ قال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما صليت
على إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت
على إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد

Sa’id b. Yahya – my father – Mas’ar – al-Hakam – Ibn Abi Layli – Ka’b b. ‘Ujrah, may Allah be pleased with him:

It was said, “O Messenger of Allah, we have already known how to make salam on you. But, how do we make salat?” He replied, ‘Say: O Allah! Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent salat upon Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.’”⁴

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) too documents:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى التميمي قال قرأت على مالك عن نعيم بن عبد الله المجرم أن محمد بن عبد الله بن زيد الأنصاري (وعبد الله بن زيد هو الذي كان أري النداء بالصلاة) أخبره عن أبي مسعود الأنصاري قال أتانا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ونحن في مجلس سعد بن عباد ف قال له بشير بن سعد أمرنا الله تعالى أن نصلي عليك يا رسول الله فكيف نصلي عليك ؟ قال فسكت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم حتى تمنينا أنه لم يسأله ثم قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما صليت على آل إبراهيم وبارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت على آل إبراهيم في العالمين إنك حميد مجيد والسلام كما قد علمتم

Yahya b. Yahya al-Tamimi – Malik – Na'im b. 'Abd Allah al-Mujmar – Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah b. Zayd al-Ansari – Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, came to us while we were in the assembly of Sa'd b. 'Ubadah. So, Bashir b. Sa'd said, "Allah the Most High ordered us to make salat upon you, O Messenger of Allah. So, how do we make salat upon you?" The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, kept silent so much we wished he had not asked him. Then, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "Say: 'O Allah! Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You sent salat upon the family of Ibrahim and bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed the family of Ibrahim THROUGHOUT THE WORLDS. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.' As for the salam, it is as you have been taught.⁵

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) has this riwayat as well:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي حدثنا عثمان بن عمر أنا مالك عن نعيم المجرم عن محمد يعني بن عبد الله عن أبي مسعود قال قيل يا رسول الله كيف نصلي عليك فقال قولوا اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد وبارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت على إبراهيم في العالمين إنك حميد مجيد

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – 'Uthman b. 'Umar – Malik – Na'im al-Mujmar – Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah – Abu Mas'ud:

It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, how do we make salat upon you?" So, he replied, "Say: 'O Allah!

Send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad and bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim THROUGHOUT THE WORLDS. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.”⁶

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of (Imam) Muslim.⁷

There are a number of points that need to be highlighted here. First, this was what Ka’b b. ‘Ujrah said to the Messenger of Allah:

يا رسول الله كيف الصلاة عليكم أهل البيت فإن الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليكم

O Messenger of Allah! What is the manner of the salat upon you, Ahl al-Bayt, for Allah has taught us how to send salam upon you (Ahl al-Bayt)?

We know from this that the Sahabah used to send salam upon members of the Ahl al-Bayt. In fact, it was Allah Himself Who taught them to send salam upon the Ahl al-Bayt. Sending salam upon a male member of the Ahl al-Bayt, for instance, is to say “alaihi al-salam” (peace be upon him), “salamullah ‘alaihi” (peace of Allah be upon him), or similar statements containing “salam” (peace) after mentioning or writing his name.

The Sahabah used to do it, as Ka’b testified. Some of the early Sunnis – from all fields of knowledge – also did it to a good extent. Examples abound galore in their classical books. However, in order to conserve space, we will be citing only a few, from Sahih al-Bukhari. Concerning Amir al-Muminin, ‘alaihi al-salam, Imam al-Bukhari writes:

قال علي عليه السلام الذاريات الرياح

‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, said: “Al-Dhariyat are the winds”.⁸

With regards to his wife, the blessed daughter of the Messenger of Allah, ‘alaiha al-salam, al-Bukhari also states:

فَقَالَتْ فَاطِمَةُ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ....

Fatimah, ‘alaiha al-salam, said....9

About Imam al-Hasan, ‘alaihi al-salam, al-Bukhari is no different either:

وَوَهَبَ الْحَسَنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ لِرَجُلٍ دَيْنَهُ

Al-Hasan b. ‘Ali, ‘alaihima al-salam, waived the debt of a man.10

Imam al-Husayn, ‘alaihi al-salam, the martyr of Karbala, is treated likewise by al-Bukhari:

حُسَيْنُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ أَخْبَرَهُ

Husayn b. ‘Ali, ‘alaihima al-salam, informed him11

He also says:

أَتَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ زِيَادٍ بِرَأْسِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

The head of al-Husayn b. ‘Ali, ‘alaihi al-salam, was brought to ‘Ubayd Allah b. Ziyad12

Even Imam Zayn al-‘Abidin, ‘Ali b. al-Husayn, ‘alaihi al-salam, is given the same recognition by al-Bukhari:

وَقَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ....

‘Ali b. al-Husayn, ‘alaihi al-salam, said....13

This Sunnah, unfortunately, is resisted by a lot of modern Sunnis. It is primarily the Shi’ah who still keep it alive. May Allah set our Ummah aright.

Secondly, the salat upon the Prophet is also the salat upon his Ahl al-Bayt. Note these words of the Sahabah:

يا رسول الله كيف الصلاة عليكم أهل البيت

O Messenger of Allah! What is the manner of the salat upon you, Ahl al-Bayt?

And:

يا رسول الله قد علمنا كيف نسلم عليك فكيف نصلي عليك

O Messenger of Allah, we already know how to make salam on you. But, how do we make salat on you?

To both questions, he gave the same answer. Whether you want to make salat on the Prophet or the Ahl al-Bayt, you must mention him together with them. ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) confesses to this as well:

قد علمت مما سبق أن صيغ الصلاة على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فيها كلها الصلاة على أهل بيته صلى الله عليه وسلم وآله؛ ولذلك فلا ينبغي الاكتفاء بالصلاة عليه صلى الله عليه وسلم وحده، بل لا بد من إضافة الآل إليه، بل لا بد من إتمام الصيغة من أولها إلى آخرها؛ كما وردت؛ تقييداً بقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: "قولوا: اللهم! صل على محمد، وعلى آل محمد ... إلخ، حين سأله عن كيفية الصلاة عليه صلى الله عليه وسلم.

You have known from our previous discussions that in all the methods of making salat upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, there is mention of his Ahl al-Bayt and his family. This is why it is incorrect to make salat upon him, peace be upon him, alone. Rather, one must attach the family to him. In fact, one must mention the complete method from its beginning to its end, as it has been narrated, bound by his statement, peace be upon him “say: O Allah, send salat upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad....” when they asked him about the method of making salat upon him, peace be upon him. 14

Interestingly, even our ‘Allamah does not conform with that same Sunnah in his statements above! 15 This reflects how bad the situation has become among the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama’ah. It is mainly the Shi’ah who keep this Sunnah, while Sunnis invent and follow their own bid’ah in this matter. Whenever Shi’is intend to send salat upon the Prophet – especially in books, writings and speeches – they say “sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi” (“salat of Allah be upon him and his family”) but often translated as

“peace be upon him and his family”).

Sunnis, by contrast, traditionally delete the phrase “and his family” from their own salat! In fact, some of them go as far as actively opposing the Sunnah in order to justify their bid’ah. ‘Allamah al-Albani expresses his frustration on this matter too:

وإن من غرائب هذا العصر أن يتجرأ بعض الناس على إنكار ما ثبت عنه صلى الله عليه وسلم من طرق مستفيضة صحيحة؛ ألا وهو الصلاة على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وعلى آله معاً، مع اطلاعه ووقوفه عليها في كتب السنة {عن جمع من الصحابة؛ منهم كعب بن عجرة، وأبو حميد الساعدي، وأبو سعيد الخدري، وأبو مسعود الأنصاري، وأبو هريرة، وطلحة ابن عبيد الله، وفي أحاديثهم أنهم سألوا النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: "كيف نصلي عليك؟"، فعلمهم صلى الله عليه وسلم هذه الصيغة}، ألا وهو: الأستاذ محمد إسعاف النشاشيبي في كتابه "الإسلام الصحيح" (ص 177 – 189)، وحجته في ذلك أن الآية: {يا أيها الذين آمنوا صلوا عليه وسلموا تسليماً}؛ لم يُذكر فيها غير النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أحدٌ. وبناء على ذلك رد الأحاديث الصحيحة كلها

One of the strange things of this time is how a person denies what is authentically transmitted from him, peace be upon him, through several, sahih chains – that is, the salat upon the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his family together with him, despite having seen and read it in the books of the Sunnah {from a number of the Sahabah, among them Ka’b b. ‘Ujrah, Abu Hamid al-Sa’di, Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Abu Mas’ud al-Ansari, Abu Hurayrah and Talhah b. ‘Ubayd Allah; and in their ahadith, they asked the Prophet, peace be upon him, “How do we make salat upon you?”, and he, peace be upon him, taught them this method}.

That person is Prof. Muhammad Is’af al-Nashashibi in his book al-Islam al-Sahih (“The Correct Islam”), pp. 177–189, and his proof in that is that the verse {**O you who believe! Make salat upon him and send salam upon him perfectly**} does not mention anyone else apart from the Prophet, peace be upon him. On this basis, he denies all the sahih ahadith.¹⁶

It is our humble contention that this ugly situation was created by the extremely troubled history of Sunni Islam with the offspring of the Prophet of Allah. We will have more to say on this, later in this book.

In the salat upon the Messenger, we pray Allah to do two things:

To send His salat upon Muhammad and his family in exactly the same manner as He sent salat upon

Ibrahim and his family.

To bless Muhammad and his family in exactly the same manner as He blessed Ibrahim and his family.

So, what does it mean that Allah sends salat upon someone? Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) gives us the answer:

قال البخاري : قال أبو العالية : صلاة الله : ثناؤه عليه عند الملائكة ، وصلاة الملائكة : الدعاء.

Al-Bukhari said: Abu al-‘Aliyah said: “The salat of Allah is His praise of him among the angels, and the salat of the angels is al-du’a (the supplication).”¹⁷

In other words, we pray Allah to praise Muhammad and his family among His angels in exactly the same manner as He praised Ibrahim and his family among them. In that case, how did Allah praise Ibrahim and his family among the angels? To avoid prolonging the research, we will restrict ourselves to Ibrahim alone. The Qur’an has mentioned about him:

ما كان إبراهيم يهوديا ولا نصرانيا ولكن كان حنيفا مسلما وما كان من المشركين

Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was an absolutely pure Muslim monotheist, and he was not one of the polytheists. ¹⁸

This is a praise of our dear Prophet, Ibrahim, for his unadulterated Islamic faith. Allah also says:

إن إبراهيم لحليم أواه منيب

Verily, Ibrahim was, without doubt, forbearing, used to invoke Allah with humility, and was repentant. ¹⁹

And:

إن إبراهيم كان أمة قانتا لله حنيفا ولم يك من المشركين شاكرا لأنعمه

Verily, Ibrahim was (himself) an Ummah, obedient to Allah, an absolutely pure monotheist, and he was not one of the polytheists. He was thankful for His Graces.²⁰

And:

واذكر في الكتاب إبراهيم إنه كان صديقا نبيا

And mention in the Book Ibrahim. Verily, he was a man of truth, a prophet.²¹

And:

واذكر عبادنا إبراهيم وإسحاق ويعقوب أولي الأيدي والأبصار إنا أخلصناهم
بخالصة ذكرى الدار وإنهم عندنا لمن المصطفين الأخيار

And remember Our devout worshippers, Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub, owners of strength and understanding. Verily, We chose them with the remembrance of the Home (i.e. the Hereafter). And they are with Us, verily, of the chosen and the best.²²

And, finally:

وإبراهيم الذي وفى

And Ibrahim who thoroughly and faithfully fulfilled (the commandments of his Lord).²³

These, without doubt, were part of the praises of Allah for His noble Prophet, Ibrahim, which He mentioned to His angels. We beseech Allah – in our salat – to say these same things about Muhammad and his family too. Of course, He never flatters. Therefore, He must first bestow these noble qualities upon the Ahl al-Bayt, and must then assist them to achieve the virtues. It is only after doing all this that He would mention the praises of Muhammad and his family to the angels.

Billions of Muslims – since the time of Muhammad, and including Muhammad himself and millions of pious awliya – have beseeched Allah for more than 1400 years to praise Muhammad and his family in His heavens, countless times everyday. Moreover, this massive du'a is based upon His Own Command and Formula. Therefore, we have absolutely no doubt that our Lord accepted the salat during the lifetime of His Prophet, and has continued to honour it, and will never cease to do so till the Hour.

In other words, He granted all the qualities and virtues of Prophet Ibrahim to Muhammad and his family, and helped them in reaching the best acts and sacrifices, and then praised them throughout His heavens, among His purified legions.

As part of our salat, we further pray Allah to bless Muhammad and his family in exactly the same manner as He blessed Ibrahim and his family. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the whole du'a. We ask our Lord to grant the same blessings which He gave Ibrahim and his family to Muhammad and his family as well. So, what were Allah's blessings upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim? Well, one of them is mentioned in this verse:

إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين ذرية بعضها
من بعض والله سميع عليم

Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds.²⁴

Therefore, Allah blessed Ibrahim and his family by choosing them above all the worlds. They were superior to all other creatures of our Lord, and none can be master over them except someone from amongst them. There is no doubt that Allah has blessed Muhammad and his family in this same way as too. He has chosen them above all the worlds, and none can be their leader in anything except someone from amongst them.

Concerning the same family, Allah declares:

فقد آتينا آل إبراهيم الكتاب والحكمة وآتيناهم ملكا عظيما

We have granted the Book and the Hikmah to the family of Ibrahim, and We gave them a great kingdom.²⁵

And:

أولئك الذين آتيناهم الكتاب والحكم والنبوة

They are those whom We gave the Book, the authority, and prophethood.²⁶

And:

ولقد آتينا بني إسرائيل الكتاب والحكم والنبوة ورزقناهم من الطيبات وفضلناهم على العالمين

And indeed, We gave the offspring of Israil the Book, and authority and prophethood, and We provided them with good things, AND WE MADE THEM SUPERIOR ABOVE THE WORLDS.²⁷

Our God fixed some five things within the family of Ibrahim: prophethood, scriptures, authority, and kingdom. None could be a prophet except someone from that blessed family. Moreover, none could receive divine scripture except he was one of them. None could legally exercise authority except a leader from their family; and – by extension – none could be a legitimate king except he was from them.

Above all, members of their family were the best of Allah's creation in all their Ummahs. In the same manner, by virtue of Hadith al-Salat, Allah has fixed the same five blessings within the family of Muhammad too. Two of them – prophethood and the Book – got restricted to Muhammad himself alone due to his Lord's Decree. As for the remaining three, however, they are in his family, and will continue among them only – till the Hour.

1. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1233, # 3190
2. See al-Qadhi Abu Ishaq Isma'il b. Ishaq b. Isma'il b. Hammad b. Zayd al-Azdi al-Basri al-Baghdadi al-Maliki al-Jahdhami, Fadhl Salat 'ala al-Nabi (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 3rd edition, 1397 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], pp. 55–68. In this book, al-Qadhi Abu Ishaq records several ahadith mentioning “the family of Muhammad” with their chains from Ka'b b. 'Ujrah, 'Uqbah b. 'Amr, 'Abd Allah, 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar or 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr, Abu Mas'ud al-Ansari, Ibrahim, al-Hasan, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Talhah, Zayd b. Kharijah, 'Abd al-Rahman b. Bishr b. Mas'ud, and Fatimah bint al-Nabi Muhammad. Moreover, Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i in his Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri] has also narrated it – with the chains of transmission – from 'Aishah (vol. 53, p. 309), Anas b. Malik (vol. 48, p. 316), al-Husayn b. 'Ali (vol. 18, p. 87) and Umm Salamah (vol. 14, p. 141). This is far more than what is needed for absolute tawattur. As for the shadh reports which expunge or replace “the family of Muhammad”, they have no tawattur whatsoever and are not even close, and therefore can neither harm nor replace the mutawatir hadith.
3. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2338, # 5996
4. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 1802, # 4519
5. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 305, # 405 (65)
6. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 118, # 17108
7. Ibid
8. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 4, p. 1836
9. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 1619, # 4193
10. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 918
11. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1125, # 2925 and vol. 6, p. 2716, # 7027
12. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1370, # 3538

13. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 1959

14. Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Asl Sifat al-Salat al-Nabi (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1427 H), vol. 3, p. 933

15. A likely explanation for this inconsistency is that 'Allamah al-Albani is only referring to the mode of salat in the tashahhud during the five daily prayers. He has written all those words within its context. However, the ahadith which he has referenced are general in nature. The Sahabah did not ask the Rasul about the method of salat during the tashahhud only. Rather, they requested him to teach them the mode of salat in all circumstances, with explicit reference to the Verse of al-Salat which is also general in nature. If indeed the 'Allamah had truly understood from the questions of the Sahabah that they were only asking about the mode of salat in the tashahhud, then he must really have had extremely poor comprehension skills.

16. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 934

17. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. 'Umar b. Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqi, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim (Dar al-Taybah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 2nd edition, 1420 H) [annotator: Sami b. Muhammad Salamah], vol. 6, p. 457

18. Qur'an 3:67

19. Qur'an 11:75

20. Qur'an 16:120-121

21. Qur'an 19:41

22. Qur'an 38:45-47

23. Qur'an 53:37

24. Qur'an 3:33

25. Qur'an 4:54

26. Qur'an 6:89

27. Qur'an 45:16

One of the greatest blessings of Allah upon Ibrahim and his family, 'alaihim al-salam, was that He made them Imams of mankind. The Qur'an has informed us about this. For instance, it states concerning Prophet Ibrahim, 'alaihi al-salam:

وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

And when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with some statements, and he fulfilled them, He said, "I will appoint you an Imam OF MANKIND." He (Ibrahim) asked, "And of my offspring?" He (Allah) replied, "My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers."¹

Often, our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah confuse the Imamah mentioned in this verse with al-nubuwwah (prophethood). However, the matter itself is totally clear. Every prophet or messenger, except Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, was sent only to his people. None of them was ever sent to all of mankind:

وما أرسلنا من رسول إلا بلسان قومه ليبين لهم

We sent not a messenger except with the language of HIS PEOPLE in order that he might clearly explain TO THEM.²

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) also records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا هشيم أنا سيار عن يزيد الفقير عن جابر بن عبد الله قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أعطيت خمسا لم يعطهن أحد قبلي بعثت إلى الأحمر والأسود وكان النبي إنما يبعث إلى قومه خاصة وبعثت إلى الناس عامة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Hushaym – Sayyar – Yazid al-Faqir – Jaber b. ‘Abd Allah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I have been given five things which were never given to anyone before me. I have been sent to the red and the black. The prophet used to be sent to HIS PEOPLE ONLY, and I have been sent to all mankind.”³

Al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁴

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) too has this:

حدثنا يحيى بن يحيى أخبرنا هشيم عن سيار عن يزيد الفقير عن جابر بن عبد الله الأنصاري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أعطيت خمسا لم يعطهن أحد قبلي كان كل نبي يبعث إلى قومه خاصة وبعثت إلى كل أحمر وأسود

Yahya b. Yahya – Hushaym – Sayyar – Yazid al-Faqir – Jaber b. ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I have been given five things which were never given to anyone before me. Every prophet was sent to HIS PEOPLE ONLY, while I have been sent to every red person and every black person.”⁵

So:

As a prophet and messenger, Prophet Ibrahim was sent to his people only.

But as an Imam, his assignment covered all human beings of his time – including even all the contemporary prophets and messengers.

Needless to say, whoever insists that “Imam” means “prophet” must explain how Ibrahim – the Khalil of al-Rahman – was made the prophet of all mankind during his time!

There are a number of other points from the verse that must be noted:

وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

And when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with some statements, and he fulfilled them, He said, “I will appoint you an Imam of mankind.” He (Ibrahim) asked, “And of my offspring?” He (Allah) replied, “My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers.”

Firstly, Allah identifies Imamah as His Covenant. This means that it is solely His affair. He Alone decides and defines it. Therefore, it is He Who grants it and makes its appointments. It is NOT their affair. As such, they have no control whatsoever over it. Secondly, it never gets to wrongdoers. Allah will NEVER permit Imamah to get to any wrongdoer till the Day of Resurrection. Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) explains further:

قال الله تعالى {وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ، قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا، قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي؟ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ} لما وفى ما أمره به ربه من التكاليف العظيمة، جعله للناس إماماً يقتدون به ويأتمون بهديه. وسأل الله أن تكون هذه الإمامة متصلة بسببه، وباقية في نسبه، وخالدة في عقبه فأجيب إلى ما سأل وسلمت إليه الإمامة بزمان، واستثنى من نيلها الظالمون، واختص بها من ذريته العلماء العاملون.

Allah the Most High says: {**And when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with some statements, and he**

fulfilled them, He said, “I will appoint you an Imam of mankind.” He (Ibrahim) asked, “And of my offspring?” He (Allah) replied, “My Covenant shall not reach the wrong-doers.”}

When he fulfilled the huge obligations which his Lord commanded him with, he appointed him the Imam of mankind, whom they must follow, and whose guidance they must copy. He requested Allah that this Imamah be connected with his lineage, and be uninterrupted within his offspring, and be perpetual forever among his offspring. So, what he asked WAS GRANTED, and he was granted full authority of Imamah, and the wrong-doers were excluded from its reach, and it was made exclusive to the righteous scholars among his offspring.⁶

In other words, Imamah has never ceased on the earth – at least, since the time of Ibrahim. It has remained “uninterrupted”, “perpetual” and “forever”, within the offspring of Ibrahim the Khalil. Therefore, there is always an Imam for all mankind from the offspring of Prophet Ibrahim. In fact, there is one right now! Moreover, Imamah never gets to wrong-doers. Therefore, the Imam from the offspring of al-Khalil is one who never does wrong. With these facts, would it still be wise to insist that Imamah is prophethood? Is nubuwwah “uninterrupted”, “perpetual” and “forever”?

Prof. Ibn Yasin records:

أخرج الطبري بسنده الصحيح عن مجاهد (قال لاينال عهدي الظالمين) قال: لا يكون إماما ظالما.

Al-Tabari records with his sahih chain from Mujahid that he said: “(My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers) There will never be an Imam who does wrong.”⁷

Meanwhile, the offspring of Ibrahim al-Khalil, as Allah states, are in two categories only:

سلام على إبراهيم كذلك نجزي المحسنين إنه من عبادنا المؤمنين وبشرناه
بإسحاق نبيا من الصالحين وباركنا عليه وعلى إسحاق ومن ذريتهما محسن
وظالم لنفسه مبين

Peace be upon Ibrahim. Thus indeed do We reward the good-doers. Verily, he was one of Our believing slaves. And We gave him the glad tidings of Ishaq, a prophet from the righteous. We blessed him (i.e. Ibrahim) and Ishaq, and of their offspring are good-doers and some that are plainly wrongdoers to themselves.⁸

Of course, anyone who disobeys Allah is someone who wrongs himself:

ومن يتعد حدود الله فقد ظلم نفسه

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then indeed he has wronged himself.⁹

We also read:

ومن يتعد حدود الله فأولئك هم الظالمون

And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then such are the wrongdoers.¹⁰

Imam Salihi al-Shami (d. 942 H) explains:

معنى قوله تعالى: {ومن يتعد حدود الله فأولئك هم الظالمون} {البقرة ٢٢٩}
(وذلك أن حدود الله هي محارمه ونواهيه)

The meaning of the Most High's Statement: {***And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, such are the wrongdoers***} {***Baqarah: 229***}, that is, the set limits of Allah are things He has made haram and His prohibitions.¹¹

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) submits that the scope is far wider than that:

من تعدى بكل عمل وقته الذي حده الله تعالى لذلك العمل فقد تعدى حدود الله
وقال تعالى: {ومن يتعد حدود الله فأولئك هم الظالمون}

Whosoever exceeds, in performing an act, the time set for that act by Allah the Most High, he has transgressed the limits of Allah, and the Most High says: {***And whosoever transgresses the limits of Allah, then such are the wrong-doers***}.¹²

And Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 H) seals it:

قوله تعالى { لا ينال عهدي الظالمين } فكل من أقدم على الذنب كان ظالماً
لنفسه لقوله تعالى { فمنهم ظالم لنفسه }

His Statement {My Covenant shall not reach the wrongdoers}: So, whosoever commits a sin, he is a wrongdoer to himself due to His, the Most High's Statement: **{And of them are those who wrong themselves}** [35:32]¹³

So, any descendant of Prophet Ibrahim who delays his Salat, for instance, without any cogent excuse or who does anything haram or prohibited, is a wrongdoer, and – as a result – can never be an Imam. Without any doubt, every sinner breaks a limit set by Allah in order to become one! As such, all sinners among the progeny of Ibrahim are automatically and absolutely disqualified and barred from Imamah.

Allah informs us of some of the Imams from Ibrahim's immediate offspring:

ووهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب نافلة وكلا جعلنا صالحين وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون
بأمرنا

And We bestowed upon him (i.e. Ibrahim) Ishaq and Ya'qub. Each one We made righteous. And We appointed them Imams, guiding by Our Command.¹⁴

We know from this verse that Imams are guides. Secondly, they guide by the Command of Allah. This means three things. One, their Imamah is bestowed by an explicit Decree from Allah. This, of course, is very obvious already. Two, these Imams themselves stick to the Commands of Allah, and never deviate from it. This too is very apparent, since they never wrong themselves. Three, the Imams hold the Command of Allah.

So, their commands are Commands of Allah, and their prohibitions are Prohibitions of Allah. Obedience to them is obedience to Allah, and disobedience to them is disobedience to Allah. Moreover, it is interesting that Allah has used the plural (جعلناهم) while mentioning the Imams. This clearly is to indicate that Ishaq and Ya'qub were not the only Imams in the immediate lineage of Ibrahim. There were several others that have not been mentioned.

Among the Israelites, there were equally many Imams chosen by Allah, from the offspring of Ibrahim:

ولقد آتينا موسى الكتاب فلا تكن في مرية من لقائه وجعلناه هدى لبني إسرائيل
وجعلنا منهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا لما صبروا وكانوا بآياتنا يوقنون

And indeed We gave Musa the Book. So be not you in doubt of meeting him. And We made it a guide to the Children of Israel. And We appointed from among them Imams guiding by Our Command, when they (i.e. the Imams) were patient and used to believe with certainty (yaqin) in

There are two quick questions at this point:

Are there any Imams from the offspring of Ibrahim in our Ummah too?

If there are, who are they?

This hadith of Imam Abu Ya'la (d. 307 H) gives the first hint:

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

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

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “The Imams are from Quraysh.”¹⁶

Shaykh Dr. Asad says:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih¹⁷

This hadith is actually mutawatir, as al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) declares:

حديث: "الأئمة من قريش"، النسائي عن أنس، ورواه الطبراني في الدعاء،
والبزار والبيهقي من طرق عن أنس. قلت: وقد جمعت طرقه في جزء مفرد عن
نحو من أربعين صحابيا

The hadith “The Imams are from Quraysh” is recorded by al-Nasai from Anas, and al-Tabarani narrated it in al-Du'a, and al-Bazzar and al-Bayhaqi also narrated it, through several chains, from Anas. I say: I gathered its chains in a separate volume from forty Sahabah.¹⁸

This hadith establishes absolutely that there are Imams in this Ummah from the offspring of Ibrahim who hold the Covenant of Allah and guide the rest of us by His Command. Most importantly, all of these

Imams are appointed by Allah, and none of them ever goes against His Laws, before and during his Imamah. A crucial point to note, also, is that all our Imams are from the tribe of Quraysh.

Meanwhile, Quraysh is a large tribe, with several clans. Are the Imams spread across the entire tribe? Or, are they concentrated in a single clan? Our answers are firmly established in this salat:

اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم
إنك حميد مجيد

O Allah! Bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, in exactly the same manner as You blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. You are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Glorious.¹⁹

Undeniably, Ibrahim and his offspring were the Imams of their past Ummahs. So, Muhammad and his family are the Imams of their present Ummah. Allah has blessed Muhammad and his family in exactly the same manner as He blessed Ibrahim and his family. Therefore, Muhammad was the Imam of mankind during his lifetime, as Ibrahim was; and the family of Muhammad are the Imams after Muhammad, as the family of Ibrahim were after Ibrahim.

We must not forget also that the family of Muhammad have been “chosen” by Allah above all creation of their times. Let us remind ourselves of this crucial submission by Prof. Ibn Yasin:

{إن الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا وآل إبراهيم وآل عمران على العالمين }

أخرج الطبري وابن أبي حاتم بسنديهما الحسن عن علي بن أبي طلحة عن ابن عباس قال: هم المؤمنون من آل إبراهيم وآل عمران: آل ياسين وآل محمد يقول الله عز وجل (إن أولى الناس بإبراهيم للذين اتبعوه).

{Verily, Allah chose Adam, Nuh, the family of Ibrahim and the family of Imran above the worlds}

Al-Tabari and Ibn Abi Hatim record with their hasan chain from ‘Ali b. Abi Talhah from Ibn ‘Abbas that he said, “They are the believers from the family of Ibrahim, the family of ‘Imran, the family of Yasin AND THE FAMILY OF MUHAMMAD. Allah the Most Glorious say: {Verily, the most entitled to Ibrahim are those who followed him}.”²⁰

We must equally remember Hadith al-Thaqalayn, which leaves no doubt about the identity of the

supreme guides of humanity after Muhammad:

يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي
أهل بيتي

O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.

Supreme guides of mankind, of course, are always the Imams:

وجعلناهم أئمة يهدون بأمرنا

And We appointed them Imams, GUIDING by Our Command.²¹

1. Qur'an 2:124
2. Qur'an 14:4
3. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 304, # 14303
4. Ibid
5. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 1, p. 370, # 521 (3)
6. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir, Qisas al-Anbiya (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadithah; 1st edition, 1388 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Wahid], vol. 1, p. 232; Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 1, p. 191
7. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 1, p. 229
8. Qur'an 37:109–113
9. Qur'an 65:1
10. Qur'an 2:229
11. Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Salihi al-Shami, Subul al-Huda al-Rashad fi Sirah Khayr al-'Ibad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1414 H) [annotators: 'Adil Ahmad 'Abd al-Mawjud and 'Ali Muhammad Ma'ud], vol. 2, p. 289
12. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Al-Thamar al-Mustatab fi Fiqh al-Sunnah wa al-Kitab (Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1422 H), p. 70
13. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, 'Ismat al-Anbiya (1406 H), p. 14
14. Qur'an 21:72–73
15. Qur'an 32:23–24
16. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 6, p. 321, # 3644
17. Ibid
18. Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Talkhis al-Habir (Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1419 H), vol. 4, p. 116, # 1730

19. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar

(Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1233, # 3190

20. Prof. Dr. Hikmat b. Bashir b. Yasin, Mawsu'at al-Sahih al-Masbur min al-Tafsir bi al-Mathur (Madinah: Dar al-Mathar li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi' wa al-Taba'at; 1st edition, 1420 H), vol. 1, p. 411

21. Qur'an 21: 73

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

والذي رواه مسلم انه بغدير خم قال إني تارك فيكم الثقلين كتاب الله فذكر
كتاب الله وحض عليه ثم قال وعثرتي أهل بيتي أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي ثلاثا
وهذا مما انفرد به مسلم ولم يروه البخاري وقد رواه الترمذي وزاد فيه وأنهما
لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

وقد طعن غير واحد من الحفاظ في هذه الزيادة وقال إنها ليست من الحديث
والذين اعتقدوا صحتها قالوا إنما يدل على أن مجموع العترة الذين هم بنو
هاشم لا يتفقدون على ضلالة وهذا قاله طائفة من أهل السنة وهو من أجوبة
القاضي أبي يعلى وغيره

والحديث الذي في مسلم إذا كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قد قاله فليس فيه
إلا الوصية باتباع كتاب الله وهذا أمر قد تقدمت الوصية به في حجة الوداع قبل
ذلك وهو لم يأمر باتباع العترة لكن قال أذكركم الله في أهل بيتي وتذكير الأمة
بهم يقتضي أن يذكروا ما تقدم الأمر به قبل ذلك من إعطائهم حقوقهم والامتناع
من ظلمهم وهذا أمر قد تقدم بيانه قبل غدير خم

As for that which is narrated by (Imam) Muslim, that at Ghadir Khumm he (the Prophet) said: "I am leaving behind over you the two weighty things (al-thaqalayn): the Book of Allah" – and he mentioned the Book of Allah and focused exclusively on it, then he said – "and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. I remind you, by Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt" three times, this is one of the reports which are documented by (Imam) Muslim alone, and al-Bukhari did not record it. Al-Tirmidhi narrated it, and recorded an additional part for it: "Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake–

Fount.”

Many of the hadith scientists have criticized this additional part, and he said: “It is not part of the hadith”. As for those who believed in its authenticity, they said, “It only proves that the ‘itrah as a whole, who are the Banu Hashim, will never agree on an error.” This is what a group from the Ahl al-Sunnah say, and it is from the replies of al-Qadhi Abu Ya’la and others.

And the hadith in (Sahih) Muslim – if the Prophet, peace be upon him, really said it – there is nothing in it except a command to follow the Book of Allah (alone); and the command for this matter had already been given before that during the Farewell Hajj, and he did not give a command to follow the offspring (‘itrah).

Rather, he said, “I remind you, by Allah, of my Ahl al-Bayt.” The remembrance of them by the Ummah means that they must remember what had previously been commanded before that, in terms of giving them their rights and refraining from oppressing them. And this matter had already been explained before Ghadir Khumm.¹

He also says:

وأما قوله وعترتي أهل بيتي وأنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض فهذا رواه الترمذى وقد سئل عنه أحمد بن حنبل فضعه وضعفه غير واحد من أهل العلم وقالوا لا يصح وقد أجاب عنه طائفة بما يدل على أن أهل بيته كلهم لا يجتمعون على ضلالة قالوا ونحن نقول بذلك كما ذكر القاضي أبو يعلى وغيره

As for his statement “and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount”, this is recorded by al-Tirmidhi. Ahmad b. Hanbal was asked about it, and he declared it dha’if, and many of the people of knowledge equally classified it as dha’if and said, “It is not authentic”. A group have also replied it with that which proves that his Ahl al-Bayt altogether do not agree on an error. They said “We too say that” as al-Qadi Abu Ya’la and others mentioned.²

The arguments of our Shaykh, in simplified forms, are:

There are only two versions of Hadith al-Thaqalayn: that of Sahih Muslim and the other of Sunan al-Tirmidhi.

The version of al-Tirmidhi was declared dha’if by Ahmad and the other people of knowledge.

The version of Sahih Muslim is doubtful too, which is why Ibn Taymiyyah says about it: “if the Prophet really said it”.

The version in Sahih Muslim only commands the Ummah to follow the Qur'an alone. It contains no order to follow the Ahl al-Bayt.

So, no one is obliged to follow the Ahl al-Bayt.

The 'itrah of the Prophet, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, are all of Banu Hashim, including all those who are not from his offspring.

These submissions of our dear Shaykh – as usual – contain several levels of misleading information. First and foremost, every single version of the hadith is sahih as we have proved so far – whether that of Sahih Muslim, or Sunan al-Tirmidhi or others. None of them is dha'if. So, even if Ahmad b. Hanbal and some other Sunni 'ulama had declared some versions of the hadith as dha'if, they would have made such statements in error. Meanwhile, errors of scholars are not followed in Islam, nor are they accepted as hujjah. All the various versions of Hadith al-Thaqalayn have been narrated through sahih or hasan chains. As such, there is no doubt about their authenticity.

Secondly, as Ibn Taymiyyah himself admits, the Prophet had described the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt as “the Two Weighty Things” (thaqalayn). This, of course, was primarily to stress the significance of following them both! Let us remind the esteemed reader of the words of Imam Ibn al-Athir (d. 606 H), a leading classical Sunni hadith linguist, in this regard:

[إني تارك فيكم الثقلين : كتاب الله وعترت] سماهما ثقلين لأن الأخذ بهما والعمل بهما ثقل . ويقال لك خطير نفيس ثقل فسماهما ثقلين إعظاما لقدرهما وتفخيما لشأنهما.

[I am leaving among you the Two Weighty Things: the Book of Allah and my offspring], he named them both thaqalayn because holding fast to them both and following them are weighty (responsibilities). And every priceless weighty thing is called thaqal. Therefore, he named them thaqalayn to highlight their significance and to extol their importance.³

So, it is absolutely proved from that term – thaqalayn – alone that the Messenger was forcefully commanding his entire Ummah to follow both the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt after him. The conclusion of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah is, therefore, a clear misrepresentation of the true instruction of the Prophet of Islam.

Thirdly, our Shaykh has defined the 'itrah of the Prophet as being the whole of Banu Hashim. This obviously converts the meaning of the word from “offspring” to “clan”. However, this contradicts the default, customary definition of the term. Ibn Manzur, the ace Sunni lexicographer, submits on the word “'itrah”:

والعامة تظن أنها ولد الرجل خاصة وأن عترة رسول الله، صلى الله عليه وسلم، ولد فاطمة، رضي الله عنها، هذا قول ابن سيده

The common masses claim that it (i.e. 'itrah) refers to the offspring of the man alone, and that the 'itrah of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, are the offspring of Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her. This was the statement of Ibn Sayyiduh.⁴

Of course, the Messenger of Allah was certainly speaking in the language of the common masses to all of humanity!

Even then, the “offspring” in Hadith al-Thaqalayn are only a few people, and not everyone who is descended from the Prophet. As 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) records, he identified those intended as his offspring in the ahadith as his khalifahs:

إني تارك فيكم خليفتين: كتاب الله حبل ممدود ما بين السماء والأرض وعترتي
أهل بيتي وإنهما لن يتفرقا حتى يردا علي الحوض

I am leaving behind over you TWO KHALIFAHs: the Book of Allah – a rope stretching between the heaven and the earth – and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake–Fount.⁵

Then, the 'Allamah comments:

صحيح

Sahih⁶

Therefore, anyone who is not a khalifah from the progeny of Muhammad – however pious or knowledgeable he or she is – is excluded from the “offspring” in the ahadith. This automatically excludes all females from the loins of the Messenger. A female can never be a legitimate khalifah in Islam. Moreover, even the number of these male khalifahs from the Ahl al-Bayt is only twelve, as declared by the Prophet himself.

Therefore, only twelve people from the bloodline of Muhammad are included in Hadith al-Thaqalayn. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) has this authentic hadith:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا مؤمل بن إسماعيل ثنا حماد بن سلمة حدثنا داود بن هند عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول يكون لهذه الأمة اثنا عشر خليفة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Mumal b. Isma’il – Hammad b. Salamah – Dawud b. Hind – al-Shu’bi – Jabir b. Samurah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: “There will be for this Ummah TWELVE KHALIFAHS.”⁷

Shaykh al-Arnaut says:

حديث صحيح

It is a sahih hadith.⁸

So, any other khalifah apart from these twelve is NOT “for” this Ummah. He is only an impostor. This riwayat is extremely significant.

Ahmad again documents:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا هاشم ثنا زهير ثنا زياد بن خيثمة عن الأسود بن سعيد الهمداني عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أو قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يكون بعدي اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Hashim – Zuhayr – Ziyad b. Khaythamah – al-Aswad b. Sa’id al-Hamdani – Jabir b. Samurah:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying, or the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “THERE WILL BE AFTER ME TWELVE KHALIFAHS, all of them from Quraysh.”⁹

Al-Arnaut comments:

حديث صحيح

It is a sahih hadith¹⁰

There will no be more than twelve khalifahs after the Rasul. This hadith is explicit and emphatic.

Another point to note is that the khilafah of the twelve from Quraysh, from the Prophet's offspring, shall remain continuous, unbroken and uninterrupted till the Last Hour. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records in this regard:

حدثنا قتيبة بن سعيد وأبو بكر بن أبي شيبة قالوا حدثنا حاتم (وهو ابن إسماعيل) عن المهاجر بن مسمار عن عامر بن سعد بن أبي وقاص قال كتبت إلى جابر بن مرة مع غلامي نافع أن أخبرني بشيء سمعته من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال فكتب لي سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم الجمعة عشية رجم الأسلمي يقول (لا يزال الدين قائما حتى تقوم الساعة أو يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش)

Qutaybah b. Sa'id and Abu Bakr b. Abi Shaybah – Hatim b. Isma'il – al-Muhajir b. Musmar – 'Amir b. Sa'd b. Abi Waqqas:

I sent a letter to Jabir b. Samurah through my servant, Nafi', to inform me of something he heard from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. So, he wrote in reply back to me: "I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying on a Friday, on the eve of the stoning of al-Aslami, saying: 'The religion will never cease to stand until the establishment of the Hour or as long as there are twelve khalifahs over you, all of them from Quraysh.'" ¹¹

In simpler words, the rule of the twelve khalifahs will remain uninterrupted as long as Islam, as a religion, "stands" on the surface of the earth. Meanwhile, Islam will never fall until the Hour. So, the rule of the twelve khalifah will last continuously till al-Qiyamah. The very moment their rule ceases, Islam will collapse.

The same point is emphasized in this hadith of Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim (d. 287 H):

ثنا الحسن بن علي، ثنا سنيد بن داود، عن حجاج، عن ابن جريج، حدثني محمد بن طلحة، عن معاوية بن أبي سفيان أنه قال وهو على المنبر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: لا يزال والي من قريش.

Al-Hasan b. 'Ali – Sunayd b. Dawud – Hajjaj – Ibn Jurayj – Muhammad b. Talhah – Mu'awiyah b. Abi Sufyan, who said while on the pulpit:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "There will never cease to be a wali from Quraysh."¹²

Al-Albani comments:

حديث صحيح

A sahih hadith.¹³

The authority of the wali is called al-wilayah. A reference is made to this, in an hadith of Imam Muslim:

حدثنا ابن أبي عمر حدثنا سفيان عن عبد الملك بن عمير عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول (لا يزال أمر الناس ماضيا ما وليهم اثنا عشر رجلا) ثم تكلم النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بكلمة خفيت علي فسألت أبي ماذا قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ فقال (كلهم من قريش)

Ibn Abi 'Umar – Sufyan – 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Umayr – Jabir b. Samurah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: "The affairs of humanity will never cease to continue as long as twelve men rule them by wilayah." Then, the Prophet, peace be upon him said a sentence which was not clear to me. So, I asked my father: "What did the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, say?" He replied, "All of them will be from Quraysh."¹⁴

This hadith, which is extremely crucial, establishes the following points:

The authority of the twelve men is over all of humanity.

As long as human affairs continue on the earth, then one of these twelve men is exercising wilayah over them.

There is always a wali from Quraysh over humanity as a whole at every point in time.

Human affairs on our planet will end with the wilayah of the twelve men only.

Another key fact about these twelve men is that they are all kings. They are all royal khalifahs, in a

dynastic system. Imam Ahmad here presents the relevant hadith:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يونس بن محمد ثنا حماد يعني بن زيد ثنا مجالد عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال خطبنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بعرفات فقال لن يزال هذا الأمر عزيزا منيعا ظاهرا على من ناوأه حتى يملك اثنا عشر كلهم قال فلم أفهم ما بعد قال فقلت لأبي ما بعد كلهم قال كلهم من قریش

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Yunus b. Muhammad – Hammad b. Zayd – Mujalid – al-Sha’bi – Jabir b. Samurah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, delivered a sermon to us at ‘Arafat and said, “This affair will never cease to be strong, invincible and victorious over whoever opposes it as long as twelve (people) rule by kingdom. All of them....”

(Jabir said): I did not understand what was said after that. So, I said to my father, “What did he say after ‘all of them...’?”. He replied, “All of them will be from Quraysh.”¹⁵

Al-Arnaut says:

حديث صحيح

A sahih hadith¹⁶

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) here documents a mutaba’ah for Mujalid:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن نصر العنبري بسمرقند قال ثنا علي بن خشرم قال ثنا عيسى بن يونس عن عمران القبي عن الشعبي عن جابر بن سمرة قال سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول في حجة الوداع لا يزال أمر هذه الأمة عاليا على من ناواها حتى يملك اثنا عشر خليفة

Ibrahim b. Nasr al-Anbari – ‘Ali b. Khashram – ‘Isa b. Yunus – ‘Imran al-Qubi – al-Sha’bi – Jabir b. Samurah:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying during the Farewell Hajj: “The affair of this Ummah will

never cease to be victorious over whoever opposes it as long as twelve khalifahs rule by kingdom.”¹⁷

Meanwhile, Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) has recorded an interesting shahid:

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

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

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “THE KINGDOM is in Quraysh.”¹⁸

‘Allamah al-Albani comments:

صحيح

Sahih¹⁹

Imam Ahmad has written it too:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي حدثنا زيد بن الحباب حدثنا معاوية بن صالح قال
حدثني أبو مريم أنه سمع أبا هريرة يقول قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
الملك في قريش

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Zayd b. al-Hubbab – Mu’awiyah b. Salih – Abu Maryam – Abu Hurayrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “THE KINGDOM is in Quraysh.”²⁰

Assessing the sanad, al-Albani says:

وهذا إسناد صحيح رجاله ثقات رجال مسلم غير أبي مريم وهو الأنصاري وهو
ثقة كما في التقريب

This chain is sahih. Its narrators are thiqah (trustworthy), narrators of (Sahih) Muslim, apart from Abu Maryam, and he is al-Ansari, and he is thiqah (trustworthy) as stated in al-Taqrīb.²¹

Then, he adds:

قلت: زيد ثقة صدوق كما في "الميزان" وقد رفعه، وهي زيادة يجب قبولها كما
تقرر في المصطلح.

I say: Zayd is thiqah (trustworthy), saduq (very truthful) as stated in al-Mizan, and he has narrated it in a marfu' manner. It is a ziyadah which must be accepted as it has been repeatedly mentioned in al-Mustalah.²²

In another hadith, the Prophet interchanged "kingdom" and "khilafah". Imam Ibn Abi 'Asim records:

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

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

We were sitting with 'Amr b. al-'As, discussing al-fiqh. Then, a man from Bakr, said, "If Quraysh do not desist, Allah will place this affair in another group among Arabs." So, 'Amr b. al-'As replied, "You lied! I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying: 'The khilafah is in Quraysh till the establishment of the Hour.'" ²³

And 'Allamah al-Albani says:

إسناده جيد

Its chain is good.²⁴

Ibn Abi 'Asim further documents:

حدثنا أبو بكر، ثنا عفان، ثنا سكين بن عبد العزيز، عن أبي المنهال سيار بن سلامة قال: دخلت مع أبي علي أبي برزة وأنا غلام فقال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: الأئمة من قريش.

Abu Bakr – 'Affan – Sikkin b. 'Abd al-'Aziz – Abu al-Minhal Sayyar b. Salamah:

I went with my father to Abu Barzah while I was a still boy, and he (Abu Barzah) said: "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: 'The Imams are from Quraysh.'"²⁵

Al-Albani comments:

حديث صحيح إسناده حسن

It is a sahih hadith. Its chain is hasan.²⁶

We know from all these authentic ahadith that each true khalifah is a royal king, a wali, and an Imam. By extension, we also see that the khilafah is kingdom, wilayah and Imamah. Notably, since the khilafah is kingdom, it necessarily follows that it is both hereditary and dynastic in nature.

1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 318
2. Ibid, vol. 7, pp. 394–395
3. Abu Sa'dat al-Mubarak b. Muhammad, Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith wa al-Athar (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 1399 AH) [annotator: Tahir Ahmad al-Zawi and Mahmud Muhammad al-Tanahi], vol. 1, p. 216
4. Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Mukram b. Manzur al-Afriqi al-Misri, Lisan al-'Arab (Beirut: Dar Sadir; 1st edition), vol. 4, p. 536
5. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih al-Jami' al-Saghir wa Ziyadatuhu (Al-Maktab al-Islami), vol. 1, p. 482, # 2457
6. Ibid
7. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 106, # 21051
8. Ibid
9. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 92, # 20890
10. Ibid
11. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1453, # 1822 (10)
12. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 533, # 1126
13. Ibid

14. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1452, # 1821 (6)
15. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 96, # 20944
16. Ibid
17. Abu Hatim Muhammad b. Hibban b. Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti, Kitab al-Thiqat (Hyderabad: Majlis Dairat al-Ma'arif al-'Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1393 H), vol. 7, pp. 241-242, # 9878
18. Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 727 # 3936
19. Ibid
20. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 2, p. 364, # 8746
21. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadiith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhiyah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 3, p. 72, # 1084
22. Ibid
23. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 527, # 1109
24. Ibid
25. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 532, # 1125
26. Ibid

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

وفي لفظ لا يزال الإسلام عزيزا إلى اثني عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش وهكذا كان
فكان الخلفاء أبو بكر وعمر وعثمان وعلي ثم تولى من اجتمع الناس عليه
وصار له عز ومنعة معاوية وابنه يزيد ثم عبد الملك وأولاده الأربعة وبينهم عمر
بن عبد العزيز

And in a text “Islam will never cease to be strong till twelve khalifahs, all of them from Quraysh”, and this was exactly how it was, for the khalifahs were Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali and then those upon whom the people agreed, who were strong and invincible, ruled: Mu'awiyah, his son Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik, and his four children, and 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz was one of them.¹

Here, our Shaykh tells us that:

- Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah, Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik and others were Imams from the offspring of Ibrahim.
- They all held the Covenant of Allah, which was Imamah, and guided humanity with His Command.

- None of them was a wrongdoer, to himself or to others.
- None of them was a wrongdoer who violated any of the laws of Allah, before and during his Imamah.
- All of them were directly appointed by Allah, as He appointed their father, Ibrahim and all the Imams before them.
- All of them were kings who ruled by kingdom, and held the kingdom over the Ummah.
- If we take Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn into consideration, then the submissions of Ibn Taymiyyah also imply that:
- Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, Mu'awiyah, Yazid, 'Abd al-Malik and the others were all from the offspring of Prophet Muhammad.
- They were his offspring, his Ahl al-Bayt, who never contradicted or violated the Qur'an for even a single second.

Of course, Abu Bakr and the other Sunni khalifahs were:

- not from the offspring of Muhammad or his Ahl al-Bayt;
- not appointed by Allah;
- not holders of the Covenant or Command of Allah;
- wrongdoers who wronged themselves and others by disobeying Allah and committing sins on several occasions;
- not kings who ruled by kingdom, except for Mu'awiyah and the subsequent Umayyads (and Abbasids); and
- not holders of kingdom over the Ummah, except for Mu'awiyah and the subsequent Umayyads (and Abbasids).

The bottom-line is: it is impossible to fit Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman, especially, into the descriptions of the true khalifahs mentioned in the Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah. Undoubtedly, they were rulers.

But, certainly, they were neither khalifahs nor Imams. The difference between political or military rule and khilafah is highlighted in the story of Harun, 'alaihi al-salam. His blessed brother appointed him as his khalifah over his Ummah during the former's absence from them:

وقال موسى لأخيه هارون اخلفني في قومي

Musa said to his brother, Harun: “Be my khalifah over my people.”²

Meanwhile, al-Samiri overthrew Harun and installed himself, with the help of the masses, as the ruler of Israel:

قال فإنا قد فتننا قومك من بعدك وأضلهم السامري

He (Allah) said: “Verily! We have tried your people in your absence, and al-Samiri has led them astray.”³

We also read:

قال ابن أم إن القوم استضعفوني وكادوا يقتلونني

He (Harun) said, “O son of my mother! Indeed the people judged me weak, and were about to murder me.”⁴

Yet, Harun remained the true khalifah of Israel, even though al-Samiri had seized power. This is how things work in Islam. What confers legitimacy is not power, but divine appointment. The Prophet appointed the Book of Allah and his offspring as his joint khalifahs till the Day of al-Qiyamah.

Imagine if all Muslims the world over rejected the authority of the Qur’an, would that cancel out its khilafah? Of course, its khilafah continues over the Ummah, whether they recognize it or not! It is the same with the Ahl al-Bayt. They are the joint khalifahs over humanity along with the Kitab – and remain so till the Hour – whether anyone obeys them or none does:

وانهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا على الحوض

Verily, both shall NEVER separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.

Another error of our dear Shaykh is his confusion of these two sentences:

- Islam is strong.
- The Ummah is strong.

This is why he declares:

وهذا تصديق ما أخبر به النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم حيث قال لا يزال هذا الدين عزيزا ما تولى اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش وهؤلاء الاثنا عشر خليفة هم المذكورون في التوراة حيث قال في بشارته بإسماعيل وسيلد اثني عشر عظيما

ومن طن أن هؤلاء الاثني عشر هم الذين تعتقد الرافضة إمامتهم فهو في غاية الجهل فإن هؤلاء ليس فيهم من كان له سيف إلا علي بن أبي طالب

This is a confirmation of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, had prophesied when he said: “This religion will never cease to be strong as long as twelve khalifahs rule, all of them from Quraysh”. These twelve khalifahs are those mentioned in al-Tawrah, when He (Allah) said in His glad tiding concerning Isma’il: “He will give birth to twelve great people”. Whoever these that these twelve are those who are accepted as Imams by the Rafidhah is in the worst level of ignorance, for there was none among them who held military authority except ‘Ali b. Abi Talib.⁵

Ibn Taymiyyah apparently equates the might of the Ummah with that of its religion. Meanwhile, it is perfectly possible to have a strong Islam but a weak Ummah. The strength of the Ummah is obviously in its unity and military prowess. However, that of the religion lies only in its ability to “stand” on the surface of the earth. This has been explicitly stated in another hadith:

لا يزال الدين قائما حتى تقوم الساعة أو يكون عليكم اثنا عشر خليفة كلهم من قريش

The religion will never cease to STAND until the establishment of the Hour or as long as there are twelve khalifahs over you, all of them from Quraysh.⁶

There are always forcing struggling to push Islam to the ground. However, it will never fall. It shall remain standing on the earth till al-Qiyamah. This is the meaning of its strength. The inability of its enemies to terminate it is its invincibility. This is also indicated in yet another hadith documented by Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H):

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا حماد بن أسامة ثنا مجالد عن عامر عن جابر بن

سمرة السوائي قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول في حجة الوداع إن هذا الدين لن يزال ظاهرا على من ناوأه لا يضره مخالف ولا مفارق حتى يمضى من أمتي اثنا عشر خليفة قال ثم تكلم بشيء لم أفهمه فقلت لأبي ما قال قال كلهم من قريش

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Hammad b. Usamah – Mujalid – ‘Amir – Jabir b. Samurah al-Suwai:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying during the Farewell Hajj: “Verily, this religion will never cease to be victorious over whoever opposes it – no opponent or defector will be able to harm it – as long as twelve khalifahs pass from my Ummah.” Then, he said something which I did not understand. So, I said to my father, “What did he say?” He replied, “All of them will be from Quraysh.”⁷

Al-Arnaut says:

حديث صحيح

It is a sahih hadith⁸

All praise be to Allah: our religion has continued to stand upon its two feet since the departure of our Prophet, despite the persistent aggression and subversion of its hardened foes to bring it down. Interestingly, as long as Islam breathes on our planet, there is one of the twelve khalifahs from the offspring of Muhammad, placed over humanity by Allah as their master and guide.

Contrary to the hallucinations of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah, the first of the true royal khalifahs of this Ummah was none other than Imam ‘Ali b. Abi Talib. Imam Ibn Abi ‘Asim (d. 287 H) records:

ثنا محمد بن المثنى، حدثنا يحيى بن حماد، عن أبي عوانة، عن يحيى بن سليم أبي بلج عن عمرو بن ميمون، عن ابن عباس قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لعلي: أنت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى إلا أنك لست نبيا وأنت خليفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي.

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna – Yahya b. Hammad – Abu ‘Awanah – Yahya b. Sulaym Abu Balj – ‘Amr b. Maymun – Ibn ‘Abbas: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to ‘Ali: “You are to me of the

status of Harun to Musa, with the exception that you are not a prophet. And you are my khalifah over every believer after me.”⁹

Dr. al-Jawabirah says:

أسناده حسن.

Its chain is hasan. ¹⁰

And ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) backs him:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is hasan. ¹¹

A quick question that comes to mind here is: was ‘Ali from the offspring of Muhammad?

The answer is simple: there are instances where a person or thing is included within a foreign category for a specific purpose. For instance, Iblis was counted among the angels by Allah in His Order to them to prostrate to Prophet Adam, ‘alaihi al-salam¹². However, he was only a jinn¹³. So, for the purpose of that Divine Command, Iblis was regarded as an angel, even though he was not.

A similar situation existed between Prophet Ibrahim, ‘alaihi al-salam, and Prophet Lut, ‘alaihi al-salam. Allah says:

وتلك حجتنا آتيناها إبراهيم على قومه نرفع درجات من نشاء إن ربك حكيم عليم
وهبنا له إسحاق ويعقوب كلا هدينا ونوحا هدينا من قبل ومن ذريته داوود
وسليمان وأيوب ويوسف وموسى وهارون وكذلك نجزي المحسنين وزكريا
ويحيى وعيسى وإلياس كل من الصالحين وإسماعيل وإيسع ويونس ولوطا
وكلا فضلنا على العالمين

And that was Our Hujjah which We gave Ibrahim against his people. We raise whom We will in ranks. Certainly your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. And We bestowed upon him Ishaq and Ya’qub, each of them We guided – and We guided Nuh before (him) – and among his offspring were Dawud, Sulayman, Ayub, Yusuf, Musa, and Harun – thus do We reward the good-doers –

and Zakariyyah, Yahya, 'Isa and Ilyas – each one of them was of the righteous – and Isma'il, al-Yasa', Yunus and Lut; and each one of them We made superior above the worlds. 14

Al-Hafiz Ibn Kathir (d. 774 H) explains:

فالضمير في قوله ومن ذريته عائد على إبراهيم على المشهور. ولوط وإن كان ابن أخيه إلا أنه دخل في الذرية تغليباً. وهذا هو الحامل للقائل الآخر إن الضمير على نوح كما قدمنا في قصته والله أعلم.

The pronoun in his statement “and among his offspring” refers to Ibrahim according to the popular opinion. As for Lut, even though he was his nephew, he was part of the offspring as a minority entry. This is the problem of those who hold the second opinion that the pronoun refers to Nuh, as we have explained in his story. And Allah knows best. 15

Imam al-Qurtubi (d. 671 H) says a similar thing:

{ومن ذريته} أي ذرية إبراهيم. وقيل: من ذرية نوح، قاله الفراء وأختاره الطبري وغير واحد من المفسرين كالقشيري وابن عطية وغيرهما. والأول قاله الزجاج، واعترض بأنه عد من هذه الذرية يونس ووط وما كانا من ذرية إبراهيم. وكان لوط ابن أخيه. وقيل: ابن أخته. وقال ابن عباس: هؤلاء الأنبياء جميعاً مضافون إلى ذرية إبراهيم، وإن كان فيهم من لم تلحقه ولادة من جهته من جهة أب ولا أم، لأن لوطاً ابن أخي إبراهيم. والعرب تجعل العم أبا كما أخبر {الله عن ولد يعقوب أنهم قالوا نعبد إلهك وإله آبائك إبراهيم وإسماعيل وإسحاق} وإسماعيل عم يعقوب. وعد عيسى من ذرية إبراهيم وإنما هو ابن البنت. فأولاد فاطمة رضي الله عنها ذرية النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم.

{**And among his offspring**}, that is the offspring of Ibrahim. It is also said: among the offspring of Nuh – this opinion belonged to al-Fara and was adopted by al-Tabari and many of the mufasssiroon like al-Qushayri, Ibn 'Atiyyah and others. Al-Zajjaj held the first opinion, and he is opposed with the statement that part of those counted among the offspring were Yunus and Lut, and they both were not from the offspring of Ibrahim. Lut was his nephew. And Ibn 'Abbas said: “All of these prophets are counted among the offspring of Ibrahim, even though there are among them who were not his descendants, for Lut was the nephew of Ibrahim.”

The Arabs consider the uncle to be a father too, as Allah informs concerning the children of Ya'qub, when they said (to Ya'qub), ***"We shall worship your God, the God of your fathers – Ibrahim, Isma'il, and Ishaq – One God, and to Him we submit."*** [2: 133] Isma'il was the uncle of Ya'qub. Also, 'Isa is counted among the offspring of Ibrahim, while he was only the son of the daughter. Therefore, the offspring of Fatimah, may Allah be pleased with her, are offspring of the Prophet, peace be upon him. 16

So, Lut was counted among the offspring of Ibrahim for some specific purposes, most likely al-nubuwwah. In this same manner, this hadith apparently includes 'Ali within the offspring of Muhammad, for the specific purposes of khilafah and Imamah:

أنت خليفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي

You are my khalifah over every believer after me.

1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, p. 238
2. Qur'an 7:142
3. Qur'an 20:85
4. Qur'an 7:150
5. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 8, pp. 240-241
6. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 1453, # 1822 (10)
7. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 87, # 20833
8. Ibid
9. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (Dar al-Sami'i li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi') [annotator: Dr. Basim b. Faysal al-Jawabirah], vol. 1, pp. 799-800, # 1222
10. Ibid
11. Abu Bakr b. Abi 'Asim, Ahmad b. 'Amr b. al-Dhahhak b. Mukhlid al-Shaybani, Kitab al-Sunnah (al-Maktab al-Islami; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188
12. See Qur'an 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, 20:116, 38:71-74,
13. See Qur'an 18:50
14. Qur'an 6:83-86
15. Abu al-Fida Isma'il b. Kathir al-Dimashqi, al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah (Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 1, p. 192
16. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Ansari al-Qurtubi, al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 1405 H), vol. 7, p. 31

After making the public declarations at 'Arafat and Ghadir, and possibly at other places too, the Messenger, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi, decided to put everything down in black and white during the last few days of his blessed lifetime. Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records how his attempt failed:

حدثنا قبيصة حدثنا ابن عيينة عن سليمان الأحول عن سعيد ابن جبير عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما أنه قال يوم الخميس وما يوم الخميس ثم بكى حتى خضب دمه الحصباء فقال: اشتد برسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وجعه يوم الخميس فقال ائتوني بكتاب أكتب لكم كتابا لن تضلوا بعده أبدا . فتنازعوا ولا ينبغي عند نبي تنازع فقالوا هجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال دعوني فالذي أنا فيه خير مما تدعونني إليه . وأوصى عند موته بثلاث: أخرجوا المشركين من جزيرة العرب وأجيزوا الوفد بنحو ما كنت أجيزهم .ونسيت الثالثة

Qubaysah – Ibn ‘Uyaynah – Sulayman al-Ahwal – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

“Thursday! And what a Thursday it was!” Then, he (Ibn ‘Abbas) wept till the stones on the ground were soaked with his tears. Then, he said, “The illness of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, became severe on Thursday, and he said, ‘Bring me a sheet of paper so that I may write a document for you after which you will never go astray’. They differed, and it is not proper to differ in front of a prophet. So, they said, ‘The Messenger of Allah is raving mad.’ He replied, ‘Leave me, as I am in a better state than what you are calling me towards.’ Then, he ordered them, when he was about to die, to do three things: ‘Expel the idolaters from the Arabian Peninsula and show respect to all foreign delegates by giving them gifts as I used to do.’ And I forgot the third.”¹

Dr. al-Bagha defines the word used by the Sahabah to describe their Prophet:

(هجر (أي يتكلم بما لا يعرف لشدة وجعه

(hajara), meaning: he is saying unintelligible things due to the severity of his illness.²

Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) also documents:

حدثنا إسحاق بن إبراهيم أخبرنا وكيع عن مالك بن مغول عن طلحة بن مصرف عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس أنه قال يوم الخميس وما يوم الخميس ثم جعل تسيل دموعه حتى رأيت على خديه كأنها نظام اللؤلؤ قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ائتوني بالكتف والدواة أو اللوح والدواة أكتب لكم كتابا

لن تضلوا بعده أبدا فقالوا إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يهجر

Ishaq b. Ibrahim – Waki’ – Malik b. Maghwal – Talhah b. Musarrif – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas:

“Thursday! What a Thursday it was!” Then, tears began to flow until I saw them on his cheeks as if they were the strings of pearls. “The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, ‘Bring me a shoulder-blade and an inkpot or a tablet and an inkpot, so that I may write for you a document after which you will never go astray’. They said: ‘The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is raving mad.’”³

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) too has this riwayat:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا سفيان عن سليمان بن أبي مسلم خال بن أبي
نجيح سمع سعيد بن جبير يقول قال بن عباس يوم الخميس وما يوم الخميس
ثم بكى حتى بل دمه وقال مرة دموعه الحصى قلنا يا أبا العباس وما يوم
الخميس قال اشتد برسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وجعه فقال اتنوني اكتب
لكم كتابا لا تضلوا بعده أبدا فتنزعوا ولا ينبغي عند نبي تنازع فقالوا ما شأنه
اهجر قال سفيان يعنى هذى

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Sufyan – Isma’il b. Abi Muslim, uncle of Ibn Abi Najih – Sa’id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas:

“Thursday! What a Thursday it was!” Then, he wept until his tears moistened the pebbles. We said, “O father of al-‘Abbas! What was the Thursday?” He replied, “The illness of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, became severe. So, he said, ‘Come to me so that I may write for you a document after which you will never go astray’. But, they disagreed, and it is not proper to disagree in front of a prophet. Then they said, ‘What is his problem? He is raving mad.’” Sufyan (a sub-narrator) said (concerning the word used by the Sahabah): “It means ‘RAVING MADNESS’”.⁴

Al-Arnaut says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁵

Imam al-Bukhari is back again:

حدثنا محمد حدثنا ابن عيينة عن سليمان الأحول سمع سعيد ابن جبير سمع ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما يقول : يوم الخميس وما يوم الخميس ثم بكى حتى بل دمه الحصى قلت يا أبا عباس ما يوم الخميس؟ قال اشتد برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وجعه فقال ائتوني بكتف أكتب لكم كتابا لا تضلوا بعده أبدا. فتنازعوا ولا ينبغي عند نبي تنازع فقالوا ما له أهرج استفهموه فقال ذروني فالذي أنا فيه خير مما تدعونني إليه. فأمرهم بثلاث قال أخرجوا المشركين من جزيرة العرب وأجيزوا الوفد بنحو ما كنت أجيزهم. والثالثة خير إما أن سكتن عنها وإما أن قالها فنسيتها. قال سفيان هذا من قول سليمان

Muhammad – Ibn ‘Uyaynah – Sulayman al-Ahwal – Ibn Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

“Thursday! What a Thursday it was!” Then, he wept until his tears moistened the pebbles. So I said, “O father of ‘Abbas! What was the Thursday?” He replied, “The illness of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, became severe. So, he said, ‘Bring to me so a shoulder-blade that I may write for you a document after which you will never go astray’. But, they disagreed, and it is not proper to disagree in front of a prophet. Then they said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is raving mad. Ask him questions to confirm’. He said, ‘Leave me, for that in which I am is better than that towards which you are calling me.’ Then, he commanded them to do three things: Expel the idolaters from the Arabian Peninsula, and show respect to all foreign delegates as I used to do.” The third (instruction) was the best. He either kept quiet about it or he said it but I forgot it. Sufyan said: “This was from the statement of Sulayman.”⁶

It was such a disastrous day – so much that Ibn ‘Abbas, radhiyallahu ‘anhu, wept abnormally when he remembered it. It was the day the Sahabah of Muhammad first openly accused him of raving mad, of saying unintelligible things due to severe illness, in his holy presence! We often see some Sunnis desperately trying to downplay the shock of what the Sahabah said by mistranslating or misinterpreting the key words – hajara (هجر) and ahajara (أهجر) [and their nominal form is al-hujr (الهجر)] – in the hadith as simply “to become unconscious” or “to faint”. However, one of their earliest classical grand Imams – Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah (d. 198 H) – had longed closed the door in their faces. He was explicit that the Sahabah literally intended that the Prophet of Allah was “raving mad”, that the words they used meant exactly that. This matter is equally confirmed by other classical ‘ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Imam al-Shami (d. 942 H), for instance, states:

الهجر: بالضم: الهذيان وقول الباطل ويطلق على الكلام الفاحش.

Al-Hujr: is raving madness and irrational talk, and it is (also) used to refer to obscene, immoral talk.⁷

The ace Sunni linguist, Ibn Manzur (d. 711 H), says as well:

والهجر: الهذيان.

Al-Hujr: is raving madness.⁸

Imam Ibn Salam (d. 224), an ancient, leading Sunni hadith expert, has this submission too:

وأما الهجر في الكلام فإنه الهذيان

As for al-hujr in statements, it is raving madness.⁹

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) does not say anything different either:

والهجر بالضم ثم السكون الهذيان

Al-Hujr is raving madness.¹⁰

At this point, we want to focus on the second term used by the Sahabah: ahajara (أهجر). As pointed out by Sufyan b. ‘Uyaynah, it – along with hajara (هجر) – means “to rave mad”. However, there is a second definition for it which must be taken into account. Imam Ibn Salam comes in again:

قال الكسائي وبعضه عن الأصمعي وغيرهما: قال: الهجر الإفحاش في المنطق والخنا ونحوه، يقال منه: أهجر الرجل يهجر إهجارا

Al-Kisai – and part of it is from al-Asma’i and others: al-hujr is to say obscene things and to use obscene language. It is said from it: the man ahajara, yahjur, ihjaran.¹¹

So, to say that someone is saying obscene things or using obscene language, the verb to use is either ahajara or yahjur. Interestingly, both terms were among those used by the Sahabah to describe their Prophet:

فقالوا إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يهجر

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is raving mad.

And:

فقالوا ما له أهجر

Then they said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is raving mad.

We have translated both words as “raving mad” – which is one of their definitions anyway, influenced heavily by the commentary of Ibn ‘Uyaynah. But then, the translations could also be these:

فقالوا إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يهجر

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is saying obscene things.

And:

فقالوا ما له أهجر

Then they said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is saying obscene things.

Qadi ‘Iyad (d. 544 H), for instance, has given both meanings to ahajara – one of the words used by the Sahabah to qualify the Rasul. He even specifically refers to the hadith itself:

يقال أهجر الرجل إذا قال الفحش وقوله أهجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
كذا هو الصحيح بفتح الهاء أي هذي والهجر الهذيان

It is said “the man ahajara” when he says obscene things. His statement “the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, ahajara” – which is the correct form with fathah of the al-ha (i.e. pronounced as ahajara) – means raving madness; and al-hujr means raving madness.¹²

Abu 'Ubayd al-Bakri does the same too:

الهجر: القبيح من الكلام، يقال [منه]: [أهجر، إذا أفحش وقال ما يقبح، ويقال هجر في منامه إذا تكلم بما لا يعقل، ويقال هجر المريض وأهجر إذا هذى. وقال ابن عباس: اشتد برسول الله عليه الصلاة والسلام وجعه فقال: ايتوني بكتاب أكتب لكم لا تضلوا بعدي فقالوا: ما شأنه أهجر

Al-Hujr is obscenity in statements. It is said from it: ahajara when he says obscene things. It is also said that he hajara in his sleep if he says irrational things. It is said that an ill person hajara or ahjara when he raves mad; and Ibn 'Abbas said, "The ILLNESS of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, became severe, and he said, 'Bring to me a paper so that I may write for you what will prevent you from going astray after me.' But they said: 'What is wrong with him? He hajara.'"13

In any case, the implication is still the same, either way. The Sahabah would not have accused their Prophet of saying obscene things unless they considered him – rightly or wrongly – to be raving mad, especially during his illness.

Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 H) also has this input:

من قولهم: أهجر الرجل: إذا أفحش في القول.

They say "the man ahajara" when he makes obscene statements.14

Ibn Faris (d. 395 H), a well-known classical linguist, caps it:

الهجر: الهذيان. يقال هجر الرجل. والهجر: الإفحاش في المنطق يقال. أهجر الرجل في منطقه.

Al-Hujr is raving madness. It is said that the man hajara (i.e. to mean that he is suffering from al-hujr). Al-Hujr also means obscenity in language. It is said that the man ahajara in his language (i.e. to mean that he uses obscene language).15

This clarification by Ibn Faris – and, of course, by others too – would establish that the Sahabah accused the Messenger of both types of al-hujr:

فقالوا هجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم

So, they said, ‘The Messenger of Allah is raving mad (hajara).’

And:

فقالوا إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يهجر

They said: ‘The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, is raving mad (yahjur).’¹⁶

And:

فقالوا ما له أهجر

Then they said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is raving mad (ahajara).’

And finally:

فقالوا ما له أهجر

Then they said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is saying obscene things (ahajara).’

But, how did the situation get to that level?! How did things become so rotten? Why did those Sahabah flare up so badly after hearing the harmless request of the Prophet? Imam al-Bukhari records a report which sheds some light:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى أخبرنا هشام عن معمر عن الزهري عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله عن ابن عباس قال: لما حضر النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال وفي البيت رجال فيهم عمر بن الخطاب قال هلم أكتب لكم كتابا لن تضلوا بعده قال عمر إن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم غلبه الوجد وعندكم القرآن. فحسبنا كتاب الله. واختلف أهل البيت اختصموا فمنهم من يقول قربوا يكتب لكم رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم كتابا لن تضلوا بعده ومنهم من يقول ما قال

عمر فلما أكثروا اللغظ والاختلاف عند النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال قوموا
عني قال عبيد الله فكان ابن عباس يقول إن الرزية كل الرزية ما حال بين
رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم وبين أن يكتب لهم ذلك الكتاب من اختلافهم
ولغظهم

Ibrahim b. Musa – Hisham – Ma'mar – al-Zuhri – 'Ubayd Allah b. 'Abd Allah – Ibn 'Abbas:

When the time of the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him, approached, and there were some men in the room, and among them was 'Umar b. al-Khattab. He (the Prophet) said, "Come near. Let me write for you a document after which you will never go astray." 'Umar said, "Verily, the illness has now fully possessed the Prophet, peace be upon him. And you have the Qur'an. So, the Book of Allah is sufficient for us."

The people in the room disputed. Among them were those who said, "Come near so that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, may write for you a document after which you will never go astray." And among them were those who were repeating what 'Umar said. When their noise and dispute became very rowdy in the presence of the Prophet, peace be upon him, he said, "Stand up and leave me."

Narrated 'Ubayd Allah: Ibn 'Abbas used to say: "It was a great disaster that their dispute and noise prevented the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, from writing that document for them." 17

So, it was all started by 'Umar. He described the Messenger of Allah as having been fully possessed by his illness. In other words, it was the illness that now owned, controlled and dictated what he thought, heard, saw, said or did! He himself was no longer in charge of anything of himself – his brain, his senses, his body. It was this heavy statement that caused the uproar in the room; and those who accused the Prophet of raving madness were also only "repeating what 'Umar said". Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) explains what 'Umar's "dilemma" was in that incident:

وأما عمر فاشتبه عليه هل كان قول النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم من شدة
المرض أو كان من أقواله المعروفة والمرض جائز على الأنبياء ولهذا قال ماله
أهجر فشك في ذلك ولم يجزم بأنه هجر والشك جائز على عمر فإنه لا معصوم
إلا النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم لا سيما وقد شك بشبهة فإن النبي صلى الله عليه
و سلم كان مريضا فلم يدر أكلامه كان من وهج المرض كما يعرض للمريض
أو كان من كلامه المعروف الذي يجب قبوله

As for ‘Umar, it was not clear to him whether the statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him, was from the severity of the illness or from his intelligent statements. Illness was possible for prophets too. This was why he (‘Umar) said, “What is wrong with him? He is raving mad (or he is saying obscene things)”. So, he doubted in that, and did not explicitly state that he was raving mad. Of course, it was permissible for ‘Umar to doubt – since none is infallible except the Prophet, peace be upon him – especially as he doubted due to confusion. This was because the Prophet, peace be upon him, was ill. So, he (‘Umar) did not know whether his statement was from the sparkle of the illness as it happens to ill people or from his intelligent statements which must be accepted. 18

Well, ignoring the blatant incoherence of the submissions, there are nonetheless pieces of misinformation in them. First and foremost, ‘Umar expressed no doubt in his statement. He was direct, explicit and firm:

قال عمر إن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم غلبه الوجع وعندكم القرآن. فحسبنا
كتاب الله

‘Umar said, “Verily, the illness has fully possessed the Prophet, peace be upon him. And you have the Qur’an. So, the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.”

Secondly, this is what our Shaykh has attributed to ‘Umar:

ولهذا قال ماله أهجر فشك في ذلك ولم يجزم بأنه هجر

This was why he said, “What is wrong with him? He is raving mad (or he is saying obscene things).” So, he doubted in that, and did not explicitly state that he was raving mad.

However, it was not ‘Umar who uttered those words:

وقالوا ما شأنه؟ أهجر استفهموه

Then THEY said, ‘What is wrong with him? He is raving mad. Ask him questions to confirm’.

Other people did. The words of ‘Umar himself are undisputed. He proclaimed that the Messenger of Allah had totally lost control of himself – including his brain and senses – to his illness. He did not express doubt in the matter, but was instead firm on it. In fact, the fact that ‘Umar openly and boldly

countermanded the order of the Prophet is enough evidence that he ('Umar) believed – or at least pretended to have believed – that the Messenger was indeed raving mad. After all, this is what our Shaykh himself says:

فلم يدر أكلامه كان من وهج المرض كما يعرض للمريض أو كان من كلامه
المعروف الذي يجب قبوله

So, he ('Umar) did not know whether his statement was from the sparkle of the illness as it happens to sick people or from his intelligent statements which must be accepted.

If he had accepted that the Prophet was making intelligent statements, he would have obeyed. But, he opposed the command. This means that he thought – or pretended to have thought – that the Messenger of his Lord was talking irrationally, or saying obscene things, due to illness.

So, we ask: what exactly in the instruction of the Prophet to his Sahabah sounded “irrational” to warrant the attack on his mental health by them? In reality, there was no such thing. His statement was perfectly sensible, reasonable and intelligent:

ائتوني بكتاب أكتب لكم كتابا لن تضلوا بعده أبدا

Bring me a sheet of paper so that I may write a document for you after which you will never go astray.

At this point, this author recalls an incident which took place in early 2007, some months after his conversion to Shi'ism. He was investigating the statements of 'Umar and his group, which called into question the mental health of the Messenger of Allah. This author asked a Sufi brother his opinion on what they did. “Of course,” he replied, “they had a point! The Prophet was unlettered. He was Ummi, as the Qur'an has called him. Yet, he was asking for pen and paper to write!” This author was very shocked. “You mean”, he asked the Sufi, “the Prophet was indeed raving mad as they claimed?!” He strangely, however, refused to answer that question. It was obvious nonetheless. If he had believed that the Messenger of Allah was mentally healthy, he would have stated so in reply. By keeping quiet, he silently hinted a “yes” to this author's question.

There are millions of Muslims, especially from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, who strongly believe that the Prophet was unlettered throughout his lifetime. They mostly base their position on the fact that he has been called “the Ummi Prophet” in the Book of Allah, and on this verse:

وما كنت تتلو من قبله من كتاب ولا تخطه بيمينك إذا لارتاب المبطلون

Neither did you (O Muhammad) read any book before it, nor did you write any book with your right hand. In that case, indeed, the followers of falsehood might have doubted.¹⁹

Well, the word ummi has several meanings. An unlettered person is an ummi in truth. But, every person of Makkan origin is also an ummi. Another name for Makkah is Umm al-Qura²⁰. So, linguistically, anyone from the blessed city may either be called a Makkan or an Ummi. As such, there is no conclusive evidence from that term for the alleged illiteracy of the Messenger of Allah. It could go either way. Besides, the above ayah seems to undermine – rather than strengthen – the Sunni claim: Muhammad never wrote or read any book before the Qur'an. This suggests that he actually wrote and read after the start of its descent. In fact, this is explicitly confirmed in the Book itself:

رسول من الله يتلو صحفا مطهرة فيها كتب قيمة

A Messenger from Allah, reading purified pages. In them are correct and straight laws.²¹

An unlettered fellow never “reads” any pages, does he?

Another clear proof of the literacy of the Prophet (since the start of the Qur'an) is this report of al-Bukhari of what happened at al-Hudaybiyyah, four years before he was accused of raving madness by his Sahabah:

حدثنا عبيد الله بن موسى عن إسرائيل عن أبي إسحاق عن البراء رضي الله عنه قال: اعتمر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في ذي القعدة فأبى أهل مكة أن يدعوه يدخل مكة حتى قاضاهم على أن يقيم بها ثلاثة أيام فلما كتبوا الكتاب كتبوا هذا ما قاضى عليه محمد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالوا لا نقر بها فلو نعلم أنك رسول الله ما منعك لكن أنت محمد بن عبد الله قال أنا رسول الله وأنا محمد بن عبد الله. ثم قال لعلي امح رسول الله. قال لا والله لا أمحوك أبدا فأخذ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الكتاب فكتب هذا ما قاضى عليه محمد بن عبد الله لا يدخل مكة سلاح إلا في القراب وأن لا يخرج من أهلها بأحد إن أراد أن يتبعه وأن لا يمنع أحدا من أصحابه أراد أن يقيم بها.

‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa – Israil – Abu Ishaq – al-Bara, may Allah be pleased with him:

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, intended to perform ‘Umrah in the month of Dhi al-Qa’dah, the people of Makkah did not let him enter Makkah till he settled the matter with them by promising to stay in it for three days only. When they wrote the document (of treaty), they wrote: “These are the terms on which Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, agreed”. They said, “We will not agree to this, for if we believed that you are the Messenger of Allah, we would not prevent you, but you are Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah.” He said, “I am the Messenger of Allah and also Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah.” Then, he said to ‘Ali, “Rub off (the words) ‘the Messenger of Allah.’” He (‘Ali) replied, “No, by Allah, I will never rub you off.” So, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, took the document AND WROTE, “This is what Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah has agreed upon: No arms will be brought into Makkah except in their cases, and nobody from the people of Makkah will be allowed to go with him even if he wished to follow him and he will not prevent any of his companions from staying in Makkah if the latter wants to stay.”²²

How could an unlettered person have achieved such a feat?!

In any case, the problem of ‘Umar and his supporters with the instruction of their Prophet was only the bold phrase below:

ائتوني بكتاب أكتب لكم كتابا لن تضلوا بعده أبدا

Bring me a sheet of paper so that I may write a document for you after which you will never go astray.

We have drawn this conclusion from ‘Umar’s own reply to it:

قال عمر إن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم غلبه الوجع وعندكم القرآن. فحسبنا كتاب الله

‘Umar said, “Verily, the illness has seized total control of the Prophet, peace be upon him. And you have the Qur’an. So, the Book of Allah is sufficient for us.”

Meanwhile, just a few weeks before, the Rasul had proclaimed at ‘Arafat:

يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي
أهل بيتي

O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah AND my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.”

A few days later, at Ghadir Khumm, he repeated the call:

قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا: كتاب الله سببه بيده، وسببه بأيديكم،
وأهل بيتي

I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah – one end of which is in His Hand and the other in your hands – AND my Ahl al-Bayt.”

It was certain that the Prophet of Allah was going to write – either in his own handwriting or through dictation – this same order of his to all humanity. He wanted it to be his written decree to the Ummah till the Hour; and we in our generation could have had a glance of it. ‘Umar caught wind of his intention – which was obvious anyway considering the similarities in his wordings. Then, he (‘Umar) delivered a preemptive response to the Messenger: “we do not want your offspring with the Qur’an; we want the Book of Allah alone”!

‘Umar’s issue was not whether the Prophet was literate or illiterate. In fact, he raised absolutely no objection on that point – which reinforces the conviction that the Rasul was literate later in life. Rather, he and his group were not prepared at all to accept the Ahl al-Bayt over them alongside the Book of Allah as masters and guides after the Prophet.

In order to ensure their success, the ‘Umarists placed a question mark on the mental competence of the Messenger of the Rabb before he was able to write anything. So, even if he had proceeded with his plan, the document would have been rejected after his death by the ‘Umarist movement – who would have named it the product of an deranged mind. In fact, this could have had a counterproductive effect on his earlier public pronouncements on the same matter.

Therefore, in his great wisdom – and, obviously, in accordance with a new decree from his Lord – Muhammad abandoned the idea and left everything to the Judgment of Allah. Meanwhile, as history would later confirm, it was on that calamitous Thursday, in that sad room, and at that fateful hour, that Sunni Islam was born, under the leadership of ‘Umar b. al-Khattab. Since that Thursday, Sunni Muslims have never ceased to reject the offspring of the Prophet, his Ahl al-Bayt, as the inseparable partner of the Qur’an in providing leadership and guidance to the Ummah in particular, and to humanity in general.

1. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1111, # 2888

2. Ibid

3. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi)

[annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1257, # 1637 (21)

4. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 222, # 1935

5. Ibid

6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma‘il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju‘fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1155, # 2997

7. Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Salihi al-Shami, Subul al-Huda al-Rashad fi Sirah Khayr al-‘Ibad (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1414 H) [annotators: ‘Adil Ahmad ‘Abd al-Mawjud and ‘Ali Muhammad Ma‘ud], vol. 11, p. 105

8. Abu al-Fadhl Jamal al-Din Muhammad b. Mukram b. Manzur al-Afriqi al-Misri, Lisan al-‘Arab (Beirut: Dar Sadir; 1st edition), vol. 5, p. 250

9. Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qasim b. Salam al-Harwi, Gharib al-Hadith (Haydarabad: Majlis Dairah al-Ma‘arif al-‘Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1384 H), vol. 2, p. 64

10. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah li al-Taba‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 8, p. 101

11. Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qasim b. Salam al-Harwi, Gharib al-Hadith (Haydarabad: Majlis Dairah al-Ma‘arif al-‘Uthmaniyyah; 1st edition, 1384 H), vol. 2, p. 63

12. Al-Qadi Abu al-Fadhl ‘Iyad b. Musa b. ‘Iyad al-Yahsubi al-Sibt al-Maliki, Mashariq al-Anwar ‘ala Sihah al-Athar (al-Maktabah al-‘Atiqah and Dar al-Turath), vol. 2, p. 529

13. Abu ‘Ubayd al-Bakri, Fasl al-Maqal Sharh Kitab al-Amthal (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1st edition, 1971 CE) [annotator: Ihsan ‘Abbas], vol. 1, p. 28

14. Abu Ja‘far Muhammad b. Jarir b. Yazid b. Kathir b. Ghalib al-Amuli al-Tabari, Jami al-Bayan fi Tawil al-Qur’an (Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: Sidqi Jamil al-‘Attar], vol. 18, p. 54

15. Abu al-Husayn Ahmad b. Faris b. Zakariyyah, Mu‘jam Maqayis al-Lughah (Qum: Maktab al-A‘lam al-Islami; 1404 H) [annotator: ‘Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun], vol. 6, p. 35

16. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1257, # 1637 (21)

17. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma‘il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju‘fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 6, p. 2680, # 6932

18. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 6, p. 24

19. Qur’an 29:48

20. See Qur’an 6:92

21. Qur’an 98:2-3

22. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma‘il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju‘fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 2, p. 960, # 2552

The Prophet of Allah, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, named Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, ‘alaihi al-salam, as the first khalifah after him. He also indicated that all the other khalifahs will be from his offspring. In particular, he declared that all the khalifahs after him will be twelve in number, that they all would be royal Imams, and that their reign would continue uninterrupted till the Day of al-Qiyamah.

He further declared them the guides of this Ummah after him till the Hour, and that they never ever separate from the Qur’an – not even for one second. However, he equally prophesied that the Ummah would betray ‘Ali (and, by extension, all the other khalifahs) once he was gone! Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) copies:

حدثنا الفضل هو أبو نعيم ، ثنا فطر بن خليفة ، أخبرني حبيب بن أبي ثابت،
قال: سمعت ثعلبة بن يزيد، قال :سمعت عليا رضي الله عنه، يقول : والله إنه
لعهد النبي الأمي صلى الله عليه وسلم: سيغدرونك من بعدي

Al-Fadhl, Abu Na'im – Fitr b. Khalifah – Habib b. Abi Thabit – Tha'labah b. Yazid:

I heard 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, saying: "I swear by Allah, verily, the Ummi Prophet, peace be upon him, told me: "They will soon betray you after me."¹

The Salafi annotator, 'Abd Allah al-Shahri, comments:

ضعيف بهذا الإسناد لحال فطر بن خليفة، و ثعلبة بن يزيد فإنهما صدوقان
متشيعان، و هذا الحديث يُؤيد بدعتهما فهو ضعيف

It is dha'if with this chain, due to the status of Fitr b. Khalifah and Tha'labah b. Yazid, for both of them were very truthful and Shi'is and this hadith supports their bid'ah. Therefore, it is dha'if.²

So, al-Shahri's only problem with the sanad is the Shi'ism of Fitr and Tha'labah. Even though both were "very truthful", this hadith of theirs cannot be accepted only because it supports their Shi'ism. A "scientific" way of discrediting reports, isn't it?! Before examining the legitimacy of al-Shahri's methodology, let us first look at the narrators of hadith, in order to have a clearer view of the whole picture.

As an initial observation, a key merit of this sanad is that it is perfectly connected. There is no break whatsoever among its narrators, and each of them explicitly declared that he literally heard the hadith from the mouth of his shaykh. Moreover, all the narrators are completely reliable without question.

Al-Hafiz states about the first narrator:

الفضل بن دكين الكوفي واسم دكين عمرو بن حماد بن زهير التيمي مولاهم
الأحول أبو نعيم الملائي بضم الميم مشهور بكنيته ثقة ثبت

Al-Fadhl b. Dukayn al-Kufi – and the name of Dukayn was 'Amr b. Hammad b. Zuhayr – al-Tamimi, their freed slave, al-Ahwal, Abu Na'im al-Mulai, well-known with his kunya: Thiqah (trustworthy), accurate.³

Concerning the second narrator, he further declares:

فطر بن خليفة المخزومي مولاهم أبو بكر الحنات بالمهملة . والنون صدوق رمي
بالتشيع

Fitr b. Khalifah al-Makhzumi, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-Hanat: Saduq (very truthful), accused of Shi'ism.⁴

What of the third narrator? Al-Hafiz says:

حبيب بن أبي ثابت قيس ويقال هند بن دينار الأسدي مولاهم أبو يحيى الكوفي
ثقة فقيه جليل وكان كثير الإرسال والتدليس

Habib b. Abi Thabit Qays – and it is said Hind – b. Dinar al-Asadi, their freed slave, al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a meritorious jurist. He used to do a lot of irsal and tadlis.⁵

Meanwhile, he has narrated with explicit sima' above. So, his irsal and tadlis are inapplicable and inconsequential here.

Finally, this is what al-Hafiz states about the last narrator:

ثعلبة بن يزيد الحماني بكسر المهملة وتشديد الميم كوفي صدوق شيعي

Tha'labah b. Yazid al-Himmani, a Kufan: Saduq (very truthful), a Shi'i.⁶

This chain, therefore, is absolutely hasan without a doubt! It is simply faultless and unassailable.

As for al-Shahri's rejection of the hadith on account of the Shi'ism of two of its narrators, we will let another Salafi hadith scientist, al-Mua'lamī (d. 1386 H) reply him:

وقد وثق أئمة الحديث جماعة من المبتدعة واحتجوا بأحاديثهم وأخرجوها في
الصحاح، ومن تتبع رواياتهم وجد فيها كثيراً مما يوافق ظاهرة بدعهم، وأهل
العلم يتأولون تلك الأحاديث غير طاعنين فيها ببدعة راويها ولا في راويها

بروايته لها

The Imams in the hadith sciences have declared as trustworthy a lot of the heretics, and have taken their (i.e. the heretics') ahadith as hujjah, and have recorded them (i.e. those reports) in their Sahih books. And whoever researches their (the heretics') narrations finds that a lot of them apparently agree with their heresies. The scholars give alternative interpretations for those ahadith without attacking them (i.e. the ahadith) on account of the heresy of their narrators, nor do they attack the narrators for narrating them.⁷

'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) too seconds him:

فإن قال قائل: راوي هذا الشاهد شيعي، وكذلك في سند المشهود له شيعي آخر، وهو جعفر بن سليمان، أفلا يعتبر ذلك طعنا في الحديث وعلة فيه؟!

فأقول: كلا لأن العبرة في رواية الحديث إنما هو الصدق والحفظ، وأما المذهب فهو بينه وبين ربه، فهو حسيبه

If someone says: "The narrator of this corroborative hadith (i.e. that of Ajlah) was a Shi'i, and also in the chain of the main hadith, there is another Shi'i, and he is Ja'far b. Sulayman. Does this not justify attack on the hadith and constitute a fault in it?"

So, I answer: "Not at all, because the requirements in the transmission of hadith are ONLY truthfulness and sound memory. As for the madhhab (of the narrator), that is between him and his Lord, and He is sufficient for him.⁸

A third Salafi hadith scientist, al-Turayfi, also traces the practice to the Sunni Imams:

والأصل في رواية المبتدع إذا كان ضابطاً ثقة القبول، سواء روى فيما يوافق بدعته أم لا، ما لم يكن قد كفر بدعته، فحينئذ يرد لكفره، وعلى هذا الأئمة الحفاظ، فهم يخرجون للمبتدع إذا كان ثقة ثباتاً، ويصححون خبره

The default position concerning the report of a heretic, if he was accurate and trustworthy, is to accept it, regardless of whether he narrated concerning what agrees with his bid'ah (heresy) or not, as long as he

had not apostatized through his heresy. In such a case, it will be rejected due to his kufr (disbelief). This was the practice of the Imams who were hadith scientists, for they used to narrate from the heretic if he was trustworthy and accurate, and used to declare his report to be sahih.⁹

The bottomline is that al-Shahri's methodology of weakening the hadith is both unprofessional and crude.

Meanwhile, al-Hafiz copies a second, different chain for the hadith:

وقال الحارث: ثنا عبد الرحمن بن زياد مولى بني هاشم، ثنا هشيم، عن
إسماعيل بن سالم، عن أبي إدريس الأودي، عن علي، قال: قال رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم: إن هذه الأمة ستغدر بك من بعدي

Al-Harith – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. Ziyad, freed slave of Banu Hashim – Hushaym – Isma’il b. Salim – Abu Idris al-Awdi – ‘Ali:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “Verily, this Ummah will soon betray you after me.”¹⁰

Al-Shahri again comments:

ضعيف بهذا الإسناد لأن أبا إدريس الأودي مجهول الحال

It is dha’if with this chain because Abu Idris al-Awdi is majhul al-hal.¹¹

This time, he is unable to accuse any of the narrators of Shi’ism, or to find any other defect – real or imagined – in the chain other than Abu Idris. But then, is Abu Idris really majhul al-hal? ‘Ali Shiri, in his tahqiq of Tarikh Madinah Dimashq – while commenting under the above riwayat – identifies who Abu Idris was for us:

وهو أبو إدريس يزيد بن عبد الرحمن الأودي

He was Abu Idris Yazid b. ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Awdi.¹²

Who then was he? Al-Hafiz has the answer:

يزيد بن عبد الرحمن بن الأسود الأودي بواو ساكنة بعدها مهملة، أبو داود مقبول

Yazid b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. al-Aswad al-Awdi, Abu Dawud: Maqbul (accepted when seconded).¹³

Obviously, he is NOT majhul al-hal, but maqbul. This means that whenever he is seconded in his report, it is established from his shaykh. However, if he is alone in narrating a riwayah, then it is dha’if. We know already that he was seconded by Tha’labah b. Yazid. Therefore, this second sanad of the hadith is also sahih or hasan.

Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) has included the report of al-Awdi in his Mustadrak too:

حدثنا أبو حفص عمر بن أحمد الجمحي بمكة ثنا علي بن عبد العزيز ثنا عمرو بن عون ثنا هشيم عن إسماعيل بن سالم عن أبي إدريس الأودي عن علي رضي الله عنه قال إن مما عهد إلي النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن الأمة ستغدر بي بعده

Abu Hafs ‘Umar b. Ahmad al-Jamhi – ‘Ali b. ‘Abd al-‘Aziz – ‘Amr b. ‘Awn – Hushaym – Isma’il b. Salim – Abu Idris al-Awdi – ‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him:

“Verily, part of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, told me is that the Ummah would soon betray me after him.”¹⁴

Then, he declares:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This hadith has a sahih chain.¹⁵

And Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) concurs:

صحيح

Al-Hakim has documented a further shahid:

عن حيان الأسدي سمعت عليا يقول قال لي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الأمة ستغدر بك بعدي وأنت تعيش على ملتي وتقتل على سنتي من أحبك أحبني ومن أبغضك أبغضني وإن هذه ستخضب من هذا يعني لحيته من رأسه

Narrated Hayyan al-Asadi:

I heard ‘Ali saying: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said to me: “Verily, the Ummah will soon betray you after me; and you will live upon my religion, and you will be killed upon my Sunnah. Whoever loves you loves me, and whoever hates you hates me. Verily, this will soon be painted from this”, he meant: his beard (will be drained with blood) from his head. 17

Al-Hakim declares:

صحيح

Sahih 18

Al-Dhahabi has the same verdict too:

صحيح

Sahih 19

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani has provided details of the sanad of this riwayat in his Itihaf:

ثنا أبو علي الحافظ ، ثنا الهيثم بن خلف، ثنا محمد بن عمر بن هياج، ثنا يحيى بن عبد الرحمن، ثنا يونس بن أبي يعفور، عن أبيه، عنه ، به.

Abu ‘Ali al-Hafiz – al-Haytham b. Khalaf – Muhammad b. ‘Umar b. Hayyaj – Yahya b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – Yunus b. Abi Yafur – his father – from him (Hayyan al-Asadi) with it. 20

As we have seen, both al-Hakim and al-Dhahabi declared it sahih. Obviously, it provides additional strength to the other chains of the riwayat. It is our firm belief, anyway, that the combined force of the three asanid leaves absolutely no doubt about the authenticity of the report. Even al-Shahri, despite his extreme bias, is unable to escape the fact in his final conclusion about the hadith:

و مع أن الحديث ضعيف بالنظر إلى كل طريق علي حدة لكن بالنظر إلى
الطريقين معا فالحديث حسن لغيره

That the hadith is dha'if by looking at each chain individually; however, by looking at the two chains together (i.e. those of Tha'labah b. Yazid and Abu Idris al-Awdi), then the hadith is hasan li ghayrihi.²¹

The Messenger of Allah prophesied that “the Ummah” would betray Amir al-Muminin ‘Ali b. Abi Talib after him. The word “Ummah” was generalized by him. So, he was referring to the generality of the Ummah, and not just a small section of it. They would “betray” his chosen khalifah after his death. Of course, as history confirms, the generality of the Ummah – including the Sahabah – truly did betray Amir al-Muminin after the death of the Rasul.

Despite that he had explicitly named ‘Ali as his khalifah after him, they became traitors against the latter and installed a rebel leader in his place. Interestingly, Imam ‘Ali identified both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar as two among the traitors mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet of Allah. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) quotes ‘Umar saying to him and ‘Abbas:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم فرأيتماه كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق
بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم
وولي أبا بكر فرأيتماني كاذبا آثما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, died, Abu Bakr said: “I am the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.”.... So both of you (‘Ali and ‘Abbas) thought him (i.e. Abu Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest. And Allah knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. Abu Bakr died and I became the wali of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and the wali of Abu Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest.²²

1. Ahmad b. ‘Ali b. Hajar al-‘Asqalani, al-Matalib al-‘Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-‘Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Afir b. ‘Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 64, # 3919

2. Ibid
3. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 11, # 5418
4. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 16, # 5458
5. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 183, # 1087
6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 149, # 849
7. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Yahya b. 'Ali b. Muhammad al-Mu'alami al-'Atmi al-Yamani, al-Tankil bi ma fi Ta-anib al-Kawthari min al-Abatil (al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Zuhayr al-Shawish and 'Abd al-Razzaq Hamzah], vol. 1, p. 237
8. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadiith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhiyah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 5, p. 262, # 2223
9. 'Abd al-'Aziz b. Marzuq al-Turayfi, al-Tahjil fi Takhrij ma lam Yukhraj min al-Ahadiith wa al-Athar fi Irwa al-Ghalil (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Rushd li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1422 H), p. 546
10. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-'Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: 'Abd Allah b. 'Afiir b. 'Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 65, # 3920
11. Ibid
12. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habbat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1417 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 42, p. 447, footnote # 7
13. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. 328, # 7774
14. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 150, # 4676
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 153, # 4686
18. Ibid
19. Ibid
20. Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Itihaf al-Maharat (Madinah al-Munawwarah: Markaz Khidmah al-Sunnah wa al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 11, p. 296, # 14043. Al-Hafiz has cited Mustadrak of al-Hakim as his source for the chain, immediately after quoting the hadith, verbatim as above. In modern editions of Mustadrak, the sanad is missing. It is most likely that al-Hafiz had access to a extinct manuscript of Mustadrak which contained the full chain. Al-Hafiz too made a scribal error in copying the name of Hayyan al-Asadi. He has misspelt his name as Aban al-Asadi.
21. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, al-Matalib al-'Aliyah bi Zawaid al-Masanid al-Thamaniyyah (Riyadh: Dar al-'Asimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: 'Abd Allah b. 'Afiir b. 'Abd Allah al-Shahri], vol. 16, p. 67, # 3921
22. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1376, #1757

The Qur'an informs us that we will be in three different categories on the Day of al-Qiyamah:

وكنتم أزواجا ثلاثة فأصحاب الميمنة ما أصحاب الميمنة وأصحاب المشأمة
ما أصحاب المشأمة والسابقون السابقون

And you will be three kinds. So, Companions of the Right Hand, who will be Companions of the Right Hand? And Companions of the Left Hand, who will be Companions of the Left Hand? And those foremost will be foremost. ¹

Those who will be in the “foremost” group will be the nearest people to Allah in al-Jannah². All the other members of Paradise will be from the Right Hand group³. Our concern in this research are those who will be on the Left Hand. Everyone who will enter Hellfire will be from the Companions of the Left Hand:

وأصحاب الشمال ما أصحاب الشمال في سموم وحميم وظل من يحموم لا
بارد ولا كريم

And Companions of the Left Hand, who will be Companions of the Left Hand? In fierce hot wind and boiling water, and shadow of black smoke, neither cool, nor good. ⁴

And:

والذين كفروا بآياتنا هم أصحاب المشأمة عليهم نار مؤصدة

And those who disbelieved in Our Verses, they will be Companions of the Left Hand. The Fire will be shut over them. ⁵

May Allah protect us from ever being among the Companions of the Left Hand.

The question here is about the Sahabah: will any of them be from the Companions of the Left Hand? We ask this because they generally failed to accept the offspring of the Messenger, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, as khalifahs and supreme guides after him.

So, what exactly will the consequence of their flouting of Hadith al-Thaqalayn and Hadith al-Khalifatayn be? Are they really going to suffer any punishment from Allah for their disobedience?

Furthermore, the Prophet had warned that his Ummah must follow his offspring after him in order to remain upon the true guidance. Well, the Sahabah did not heed his warning. So, did they derail from the Right Path?

Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H) records the answer:

حدثنا أحمد بن صالح حدثنا ابن وهب قال أخبرني يونس عن ابن شهاب عن

ابن المسيب أنه كان يحدث عن أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم :أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال يرد علي الحوض رجال من أصحابي فيحلّون عنه فأقول يا رب أصحابي ؟ فيقول إنك لا علم لك بما أحدثوا بعدك إنهم ارتدوا على أدبارهم القهقري

Ahmad b. Salih – Ibn Wahb – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – Ibn al-Musayyab, who used to narrate from the Sahabah of the Prophet, peace be upon him, that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said:

Some men from my Sahabah will come to my Lake-Fount and they will be driven away from it. So, I will say, “O my Lord, my Sahabah!” It will be said, “You have no knowledge of what they INNOVATED after you: they turned APOSTATES.”⁶

This hadith was transmitted by the Sahabah themselves, and it reflects the true Islamic position on the matter. Many of the Sahabah became “innovators” and “apostates” after the death of the Messenger of Allah. As a result, they will be Companions of the Left Hand on the Day of al-Qiyamah, and will thereby be thrown into Hellfire.

One of the Sahabah who spread this bad news about his kind was Anas. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) has his report:

وحدثني محمد بن حاتم حدثنا عفان بن مسلم الصفار حدثنا وهيب قال سمعت عبدالعزیز بن صهیب يحدث قال حدثنا أنس بن مالك أن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال ليردن علي الحوض رجال ممن صاحبني حتى إذا رأيتهم ورفعوا إلي اختلجوا دوني فلاقولن أي رب أصحابي أضيحابي فليقالن لي إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

Muhammad b. Hatim – ‘Affan b. Muslim al-Saffar – Wuhayb – ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Suhayb – Anas b. Malik:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “Some persons from amongst those who kept me company will meet me at the Lake-Fount. I will see them, and they will be presented to me. Then, they will be forced away from me. I will say: ‘O my Lord, my Sahabah! My Sahabah’. It will be said to me: ‘You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.’”⁷

We will, in the last chapter of this book, identify some of these innovators among the Sahabah, through sahih Sunni riwayat. Some of these names may severely bother some of our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah.

Imam al-Bukhari has documented the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas too, on this matter:

حدثنا محمد بن يوسف حدثنا سفيان عن المغيرة بن النعمان عن سعيد بن جبير عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم : تحشرون حفاة عراة غرلا ثم قرأ { كما بدأنا أول خلق نعيده وعدا علينا إنا كنا فاعلين . } فأول من يكسى إبراهيم ثم يؤخذ برجال من أصحابي ذات اليمين وذات الشمال فأقول أصحابي فيقال إنهم لم يزالوا مرتدين على أعقابهم منذ فارقتهم فأقول كما قال العبد الصالح عيسى بن مريم { وكنت عليهم شهيدا ما دمت فيهم فلما توفيتني كنت أنت الرقيب عليهم وأنت على كل شيء شهيد . إن تعذبهم فإنهم عبادك وإن تغفر لهم فإنك أنت العزيز الحكيم }

قال محمد بن يوسف ذكر عن أبي عبد الله عن قبيصة قال هم المرتدون الذين ارتدوا على عهد أبي بكر فقاتلهم أبي بكر رضي الله عنه

Muhammad b. Yusuf – Sufyan – al-Mughirah b. al-Nu‘man – Sa‘id b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “You will be resurrected bare-footed, naked and uncircumcised.” Then he recited: {**As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it: a promise We have undertaken. Truly, We shall do it**} [21: 104]. He continued: “The first to be dressed will be Ibrahim. Then, some of my Sahabah will be taken towards the right side AND TOWARDS THE LEFT SIDE. So, I will say: ‘My Sahabah!’ It will be said, ‘THEY HAD BEEN APOSTATES SINCE YOU LEFT THEM.’ I will then say as the Righteous Servant, ‘Isa b. Maryam, said: {**And I was a witness over them whilst I lived amongst them. But, when You caused me to die, You were the Watcher over them, and You are a Witness to all things. If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, You, only You, are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise**} [5: 117-118].”

Muhammad b. Yusuf narrated from Abu ‘Abd Allah that Qubaysah said: “They were those who apostatized during the time of Abu Bakr. So, Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, fought them.”⁸

Qubaysah, one of the Sunni Imams, identified the apostates among the Sahabah as only those of them who renounced Islam during the rule of Abu Bakr. Our contention is that the apostates truly included, but were far more than just the Ahl al-Riddah. More details will be provided.

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) records the testimony of yet another Sahabi:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عفان ثنا حماد بن سلمة أنا علي بن زيد عن الحسن عن أبي بكرة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال ليردن على الحوض رجال ممن صحبني ورآني حتى إذا رفعوا إلى ورأيهم اختلجوا دوني فلاقولن رب أصحابي أصحابي فيقال إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Affan – Hammad b. Salamah – ‘Ali b. Zayd – al-Hasan – Abu Bakrah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said:

Some persons from amongst those who kept me company AND SAW ME will meet me at the Lake-Fount. They will be presented to me and I will see them. But then, they will be forced away from me. So, I will say, “O my Lord! My Sahabah! My Sahabah!” It will be said, “You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.”⁹

Shaykh al-Arnaut comments:

صحيح لغيره

Sahih li ghayrihi¹⁰

Al-Bukhari returns again with the riwayat of Abu Hurayrah:

وقال أحمد بن شبيب بن سعيد الحبطي حدثنا أبي عن يونس عن ابن شهاب عن سعيد بن المسيب عن أبي هريرة أنه كان يحدث: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال يرد علي يوم القيامة رهط من أصحابي فيجلون عن الحوض فأقول يا رب أصحابي فيقول إنك لا علم لك بما أحدثوا بعدك إنهم ارتدوا على أديبارهم القهقري

Ahmad b. Shabib b. Sa’id al-Hinti – my father – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – Sa’id b. al-Musayyab – Abu Hurayrah, that he used to say:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: On the Day of al-Qiyamah, a group from my Sahabah will meet me. But, they will be driven away from the Lake-Fount. So, I will say, “O my Lord! My Sahabah!” Then, He will say, “You have no knowledge of what they INNOVATED after you: they turned APOSTATES.”¹¹

Ahmad b. Hanbal has the testimony of yet another Sahabi:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا سليمان بن داود ثنا عبد الرحمن بن عبد الله بن دينار عن أبي حازم عن النعمان بن أبي عياش الزرقى عن أبي سعيد الخدري أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال فأقول أصحابي أصحابي فقل إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك قال فأقول بعدا بعدا أو قال سحقا سحقا لمن بدل بعدي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Sulayman b. Dawud – ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd Allah b. Dinar – Abu Hazim – al-Nu’mān b. Abi ‘Ayyash al-Zarqi – Abu Sa’id al-Khudri:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “So, I will say, ‘My Sahabah! My Sahabah!’ It will be said, ‘You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.’ Then I will say, ‘Woe, woe to whoever changed after me.’”¹²

Al-Arnaut says:

صحيح

Sahih¹³

Imam al-Bukhari also documents that of Ibn Mas’ud:

وحدثني عمرو بن علي حدثنا محمد بن جعفر حدثنا شعبة عن المغيرة قال سمعت أبا وائل عن عبد الله رضي الله عنه: عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أنا فرطكم على الحوض وليرفعن رجال منكم ثم ليختلجن دوني فأقول يا رب أصحابي فيقال إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

‘Amr b. ‘Ali – Muhammad b. Ja’far – Shu’bah – al-Mughirah – Abu Wail – ‘Abd Allah, may Allah be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: I will be your predecessor at the Lake-Fount. Some persons from amongst you will be presented to me. Then they will be forced away from me. Therefore, I will say, “O my Lord! My Sahabah!” It will be said, “You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.”¹⁴

He was addressing his Sahabah, and clearly stated that the innovators would be “from amongst” them.

Imam Ahmad documents the report of Hudhayfah as well:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا سريج بن النعمان حدثنا هشيم عن المغيرة عن
أبي وائل عن بن مسعود وحصين عن أبي وائل عن حذيفة قال قال رسول الله
صلى الله عليه و سلم أنا فرطكم على الحوض أنظركم ليرفع لي رجال منكم
حتى إذا عرفتهم اختلجوا دوني فأقول رب أصحابي أصحابي فيقال إنك لا تدري
ما أحدثوا بعدك

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Shurayh b. al-Nu‘man – Hushaym – al-Mughirah – Abu Wail – Ibn Mas‘ud AND Husayn – Abu Wail – Hudhayfah, both of them (Ibn Mas‘ud and Hudhayfah) said:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: “I will be your predecessor at the Lake-Fount, expecting you. Some persons from amongst you will be presented to me, and I will recognize them. Then, they will be forced away from me. So, I will say, ‘O my Lord! My Sahabah! My Sahabah!’ It will be said, ‘You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.’”¹⁵

Al-Arnaut comments:

هذا الحديث له إسنادان: الأول إسناده صحيح والإسناد الثاني رجاله ثقات
رجال الصحيح

This hadith has two chains. The first chain is sahih, and the narrators of the second chain are thiqah (trustworthy) narrators of the Sahih.¹⁶

Ahmad also records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الصمد ثنا عبد العزيز بن مسلم حدثنا
حصين عن أبي وائل عن حذيفة أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال ليردن

على الحوض أقوام فيختلجون دوني فأقول رب أصحابي رب أصحابي فيقال لي
إنك لا تدري ما أحدثوا بعدك

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Abd al-Samad – ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Muslim – Husayn – Abu Wail – Hudhayfah:

The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said, “Groups of people will meet me at the Lake-Fount. But, they will be forced away from me. So, I will say, ‘O my Lord, my Sahabah! O my Lord, my Sahabah!’ It will be said to me, ‘You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.’”¹⁷

Al-Arnaut comments:

حديث صحيح

A sahih hadith¹⁸

Imam al-Haythami (d. 807 H) copies the hadith of another prominent Sahabi:

وعن أبي مسعود عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " ليرفعن لي رجال من
أصحابي حتى إذا رأيتهم اختلجوا دوني فأقول : أصحابي فيقال : إنك لا تدري ما
أحدثوا بعدك "

Narrated Abu Mas’ud, from the Prophet, peace be upon him:

Some persons from my Sahabah will be presented to me. When I see them, they will be forced away from me. So, I will say, “My Sahabah!” Then it will be said, “You do not know what they INNOVATED after you.”¹⁹

Al-Haythami says:

رواه الطبراني ورجاله رجال الصحيح

Al-Tabarani recorded it and its narrators are narrators of the Sahih.²⁰

Imam Ahmad has not relented yet:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا قتيبة بن سعيد ثنا يعقوب بن عبد الرحمن عن أبي حازم قال سمعت سهلاً يقول سمعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول أنا فرطكم على الحوض من ورد شرب ومن شرب لم يظمأ بعده أبداً وليردن على أقوام أعرفهم ويعرفونني ثم يحال بيني وبينهم قال أبو حازم فسمعني النعمان بن أبي عياش وأنا أحدثهم هذا الحديث فقال هكذا سمعت سهلاً يقول قال فقلت نعم قال وأنا أشهد على أبي سعيد الخدري لسمعت يزيد فيقول أنهم مني فيقال إنك لا تدري ما عملوا بعدك فأقول سحقا سحقا لمن بدل بعدي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Qutaybah b. Sa’id – Ya’qub b. ‘Abd al-Rahman – Abu Hazim – Sahl:

I heard the Prophet, peace be upon him, saying: “I will be your predecessor at the Lake–Fount, and whoever will pass by there, he will drink from it and whoever will drink from it, he will never again be thirsty. Groups of people will meet me. I will recognize them and they will recognize me. Then, a barrier will be placed between me and them.”

Abu Hazim said: al-Nu’mān b. Abi ‘Ayyash heard me while I was narrating this hadith to them and said. “Did you hear this from Sahl?” I said, “Yes.” He said, “I bear witness that I heard Abu Sa’id al-Khudri adding (as part of the hadith): “I will say: ‘They are from me’. It will be said, ‘You do not know what they did after you.’ I will say, ‘Woe to those who changed after me.’”²¹

Al-Arnaut declares:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.²²

Imam Muslim returns again:

وحدثنا ابن أبي عمر حدثنا يحيى بن سليم عن ابن خثيم عن عبد الله بن عبيد الله بن أبي مليكة أنه سمع عائشة تقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول وهو بين ظهري أصحابه إني على الحوض أنتظر من يرد علي منكم والله

ليقتطعن دوني رجال فلاقولن أي رب مني ومن أمتي فيقول إنك لا تدري ما
عملوا بعدك ما زالوا يرجعون على أعقابهم

Ibn Abi 'Umar – Yahya b. Salim – Ibn Khaytham – 'Abd Allah b. 'Ubayd Allah b. Abi Mulaykah – 'Aishah:

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying while he was in front of his Sahabah: "I will be at the Lake-Fount, expecting whosoever from amongst you will meet me. By Allah, some persons will be cut away from me, and I will, as a result say 'O my Lord! From me, and from my Ummah.' He will say, 'You do not know what they did after you. They did not cease to turn back upon their heels.'"23

And al-Bukhari caps it with the report of her sister:

حدثنا سعيد بن أبي مريم عن نافع بن عمر قال حدثني ابن أبي مليكة عن أسماء
بنت أبي بكر رضي الله عنهما قالت: قال النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم إني على
الحوض حتى أنظر من يرد علي منكم وسيؤخذ ناسدونني فأقول يا رب مني ومن
أمتي فيقال هل شعرت ما عملوا بعدك والله ما برحوا يرجعون على أعقابهم .

فكان ابن أبي مليكة يقول اللهم إنا نعوذ بك أن نرجع على أعقابنا أو نفتن عن
ديننا

Sa'id b. Abi Maryam – Nafi' b. 'Umar – Ibn Abi Mulaykah – Asma b. Abi Bakr, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: "I will be at the Lake-Fount expecting whoever will meet me from amongst you. Some people will be taken away from me. So, I will say, "They are from me, and from my Ummah." It will be said, "Do you know what they did after you? By Allah! They did not cease to turn back upon their heels."

As a result (of this hadith) Ibn Abi Mulaykah used to say: "O Allah, we seeks refuge with You from turning back on our heels or facing trials in our religion".24

With this, the ahadith have been narrated by, at least, the following Sahabah:

1. Anas b. Malik

2. Ibn ‘Abbas
3. Abu Bakrah
4. Abu Hurayrah
5. Abu Sa’id al-Khudri
6. ‘Abd Allah b. Mas’ud
7. Hudhayfah
8. Abu Mas’ud
9. Sahl
10. Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah
11. Asma b. Abi Bakr

So, the tawattur of this matter is beyond question.

1. Qur’an 56:7–10
2. Qur’an 56:10–12
3. Qur’an 56:27–40
4. Qur’an 56:41–44
5. Qur’an 90:19–20
6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2407, # 6214
7. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1800, # 2304 (40)
8. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 3, p. 1271, # 3263
9. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 48, # 20512
10. Ibid
11. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2407, # 6213
12. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 28, # 11236
13. Ibid
14. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2404, # 6205
15. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 393, # 23385
16. Ibid
17. Ibid, vol. 5, p. 388, # 23338
18. Ibid

19. Nur al-Din 'Ali b. Abi Bakr al-Haythami, Majma' al-Zawaid (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1412 H), vol. 10, pp. 662-663, # 18471
20. Ibid
21. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 333, # 22873
22. Ibid
23. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad 'Abd al-Baqi], vol. 4, p. 1794, # 2294 (28)
24. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma'il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju'fi, al-Jami' al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2409, # 6220

As expected, our 'ulama from the Ahl al-Sunnah have offered various explanations for Hadith al-Hawdh, some of them deliberately aimed at saving certain famous Sahabah. Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H), for instance, states:

وقال الخطابي لم يرتد من الصحابة أحد وإنما ارتد قوم من جفاة الاعراب ممن
لا نصرة له في الدين وذلك لا يوجب قدحا في الصحابة المشهورين ويدل قوله
أصحابي بالتصغير على قلة عددهم

Al-Khattabi said: "None of the Sahabah ever apostatized. It was only a group from the Bedouin Arabs, among those who had no help in the religion. Therefore, this does not constitute a blemish on the well-known Sahabah; and his statement usayhabi ("my Sahabah") with tasghir points to their small number.¹

Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H) also submits:

قال القاضي يريد بهم من ارتد من الأعراب الذين أسلموا في أيامه كأصحاب
مسيلمة والأسود وأضرابهم

Al-Qadhi said: "He intended by them those who apostatized among the Bedouin Arabs who had accepted Islam during his lifetime, like the companions of Musaylamah and al-Aswad and their likes."²

He further adds concerning the ahadith:

قال النووي هذا مما اختلف العلماء في المراد على أقوال

أحدها أن المراد به المنافقون والمرتدون

والثاني أن المراد من كان في زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم ارتد بعده

والثالث أن المراد أصحاب المعاصي الكبائر الذين ماتوا على التوحيد
وأصحاب البدع

الذين لم يخرجوا ببدعتهم عن الاسلام

Al-Nawawi said: “This is part of what the scholars dispute about its meaning, submitting various opinions:

One of them is that those intended were the hypocrites and apostates....

The second opinion is that those intended were those who lived during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and then apostatized after him....

The third opinion is that those intended are the major sinners who die upon al-tawhid (i.e. as true Muslims) and the heretics whose heresy does not take them out of Islam.”³

Therefore, the various Sunni explanations of the ahadith can be summarized in this manner:

The “Sahabah” mentioned in the reports were the Bedouin Arabs who renounced Islam during the rule of Abu Bakr. None of the Muhajirun, Ansar or other major Sahabah were involved or included.

Or, rather, those “Sahabah” were the hypocrites and apostates during the lifetime of the Prophet (and perhaps beyond).

Or, those “Sahabah” are actually the “major sinners” and minor heretics of all times.

The affected “Sahabah” were “few” because the Messenger, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, in some ahadith, called them usayhabi with tasghir.

However, looking at the actual ahadith, one must conclude that none of the Sunni interpretations is accurate. For instance, the reports identify the Sahabah meant as those “who kept me company and

saw me” and “I will recognize them and they will recognize me”. This rules out the claim that the “Sahabah” in the riwayat are all major sinners and minor heretics.

None of such people in our times, for example, ever saw the Prophet or kept him company! Yet, those descriptions do not match the Bedouin Arabs either. They were nomadic people, who wandered in the desert, round about the city of al-Madinah. Some of them might have seen the Messenger of Allah. But, they certainly were not keeping him company in the city and elsewhere. In fact, the Qur’an distinguishes between them and the people of Madinah:

وممن حولكم من الأعراب منافقون ومن أهل المدينة

And among the Bedouin Arabs round about you, some are hypocrites, and so are some among the people of al-Madinah.⁴

And:

ما كان لأهل المدينة ومن حولهم من الأعراب أن يتخلفوا عن رسول الله ولا
يرغبوا بأنفسهم عن نفسه

It was not becoming of the people of al-Madinah and the Bedouin Arabs round about them to remain behind the Messenger of Allah and to prefer their own lives to his life.⁵

Therefore, the Bedouin Arabs lived outside al-Madinah. So, they were unable to keep company of the Prophet. To do that, they must first settle in the city, which they never did. Moreover, it was impossible for the Messenger to have personally known many of them. They lived far away from him. It was even possible that he never, for once, set his eyes on a lot of them.

Yet, the ahadith are clear that he will recognize the affected Sahabah in the Hereafter!

The bottom-line is that the Sahabah who will be driven into Hellfire for their “innovations” were those who lived with the Rasul in al-Madinah, kept him company, and were known personally to him.

Part of what supports our position are these words of Umm al-Muminin ‘Aishah:

سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول وهو بين ظهراني أصحابه إني
على الحوض أنتظر من يرد علي منكم

I heard the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, saying while he was in front of his Sahabah: “I will be at the Lake–Fount, expecting whosoever from amongst you will meet me.”

He was addressing his Sahabah. By default, this took place in al–Madinah, as there is nothing to suggest otherwise. Then, he declared that those who will be driven away from the Lake–Fount were from amongst those same Sahabah “in front of” him. Moreover, al–Bukhari (d. 256 H) documents for us the unmistakable interpretation of a senior Sahabi:

حدثني أحمد بن إشكاب حدثنا محمد بن فضيل عن العلاء بن المسيب عن أبيه
قال: لقيت البراء بن عازب رضي الله عنهما فقلت طوبى لك صحبت النبي
صلى الله عليه و سلم وبايعته تحت الشجرة فقال يا ابن أخي إنك لا تدري ما
أحدثنا بعده

Ahmad b. Ishkab – Muhammad b. Fudhayl – al–‘Ala b. al–Musayyab – his father (al–Musayyab):

I met al–Bara b. ‘Azib, may Allah be pleased with them both, and I said, “Congratulations to you! You kept company of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and gave him ba’yah under the Tree”. As a result of this, he replied, “O son of my brother, you do not know what WE HAVE INNOVATED after him.”⁶

This is important. It confirms that those Sahabah who kept company of the Messenger of Allah and gave him ba’yah under the Tree became innovators after him. The language of al–Bara was general. This shows that the innovations were very widespread among this category of Sahabah; and they were primarily Muhajirun and Ansar! This however does not rule out the fact that some of them also never deviated from the Qur’an and Sunnah.

So, the argument that the “Sahabah” in the Hadith al–Hawdh refers to the Bedouin Arabs or to anyone in the post–Sahabah era simply cannot hold. The innovators were from the inhabitants of al–Madinah and so were able to keep company of the Prophet, and many of them also gave him ba’yah under the Tree of al–Hudaybiyyah. They were people who saw him, and were amongst the very Sahabah he was addressing with the ahadith during his lifetime. A key point in the reports is highlighted in this riwayat of Abu Sa’id al–Khudri:

ان النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال فأقول أصحابي أصحابي فقل إنك لا تدري
ما أحدثوا بعدك قال فأقول بعدا بعدا أو قال سحقا سحقا لمن بدل بعدي

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “So, I will say, ‘My Sahabah! My Sahabah!’ It will be said, ‘You

do not know what they INNOVATED after you.’ Then I will say, ‘Woe, woe to WHOEVER CHANGED after me.’”⁷

These Sahabah were upon the upright religion throughout the lifetime of the Messenger, but only “changed” after his death. This indicates that they could not have been the hypocrites – who were never upon al-Haqq, to begin with⁸. This theme prevails throughout the riwayat; and emphasis is laid upon the fact that these Sahabah will be in Hellfire solely for what they innovated after the Prophet.

Their innovations constituted apostasy from Islam, as well. Certainly, some bid’ahs are of such seriousness. In order to apostatize, one must first be upon the true religion. The fact that these Sahabah became apostates through their bid’ahs after the Messenger shows clearly that they were within Islam before then. This obviously was not the condition of the hypocrites.

Al-Khattabi attempts to downplay the significance of these revelations about the Sahabah:

ويدل قوله أصحابي بالتصغير على قلة عددهم

his statement usayhabi (“my Sahabah”) with tasghir points to their small number

To him, these heretical “Sahabah” – whom he incorrectly identifies as Bedouin Arabs – were only few in number. His proof is that the Messenger, in some ahadith, called them usayhabi, which is truly a reference to a small number of Sahabah. What al-Khattabi fails to mention, however, is that the Prophet has also called them ashabi (أصحابي) in most of the ahadith, as well as aqwam (أقوام), the plural of qawm. Both ashabi (أصحابي) and aqwam (أقوام) are terms that can refer to very large numbers of people. In fact, aqwam itself could mean entire “nations” or “races”.⁹

The most logical explanation for these different terminologies is that the apostate Sahabah will be coming to the Messenger of the Lord in groups of various sizes – some very small, some very big. This equally justifies why the word aqwam (أقوام) [groups] has been used in some riwayat. As for the small groups, the Prophet will call them usayhabi; and he will identify the large groups as ashabi. Imam al-Bukhari documents a report of Abu Hurayrah, which gives additional strength to our submissions:

حدثني إبراهيم بن المنذر الحزامي حدثنا محمد بن فليح حدثنا أبي قال حدثني هلال بن عطاء بن يسار عن أبي هريرة : عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال بينا أنا نائم إذا زمرة حتى إذا عرفتهم خرج رجل من بيني وبينهم فقال هلم فقلت أين؟ قال إلى النار والله قلت وما شأنهم؟ قال إنهم ارتدوا بعدك على أدبارهم القهقري . ثم إذا زمرة حتى إذا عرفتهم خرج رجل من بيني وبينهم فقال هلم فقلت

أَيْنَ؟ قَالَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهِ قُلْتُ مَا شَأْنُهُمْ؟ قَالَ إِنَّهُمْ ارْتَدَوْا بَعْدَكَ عَلَى أَدْبَارِهِمُ
الْقَهْقَرَى فَلَا أَرَاهُ يَخْلُصُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا مِثْلُ هَمْلِ النِّعَمِ

Ibrahim b. al-Mundhir al-Huzami – Muhammad b. Fulayh – my father – Hilal – ‘Ata b. Yasar – Abu Hurayrah:

In my dream, a group of persons (zumrah) came. Once I recognized them, a man came between me and them, saying (to them), “Let’s go”. I said, “To where?” He replied, “To Hellfire, I swear by Allah!” I asked, “What is their offence?” He said, “They apostatized after you!”

Then, another group came, and when I recognized them, a man came between me and them, saying (to them), “Let’s go”. I said, “To where?” He replied, “To Hellfire, I swear by Allah!” I asked, “What is their offence?” He said, “They apostatized after you.”

I do not see any of them escaping except very few.¹⁰

Commenting on the word used in the hadith, Dr. al-Bagha writes:

(زَمْرَةٌ) جَمَاعَةٌ

(Zumrah) means a jama’ah.¹¹

Meanwhile, a jama’ah can refer to any group of two people or more. In fact, a group of millions is still only a jama’ah! For instance, the entire worldwide Sunni population of more than one billion people are a single jama’ah. This hadith mentions two such groups. However, the use of aqwam (أَقْوَامٌ) elsewhere confirms that they were more than two. The above report has only cut short the long story. In any case, the terms adopted by the Messenger of Allah suggest that the overall numbers of apostate Sahabah were great. This seems to be the message of this part of the hadith too:

فَلَا أَرَاهُ يَخْلُصُ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا مِثْلُ هَمْلِ النِّعَمِ

I do not see any of them escaping except very few.

Was the Prophet saying “I did not see any of the apostates escaping except a few”? Of course, he never could have said or meant that. Apostates never escape Hellfire in the Hereafter. They enter it inescapably and burn therein eternally¹². The most obvious meaning of the phrase is that only very few from each group (zumrah, qawm) will be free.

Most of each group of Sahabah – whom he knew personally – that will come to the Lake–Fount will be thrown into Hellfire for blasphemous heresies; and only a tiny number of each set will be acquitted. This, of course, confirms absolutely that the overwhelming majority of the Sahabah became first–grade innovators after the death of the Messenger.

1. Shihab al-Din Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari (Beirut: Dar al-Ma‘rifah li al-Taba‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 11, p. 333
2. Abu al-‘Ala Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami’ al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 9, p. 6
3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 93
4. Qur’an 9:101
5. Qur’an 9:120
6. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 4, p. 1529, # 3937
7. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muassasat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu‘ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 28, # 11236
8. See Qur’an 4:142, 9:67–68, and 48:6
9. Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Languages Services; 3rd edition, 1976 CE), p. 800; see also Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, al-Mawrid: A Modern Arabic–English Dictionary (Beirut: Dar al-‘Ilm li al-Malayin; 7th edition, 1995 CE), p. 877
10. Abu ‘Abd Allah Muhammad b. Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Mughirah al-Bukhari al-Ju’fi, al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Mustafa Dib al-Bagha], vol. 5, p. 2407, # 6215
11. Ibid
12. See Qur’an 2:39, 4:168–169 and 64:10

Perhaps, it is time to see the faces of some of these heretics. We know already from al-Bara that the Sahabah who gave ba’yah to the Prophet, sallallahu ‘alaihi wa alihi, under the Tree of al-Hudaybiyyah were among them. These, of course, were the most senior Sahabah – from the Muhajirun, the Ansar and some others. Writing about these people, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

ثم إن المسلمين بايعوه و دخلوا في طاعته و الذين بايعوه هم الذين بايعوا رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم تحت الشجرة و هم السابقون الأولون من المهاجرين و الأنصار و الذين اتبعوهم بإحسان رضي الله عنهم و رضوا عنه و هم أهل الإيمان و الهجرة و الجهاد و لم يتخلف عن بيعته إلا سعد بن عبادة

Besides, the Muslims gave ba’yah to him (i.e. Abu Bakr) and obeyed him. Those who gave ba’yah to him were those same who gave ba’yah to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, under the Tree, and they were the foremost Muhajirun and Ansar and those who followed them in good deeds. Allah was pleased with them and they were pleased with Him; and they were people of iman, Hijrah and jihad, and

none refused to give him (i.e. Abu Bakr) bay'ah except Sa'd b. 'Ubadah.¹

Obviously, Allah was pleased with them generally during the lifetime of the Prophet, because they had iman and were righteous². However, they “changed” after him, and “innovated” in the religion. These later actions removed the Pleasure of Allah from them, and cancelled His Promises to them – which were hinged upon their continued iman and righteousness anyway³.

Meanwhile, we have Sunni reports which also identify some of these Sahabah by name with various other bid'ahs. Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) records one of them:

وحدثنا محمد بن المثنى وابن بشار قال ابن المثنى حدثنا محمد بن جعفر
حدثنا شعبة عن الحكم عن عمارة بن عمير عن إبراهيم بن أبي موسى عن أبي
موسى أنه كان يفتي بالمتعة فقال له رجل رويدك ببعض فتياك فإنك لا تدري ما
أحدث أمير المؤمنين في النسك بعد حتى لقيه بعد فسأله فقال عمر قد علمت أن
النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قد فعله وأصحابه ولكن كرهت أن يظلوا معرسين
بهن في الأراك ثم يروحون في الحج تقطر رؤسهم

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna and Ibn Bashir – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – al-Hakam – 'Amarah b.
'Umayr – Ibrahim b. Abi Musa – Abu Musa:

I used to give fatwas in favour of Hajj al-Tamattu'. So, a person said to me, “Exercise restraint in delivering some of your fatwas, for you do not know what the Commander of the Believers has INNOVATED in the Hajj rites during your absence.” I met him subsequently and asked him and he replied, “I know that the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and his Sahabah performed it. But, I hate that the married persons should have intercourse with their wives under the shade of trees, and then set out for Hajj with water trickling from their heads.”⁴

Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) documents a fuller version:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق أنا الثوري عن قيس بن مسلم عن
طارق بن شهاب عن أبي موسى الأشعري قال... ما زلت أفتي الناس بالذي
أمرني رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم حتي توفي ثم زمن أبي بكر رضي الله
تعالى عنه ثم زمن عمر رضي الله تعالى عنه فبينما أنا قائم عند الحجر الأسود أو
المقام أفتي الناس بالذي أمرني به رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إذ أتاني
رجل فسارني فقال لا تعجل بفتياك فان أمير المؤمنين قد أحدث في المناسك

شيئاً فقلت أيها الناس من كنا أفطيناه في المناسك شيئاً فليتئد فإن أمير المؤمنين قادم فبه فأتمو قال فقدم عمر رضي الله تعالى عنه فقلت يا أمير المؤمنين هل أحدثت في المناسك شيئاً قال نعم إن نأخذ بكتاب الله عز و جل فإنه يأمر بالتمام وإن نأخذ بسنة نبينا صلى الله عليه و سلم فإنه لم يحلل حتى نحر الهدي

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – al-Thawri – Qays b. Muslim – Tariq b. Shihab – Abu Musa al-Ash’ari:

... I continued to give fatwas to the people with what the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, commanded me (i.e. Hajj al-Tamattu’) till he died, then during the time of Abu Bakr, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him, then during the time of ‘Umar, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him. Then, while I was standing near the Black Stone or the Maqam, I gave fatwa to the people with that which the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, commanded me. At that point, a man came to me and whispered to me, saying “Exercise constraint with your fatwas, for the Commander of the Believers had INNOVATED something in the Hajj rites.” So, I said, “O people, whomever we gave any fatwa concerning the Hajj rites, let him wait, for the Commander of the Believers is about to come to you, and you should follow him.”

‘Umar, may Allah the Most High be pleased with him, then came and I said, “O Commander of the Believers! Did you INNOVATE something in the Hajj rites?” He replied, “Yes. If we follow the Book of Allah the Almighty, it commands to do al-tamam (i.e. Hajj al-Tamattu’); and if we follow the Sunnah of our Prophet, peace be upon him, he, peace be upon him, did not put off ihram till he had sacrificed the animal.”⁵

Al-Arnaut says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁶

But, what exactly was this self-confessed “innovation” of ‘Umar in the Hajj rites? Imam al-Nasai (d. 303 H) records the answer:

أخبرنا محمد بن علي بن الحسن بن شقيق قال أنبأنا أبي قال أنبأنا أبو حمزة

عن مطرف عن سلمة بن كهيل عن طاوس عن بن عباس قال سمعت عمر يقول
والله إني لأنهاكم عن المتعة وإنها لفي كتاب الله ولقد فعلها رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم يعني العمرة في الحج

Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. al-Hasan b. Shaqiq – my father – Abu Hamzah – Mutarrif – Salamah b. Kuhayl –
Tawus – Ibn ‘Abbas:

I heard ‘Umar saying, “I swear by Allah, I forbid you from Hajj al-Tamattu’ while it certainly is in the Book
of Allah and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, practised it.” He meant the performance of
‘Umrah during Hajj.⁷

‘Allamah al-Albani says:

صحيح الإسناد

It has a sahih chain⁸

Interesting, isn’t it? Allah commands Hajj al-Tamattu’ in His Book, and His Messenger performed it and
also “commanded” his Sahabah with it. But, ‘Umar arrogated to himself the authority to countermand the
Order of his Lord, and to proscribe the Sunnah of his Prophet! Surprisingly, he personally admitted that
his action was an innovation in the Hajj rites. Yet, he pressed ahead with it. Even more unbelievable was
the instruction of Abu Musa to his followers to abandon the Qur’an and Sunnah in favour of ‘Umar’s
bid’ah?!

This incident reveals how audacious the senior Sahabah were in trampling upon the Laws of Allah as
they wished. They easily abandoned the Qur’an and Sunnah, just to satisfy their rulers. People like
‘Umar too saw nothing bad in supplanting the Laws of Allah with his own “innovations”; and he did not
bat an eye-lid doing so. In any case, our main interest is to establish that ‘Umar was an innovator; and,
all praise be to Allah, he too personally confirmed that explicitly.⁹

Another senior Sahabi whose bid’ah became apparent was ‘Uthman b. ‘Affan, the third Sunni khalifah.
After the death of ‘Umar, he carried on the former’s bid’ah, as Imam Muslim documents:

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى وابن بشار قال ابن المثنى حدثنا محمد بن جعفر حدثنا
شعبة عن قتادة قال قال عبدالله ابن شقيق كان عثمان ينهى عن المتعة وكان
علي يأمر بها فقال عثمان لعلي كلمة ثم قال علي لقد علمت أنا قد تمتعنا مع

رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم فقال أجل ولكننا كنا خائفين

Muhammad b. al-Muthanna and Ibn Bashar – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – Qatadah – 'Abd Allah b. Shaqiq:

'Uthman used to forbid Hajj al-Tamattu' while 'Ali used to command people to perform it. So, as a result, 'Uthman said something to 'Ali. Then, 'Ali said, "You know that we performed Hajj al-Tamattu' with the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him." He ('Uthman) replied, "That's right. But, we were in fear then." ¹⁰

What fear exactly was 'Uthman talking about? There was none when the Prophet and his Sahabah performed Hajj al-Tamattu'. Even 'Umar, the original founder of this bid'ah, did not attempt to bring up such a ridiculous revision of history. Besides, 'Umar himself named it an innovation. So, 'Uthman had no real defence whatsoever. Imam Ahmad also records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا محمد بن جعفر ثنا شعبة عن الحكم عن علي بن الحسين عن مروان بن الحكم انه قال شهدت عليا وعثمان رضي الله عنهما بين مكة والمدينة وعثمان ينهى عن المتعة وان يجمع بينهما فلما رأى ذلك على رضي الله عنه أهل بهما فقال لبيك بعمرة وحج معا فقال عثمان رضي الله عنه تراني أنهى الناس عنه وأنت تفعله قال لم أكن أدع سنة رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لقول أحد من الناس

'Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – Muhammad b. Ja'far – Shu'bah – al-Hakam – 'Ali b. al-Husayn – Marwan b. al-Hakam:

I witnessed 'Ali and 'Uthman, may Allah be pleased with them both, between Makkah and Madinah. 'Uthman was forbidding (people) from Hajj al-Tamattu', and from joining them both (Hajj and 'Umrah) together (during the Hajj season). When 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, said that, he took the ihram for both of them (i.e. Hajj and 'Umrah), and said, "Labaik bi 'Umrah wa Hajj". So, 'Uthman, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "You saw me forbidding the people from it, and yet you are performing it." He ('Ali) replied, "I will never abandon the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, on the word of anyone from mankind." ¹¹

As-salamu 'alaika ya Amir al-Muminin 'Ali b. Abi Talib! Unlike Abu Musa who abandoned the Sunnah for the "innovation" of 'Umar, Imam 'Ali would rather die than commit such an abomination.

Meanwhile, apart from continuing the bid'ah of 'Umar, 'Uthman proceed to found his own too. Imam Abu

Dawud (d. 275 H) documents his feat:

حدثنا محمد بن سلمة المرادي ثنا ابن وهب عن يونس عن ابن شهاب قال أخبرني السائب بن يزيد أن الأذان كان أوله حين يجلس الإمام على المنبر يوم الجمعة في عهد النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم وأبي بكر وعمر [رضي الله عنهما] فلما كان خلافة عثمان وكثر الناس أمر عثمان يوم الجمعة بالأذان الثالث فأذن به على الزوراء (الزوراء موضع بسوق المدينة) فثبت الأمر على ذلك

Muhammad b. Salamah al-Muradi – Ibn Wahb – Yunus – Ibn Shihab – al-Saib b. Yazid:

The adhan used to be made for the first time when the Imam sat on the pulpit on Friday during the lifetimes of the Prophet, peace be upon him, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar [may Allah be pleased with them both]. But, during the khilafah of ‘Uthman, when the population grew, ‘Uthman ordered a THIRD adhan. So, the adhan was made at al-Zawra (al-Zawra was a plat near the market of al-Madinah), and the practice became established.¹²

Al-Albani says:

صحيح

Sahih¹³

In other words, the first adhan used to be made once the Messenger was seated on the pulpit during his lifetime. Later, there was a second one – actually the iqamah, which was also the final. Imam al-Mubarakfuri (d. 1282 H) clarifies further:

والمعنى كان الأذان في العهد النبوي وعهد أبي بكر وعمر أذانين أحدهما حين خروج الإمام وجلوسه على المنبر والثاني حين إقامة الصلاة فكان في عهدهم الأذانان فقط ولم يكن الأذان الثالث والمراد بالأذانين الأذان الحقيقي والإقامة

The meaning of the statement “the adhan during the time of the Prophet, and the time of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, used to be two adhans”: one of them was when the Imam came out (into the mosque) and sat down on the pulpit, and the second was during the iqamah of the Salat. During their times, the adhans

were only two, and there was no third one; and what was intended by the two adhans were the real adhan and the iqamah.¹⁴

This was the correct Sunnah. But, ‘Uthman ordered a “third” adhan, which was made near the marketplace. It was also called the “first adhan”, because it was placed before original adhan. Imam Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H) records:

أن سلم بن جنادة حدثنا : و كيع عن ابن أبي ذئب عن الزهري عن السائب بن يزيد قال كان الأذان على رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أبي بكر و عمر أذنين يوم الجمعة حتى كان زمن عثمان فكثر الناس فأمر بالأذان الأول بالزوراء

Salam b. Junadah – Waki’ – Ibn Abi Dhaib – al-Zuhri – al-Saib b. Yazid:

“The adhan during the times of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were two adhans on Friday. This remained until the time of ‘Uthman when the population grew. So, he ordered the FIRST adhan at al-Zawra.”¹⁵

Al-Albani comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih¹⁶

Al-Mubarakfuri also explains:

قال الحافظ في رواية وكيع عن ابن أبي ذئب فأمر عثمان بالأذان الأول ونحوه للشافعي من هذا الوجه ولا منافاة بينهما لأنه باعتبار كونه مزيدا يسمى ثالثا وباعتبار كونه جعل مقدما على الأذان والإقامة يسمى أولا

Al-Hafiz said: In the riwayat of Waki’ from Ibn Abi Dhaib, it is narrated that “‘Uthman ordered the first adhan.” Al-Shafi’i transmitted a similar thing from this route. There is no contradiction between the two: because it was an addition, it was called the third (adhan); and because it was made before the adhan and iqamah, it was called the first (adhan).¹⁷

Meanwhile, some top ‘ulama of the Ahl al-Sunnah have identified ‘Uthman’s new adhan as an “innovation”. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah (d. 235 H) documents one such testimony:

حدثنا ابن علي عن برد عن الزهري قال كان الأذان عند خروج الامام فأحدث
أمير المؤمنين عثمان التآذينة الثالثة على الزوراء ليجتمع الناس.

Ibn ‘Ulayyah – Burd:

Al-Zuhri said, “The adhan used to be made when the Imam came out (into the mosque). But, the Commander of the Believers ‘Uthman INNOVATED the third adhan which was made at al-Zawra to gather the people. 18

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the first narrator:

إسماعيل بن إبراهيم بن مقسم الأسدي مولاهم أبو بشر البصري المعروف بابن
عليه ثقة حافظ

Isma’il b. Ibrahim b. Miqdam al-Asadi, their freed slave, Abu Bishr al-Basri, well-known as Ibn ‘Ulayyah: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist. 19

And concerning the main narrator, he further states:

برد بن سنان أبو العلاء الدمشقي نزيل البصرة مولى قريش صدوق رمي بالقدر

Burd b. Sinan, Abu al-‘Ala al-Dimashqi, he resided in Basra, freed slave of Quraysh: Saduq (very truthful), he was accused of believing in fatalism. 20

So, the sanad is hasan. Al-Zuhri himself was a grand Sunni Imam, as testified by Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H):

محمد بن مسلم بن عبيد الله بن عبد الله بن شهاب بن عبد الله بن الحارث بن
زهرة بن كلاب بن مرة بن كعب بن لؤي بن غالب، الامام العلم، حافظ زمانه
أبو بكر القرشي الزهري المدني نزيل الشام. روى عن ابن عمر، وجابر بن عبد

الله شيئاً قليلاً، ويحتمل أن يكون سمع منهما، وأن يكون رأى أبا هريرة، وغيره

Muhammad b. Muslim b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah b. Shihab b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-Harith b. Zuhrah b. Kilab b. Murrah b. Ka’b b. Luayy b. Ghalib, the Imam of knowledge, the hadith master of his time, Abu Bakr, al-Qurshi, al-Zuhri, al-Madani, he lived in Syria. He narrated a few things from Ibn ‘Umar and Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah. So, it is possible that he heard from them both, and that he saw Abu Hurayrah and others.²¹

This huge Imam named ‘Uthman’s action an innovation.

Besides, Ibn Abi Shaybah has an even more important athar for us:

حدثنا شبابة قال حدثنا هشام بن الغاز عن نافع عن ابن عمر قال الأذان الأول
يوم الجمعة بدعة.

Shubabah – Hisham b. al-Ghaz – Nafi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

“The first adhan on Friday is a bid’ah.”²²

Al-Hafiz says about the first narrator:

شبابة بن سوار المدائني أصله من خراسان يقال كان اسمه مروان مولى بني
فزارة ثقة حافظ رمي بالإرجاء

Shubabah b. Sawar al-Madaini, his origin was Khurasan. It is said that his (real) name was Marwan, freed slave of Banu Fazarah: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, accused of believing in al-irja.²³

What about the second? Al-Hafiz submits:

هشام بن الغاز بن ربيعة الجرشي بضم الجيم وفتح الراء بعدها معجمة الدمشقي
نزيل بغداد ثقة

Hisham b. al-Ghaz al-Jurashi al-Dimashqi, he lived in Baghdad: Thiqah (trustworthy).²⁴

The last narrator is like that too, according to al-Hafiz:

نافع أبو عبد الله المدني مولى ابن عمر ثقة ثبت فقيه مشهور

Nafi', Abu 'Abd Allah al-Madani, freed slave of Ibn 'Umar: Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate), a well-known jurist.²⁵

As such, the chain is sahih. Ibn 'Umar, a prominent Sahabi, described 'Uthman's new adhan as a bid'ah.

Ibn Abi Shaybah has recorded a mutaba'ah as well:

حدثنا وكيع قال حدثنا بن الغاز قال سألت نافعا مولى ابن عمر عن الأذان الأول
يوم الجمعة فقال: قال ابن عمر: بدعة.

Waki' – Ibn al-Ghaz:

I asked Nafi', the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar, about the first adhan on Friday. He replied, "Ibn 'Umar said: 'It is a bid'ah'".²⁶

The only new name here is Waki, and this is what al-Hafiz says about him:

وكيع بن الجراح بن مليح الرؤاسي بضم الراء وهمزة ثم مهملة، أبو سفيان
الكوفي ثقة حافظ عابد

Waki' b. al-Jarah b. Malih al-Ruwasi, Abu Sufyan al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy), a hadith scientist, a devout worshipper of Allah.²⁷

So, this chain too is sahih.

However, al-Mubarakfuri thinks he has a defence for 'Uthman:

وروى ابن أبي شيبه من طريق ابن عمر قال الأذان الأول يوم الجمعة بدعة
فيحتمل أن يكون قال ذلك على سبيل الإنكار ويحتمل أنه يريد أنه لم يكن في
 زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وكل ما لم يكن في زمنه يسمى بدعة لكن منها

ما يكون حسنا ومنها ما يكون بخلاف ذلك وتبين بما مضى أن عثمان أحدثه لإعلام الناس بدخول وقت الصلاة

Ibn Abi Shaybah recorded through the route of Ibn ‘Umar that he said, “The first adhan on Friday is a bid’ah.” It is possible that he said that to express disapproval, and it is possible that he intended that it did not exist during the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and whatsoever did not exist during his time is called a bid’ah. However, some of them (i.e. the bid’ahs) are good and some are not. And it is clear from the previous discussion that ‘Uthman INNOVATED it to announce the arrival of the time of the Salat to the people.²⁸

So, it was after all only a “good” bid’ah, a “good” innovation. Really?! But, how can that be, considering these words of the Messenger of Allah, documented by Imam al-Nasai:

شر الأمور محدثاتها وكل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار

The worst of the (religious) affairs are their innovations, and every innovation is a bid’ah, and every bid’ah is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Fire.²⁹

Al-Albani says:

صحيح

Sahih³⁰

‘Uthman’s invention was an “innovation” and a “bid’ah”. It was therefore a “misguidance”, which led its inventor and followers into the Fire.

Meanwhile, another innovator among the Sahabah was also Mu’awiyah b. Abi Sufyan. Imam al-Mubarakfuri confirms:

وروى ابن أبي شيبة في المصنف بإسناد صحيح عن ابن المسيب قال أول من أحدث الأذان في العيد معاوية

Ibn Abi Shaybah recorded in al-Musannaf with a sahih chain from Ibn al-Musayyab that he said: “The

first to INNOVATE the azan during the ‘Eid (prayers) was Mu’awiyah.”³¹

His comrade-in-arms against Imam ‘Ali was an innovator too. Imam Ibn Abi Shaybah documents her testimony:

حدثنا أبو أسامة حدثنا إسماعيل بن أبي خالد عن قيس قال قالت عائشة لما
حضرتها الوفاة ادفنوني مع أزواج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فإني كنت أحدث
بعده.

Abu Usamah – Isma’il b. Abi Khalid – Qays:

When she was about to die, ‘Aishah said, “Bury me with the wives of the Prophet, peace be upon him, for I had INNOVATED after him.”³²

And:

حدثنا أبو أسامة قال حدثنا إسماعيل عن قيس قال: قالت عائشة لما حضرتها
الوفاة: ادفنوني مع أزواج النبي عليه السلام فإني كنت أحدثت بعده حدثا.

Abu Usamah – Isma’il – Qays:

When she was about to die, ‘Aishah said, “Bury me with the wives of the Prophet, peace be upon him, for I had INNOVATED a heresy after him.”³³

Al-Hafiz says about the first narrator:

حماد بن أسامة القرشي مولاهم الكوفي أبو أسامة مشهور بكنيته ثقة ثبت ربما
دلس وكان بأخرة يحدث من كتب غيره

Hammad b. Usamah al-Qurshi, their freed slave, al-Kufi, Abu Usamah, well-known with his kunya: Thiqah (trustworthy), accurate, perhaps did tadlis. During the end of his life, he used to narrate from the books of others.³⁴

His probable tadlis is inconsequential here, as he has narrated with explicit tahdith. He stated that he literally heard the athar from the mouth of Isma’il. Concerning Isma’il himself, al-Hafiz states:

إسماعيل بن أبي خالد الأحمسي مولا هم البجلي ثقة ثبت

Isma'il b. Abi Khalid al-Ahmasi, their freed slave, al-Bajali: Thiqah (trustworthy), accurate.³⁵

And finally, he has this verdict about the last narrator:

قيس بن أبي حازم البجلي أبو عبد الله الكوفي ثقة

Qays b. Abi Hazim al-Bajali, Abu 'Abd Allah al-Kufi: Thiqah (trustworthy).³⁶

Therefore, the report is perfectly sahih. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) also records:

حدثنا أبو العباس محمد بن يعقوب ثنا أبو البحتري عبد الله بن محمد بن بشر
العبدي ثنا إسماعيل بن أبي خالد عن قيس بن أبي حازم قال قالت عائشة رضي
عنها : وكانت تحدث نفسها أن تدفن في بيتها مع رسول الله صلى الله عليه
وسلم وأبي بكر فقالت : إني أحدثت بعد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حدثا
أدفنوني مع أزواجه فدفنت بالبقيع

Abu al-'Abbas Muhammad b. Ya'qub – Abu al-Bahtari 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Bishr al-'Abdi –
Isma'il b. Abi Khalid – Qays b. Abi Hazim:

'Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her – and she used to tell herself to be buried in her house with the
Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, and Abu Bakr – said: "I INNOVATED a heresy after the
Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, Bury me with his wives." So, she was buried at al-Baqi'.³⁷

Al-Hakim comments:

هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This hadith is sahih upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.³⁸

And, Imam al-Dhahabi concurs with him:

على شرط البخاري ومسلم

Upon the standard of al-Bukhari and Muslim.³⁹

Obviously, the list of innovations and bid'ahs by various Sahabah, including some of their most senior, is endless. We have merely quoted a very tiny number of examples in order to prevent our book from getting too big. Moreover, we believe that the few examples we have given have sufficiently served our purpose.

One of the truly incredible fallacies we experience from some of our Sunni brothers is how they quote the athar below – from Musnad Ahmad – in “retaliation” when we show them some of the aforementioned Sunni ahadith about the innovations of the various Sahabah:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني وهب بن بقية الواسطي أخبرنا خالد بن عبد الله عن
حصين عن المسيب بن عبد خير عن أبيه قال قام علي فقال خير هذه الأمة بعد
نبيها أبو بكر وعمر وأنا قد أحدثنا بعدهم أحداثا يقضى الله تعالى فيها ما شاء

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – Wahb b. Baqiyyah al-Wasiti – Khalid b. ‘Abd Allah – Husayn – al-Musayyab b. ‘Abd Khayr – his father:

‘Ali stood and said, “The best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. And we have innovated heresies after them. Allah the Most High will decide concerning them (i.e. the heresies) whatever He wills.”⁴⁰

Al-Arnaut comments:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁴¹

We also read:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبو بحر عبد الواحد البصري ثنا أبو عوانة عن خالد بن علقمة عن عبد خير قال قال علي
رضي الله عنه لما فرغ من أهل البصرة إن خير هذه الأمة بعد نبيها صلى الله عليه وسلم أبو بكر وبعد أبي بكر عمر
وأحدثنا أحداثا يصنع الله فيها ما شاء

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – Abu Bahr ‘Abd al-Wahid al-Basri – Abu ‘Awanah – Khalid b. ‘Alqamah – ‘Abd Khayr:

‘Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, after finishing with the people of Basra, said: “Verily, the best of this Ummah after its Prophet, peace be upon him, is Abu Bakr, and after Abu Bakr it is ‘Umar. And we have innovated heresies, concerning which Allah will do whatever He wills.”⁴²

Al-Arnaut again says:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is sahih.⁴³

The apparent aim of quoting these reports is to “prove” that Amir al-Muminin too was also an innovator. But, who exactly are these people attempting to convince? Is it their Sunni brethren or the Shi’ah? If it is the Shi’ah, then their case is absolutely hopeless. The author of the book, Ahmad b. Hanbal, is majhul al-hal according to Shi’i rijal⁴⁴.

Therefore, everything in his entire book is dha’if by default, from the sanad point of view. His son too, the transmitter of the athar, is muhmal (untraceable), with no entry in our rijal books.⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Khayr, main narrator, is majhul as well⁴⁶. The various other narrators in the two chains of the report are equally dha’if. So, it is extremely dha’if, in fact mawdu’ (fabricated). No wonder, Grand Ayatullah al-Tustari says:

ثم إن الذهبي نقل روايتهم عنه، عن المسيب بن عبد خير، عن أبيه سمع علياً يقول: ألا أن خير هذه الأمة بعد نبيها أبو بكر وعمر. ولا بد أنهم وضعوها عليه.

Then, al-Dhahabi quoted their report from him, from al-Musayyab b. ‘Abd Khayr, from his father, that he heard ‘Ali saying: “Verily, the best of this Ummah after its Prophet are Abu Bakr and ‘Umar.” There is NO doubt that they fabricated it and attributed it to him.⁴⁷

So, by Shi’i rijali standards, the riwayat is mawdu’ (fabricated), and therefore is completely worthless to or against the Shi’ah.

But then, it is equally weak by Sunni standards. It contradicts Hadith al-Thaqalayn, Hadith al-Khalifatayn and a lot of other sahih ahadith⁴⁸. Meanwhile, Hadith al-Thaqalayn alone – with its several, distinct sahih and hasan chains – is far more authentic than it. As such, the athar of ‘Abd Khayr above has a munkar (repugnant) matn (text) on account of its inconsistency with a more reliable report, and is therefore dha’if.

Besides, it is authentically narrated in Sahih Muslim – as we have already quoted in this book – that ‘Ali considered both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar to be dishonest liars and traitors.

How then would he have declared such people to be the best of this Ummah?! Amir al-Muminin was far more reasonable than that.

In all, we see that the warning of our dear Prophet – that following the Ahl al-Bayt prevents from misguidance – has full merit. Those Sahabah who refused to obey Hadith al-Thaqalayn later deviated from the Right Path, and became innovators. If they had chosen the offspring of Muhammad as their masters and supreme guides after him, they certainly would have remained upon the Kitab and the Sunnah, in line with the assurance in Hadith al-Thaqalayn. We too should learn from this costly mistake of the Sahabah, and set straight our Path to Allah till death.

1. Abu al-‘Abbas Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 450
2. There were a few exceptions though, such as those of them who accused the Rasul of mental illness on the tragic Thursday. But, the vast majority of them remained upon the truth until after the death of the Prophet.
3. In the Qur’an, Allah has made His Pleasure and all His promises of Paradise conditional upon the steadfastness (istiqamah) of the believer upon the Right Guidance. The moment he slides back, everything he had previously earned goes up in smoke. See Qur’an 41:30–32 and 46:13–14. Even Prophet Muhammad too was ordered to be steadfast in his Islam. See Qur’an 11:112. In recognition of this fact, Allah commanded him to tell his Ummah that he (Muhammad) too would enter Hellfire if he slid back. See Qur’an 2:120, 10:15 and 69:44–47. So, the fact that Allah was once pleased with a Sahabi, or that he had promised him Paradise during the lifetime of His Messenger, is not sufficient. It has to be shown that the Sahabi did not later slide back from the Right Guidance by innovating bid’ahs or committing grave atrocities.
4. Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 2, p. 896, # 1222 (157)
5. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 393, # 19523
6. Ibid
7. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu’ayb al-Nasai, al-Mujtaba min al-Sunan (Halab: Maktab al-Matbu’at al-Islamiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 153, # 2736
8. Ibid
9. The case of ‘Umar seems to be even more serious than that of the Sahabah who will be charged with apostasy at the Lake-Fount. From the look of it, he will be in a worse category than them. At least, those Sahabah were upon the Qur’an and Sunnah, and upon the correct iman and tawhid, throughout the lifetime of the Messenger. They only apostatized through their bid’ahs after his death. By contrast, there is evidence which casts serious doubts on the iman of ‘Umar b. al-Khattab during the time of the Prophet. For instance, he was the leader of the group of Sahabah who accused the Messenger of Allah of “raving madness”. No true believer would ever do that. Anyway, our Sunni brothers insist that he was a perfect believer while the Prophet lived. Even then, they cannot deny the fact that he turned an “innovator” after the death of the Rasul.
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11. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 135, # 1139
12. Abu Dawud Sulayman b. al-Ash’ath al-Sijistani al-Azdi, Sunan (Dar al-Fikr) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 1, p. 352, # 1087
13. Ibid

14. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami* al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 3, p. 39
15. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Sulami al-Naysaburi, *Sahih* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 3, p. 137, # 1774
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 2, p. 48, # 6
19. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 90, # 417
20. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 123, # 654
21. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotator of the fifth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 5, p. 326, # 160
22. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 2, p. 48, # 3
23. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 410, # 2741
24. Ibid, vol. 2, p. P. 268, # 7331
25. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 239, # 7111
26. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar* (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham], vol. 2, p. 48, # 7
27. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 2, p. pp. 283-284, # 7441
28. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami* al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 3, p. 40
29. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Ahmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasai, *al-Mujtaba min al-Sunan* (Halab: Maktab Matbu'at al-Islamiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 3, p. 188, # 1578
30. Ibid
31. Abu al-'Ala Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Mubarakfuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi bi Sharh Jami* al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 3, p. 62
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33. Ibid, vol. 8, p. 708, # 16
34. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, pp. 236-237, # 1492
35. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 93, # 439
36. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 32, # 5583
37. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, *al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 4, p. 7, # 6717
38. Ibid
39. Ibid
40. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 1, p. 115, # 926 and vol. 1, p. 125, # 1032
41. Ibid

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43. Ibid

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45. 'Ali al-Namazi al-Shahrudi, Mustadrakat 'Ilm Rijal al-Hadith (Tehran: Haydari; 1st edition, 1414 H), vol. 4, p. 475, # 8043

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47. Muhammad Taqi al-Tustari, Qamus al-Rijal (Qum: Muassasat al-Nashr al-Islami; 1st edition, 1422 H), vol. 11, p. 165, # 8553

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3. 'Abd Allah b. Muhammad b. Abi Shaybah Ibrahim b. 'Uthman b. Abi Bakr b. Abi Shaybah al-Kufi al-'Ubsi, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaybah fi al-Ahadith wa al-Athar (Dar al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa'id al-Laham]
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