

DID ABU BAKR REALLY LEAD THE SALAT?

A FACTS CHECK

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Toyib Olawuyi

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TOYIB OLAWUYI

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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إنما كانت بيعة أبي بكر فلتة وتمت
ألا وإنها قد كانت كذلك
ولكن الله وقي شرها

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to the master
of all prophets, messengers and Imāms,
Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ālihi*.

CONTENTS

	Acknowledgments	i
	Preface	ii
1	An Exclusive "Merit"?	1
2	A Game of Contradictions (Part I)	4
3	A Game of Contradictions (Part II)	15
4	Did Abu Bakr Lead the Prophet?	23
5	Was Abu Bakr Even Qualified to Lead?	30
6	<i>Imamah</i> of Bastards and Children	39
7	Abū Bakr's Presence in the Army of Usāmah	46
8	Were the Ṣaḥābah Expecting Abū Bakr's Reign?	63
	Bibliography	79

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PREFACE

Let us imagine that an authentic *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ‘ālīhi*, reads:

أبو بكر خليفتي في كل مؤمن من بعدي

Abū Bakr is my *khaliḥ* over every believer after me.

How would the Ahl al-Sunnah have interpreted it?

What about this one:

أبو بكر ولي كل مؤمن بعدي

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

Or this:

أبو بكر أخي وصاحبي ووارثي ووزيري

Abū Bakr is my brother, and my companion, and my inheritor and my *waṣīr*.

We have absolutely no doubt that the Ahl al-Sunnah would cite these statements as unassailable proofs of Abū Bakr’s legitimate *khilāḥ* over the *Ummah* immediately after the Messenger of Allāh. However, as we have discussed in our second book, *On the Khilāḥ of ‘Alī over Abū Bakr*, the above *aḥādīth* and similar others actually exist with reliable chains in the Sunnī books – except that instead of “Abū Bakr”, it is the name of Amīr al-Mūminīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *‘alaihi al-salām*, that is mentioned in them. This is why the Ahl al-Sunnah do not like, and always struggle against, them.

When we quote the actual *aḥādīth* with the name of ‘Alī to our Sunnī brothers, they usually instinctively respond with a tired counterargument: the Prophet deputized Abū Bakr to lead the *ṣalāt* during his fatal illness. To them, that, in a weird way, is a stronger, and more explicit, proof of *khilāḥ* than any of the *aḥādīth* about ‘Alī! Apparently, the world is indeed a very strange place. When the Messenger of Allāh said “ ‘Alī is my *khaliḥ* over every believer after me”, Sunnīs think he was NOT naming ‘Alī as his

ḵhalīfah! But, when he *allegedly* appointed Abū Bakr to lead ṣalāt as he had similarly appointed many others before him – to our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah - he was somehow naming him his *ḵhalīfah!*

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

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

1 AN EXCLUSIVE “MERIT”?

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) says:

وكان إذا سافر عن المدينة استخلف من يستخلفه يصلي بالمسلمين كما استخلف ابن
أم مكتوم تارة وعلياً تارة في الصلاة واستخلف غيرها تارة

فأما في حال غيبته ومرضه فلم يستخلف إلا أبا بكر لا علياً ولا غيره واستخلفه
للصديق في الصلاة متواتر ثابت في الصحاح والسنن والمسند من غير وجه

Whenever he (the Prophet) left Madīnah on a journey, he would appoint a *khalīfah* (to govern the city on his behalf). Whoever he appointed as a *khalīfah* would lead the Muslims in *ṣalāt*, as he once made Ibn Umm Maktūm a *khalīfah*, and also ‘Alī once, to lead the *ṣalāt*. He equally appointed others apart from them both as *khalīfahs* at other times.

However, during his absence or illness, he never appointed anyone as *khalīfah* except Abū Bakr – neither ‘Alī nor anyone else. **And his appointment of al-Ṣiddīq as *khalīfah* to lead *ṣalāt* is *mutawātir***, and authentically narrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* books, and the *Sunan* books, and the *Musnad* books through many routes.¹

¹ Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm b. Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qurṭubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim], vol. 8, p. 558

Basically, our Shaykh confesses to the following points:

1. Abū Bakr was NOT the first or the only to lead Muslims in *ṣalāt* in the mosque of the Prophet, *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ‘ālīhi*, in Madīnah.
2. Amīr al-Mūminīn ‘Alī, *‘alaihi al-salām*, and Ibn Umm Maktūm, *radīyallāhu ‘anhu*, were among those Ṣaḥābah, *radīyallāhu ‘anhum*, who also led the Muslims in *ṣalāt* in that mosque *on the order* of the Messenger of Allāh.

But, our Shaykh then proceeds to make some garbled remarks:

- i. Abū Bakr was the only one ever deputized to lead *ṣalāt* in the mosque of the Prophet during his *absence* from Madīnah.
- ii. He was also the only one ever commanded to lead the *ṣalāt* in that mosque during the Messenger’s illness.

Somehow, Ibn Taymiyyah thinks that these were “*exclusive* merits” of his first *khalīfah*, Abū Bakr. But, when the Messenger of Allāh appointed Imām ‘Alī, Ibn Umm Maktūm and others as *khalīfahs* over his Madīnah, was he then not also “absent” from the city?! The Shaykh himself answers:

وكان إذا سافر عن المدينة استخلف من يستخلفه يصلي بالمسلمين

Whenever he (the Prophet) LEFT MADĪNAH on a journey, he would appoint a *khalīfah* (to govern the city on his behalf). Whoever he appointed as a *khalīfah* would lead the Muslims in *Ṣalāt*

With this admission, one wonders: on what basis then was Abū Bakr the only one ever appointed *khalīfah* to lead *ṣalāt* in Madīnah *during the Prophet’s absence*? How on earth did that submission of Ibn Taymiyyah even ever make any sense to him at all?! Why do these people suddenly lose their simple logic whenever discussions involving Amīr al-Mūminīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib come up?

As for our Shaykh’s insistence on the “uniqueness” of Abū Bakr’s *khalīfah* in *ṣalāt* during the Prophet’s illness, then, there are two issues. One, as we will demonstrate in this book, there is NO reliable proof of it - to begin with! All that our Sunnī brothers can muster together are nothing but a set of severely contradictory *riwāyāt* which only muddle up the entire picture. Such kinds of irreconcilable reports are never accepted as valid testimonies. Two, even if it is agreed, for the sake of argument, that Abū Bakr ever led the *ṣalāt* on the order of the Prophet, then there is very little “merit” in it

for him, if any at all. He then would have been a *khalīfah* in *ṣalāt* only, which was the weakest form of *khalīfah*. He would have had no authority whatsoever to give commands to the Muslim soldiers, or to administer the Muslim society, or to pass judgments in disputes. Basically, he had no administrative, military or judicial authority in his alleged *khalīfah*. By contrast, when Amīr al-Mūminīn was made the *khalīfah* of Madīnah by the Messenger during the Battle of Tabūk, the former had full authority to lead Muslims in *ṣalāt* in the Prophet's mosque, command the Muslim armed forces stationed with him in the city, administer the affairs of its inhabitants and give judgments in any disputes that arose among them! How can anyone rationally consider the largely empty *khalīfah* of Abū Bakr as superior to that of 'Alī? How do these people reason?

The issue of Abū Bakr's alleged appointment as prayer-leader is usually raised by our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah in debates over *khalīfah*. Their logic always is – since the Prophet deputized Abū Bakr to lead the *ṣalāt* in his mosque, then he was automatically declaring the latter, implicitly, as his *khalīfah* after his death. However, even Ibn Taymiyyah is unable to completely ignore the fallacy of this mainstream Sunnī premise:

ليس كل من يصلح للاستخلاف في الحياة على بعض الأمة يصلح إن يستخلف بعد الموت فإن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم استخلف في حياته غير واحد و منهم من لا يصلح للخلافة بعد موته

Not all who are qualified to be appointed *khalīfahs* during the lifetime (of the Muslim ruler) over part of the *Ummah* are equally qualified to be appointed as *khalīfahs* after the death (of the ruler). **The Prophet, peace be upon him, appointed during his lifetime many people as *khalīfahs*, and among them were those who were not qualified for the *khalīfah* after his death.**²

² Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm b. Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qur'ubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim], vol. 7, p. 339

2 A GAME OF CONTRADICTIONS

(Part I)

There actually is no *valid* Sunnī proof to establish that Abū Bakr was ever deputized by the Messenger, *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ‘ālihi*, as prayer-leader during the latter’s fatal or other illness. The reports about Abū Bakr’s alleged appointment were narrated *mainly* by both Umm al-Mūminīn ‘Āishah and Anas. Most of the reports on the matter trace directly to them both, and to ‘Āishah in particular. There were other Ṣaḥābah – such as Ibn Mas’ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī, Buraydah, Sālim b. ‘Ubayd, and Ibn Zam’a. However, their reports were mostly carbon copies of the severely contradictory *riwāyāt* of both ‘Āishah and Anas. In this chapter, we will be dissecting primarily the narrations of ‘Āishah and Anas – and by extension, those of all the others too. We will be exposing their extreme weakness as valid proofs in the issue at hand.

Imām Muslim (d. 261 H) has compiled many of these reports under the chapter: “*The Imām is authorized to appoint someone as khalīfah who will lead the people in ṣalāt when there is a valid reason for it, for example illness, or journey or others. And whoever performs ṣalāt behind a sitting Imām who is unable to stand should do so standing if he can. And there is an abrogation of performing ṣalāt sitting behind a sitting Imām for whoever is able to stand.*” So, we will be examining the landmark reports in it in this investigative research.

EXHIBIT A

Muslim records:

حدثنا محمد بن المثنى وهارون بن عبدالله قال حدثنا عبدالصمد قال سمعت أبي يحدث قال حدثنا عبدالعزيز عن أنس قال لم يخرج إلينا نبي الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ثلاثاً فأقيمت الصلاة فذهب أبو بكر يتقدم فقال نبي الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بالحجاب فرفعه فلما وضع لنا وجه نبي الله صلى الله عليه و سلم ما نظرنا منظراً قط كان أعجب إلينا من وجه النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم حين وضع لنا قال فأومأ نبي الله صلى الله عليه و سلم بيده إلى أبي بكر أن يتقدم وأرخى نبي الله صلى الله عليه و سلم الحجاب فلم تقدر عليه حتى مات

Muḥammad b. Al-Muthannā and Hārūn b. ‘Abd Allāh – ‘Abd al-Ṣamad – my father – ‘Abd al-‘Azīz – Anas:

The Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, did not come out to us for three days. When the ṣalāt was about to start, ABŪ BAKR STEPPED FORWARD TO LEAD. The Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, was near the curtain and he lifted it. When the face of the Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, became visible to us, we had never seen anything as wonderful to us as the face of the Prophet, peace be upon him when it became visible to us. So, the Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, gestured to Abū Bakr with his hand to lead. The Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, then drew the curtain, and we were unable to see him until he died.³

This report explicitly states that the Messenger of Allāh was unable to lead the Ṣaḥābah in ṣalāt for a total of four days – the initial three days and his day of death. Basically, he did not participate in ṣalāt with the Muslims in his mosque throughout the last four days of his lifetime.

EXHIBIT B

In another report, Anas indicated that the Messenger died on a Monday. Muslim again documents:

حدثني عمرو الناقد وحسن الحلواني وعبد بن حميد (قال عبد أخبرني وقال الآخرون حدثنا يعقوب) (وهو ابن إبراهيم بن سعد) وحدثني أبي عن صالح عن ابن شهاب

³ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 315, # 419 (100)

قال أخبرني أنس بن مالك أن أبا بكر كان يصلي لهم في وجع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الذي توفي فيه حتى إذا كان يوم الاثنين وهم صفوف في الصلاة كشف رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ستر الحجرة فنظر إلينا وهو قائم كأن وجهه ورقة مصحف ثم تبسم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ضاحكا قال فهبتنا ونحن في الصلاة من فرج بخروج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ونكص أبو بكر على عقبه ليصل الصف وظن أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خارج للصلاة فأشار إليهم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بيده أن أتموا صلاتكم قال ثم دخل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فأرخي الستة قال فتوفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من يومه ذلك

‘Amr al-Nāqid, Ḥasan al-Ḥalwānī and ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd – Ya’qūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d – my father – Sāliḥ – Ibn Shihāb – Anas b. Mālik:

Abū Bakr led them in *ṣalāt* during the fatal illness of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, UNTIL IT WAS A MONDAY and they had stood in congregational rows PERFORMING *ṣalāt*. The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, drew aside the curtain of the room and looked at us while he was standing. His face was like the page of the *mushaf*. Then, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, felt happy and smiled. And we were confounded with joy DURING THE *ṢALĀT* due to the coming out of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him. **Abū Bakr stepped back upon his heels to continue the *ṣalāt* in the congregational row, thinking that the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, had come out for the *ṣalāt*.** The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, gestured to *them* with his hand to “complete your *ṣalāt*”. Then, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, entered and drew the curtain.

He (Anas) said: The Messenger of Allāh breathed his last **ON THAT VERY DAY of his.**⁴

This *ḥadīth* is interesting. Anas made it absolutely clear that they were already performing the *ṣalāt* (في الصلاة), in their congregational rows, before the appearance of the Prophet. Yet, the Ṣaḥābah were able, during *ṣalāt*, to

⁴ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 315, # 419 (98)

see the Messenger of Allāh draw the curtain, to view his bright face and his happy smile, to witness how Abū Bakr stepped back, to notice how the Prophet's hand gesture to him, and to look at him returning to his room. What kind of ṣalāt was that?! Where were they really looking during the prayer? Were they even concentrating at all?

Muslim has this further *riwāyah* as well:

وحدثني عمرو الناقد وزهير بن حرب قالوا حدثنا سفیان بن عيينة عن الزهري عن
أنس قال آخر نظرة نظرتها إلى رسول الله عليه وسلم كشف الستارة يوم الاثنين

‘Amr al-Nāqid and Zuhayr b. Ḥarb – Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah – al-Zuhri –
Anas:

The last glance which we had of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, **was when he drew the curtain aside ON MONDAY.**⁵

Therefore, the Prophet did not participate in congregational ṣalāt on Monday, the day of his death. He also did not pray in his mosque throughout the three days before that. That means that he stopped leading his Ṣaḥābah on Thursday, most probably in its afternoon or evening. So, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, he did not come out to his followers at all. On Monday, the day he died, he showed himself to them but did not join them in the ṣalāt. The direct implication of all this is that his last ever ṣalāt with his Ṣaḥābah was offered on Thursday.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 H) agrees with our conclusions:

قلنا فعلى هذا يكون آخر صلاة صلاها معهم الظهر كما جاء مصرحا به في حديث
عائشة المتقدم، ويكون ذلك يوم الخميس لا يوم السبت ولا يوم الأحد كما حكاه
البيهقي عن مغازي موسى بن عقبة وهو ضعيف

We say: based upon this, **the last ṣalāt which he performed with them would be Zuhr**, as it is explicitly reported in the foregoing *ḥadīth* of ‘Āishah, **and that would be on Thursday** – and not on Saturday or Sunday as al-Bayhaqī quoted from *Maḡhāẓi* of Mūsā b. ‘Uqbah, and it (i.e. that submission of Mūsā) is *ḍa’i’f*.⁶

⁵ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 315, # 419 (99)

⁶ Abū al-Fidā Ismā’īl b. Kathīr al-Dimashqī, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī; 1st edition, 1408 H) [annotator: ‘Alī Shīrī], vol. 5, p. 256

Imām al-Ṣālihī al-Shāmī (d. 942 H) has a backup for him:

قال الحافظ: اختلف في مدة مرضه فالأكثر على أنه ثلاثة عشر يوما وقيل: بزيادة يوم وقيل: بنقصه. وقيل: تسعة أيام رواه البلاذري عن علي رضي الله تعالى عنه وقيل: عشرة، وفيه جزم سليمان التيمي، وكان يخرج إلى الصلاة إلا أنه انقطع ثلاثة أيام. قال في العيون: أمر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أن يصلي بالناس فصلى بهم فيما روينا سبع عشرة صلاة

Al-Hāfiẓ (Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī) said: “There is disagreement about the length of his (i.e. the Prophet’s fatal) illness. The majority are of the opinion that it lasted thirteen days. Some say: it was a day more. Some say: it was a day less.” Some also say: it was nine days. This opinion was narrated from ‘Alī, may Allāh the Most High be pleased with him, by al-Balādhārī. Some say: it lasted ten days. This was explicitly stated by Sulaymān al-‘Tamīmī.

He (the Prophet) used to come out for the *ṣalāt* (throughout his illness) except that he missed three days.

The author of *al-‘Uyūn* said: “The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, ordered that he (Abū Bakr) lead the people in *ṣalāt*, **and he led them in seventeen *ṣalāts***, according to what was narrated to us.”⁷

One glaring omission from Anas’ reports is that of any explicit order from the Prophet concerning Abū Bakr’s leadership of *ṣalāt*. As such, we do not know – from Anas’ narrations – whether he led the Ṣaḥābah in *ṣalāt* from Thursday till Monday on the order of the Messenger of Allāh or not. What is clear from them, however, is that the Prophet was allegedly pleased with Abū Bakr’s leadership of *ṣalāt* when he saw it on the Monday of his demise. This is also the best – based upon Anas’ reports above – that can be said about Abū Bakr’s leadership of *ṣalāt* for the three previous days: that the Prophet knew about it, and silently approved it by not objecting. Nothing more can be claimed from those texts. Of course, an approval is not always the same thing as an order.

EXHIBIT C

⁷ Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-ṣālihī al-Shāmī, *Subul al-Hudā al-Rashād fī Sirah Khayr al-‘Ibād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1414 H) [annotators: ‘Ādil Aḥmad ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and ‘Alī Muḥammad Ma’ūd], vol. 12, p. 244

Ibn Kathīr makes reference to a *ḥadīth* of Umm al-Mūminīn ‘Āishah. This is it, as recorded by Imām Muslim:

حدثنا أحمد بن عبدالله بن يونس حدثنا زائدة حدثنا موسى بن أبي عائشة عن عبيدالله بن عبدالله قال دخلت على عائشة فقلت لها ألا تحدثيني عن مرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ قالت بلى ثقل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال صلى الناس؟ قلنا لا وهم ينتظرونك يا رسول الله قال ضعوا لي ماء في الخضب ففعلنا فاعتسل ثم ذهب لينوء فأغمي عليه ثم أفاق فقال صلى الناس؟ قلنا لا وهم ينتظرونك يا رسول الله فقال ضعوا لي ماء في الخضب ففعلنا فاعتسل ثم ذهب لينوء فأغمي عليه ثم أفاق فقال صلى الناس؟ قلنا لا وهم ينتظرونك يا رسول الله

قالت والناس عكوف في المسجد ينتظرون رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لصلاة العشاء الآخرة

قالت فأرسل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى أبي بكر أن يصلي بالناس فأتاه الرسول فقال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يأمر أن تصلي بالناس فقال أبو بكر وكان رجلاً رقيقاً يا عمر صل بالناس قال فقال عمر أنت أحق بذلك

قالت فصلى بهم أبو بكر تلك الأيام ثم إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وجد من نفسه خفة فخرج بين رجلين أحدهما العباس لصلاة الظهر وأبو بكر يصلي بالناس فلما رآه أبو بكر ذهب ليتأخر فأوماً إليه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن لا يتأخر وقال لهما اجلساني إلى جنبه فأجلساه إلى جنب أبو بكر وكان أبو بكر يصلي وهو قائم بصلاة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم والناس يصلون بصلاة أبي بكر والنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قاعد

قال عبيدالله فدخلت على عبدالله بن عباس فقلت له ألا أعرض عليك ما حدثتني عائشة عن مرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم؟ فقال هات فعرضت حديثها

عليه فما أنكر منه شيئاً غير أنه قال أستم لك الرجل الذي كان مع العباس؟ قلت لا
قال هو علي

Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūnus – Zāidah – Mūsā b. Abī ‘Āishah –
‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh:

I visited ‘Āishah and said to her, “Would you tell me about the illness of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him?” She replied, “Yes, I will. The Prophet, peace be upon him, was seriously ill, and he asked, ‘Have the people performed *ṣalāt*?’ We said, ‘No, they are waiting for you (to lead them), O Messenger of Allāh.’ He said, ‘Put some water for me in the tub’. We complied. So, he performed ablution. Then, he was about to move with difficulty but fainted. Then, he woke up and said, ‘Have the people performed *ṣalāt*?’ We said, ‘No. They are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allāh.’ He said, ‘Put some water for me in the tub’. We complied. So, he performed ablution. Then, he was about to move with difficulty but fainted. Then, he woke up and said, ‘Have the people performed *ṣalāt*?’ We said, ‘No. They are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allāh.’ He said, ‘Put some water for me in the tub’. We complied. So, he performed ablution. Then, he was about to move with difficulty but fainted. Then, he woke up and said, ‘Have the people performed *ṣalāt*?’ We said, ‘No. They are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allāh.’

She (‘Āishah) said, “The people were standing in the mosque waiting for the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, **FOR THE ‘ISHĀ PRAYER.**”

She (‘Āishah) said, “Then, the Messenger of Allāh sent a messenger to Abū Bakr to tell him to lead the people in *ṣalāt*. When the messenger (of the Prophet) got to him, he said, ‘The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, orders you to lead the people in *ṣalāt*.’ So, Abū Bakr, who was a man of tenderly feelings, said, ‘O ‘Umar, lead the people in *ṣalāt*.’ ‘Umar replied, ‘You are more entitled to that.’

She (‘Āishah) said, “**So, Abū Bakr led them in *ṣalāt* during those days.** THEN, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, felt some relief and he went out, supported by two men, **one of whom was al-‘Abbās, FOR THE ZUHR PRAYER** while Abū Bakr was already **leading the people in *ṣalāt*.** When Abū Bakr saw him, he began to move backwards. But the Prophet, peace be upon him, indicated to him not to move backwards. He also told them both (i.e. the two men with him), ‘Sit me *beside* Abū Bakr.’ Therefore, they sat him beside Abū

Bakr. Abū Bakr was performing *ṣalāt* while standing, **and he was following the *ṣalāt* of the Prophet**, peace be upon him, and the people were following the *ṣalāt* of Abū Bakr. The Prophet, peace be upon him, was sitting.”

‘Ubayd Allāh said: I visited ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās and said to him, “Should I tell you what ‘Āishah told me concerning the illness of the Messenger of Allāh?” He said, “Tell.” So, I presented her *ḥadīth* to him, and he did not deny anything from it, except that he asked, “Did she tell you the name of the other man who was with al-‘Abbās?” I said, “No”. He said, “He was ‘Alī.”⁸

But, ‘Āishah has only blown up everything here! The Messenger of Allāh became unable to lead *ṣalāt* on Thursday, according to the *ḥadīth* of Anas. In this report of ‘Āishah, that was at the time of the *‘Ishā* prayer – and not *Zuhr* as al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr wants us to believe. That *‘Ishā* prayer, as well as the subsequent *ṣalāts* for a few days, were led by Abū Bakr on the explicit order of the Prophet. These are claims of ‘Āishah which are missing in the reports of Anas. But, according to Anas, the Messenger of Allāh never again joined the Muslims in *ṣalāt* once Abū Bakr started leading. By contrast, ‘Āishah claimed that her blessed husband actually took over the leadership of *ṣalāt* from her father after some “days”! In the Arabic, the word *ayām* is used for the days of Abū Bakr’s leadership after the initial *‘Ishā*. That word is plural, and refers to at least three days. This means that Abū Bakr led the *ṣalāts* on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Then, the Prophet of Allāh intervened in his *ṣalāt* and took over from him on Monday. Here, Anas and ‘Āishah clash again. He submitted that the Messenger never participated in congregational *ṣalāt* on the Monday of his death, while she insisted that her husband did in the *Zuhr* prayer of that day!

EXHIBIT D

Yet, ‘Āishah proceeded to contradict herself too in a very fundamental way. Muslim records:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا أبو معاوية ووکیع ح وحدثنا یحیی بن یحیی (واللفظ له) قال أخبرنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن إبراهيم عن الأسود عن عائشة قالت لما

⁸ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 311, # 418 (90)

ثقل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم جاء بلال يؤذنه بالصلاة فقال مرو أبا بكر فليصل بالناس قالت فقلت يا رسول الله إن أبا بكر رجل أسيف وإنه متى يتم مقامك لا يسمع الناس فلو أمرت عمر فقال مرو أبا بكر فليصل بالناس قالت فقلت لحفصة قولي له إن أبا بكر رجل أسيف وإنه متى يتم مقامك لا يسمع الناس فلو أمرت عمر فقالت له فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إنكن لأنتن صواحب يوسف مرو أبا بكر فليصل بالناس قالت فأمر أبا بكر يصلي بالناس قالت فلما دخل في الصلاة وجد رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من نفسه خفة فقام يهادي بين رجلين ورجلاه تخطان في الأرض قالت فلما دخل المسجد سمع أبو بكر حسه فذهب يتأخر فأومأ إليه رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قم مكانك فجاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى جلس عن يسار أبي بكر قالت فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي بالناس جالسا وأبو بكر قائما يقتدي أبو بكر بصلاة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ويقتدي الناس بصلاة أبي بكر

Abū Bakr b. Abī Shaybah – Abū Mu'āwiyah and Wakī' AND Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā – Abū Mu'āwiyah – al-A'mash - Ibrāhīm - al-Aswad – 'Āishah:

When the Messenger of Allāh became seriously ill, **Bilāl came to summon him to ṣalāt. He said, "Ask Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāt."**

She said: I said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Verily, Abū Bakr is a tenderly man. If he stood in your place, he would not be able to make the people hear anything. You should instead order 'Umar." He said, "Ask Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāt."

She said: "So, I told Ḥaṣṣah my statement to him, 'Abū Bakr is a tenderly man. If he stood in your place, he would not be able to make people hear anything. You should instead order 'Umar.'" She told him. On that, the Messenger of Allāh said, "You are like the women who gathered around Yūsuf. Ask Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāt."

She said: "Therefore, Abū Bakr was asked to lead the people in ṣalāt." She said: "As he (Abū Bakr) began the ṣalāt, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, felt some relief. So, He got up and moved, supported by two men, and his feet dragged on the ground."

She said: “When he entered the mosque, Abū Bakr heard his sound. He moved backwards, but the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, indicated to him to ‘stand in your place.’ **The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, then came and sat on the left side of Abū Bakr.**”

She said: “The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, was leading the people in ṣalāt in a sitting posture. **Abū Bakr was following the ṣalāt of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in a standing posture and the people were following the ṣalāt of Abū Bakr.**⁹

The contradictions between this report and *Exhibit C* above are tremendous:

1. According to *Exhibit C*, Bilāl did not come to summon the Prophet for ṣalāt. In *Exhibit D*, he came.
2. According to *Exhibit C*, the Messenger of Allāh attempted to join the Muslims in the mosque but fainted three times. In *Exhibit D*, the Prophet did not faint at all, and made no attempt whatsoever to join his followers in his mosque.
3. According to *Exhibit C*, the Prophet only ordered Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāt after three failed attempts to do so by himself. In *Exhibit D*, he gave the order *immediately* Bilāl came to him, without making any attempt to lead the ṣalāt by himself.
4. According to *Exhibit C*, the Prophet sent a specific messenger to Abū Bakr to lead the Ṣalāt. Moreover, Abū Bakr too offered the “honour” to ‘Umar, who politely turned it down. However, in *Exhibit D*, the Messenger of Allāh did not send any specific messenger to Abū Bakr. Rather, he only gave a general order to inform Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāt. Besides, Abū Bakr did not offer the “honour” to ‘Umar.
5. According to *Exhibit C*, ‘Āishah did not object to the Prophet’s order to Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāt. However, in *Exhibit D*, she allegedly fiercely objected to it.
6. According to *Exhibit C*, after the Prophet’s order to Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāt, he continued to do so for *days*, till Monday before the Messenger of Allāh felt a relief and “took over” an already ongoing ṣalāt from him. In *Exhibit D*, the Prophet felt a relief and “took over” from Abu Bakr, on that same Thursday, only *minutes* after

⁹ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 311, # 418 (95)

giving his order to him to lead the *ṣalāt*! ‘Āishah’s “frantic” objection to Abū Bakr’s appointment, especially the text of her arguments - as narrated in *Exhibit D* - shows that Abū Bakr had *never* led Muslims in *ṣalāt* before then!

7. According to *Exhibit C*, Abū Bakr led the *ṣalāt* for several days before the Prophet’s intervention. By contrast, in *Exhibit D*, Abū Bakr did not even lead a single *ṣalāt* before the take-over!
8. According to *Exhibit C*, the Messenger – on his order - was taken by two men to the side of Abū Bakr. But, in *Exhibit D*, the Prophet went to the left side of Abū Bakr *by himself*, with no support.

What exactly are we supposed to believe from all these terrible contradictions?!

3 A GAME OF CONTRADICTIONS

(Part II)

Suddenly, the whole drama gets out of hand.

EXHIBIT E

Ibn Zam'a makes things much worse with his own set of new contradictions! Imām Abū Dāwud (d. 275 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله بن محمد النخيلي ثنا محمد بن سلمة عن محمد بن إسحاق قال حدثني
الزهري قال حدثني عبد الملك بن أبي بكر بن عبد الرحمن بن الحارث بن هشام عن
أبيه عن عبد الله بن زمعة قال لما استعز برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وأنا عنده
في نفر من المسلمين دعاه بلال إلى الصلاة فقال مروا من يصلي للناس فخرج عبد
الله بن زمعة فإذا عمر في الناس وكان أبو بكر غائبا فقلت يا عمر قم فصل بالناس
فتقدم فكبر فلما سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صوته وكان عمر رجلا مجبها
قال "فأين أبو بكر؟ يأبى الله ذلك والمسلمون يأبى الله ذلك والمسلمون" فبعث
إلى أبي بكر فجاء بعد أن صلى عمر تلك الصلاة فصلى بالناس .

‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad al-Nufaylī – Muḥammad b. Salamah –
Muḥammad b. Ishāq – al-Zuhri – ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abī Bakr b. ‘Abd al-
Raḥman b. al-Ḥārith b. Hishām – his father – ‘Abd Allāh b. Zam’a:

When the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, was seriously ill,
and I, with a number of Muslims, was with him, **Bilāl summoned**

him to *ṣalāt*. He said, "Tell **SOMEONE** to lead the people in *ṣalāt*." So, 'Abd Allāh b. Sam'a went out (into the mosque), and found 'Umar. Meanwhile, Abū Bakr was absent. I said, "O 'Umar! Get up and lead the people in *ṣalāt*." Therefore, he stepped forward and made the *takbīr* (thereby starting the congregational *ṣalāt*). When the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, heard his voice, and 'Umar was a man with a loud voice, he (the Prophet) said, "Where is Abū Bakr? Allāh and the Muslims forbid that (i.e. the leadership of 'Umar in *ṣalāt*). Allāh and the Muslims reject that." As such, he sent a messenger to Abū Bakr. **HE CAME AFTER 'UMAR HAD PERFORMED THAT ṢALĀT.** Then, he (Abū Bakr) led the people in *ṣalāt* (again).¹⁰

'Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) comments:

حسن صحيح

Hasan ṣāḥiḥ.¹¹

Abū Dāwud also records a supplementary report, which gives further details:

حدثنا أحمد بن صالح ثنا ابن أبي فديك قال حدثني موسى بن يعقوب عن عبد الرحمن بن إسحاق عن ابن شهاب عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله بن عتبة أن عبد الله بن زمعة أخبره بهذا الخبر قال لما سمع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صوت عمر قال ابن زمعة خرج النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم حتى أطلع رأسه من حجرتة ثم قال " لا لا لا ليصل للناس ابن أبي خثافة " يقول ذلك مغضبا .

Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ – Ibn Abī Fudayk – Mūsā b. Ya'qūb – 'Abd al-Raḥman b. Ishāq – Ibn Shihāb – 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utbah – 'Abd Allāh b. Zam'a:

When the Prophet, peace be upon him, heard the voice of 'Umar, the Prophet, peace be upon him, went out until his head appeared from his room. Then, he said, "No. No. No. Certainly, it is the son of Abū

¹⁰ Abū Dāwud Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath al-Sijistānī al-Azdī, *Sunan* (Dār al-Fikr) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 627, # 4660

¹¹ *Ibid*

Quḥāfah (i.e. Abū Bakr) that shall lead the people in ṣalāt." **He was saying it in a state of ANGER.**¹²

Al-Albānī says:

صحيح

Ṣaḥīḥ¹³

It is interesting. Is it not? The Prophet, ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ‘ālihi, allegedly knew that it was *ḥarām* for anyone other than Abū Bakr to lead the ṣalāt. Yet, he ordered them to tell “someone” to do so?! Was it not his mission to “deliver the message clearly”?¹⁴ So, what was he allegedly angry about exactly? According to this Sunnī *riwāyah*, it was the Prophet himself who caused the confusion – and may Allāh protect us from such blasphemous thoughts! So, logically, none was to blame except him. Thus, why was he angry, and at whom? What is this drama which the Ahl al-Sunnah have attributed to the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds?! In any case, this report of Ibn Zam’a opens a new can of worms for our Sunnī brothers, which severely complicate an already horrible situation.

EXHIBIT F

In order to analyze the reports of Ibn Zam’a, we must first pinpoint them within a specific timescale. So, this *ḥadīth* of Imām Aḥmad (d. 241 H) comes in handy:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الأعلى عن معمر عن الزهري عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله عن عائشة قالت لما مرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في بيت ميمونة فاستأذن نساءه ان يمرض في بيتي فأذن له فخرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم معتمدا على العباس وعلى رجل آخر ورجلاه تخطان في الأرض وقال عبيد الله فقال بن عباس أتدري من ذلك الرجل هو علي بن أبي طالب ولكن عائشة لا تطيب لها نفسا قال الزهري فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو في بيت ميمونة لعبد الله بن زمعة مر الناس فليصلوا فلقي عمر بن الخطاب فقال يا عمر صل بالناس فصلى بهم فسمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صوته فعرفه وكان يجهر الصوت فقال رسول

¹² *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 627, # 4661

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ See Qur’ān 5:92, 14:4, 16:44, 16:64, 24:54 and 64:12

الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أليس هذا صوت عمر قالوا بلى قال يا أباي الله جل وعز ذلك والمؤمنون مروا أبا بكر فليصل بالناس قالت عائشة يا رسول الله ان أبا بكر رجل رقيق لا يملك دمه وأنه إذا قرأ القرآن بكى قالت وما قلت ذلك الا كراهية ان يتأثم الناس بأبي بكر ان يكون أول من قام مقام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال مروا أبا بكر فليصل بالناس فراجعته فقال مروا أبا بكر فليصل بالناس انكم صواحب يوسف

‘Abd Allāh (b. Aḥmad) – my father (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) – ‘Abd al-A’lā – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh – ‘Āishah:

When the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, became ill in the house of Maymūnah, he sought the permission of his wives to stay in my house during his illness. So, they permitted him. Then, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, came out (of Maymūnah’s room) **supported by al-‘Abbās and another man** and his feet were dragging on the ground.

‘Ubayd Allāh said: “Ibn ‘Abbās asked, ‘Do you know that man? He was ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. But, ‘Āishah did not like him.”

Al-Zuhri (narrating from ‘Ubayd Allāh from ‘Āishah) reported: **The Prophet, peace be upon him, said while he was (still) in the house of Maymūnah to ‘Abd Allāh b. Zam’a, “Tell THE PEOPLE to perform the ṣalāt.”** So, he met ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and said, “O ‘Umar! Lead the people in ṣalāt.” Therefore, he led them in ṣalāt. Then, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, heard his voice and recognized him, as he was someone with a loud voice. The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said, “Is that not the voice of ‘Umar?” They said, “Yes, it is.” He said, “Allāh the Almighty and the believers forbid that. Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāt.” ‘Āishah said, “O Messenger of Allāh, verily, Abū Bakr is a tenderly man. He cannot control his tears. As he recites the Qur’ān, he cannot help weeping.”

She (‘Āishah) said: “I did not say that except through worry that the people may take an evil omen with Abū Bakr, that he would become the first to occupy the position of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him.” He said, “Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in ṣalāt.” But, I

dissuaded him. He said (again), “Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in Ṣalāt. You are like the women around Yūsuf.”¹⁵

Shaykh al-Arnāuṭ says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs¹⁶

So, it was *before* the Prophet moved to the house of ‘Āishah. This was during the initial stages of his fatal illness, at the start of his inability to join the congregational ṣalāts. That apparently was on Thursday. Imām Muslim (d. 261 H) records another *ḥadīth* which confirms this:

حدثنا محمد بن رافع وعبد بن حميد (واللفظ لابن رافع) قالوا حدثنا عبدالرزاق أخبرنا معمر قال قال الزهري وأخبرني عبيدالله بن عبدالله بن عتبة أن عائشة أخبرته قالت أول ما اشتكى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في بيت ميمونة فاستأذن أزواجه أن يمرض في بيتها وأذن له قالت فخرج ويد له على الفضل بن عباس ويد له على رجل آخر وهو يخط برجليه في الأرض فقال عبيدالله فحدثت به ابن عباس فقال أتدري من الرجل الذي لم تسم عائشة ؟ هو علي

Muḥammad b. Rāfi’ and ‘Abd b. Ḥamīd – ‘Abd al-Razzāq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Utbah – ‘Āishah:

“It was in the house of Maymunah that the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, first fell ill. He asked permission from his wives to stay in my house during his illness. They granted him permission.”

She said: “Then, he went out with one of his hands over (the shoulder of) ‘**al-Faḍl b. ‘Abbās** and the other hand on (the shoulder of) another man. His feet dragged on the earth.

‘Ubayd Allāh said: “I narrated it to Ibn ‘Abbās and he said, ‘Do you know the man whose name ‘Āishah did not mention? He was ‘Alī.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnāuṭ], vol. 6, p. 34, # 24107

¹⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁷ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 311, # 418 (91)

There is a fresh contradiction in these last two reports of ‘Āishah. In the first, she claimed that the partner of Amīr al-Mūminīn ‘Alī, *‘alaihi al-salām*, when he was supporting the Messenger of Allāh out of Umm al-Mūminīn Maymūnah’s room was al-‘Abbās. In the second, she said that the *same* partner was al-Faḍl b. al-Abbās! That, apparently, is an irreconcilable contradiction.

One cannot help but notice the strange inconsistencies between the reports of Zam’a and *Exhibit F* on the one hand and the other reports of ‘Āishah and Anas (in the last chapter) on the other:

1. In one report, the Prophet gave the order that Abū Bakr - specifically naming him - should lead the *ṣalāt* immediately when Bilāl came to him. However, in other reports, the Messenger only said, "Tell *someone* to lead the people in *ṣalāt*" or "Tell *the people* to perform the *ṣalāt*" *without* naming Abū Bakr.
2. In some reports, ‘Umar was mistakenly chosen, by Ibn Zam’a or another messenger of the Prophet, to lead the *ṣalāt*, and he (‘Umar) did so, before Abū Bakr. In other reports, ‘Umar was never selected for leadership of the *ṣalāt* by any messenger of the Prophet, and he (‘Umar) never led it.
3. In one report, after Abū Bakr’s designation as the prayer leader, he went ahead to offer the position to ‘Umar, who politely turned it down. By contrast, according to other reports, Abū Bakr never offered the position to ‘Umar. Rather, ‘Umar himself had already held the position, by mistake, before him! So, it would have been illogical to ask him to lead the same *ṣalāt* again.
4. By one report, Abū Bakr was one of those waiting in the mosque for the Messenger of Allāh in the evening of Thursday. The messenger of the Prophet came to him *in the mosque*, while ‘Umar too was present with him, to convey the order to lead. Meanwhile, in other reports, Abū Bakr was absent from the mosque, while the other Muslims were waiting for *ṣalāt*! Where was he? What could he possibly be doing where he was? The messenger of the Prophet had to quickly locate him to bring him into the mosque so that he could take over from ‘Umar who was already leading the *ṣalāt* by mistake. But, before Abū Bakr arrived, ‘Umar had already finished.

At this point, let us make a final recap of the *some* of the words of ‘Āishah concerning that same event, about that same *Tshā* prayer of that same Thursday. This is the first one:

قالت والناس عكوف في المسجد ينتظرون رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم لصلاة
العشاء الآخرة

قالت فأرسل رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم إلى أبي بكر أن يصلي بالناس فأتاه
الرسول فقال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يأمرك أن تصلي بالناس فقال أبو
بكر وكان رجلاً رقيقاً يا عمر صل بالناس قال فقال عمر أنت أحق بذلك

قالت فصلى بهم أبو بكر تلك الأيام

She (‘Āishah) said, “The people were standing in the mosque waiting for the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, **FOR THE ‘ISHĀ PRAYER.**

She (‘Āishah) said, “**So, the Messenger of Allāh sent a messenger to Abū Bakr to tell him to lead the people in ṣalāt.** When the messenger (of the Prophet) got to him, he said, ‘The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, orders you to lead the people in ṣalāt.’ **So, Abū Bakr, who was a man of tenderly feelings, said, ‘O ‘Umar, lead the people in ṣalāt.’ ‘Umar replied, ‘You are more entitled to that.’**

She (‘Āishah) said, ‘**So, Abū Bakr led them in ṣalāt DURING THOSE DAYS.**

This is her second claim on that same event:

فأمروا أبا بكر يصلي بالناس قالت فلما دخل في الصلاة وجد رسول الله صلى الله
عليه و سلم من نفسه خفة فقام يهادي بين رجلين ورجلاه تخطان في الأرض قالت
فلما دخل المسجد سمع أبو بكر حسه ذهب يتأخر فأومأ إليه رسول الله صلى الله
عليه و سلم ثم مكانك فجاء رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم حتى جلس عن يسار
أبي بكر قالت فكان رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يصلي بالناس جالسا وأبو بكر
قائماً يقتدي أبو بكر بصلاة النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم ويقتدي الناس بصلاة أبي
بكر

She said: "Therefore, Abū Bakr was asked to lead the people in *ṣalāt*." She said: "As he (Abū Bakr) began the *ṣalāt*, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, felt some relief. So, He got up and moved, supported by two men, and his feet dragged on the ground.

She said: "When he entered the mosque, Abū Bakr heard his sound. He moved backwards, but the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, indicated to him to 'stand in your place.' **The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, then came and sat on the left side of Abū Bakr.**"

She said: "The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, was leading the people in *Ṣalāt* in a sitting posture.

Here, we have her third:

فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وهو في بيت ميمونة لعبد الله بن زمعة مر الناس فليصلوا فلقى عمر بن الخطاب فقال يا عمر صل بالناس فصلى بهم فسمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم صوته فعرفه وكان جهمير الصوت فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أليس هذا صوت عمر قالوا بلى قال يأبى الله جل وعز ذلك والمؤمنون مروا أبا بكر فليصل بالناس

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said while he was (still) in the house of Maymūnah to 'Abd Allāh b. Zam'a, "Tell *the people* to perform the *ṣalāt*." So, he met 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and said, "O 'Umar! Lead the people in *ṣalāt*." Therefore, he led them in *ṣalāt*. Then, the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, heard his voice and recognized him, as he was someone with a loud voice. The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said, "Is that not the voice of 'Umar?" They said, "Yes, it is." He said, "Allāh the Almighty and the believers forbid that. Tell Abū Bakr to lead the people in *Ṣalāt*."

What *exactly* are we supposed to believe, O Umm al-Mūminīn 'Āishah?

4 DID ABŪ BAKR LEAD THE PROPHET?

As if the crisis is not bad enough yet, ‘Āishah threw in one more unnerving contradiction into the mess.

EXHIBIT G

Imām Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354 H) records about it:

أخبرنا محمد بن إسحاق بن خزيمة قال حدثنا محمد بن بشار قال حدثنا بدل بن المحبر
قال حدثنا شعبة عن موسى بن أبي عائشة عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله عن عائشة أن
أبا بكر صلى بالناس ورسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في الصف خلفه

Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzaymah – Muḥammad b. Bashār – Badal b.
al-Muḥabbar – Shu‘bah – Mūsā b. Abī ‘Āishah – ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Abd
Allāh – ‘Āishah:

Abū Bakr led the people in *ṣalāt* while the Messenger of Allāh, peace
be upon him, was in the congregational row **BEHIND** him.¹⁸

‘Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) comments:

صحيح

¹⁸ Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad b. Ḥibbān b. Mu‘ādh b. Ma‘bad al-Tamīmī al-Dārimī al-Bustī, *ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān bi Tartīb Ibn Balbān* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and Shu‘ayb al-Arnāūt], vol. 5, p. 483, # 2117

*Ṣaḥīḥ*¹⁹

And, Shaykh al-Arnāūṭ concurs:

إسناده صحيح على شرط البخاري

Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the standard of al-Bukhārī.²⁰

Imām al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 H) also documents:

حدثنا محمود بن غيلان حدثنا شبابة [بن سوار] عن شعبة عن نعيم بن أبي هند عن
أبي وائل عن مسروق عن عائشة قال صلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خلف
أبي بكر في مرضه الذي مات فيه قاعدا

Maḥmūd b. Ghīlān – Shubābah b. Sawār – Shu‘bah – Na‘īm b. Abī
Hind – Abū Wā’il – Masrūq – ‘Āishah:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, performed *ṣalāt* in a
sitting posture **BEHIND** Abū Bakr during his fatal illness.²¹

Al-Tirmidhī says:

حديث عائشة حديث حسن صحيح غريب

The *ḥadīth* of ‘Āishah is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb*.²²

‘Allāmah al-Albānī comments too:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*²³

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 196, #

362

²² *Ibid*

²³ *Ibid*

When did this take place? At the best, one may only attempt to fix it either in the *Tshā* prayer of Thursday or in the *Zuhr* of Monday, the Prophet's last day. By the narration of Anas, the Messenger of Allāh did not step into the mosque at all on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday preceding his death. So, we are left with only the evening of Thursday, when he first stopped leading the *ṣalāt* and the Monday of his demise. According to one report of 'Āishah, the Messenger of Allāh took over the *Tshā* on Thursday, shortly after giving the order to Abū Bakr to lead it. But, in another narration by her, the Prophet actually never intervened in that *Tshā* at all, and Abū Bakr led it and all subsequent *ṣalāts* till the *Zuhr* of the following Monday. Yet, even on that Monday, Abū Bakr only prayed *beside* him as a surrogate Imām. As such, there really is nowhere to place this new claim of 'Āishah – that her father was our Prophet's Imām – within the possible timeframe.

However, Anas b. Mālīk made a frantic attempt to save her! Imām Ibn Hibbān documents:

أخبرنا عمر بن محمد الهمداني قال حدثنا إسحاق بن إبراهيم بن سويد الرملي قال
حدثنا أيوب بن سليمان قال حدثني أبو بكر بن أبي أويس عن سليمان بن بلال عن
حميد الطويل عن ثابت البناني عن أنس بن مالك قال آخر صلاة صلاها رسول
الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مع القوم في ثوب واحد متوشحا به برد قاعدا خلف أبي
بكر

'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hamdānī – Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Suwayd al-Ramlī – Ayūb b. Sulaymān – Abū Bakr b. Abī Uways – Sulaymān b. Bilāl – Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl – Thābit al-Banānī – Anas b. Mālīk:

The last ṣalāt performed by the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, with the people was done in a single garment wrapped around him in a sitting posture BEHIND Abū Bakr.²⁴

'Allāmah al-Albānī comments:

صحيح

²⁴ Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Hibbān b. Aḥmad b. Hibbān b. Mu'ādh b. Ma'bad al-Tamīmī al-Dārimī al-Bustī, *ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān bi Tartīb Ibn Balbān* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 2nd edition, 1414 H) [annotators: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and Shu'ayb al-Arnāūt], vol. 5, p. 496, # 2125

*Ṣaḥīḥ*²⁵

Shaykh al-Arnāūṭ agrees:

إسناده صحيح

Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*²⁶

Imām al-Tirmidhī also records:

حدثنا عبد الله بن أبي زياد شبابه بن سوار حدثنا محمد بن طلحة عن حميد عن
ثابت عن أنس قال صلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في مرضه خلف أبي بكر
قاعدا في ثوب متوشحا به

‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Ziyād - Shubābah b. Sawār – Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah
– Ḥumayd – Thābit – Anas:

He (the Prophet), peace be upon him, during his illness, performed
ṣalāt in a sitting posture **BEHIND Abū Bakr**, wrapped in a garment.²⁷

Al-Tirmidhī comments:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*²⁸

‘Allāmah al-Albānī agrees:

صحيح الإسناد

Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*²⁹

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Abū ‘Īsā Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi’ al-ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 197, # 363

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ *Ibid*

So, it was the *last* congregational ṣalāt of the Prophet, after all. But, even Anas' intervention rescues nothing! We still do not know when that last ṣalāt was. Anas himself narrated that the final congregational ṣalāt of the Messenger of Allāh – and it was led by him, obviously before the *Tshā* prayer - was on Thursday, followed by three days when he never stepped into the mosque at all. On the Monday of his departure, he came into the mosque, but did not join the congregational ṣalāt. He retreated into his room, and that was the very last time his Ṣahābah saw him alive. He apparently died shortly after his appearance. Basically, it is practically impossible to fix his alleged ṣalāt behind Abū Bakr anywhere within his lifetime!

There is another similarly unfixable *riwāyah* by this same 'Āishah, concerning the same period. Imām al-Nasāi (d. 303 H) records:

أخبرنا محمود بن غيلان قال حدثني أبو داود قال أنبأنا شعبة عن موسى بن أبي عائشة قال سمعت عبيد الله بن عبد الله يحدث عن عائشة رضي الله عنها أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أمر أبا بكر أن يصلي بالناس قالت وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بين يدي أبي بكر فصلى قاعدا وأبو بكر يصلي بالناس والناس خلف أبي بكر

Maḥmūd b. Ghilān – Abū Dāwud – Shu'bah – Mūsā b. Abī 'Āishah – 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh – 'Āishah, may Allāh be pleased with her:

"The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, ordered Abū Bakr to lead the people in Ṣalāt."

She said: "**The Prophet, peace be upon him, was IN FRONT of Abū Bakr, and he performed the ṣalāt in a sitting posture while Abū Bakr led the people in ṣalāt** and the people were behind Abū Bakr.³⁰

'Allāmah al-Albānī declares about it:

صحيح

³⁰ Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasāi, *al-Mujtabā min al-Sunan* (Ḥalab: Maktab al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 83, # 797

*Ṣaḥīḥ*³¹

Where does this belong? Was it the *Ṭshā* prayer of the Messenger's last Thursday? Well, 'Āishah herself had also narrated that he led that *ṣalāt*, sitting *beside* her father! Of course, Anas denied completely the Prophet's participation in that *Ṭshā* prayer or any other, from that period, till his death! 'Āishah also claimed in another report that the Prophet did not join the *Ṭshā* prayer on that Thursday! But, what about the *ṣalāt* on the Monday of his death? Still, the problem adamantly persists. 'Āishah had narrated that her blessed husband led that *ṣalāt* beside Abū Bakr! He neither stayed in front of her father, nor behind him. Therefore, it is once more impossible to fix another *riwāyah* of Umm al-Mūminīn 'Āishah within the lifetime of her master and prophet, *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa ālihi*.

Understandably, the '*ulamā* of the Ahl al-Sunnah are very disturbed by these grave, irreconcilable inconsistencies in 'Āishah's, and of course Anas', reports. Al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 852 H) himself is unable to hide this fact:

ورواه مسلم بن إبراهيم عن شعبة بلفظ أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى خلف
أي بكر أخرجه بن المنذر وهذا عكس رواية أي موسى وهو اختلاف شديد ووقع
في رواية مسروق عنها أيضا اختلاف فأخرجه ابن حبان من رواية عاصم عن شقيق
عنه بلفظ كان أبو بكر يصلي بصلاته والناس يصلون بصلاة أي بكر

Muslim b. Ibrāhīm narrated from Shu'bah with the wording, "The Prophet, peace be upon him, performed *ṣalāt* behind Abū Bakr". Al-Mundhir recorded it. **This is in contrast to the narration of Abū Mūsā, AND IT IS A SEVERE CONTRADICTION. Moreover, there is A FURTHER CONTRADICTION in the report of Masrūq.** It is recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān in the report of 'Āṣim, from Shaqīq from him (i.e. Masrūq) with the wording, "Abū Bakr was following his *ṣalāt* (i.e. that of the Prophet), and the people were following the *ṣalāt* of Abū Bakr."³²

So, what answer do the Sunnī '*ulamā* have to these contradictions? They, of course, attempted to devise a way out, as 'Allāmah al-Albānī explains, after quoting the contradictory stories:

³¹ *Ibid*

³² Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah li al-Ṭabā'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 130

ففي هذه الرواية أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان إماماً بخلاف الأولى؛ ففيها أنه كان مقتدياً، وقد اختلف العلماء في التوفيق بين الروايات على وجوه ذكرها الحافظ في "الفتح"؛ أولها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى صلاتين في المسجد؛ كان في إحداها مأموماً، وفي الأخرى إماماً. وإليه ذهب ابن حزم في "المحلى" (47/3)، والبيهقي، وقبله ابن حبان.

In this report, it is stated that the Prophet, peace be upon him, was the Imām (in the ṣalāt), in contradiction to the first one which states that he was a follower (in the ṣalāt). **The ‘ulamā are in disagreement over the methods to harmonize the two reports.** Al-Ḥāfiẓ mentioned them (i.e. those methods) in *al-Fath*. The first of them is that the Prophet, peace be upon him, performed two ṣalāts in the mosque. In one of them, he was a follower (of Abū Bakr), and in the other, he was the Imām (of Abū Bakr). This was the opinion of Ibn Hazm in *al-Muḥallā* (3/47) and al-Bayhaqī, and before him, Ibn Ḥibbān.³³

The ‘Allāmah does not cite any other of those methods. This suggests that he most probably considers the two-ṣalāt "solution" as the strongest possibility. But, does it *really* help the Sunnī case? Apparently, it does not. Even if we ignore Anas' claim that the Messenger of Allāh never participated in congregational ṣalāt in his mosque since the last Thursday of his fatal illness, it is still impossible to fix his alleged ṣalāt behind Abū Bakr anywhere within his lifetime! No matter where it stays, it clashes with some other "ṣaḥīḥ" *aḥādīth* of the Ahl al-Sunnah and creates a new commotion. Besides, even finding a comfortable seat for that *riwāyah* (about Abū Bakr's leadership of the Prophet) does not in any way resolve the innumerable, severe contradictions in the various reports about the Messenger of Allāh's last congregational prayers and his alleged order(s) to Abū Bakr to lead in ṣalāt.

³³ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Aṣl Ṣifāt Ṣalāt al-Nabī* (Riyādh: Maktabah al-Ma'ārif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1st edition, 1427 H), vol. 1, p. 84

5 WAS ABŪ BAKR EVEN QUALIFIED TO LEAD?

Apart from the severe contradictions in the *ahādīth* on Abū Bakr's alleged leadership of *ṣalāt* during the Prophet's fatal illness, there is also the question of its factual possibility. It is one thing for something to be possible; it is another for it to have truly occurred. Where it is impossible, then all reports of its occurrence are false by default. However, where it is possible, then additional, *consistent* and authentic evidence of its actual occurrence must be produced by whoever seeks to rely on that fact. With regards to Abū Bakr's alleged leadership of the *ṣalāt*, there are only conflicting, irreconcilable "proofs" of it. As such, there actually are none. In this chapter, we seek to explore the *possibility* of it even ever happening. This way, we bury it for good.

Without a doubt, the very first step in determining the possibility of Abū Bakr's leadership of the *ṣalāt* is to establish or discredit his qualification for it. Unless it is proved that he was qualified to lead, then every effort to claim that he did is futile. If he was not qualified, apparently his appointment as prayer leader by the Prophet, *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa ālihi*, would have been impossible. However, if he was qualified, it would, in that case, be at least possible. Then, additional, unquestionable evidence would become admissible to establish its factual occurrence.

So, was Abū Bakr qualified to lead the Messenger of Allāh in *ṣalāt*? Moreover, was he equally qualified to lead the Ṣahābah in *ṣalāt* in the Prophet's mosque?

The answer to the first question is in this verse:

يا أيها الذين آمنوا لا تقدموا بين يدي الله ورسوله واتقوا الله إن الله سميع عليم

O you who believe! **Do not lead in front of Allāh and His Messenger**, and fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.³⁴

This effectively makes it absolutely *ḥarām* to lead the Prophet of Allāh in anything – including in battles and *ṣalāt*. Imām al-Mubārakfūrī (d. 1282 H) also states:

حكى ذلك القاضي عياض قال ولا يصح لأحد أن يؤم جالسا بعده صلى الله عليه وسلم قال وهو مشهور قول مالك وجماعة أصحابه قال وهذا أولى الأقاويل لأنه صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يصح التقدم بين يديه في الصلاة ولا في غيرها ولا لعذر ولا لغيره

That is narrated from Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ. He said, "It is not correct for anyone to lead in *ṣalāt* in a sitting posture other than him, peace be upon him." He said, "And this is the famous statement of Mālik and the majority of his companions." He said, "And this is the most correct of the opinions, **because it is NOT correct to lead in front of him in *ṣalāt* or in anything else, whether due to an excuse or otherwise.**"³⁵

Al-Hāfiẓ (d. 852 H), while relating the submissions of Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ, reports:

واحتج أيضا بأنه صلى الله عليه وسلم إنما صلى بهم قاعدا لأنه لا يصح التقدم بين يديه لنهى الله عن ذلك

He cited as proof also the fact that he, peace be upon him, led them in *ṣalāt* in a sitting posture, **because it is NOT correct to lead in front of him, due to the prohibition of that by Allāh.**³⁶

³⁴ Qur'ān 49:1

³⁵ Abū al-'Alā Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwāṣ bi Sharḥ Jamī' al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 2, p. 294

³⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifah li al-Taḥā'ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 146

In simpler words, it was absolutely impossible that Abū Bakr ever led Muḥammad in *ṣalāt* or in anything else. Allāh has totally forbidden that; and so, Abū Bakr was NOT qualified in any way or by any means to lead the Messenger in *ṣalāt* or in any other situation or circumstance. Even Abū Bakr too realized this, as documented by Imām Muslim (d. 261 H):

قال أبو بكر ما كان لابن أبي قحافة أن يصلي بين يدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و
سلم

Abū Bakr said, "It is NOT for the son of Abū Quḥāfah (i.e. Abū Bakr) to lead *ṣalāt* in front of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him."³⁷

So, all the reports about how the Prophet was led in *ṣalāt* by Abū Bakr or anyone else from this *Ummah* are fallacious and hold no truth at all. The Book of Allāh rejects them, and Abū Bakr too denounced them. There is also an element of high blasphemy in those *ahādīth*. The only way Abū Bakr could have legitimately led the Messenger of Allāh in *ṣalāt* was if the latter had lost or forfeited his *risālah* (messengership) and had become inferior to the former in many areas.

Moreover, we ask our Sunnī brothers: who was the ruler of Madīnah at that moment when – as your sect claims – Abū Bakr led the Prophet in *ṣalāt*? Was it the Messenger? Or, was it Abū Bakr? This question is crucial in the light of some authentic narrations in your books. For instance, Imām al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 H) records:

حدثنا هناد حدثنا أبو معاوية عن الأعمش عن إسماعيل بن رجاء عن أوس بن ضمعج
عن أبي مسعود أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم قال لا يؤم الرجل في سلطانه
ولا يجلس على تكريمته إلا بإذنه

Hanād – Abū Mu'āwiyah – al-A'mash – Ismā'īl b. Rajā - Aws b. Ḍam'aj
– Abū Mas'ūd:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said: “**No one can lead a man in *ṣalāt* in his place of authority**, and no one can sit in his place of honour except with his permission.”³⁸

³⁷ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 316, # 421 (102)

Al-Tirmidhī says:

هذا حديث حسن صحيح

This *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*³⁹

‘Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) also comments:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*⁴⁰

Imām al-Nasāī (d. 303 H) also documents:

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

Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Taymī – Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd – Shuʿbah – Ismāʿīl b. Rajā – Aws b. Ḍamʿaj – Abū Masʿūd:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said: “**No one can lead a man in ṣalāt in his place of authority**, and no one can sit in his place of honour except with his permission.”⁴¹

And ‘Allāmah al-Albānī declares again:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*⁴²

³⁸ Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā al-Sulamī al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 5, p. 99, # 2772

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*

⁴¹ Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Aḥmad b. Shuʿayb al-Nasāī, *al-Mujtabā min al-Sunan* (Ḥalab: Maktab al-Maṭbūʿāt al-Islāmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 77, # 783

So, if the Prophet of Allāh was really still the *amir* of the Muslims *at that moment*, then Abū Bakr was further disqualified from ever leading him in *ṣalāt*! Whoever insists that Abū Bakr was his Imām is telling us that he (the Messenger) had lost authority over Madīnah. Meanwhile, the authority of the Prophet was, and still is, tied to his *risālah*, among others. As such, if he had lost authority over Madīnah, then he must have lost *all* his divine ranks. The direct implication of this is – the only way Abū Bakr could have been the Prophet's Imām was if the latter was no longer a messenger of Allāh, at the least! Therefore, whoever claims that Abū Bakr led him in *ṣalāt* has thereby rejected his (i.e. the Prophet's) *risālah*! There is simply no second way to it.

In other *aḥādīth*, the Messenger of Allāh mentions some other conditions with farther reaching implications. Imām Muslim records:

وحدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة وأبو سعيد الأشج كلاهما عن أبي خالد قال أبو بكر
حدثنا أبو خالد الأحمر عن الأعمش عن إسماعيل بن رجاء عن أوس بن ضميج عن
أبي مسعود الأنصاري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوم القوم أقرؤهم
لكتاب الله فإن كانوا في القراءة سواء فأعلمهم بالسنة فإن كانوا في السنة سواء
فأقدمهم هجرة فإن كانوا في الهجرة سواء فأقدمهم سلماً ولا يؤمن الرجل الرجل في
سلطانه ولا يقعد في بيته على تكرمته إلا يأذنه

Abū Bakr b. Abī Shaybah and Abū Saʿīd al-Ashjaʿ – Abū Khālid: Abū
Bakr – Abū Khālid al-Aḥmar – al-Aʿmash – Ismāʿīl b. Rajā – Aws b.
Ḍamʿaj – Abū Masʿūd al-Anṣārī:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said: “**The people should be led in *ṣalāt* by the best reciter of the Book of Allāh among them.** But, if they are equal in recitation, then the one who is the most knowledgeable among them concerning the *Sunnah*. If they are equal regarding the *Sunnah*, then the earliest of them to do the *hijrah*. If they are equal in the *hijrah*, then the earliest of them to embrace Islām. **No man can lead another in *ṣalāt* in a place where**

the latter has authority, or sit in his place of honour in his house without his permission.”⁴³

There is need to quickly highlight a point here. Where someone is the ruler or administrator of a place, as long as he is a Muslim, none can lead him in *ṣalāt* in it. He is the *automatic* Imām, even if he is not the best of them in Qur’ānic recitation, or in knowledge of the *Sunnah*. His political authority overrides all the other set conditions. However, where none in the mosque is the ruler of its area, then the various criteria are examined in the specified order. Imām al-Mubārakfūrī (d. 1282 H) confirms:

وفي رواية مسلم لا يؤمن الرجل الرجل في سلطانه ... ولذا كان ابن عمر يصلي خلف
الحجاج وصح عن ابن عمر أن إمام المسجد مقدم على غير السلطان

In the report of (Imām) Muslim, it is stated “No man can lead another in *ṣalāt* in a place where the latter has authority.” ... **This was why Ibn ‘Umar used to offer *ṣalāt* behind al-Ḥajjāj.** It is also authentically narrated that Ibn ‘Umar stated that the Imām of the mosque leads (only) the non-ruler.⁴⁴

These facts reveal that leadership in *ṣalāt* is no indicator of superiority before Allāh at all. Ibn ‘Umar was superior – in the eyes of Sunnī Islām – over al-Ḥajjāj in all ways and by all means. So, even a drunken Sunnī governor can validly be the Imām for a saint of Allāh. The other criteria in the *ḥadīth* are of the same effect as well. The best reciter in the *Ummah*, who is the most qualified to lead the *ṣalāt* after the ruler or governor, may – just like the executive leader - not necessarily be the best of the Muslims, or their most knowledgeable. Something we wonder about though is – how many of the Sunnī kings, sultans, emirs, presidents and sheikhs today lead *ṣalāt* in their grand mosques?

Imām Aḥmad (d. 241 H) also documents:

⁴³ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 465, # 673 (290)

⁴⁴ Abū al-‘Alā Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Mubārakfūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Aḥwazī bi Sharḥ Jami’ al-Tirmidhī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1410 H), vol. 2, p. 29

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا محمد بن جعفر ثنا شعبة عن إسماعيل بن رجاء قال سمعت أوس بن ضمعج يقول سمعت أبا مسعود يقول قال لنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يؤم القوم أقرؤهم لكتاب الله تعالى وأقدمهم قراءة فإن كانت قراءتهم سواء فليؤمهم أقدمهم هجرة فإن كانوا في الهجرة سواء فليؤمهم أكبرهم سناً ولا يؤمن الرجل في أهله ولا في سلطانه ولا يجلس على تكرمته في بيته إلا أن يأذن له أو يأذنه

‘Abd Allāh (b. Aḥmad) – my father – Muḥammad b. Ja’far – Shu’bah – Ismā’īl b. Rajā – Aws b. Ḍam’aj – Abū Mas’ūd:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said to us: **“The people should be led in *ṣalāt* by the best reciter of the Book of Allāh the Most High among them.** But, if their recitations are equal, then the earliest of them in *hijrah* should lead them in *ṣalāt*. If they are equal in the *hijrah*, then the oldest of them should lead them in *ṣalāt*. **No man can be led in *ṣalāt* among his family members or in a place where he has authority,** or none can sit in his place of honour in his house without his permission.”⁴⁵

Shaykh al-Arnāuṭ comments:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the standard of (Imām) Muslim⁴⁶

It is undisputed that Abū Bakr was not the ruler over the Messenger of Allāh at any point in time. Therefore, he was automatically and absolutely disqualified from ever leading his Prophet in *ṣalāt*. Besides, was Abū Bakr a better reciter of the Qur’ān than the Messenger of Allāh? Was he more knowledgeable of the *Sunnah* than the Prophet? Did Abū Bakr do the *hijrah* before him? Was he older than his Messenger? Did he accept Islām before his Prophet? We ask – on what basis *exactly* was Abū Bakr ever qualified lead the Master and Best of all creation in *ṣalāt*? Apparently, there is none, and there can *never* be any! As such, all the Sunnī *riwāyāt* about how he supposedly was the Imām of the Messenger are only Sunnī exaggerations and hallucinations!

⁴⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnāuṭ], vol. 4, p. 121, # 17133

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

Interestingly, Abū Bakr was equally unqualified to lead even the other Ṣaḥābah! In order to be qualified, he had to be their best reciter. But, was he? Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H) records the answer of ‘Umar:

حدثنا عمرو بن علي حدثنا يحيى حدثنا سفيان عن حبيب عن سعيد بن جبير عن
ابن عباس قال قال عمر رضي الله عنه: أقرؤنا أبي وأقضانا علي

‘Amr b. ‘Alī – Yaḥyā – Sufyān – Ḥabīb – Sa’īd b. Jubayr – Ibn ‘Abbās:

‘Umar, may Allāh be pleased with him, said: “**The best reciter among us is Ubayy**, and the best judge among us is ‘Alī.”⁴⁷

‘Allāmah al-Albānī has equally copied the Prophetic confirmation of this:

عن أنس بن مالك، أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: أرحم أمتي بأمتي أبو
بكر وأشدّهم في دين الله عمر وأصدقهم حياء عثمان وأقضاهم علي بن أبي طالب .
وأقرؤهم لكتاب الله أبي بن كعب.

Narrated Anas b. Mālik:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said, “The most merciful of my *Ummah* to my *Ummah* is Abū Bakr. The most severe of them in the religion of Allāh is ‘Umar. The most shy of them is ‘Uthmān. And the best judge among them is ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. **And the best reciter of the Book of Allāh among them is Ubayy b. Ka’b.**”⁴⁸

صحيح

Ṣaḥīḥ.⁴⁹

So, it was not Abū Bakr?! Therefore, it was Ubayy who was qualified for the leadership of the ṣalāt and NOT Abū Bakr! With the presence of Ubayy

⁴⁷ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā’īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mughīrah al-Bukhārī al-Ju’fī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā], vol. 4, p. 1628, # 4211

⁴⁸ Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Majah* (Maktabah al-Ma’ārif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’; 1st edition, 1417 H), vol. 1, pp. 67-68, # 125

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

among the Ṣaḥābah, Abū Bakr – the first Sunnī *khalīfah* – was thereby disqualified from leading either the Prophet or his followers in *ṣalāt* in the grand mosque of Madīnah. With this, all the reports about Abū Bakr's leadership of the *ṣalāt* drown in the Sunnī ocean of fabrications. The Messenger of Allāh would never place the wrong rod in the right hole – neither by nepotism nor by mistake. The *Sunnah* is that the best reciter should lead in *ṣalāt* – unless where the ruler is present. Abū Bakr was neither the best reciter nor the ruler. Those facts alone terminate the entire story.

6 IMĀMAH OF BASTARDS AND CHILDREN

The most qualified to lead *ṣalāt* in any circumstance is the Muslim administrator within his domain, according to Sunnī Islām. He may be righteous or a drunkard. He may be a good reciter or a poor one. He may be knowledgeable or ignorant. He is the *automatic* Imām. Where he is absent in the mosque, then the most qualified is the best reciter among those present. This best reciter too may also be the best of them in the Sight of Allāh – in terms of *taqwā* (piety) and knowledge – or one of their worst. Leadership in *ṣalāt* has nothing to do with righteousness or spiritual superiority. A lot of Sunnī *aḥādīth* testify to this. We have discussed some of them in the last chapter. Let us briefly quote a few more before proceeding. Imām Aḥmad (d. 241 H) records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا يحيى بن سعيد ثنا هشام قال ثنا قتادة عن يونس بن جبير عن حطان بن عبد الله الرقاشي ان الأشعري صلى بأصحابه صلاة ... فقال الأشعري ... ان نبي الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خطبنا فعلمنا سنتنا وبين لنا صلاتنا فقال أقيموا صفوفكم ثم ليؤمكم أقرؤكم

‘Abd Allāh (b. Aḥmad) – my father (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) – Yahyā b. Saʿīd – Hishām – Qatādah – Yūnus b. Jubayr – Ḥittān b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Raḡāshī:

Al-Ashʿarī led his companions in a *ṣalāt* ... So, al-ʿAsharī said, “... Verily, the Prophet of Allāh, peace be upon him, gave us a sermon and taught us our *Sunnah*, and explained to us our *ṣalāt*. So, he said, ‘Establish your

congregational rows. **Then, the best reciter among you should be your Imām.**”⁵⁰

Shaykh al-Arnāūṭ says:

إسناده صحيح على شرط مسلم

Its chain is *ṣaḥiḥ* upon the standard of (Imām) Muslim.⁵¹

Imām Muslim (d. 261 H) also documents:

حدثنا قتيبة بن سعيد حدثنا أبو عوانة عن قتادة عن أبي نضرة عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا كانوا ثلاثة فليؤمهم أحدهم وأحقهم بالإمامة أقرؤهم

Qutaybah b. Saʿīd – Abū ʿAwānah – Qatādah – Abū Naḍrah – Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said: “Whenever there are three persons, one of them should be their Imām. **The most entitled to be the Imām among them is the best reciter among them.**”⁵²

Imām Aḥmad again records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا عبد الرزاق أنا بن جريج قال لي عبد الملك ان أنس بن مالك قال قال عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يؤم القوم أقرؤهم للقرآن

ʿAbd Allāh (b. Aḥmad) – my father (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) – ʿAbd al-Razzāq – Ibn Jurayj – ʿAbd al-Malik – Anas b. Mālik:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “**The people are to be led in ṣalāt by the best reciter of the Qurʾān among them.**”⁵³

⁵⁰ Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurʾubah) [annotator: Shuʿayb al-Arnāūṭ], vol. 4, # 19680

⁵¹ *Ibid*

⁵² Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-ʿArabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ʿAbd al-Bāqī], vol. 1, p. 464, # 672 (289)

⁵³ Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurʾubah) [annotator: Shuʿayb al-Arnāūṭ], vol. 3, p. 163, # 12687

Al-Arnāuṭ submits:

صحيح لغيره

It is *ṣaḥīḥ li ghayriḥ*⁵⁴

The Ṣaḥābah too put this into practice. Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H) documents such an instance:

حدثنا إبراهيم بن المنذر قال حدثنا أنس بن عياض عن عبيد الله عن نافع عن ابن عمر قال : لما قدم المهاجرون الأولون العصبه موضع بقاء قبل مقدم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يؤمهم سالم مولى أبي حذيفة وكان أكثرهم قرآنا

Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir – Anas b. ‘Iyād – ‘Ubayd Allāh – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

When the earliest Muhājirūn came to al-‘Uṣbah, a place in Qubā, before the arrival of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, Sālim, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, used to lead them in *ṣalāt*, **and he was the most knowledgeable of the Qur’ān among them.**⁵⁵

Al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 852 H) comments about this *ḥadīth*:

قوله (وكان أكثرهم قرآنا) إشارة إلى سبب تقديمهم له مع كونهم أشرف منه وفي رواية للطبراني لأنه كان أكثرهم قرآنا

His statement (and he was the most knowledgeable of the Qur’ān among them) is an indicator towards their reason for making him their leader (in *ṣalāt*) despite that they were of more noble statuses than him. In the report of al-Ṭabarānī, it is narrated: “*because* he was the most knowledgeable of them of the Qur’ān)⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mughīrah al-Bukhārī al-Ju‘fi, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā], vol. 1, p. 246, # 660

⁵⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṭabā‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 156

The explanation is confirmed by this *rimāyah* of Imām Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235 H):

حدثنا ابن نمير عن عبيد الله عن نافع عن ابن عمر أن المهاجرين حين أقبلوا من مكة
نزلوا إلى جنب قباء فأفهمهم سالم مولى أبي حذيفة لأنه كان أكثرهم قرآنا فيهم أبو سلمة
بن عبد الأسد وعمر بن الخطاب.

Ibn Numayr – ‘Ubayd Allāh – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

When the Muhājirūn fled Makkah, they camped near Qubā and **Sālim, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, led them in ṣalāt because he was the most knowledgeable of the Qur’ān among them.** Among them were Abū Salamah b. ‘Abd al-Asad and **‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.**⁵⁷

Grading another *ḥadīth* with this same exact chain, ‘Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) declares:

وهذا إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين

This chain is *ṣaḥīḥ* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.⁵⁸

Al-Bukhārī further records:

حدثنا عثمان بن صالح حدثنا عبد الله بن وهب أخبرني ابن جريج أن نافعا أخبره أن
ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما أخبره قال كان سالم مولى أبي حذيفة يؤم المهاجرين الأولين
وأصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم في مسجد قباء فيهم أبو بكر وعمر وأبو سلمة
وزيد وعامر بن ربيعة

‘Uthmān b. Ṣāliḥ – ‘Abd Allāh b. Wahb – Ibn Jurayj – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar, may Allāh be pleased with him:

Sālim, the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, used to lead the earliest Muhājirūn and the *Ṣaḥābah* of the Prophet, peace be upon him, in

⁵⁷ ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shaybah Ibrāhīm b. ‘Uthmān b. Abī Bakr b. Abī Shaybah al-Kūfī al-‘Ubsī, *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah fī al-Aḥādīth wa al-Athār* (Dār al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa’īd al-Laḥām], vol. 1, p. 379, # 11

⁵⁸ Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Ḥajj Nūḥ b. Tajātī b. Ādam al-Ashqūdī al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abi Dawūd* (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharās li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 3, p. 270, # 688

Ṣalāt in the mosque of Qubā. Among them were Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, Abū Salamah, and Āmir b. Rabī’ah.⁵⁹

So, the most senior Muhājirūn – including Abū Bakr and ‘Umar – unanimously appointed Sālim, a freed slave, as their Imām in *ṣalāt* pending the arrival of the Messenger of Allāh, *ṣallallāhu ‘alaihi wa ‘ālihi*, because he was more knowledgeable of the Qur’ān than all of them. This, obviously, was in line with the *Sunnah* of Muḥammad.

Sālim was a freed slave. But, the *‘ulamā* of the Ahl al-Sunnah actually allow leadership in *ṣalāt* by even serving slaves and bastards too, as long as they are the best in Qur’ānic recitation, as al-Ḥāfiẓ declares:

وإلى صحة إمامة العبد ذهب الجمهور وخالف مالك ... وإلى صحة إمامة ولد الزنا
ذهب الجمهور

The majority (of the scholars) accepted the correctness of leadership in *ṣalāt* by a slave. But, (Imām) Mālik objected.... **Also, the majority accepted the correctness of leadership in *ṣalāt* by a bastard.**⁶⁰

The supreme Salafī *fiqh* council in Saudi Arabia and across the world, *al-Lajnah al-Dāimah*, also states:

تصح إمامة العبد وولد الزنا في الصلاة، إذا كان كل منهما أهلاً لذلك، من جهة الدين؛
لعموم قوله: يؤم القوم أقرؤهم لكتاب الله " ولا نعلم دليلاً يمنع ذلك.

The leadership of the slave or the bastard in *ṣalāt* is correct, as long as each of them is qualified for it, from the religious aspect, due to the generality of his (i.e. the Prophet’s) statement, “The people are to be led in *ṣalāt* by the best reciter of the Book of Allāh among them.” **We do not know any proof forbidding that.**⁶¹

⁵⁹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mughīrah al-Bukhārī al-Ju’fī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā], vol. 6, p. 2625, # 6754

⁶⁰ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṭabā‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 2, p. 155

⁶¹ *Fatāwā al-Lajnah al-Dāimah li al-Buḥṭh al-‘Ilmiyyah wa al-Ifṭā*, compiled and arranged by Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Razzāq, al-Duwaysh, vol. 7, pp. 414-415

Even a small child can lead his grandfathers in *ṣalāt*, according to the same council:

تصح إمامة الصبي الذي يعقل الصلاة؛ لقول النبي (ص) "يؤم القوم أقرؤهم لكتاب الله"

The leadership of *ṣalāt* by a small child, who understands *ṣalāt*, is correct, due to the statement of the Prophet, peace be upon him: "The people are to be led in *ṣalāt* by the **best reciter** of the Book of Allāh among them."⁶²

As such, if the Messenger of Allāh ever truly designated Abū Bakr as Imām in *ṣalāt* during the former's fatal illness – and he *never* did – then it would have been only because he considered him as having the best recitation among the Ṣaḥābah – nothing more, nothing less. Most importantly, even if Abū Bakr had been a bastard – and he was NOT – he would still have been appointed Imām in *ṣalāt* over the Ṣaḥābah by the Prophet at that point in time, according to Sunnī Islām, as long as he had the best Qur'ānic recitation among them. The problem however is that Abū Bakr was *never* the overall best reciter among his colleagues. So, he was unqualified, and therefore could never have been appointed as Imām during the period of the illness. Still, even if he had been qualified and had been designated, it would have indicated *absolutely* nothing of spiritual status or choice for the *khilāfah* after the Messenger.

However, the *‘ulamā* of the Ahl al-Sunnah go to desperate lengths in exaggerating about the event – which, in the first place, is narrated only in severely contradictory reports. For instance, Imām al-Nawawī (d. 676 H) claims about the alleged leadership of the Ṣaḥābah in *ṣalāt* by Abū Bakr:

فيه فوائد منها فضيلة أبي بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه وترجيحه على جميع الصحابة رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين وتفضيله وتنبيهه على أنه أحق بخلافة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم من غيره ومنها أن الإمام إذا عرض له عذر عن حضور الجماعة استخلف من يصلي بهم وأنه لا يستخلف إلا أفضلهم

There are benefits from it. Among them is the excellence of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him, and his preference over all the Ṣaḥābah, *riḍwānullāh ‘alaihim ajma’in*,

⁶² *Ibid*, vol. 7, p. 415

and his overall superiority and his notice that he (Abū Bakr) was more entitled to the *khilāfah* of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, than anyone else. Among them (i.e. the benefits) is that the Imām, if he has an excuse for not attending the congregational prayer, he should deputize someone to lead them in *ṣalāt*, and that he cannot deputize except the best of them.⁶³

For Allāh's sake, where exactly did he get all that? We are certain that this same Nawāwī and his followers would object to these words about Sālim – the freed slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, concerning his leadership over Abū Bakr, 'Umar and the other Ṣaḥābah in *ṣalāt*.

There are benefits from it. **Among them is the excellence of Sālim, may Allāh be pleased with him, and his preference over all the Ṣaḥābah, *riḍwānullāh 'alaihim ajma'in*, and his overall superiority** and a notice that he (Sālim) was more entitled to the *khilāfah* of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, than anyone else.

It is amusing how almost everything about Abū Bakr – whether true or not – is easily interpreted by the Ahl al-Sunnah as “evidence” of his “excellence”, “superiority” and “khilāfah”. Sometimes, the ridiculousness of such submissions gets to extreme lengths, as in this case of his alleged leadership in *ṣalāt*. For instance, they claim that Abū Bakr's leadership in *ṣalāt* over the Ṣaḥābah was evidence of his overall superiority above them. Of course, such a conclusion actually contradicts the authentic *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh. Nonetheless, did Abū Bakr not lead the Prophet in *ṣalāt* according to Sunnis? So, did the Messenger consider himself to have lost his overall superiority over Abū Bakr? Moreover, Abū Bakr allegedly offered the leadership of the *ṣalāt* to 'Umar. Was he then admitting thereby the superiority of 'Umar over himself?

⁶³ Abū Zakariyāh Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī; 1407 H), vol. 4, p. 137

7 ABŪ BAKR'S PRESENCE IN THE ARMY OF USĀMAH

There is another fundamental twist to the whole saga about Abū Bakr's alleged leadership of the *ṣalāt* during the Prophet's fatal illness, *sallallāhu 'alaihī wa ālihī*, which creates a new major crisis for the official Sunnī narrative. Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H) records:

حدثنا خالد بن مخلد حدثنا سليمان قال حدثني عبد الله بن دينار عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال : بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بعثا وأمر عليهم أسامة بن زيد فطعن بعض الناس في إمارته فقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إن تطعنوا في إمارته فقد كنتم تطعنون في إماره أبيه من قبل وايم الله إن كان خليقا للإمارة وإن وكان لمن أحب الناس إلي وإن هذا لمن أحب الناس إلي بعده

Khālīd b. Makhlad – Sulaymān – ‘Abd Allāh b. Dīnār – ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar, may Allāh be pleased with him:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, sent troops and appointed Usāmah b. Zayd as their *amīr* (commander). But, some people criticized his appointment as *amīr*. Then, the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "If you criticize his appointment as *amīr*, you used to criticize the appointment of his father as *amīr* before. I swear by Allāh, he (Usāmah's father) deserved the appointment as *amīr* indeed, and he used to be one of the most beloved persons to me, and now this

(Usāmah) is certainly one of the most beloved persons to me after him."⁶⁴

Dr. al-Baghā has some comments on this narration:

(فطعن) قدح وتكلم فيها. (بعض الناس) وكان أشدهم في هذا عياش ابن أبي ربيعة المخزومي رضي الله عنه.

(criticized) disparaged and condemned. (Some people) the most severe of them in this was ‘Ayyāsh b. Abī Rabī’ah al-Makhzūmī, may Allāh be pleased with him.⁶⁵

Al-Ḥāfiẓ (d. 852 H) also has these words on the *ḥadīth*:

قوله (باب بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أسامة بن زيد في مرضه الذي توفي فيه) إنما أخر المصنف هذه الترجمة لما جاء أنه كان تجهيز أسامة يوم السبت قبل موت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يومين

His statement (Chapter on the Appointment of Usāmah b. Zayd by the Prophet, peace be upon him, during his Fatal Illness): The author (i.e. al-Bukhārī) has only given this biography a late timing due to what is narrated that the mobilization of Usāmah (for war) was on Saturday, two days before the death of the Prophet.⁶⁶

This was well into the period when Abū Bakr was supposed to be leading the ṣalāt ! What is going on here? Well, al-Ḥāfiẓ has some more information:

وكان ممن انتدب مع أسامة كبار المهاجرين والأنصار منهم أبو بكر وعمر وأبو عبيدة وسعد وسعيد وقتادة بن النعمان وسلمة بن أسلم فتكلم في ذلك قوم منهم عياش بن أبي ربيعة المخزومي فرد عليه عمر

⁶⁴ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Mughīrah al-Bukhārī al-Ju‘fī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā], vol. 3, p. 1365, # 3524

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṭabā‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 8, p. 115

Among those conscripted with Usāmah were senior Muhājirūn and Anṣār, among them Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, Abū ‘Ubaydah, Sa’d, Sa’id, Qatādah b. al-Nu’mān, and Salamah b. Aslam. So, a group criticized that, among them ‘Ayyāsh b. Abī Rabī’ah al-Makhzūmī, and ‘Umar opposed him.⁶⁷

So, the Messenger of Allāh deployed Abū Bakr and ‘Umar as ordinary foot soldiers under the command of Usāmah, just two days before his death. This is huge indeed.

Elsewhere, al-Ḥāfiẓ submits further:

قال بن سعد ولد أسامة في الاسلام ومات النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وله عشرون سنة وقال بن أبي خيثمة ثمانى عشرة وكان أمره على جيش عظيم

Ibn Sa’d said: “Usāmah was born during the Islāmic era, and the Prophet, peace be upon him, died while he (Usāmah) was twenty years old.” Ibn Abī Khaythamah said, “He was eighteen years old”. He (the Prophet) made him the *amir* (commander) of a huge army.⁶⁸

Usāmah was old enough only to be a grandson of Abū Bakr. He was barely a teenager. Yet, the Messenger of Allāh, in his divinely-inspired wisdom, made him the *amir* over Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Besides that, Usāmah was *amir* just a few days before the Prophet’s death, during the most serious phase of his fatal illness when he was no longer able to appear in the mosque. The direct implications of this are clear:

1. Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were under the command of Usāmah. Therefore, they both were supposed to be at the army camp, and Usāmah was their appointed Imām in *ṣalāt* as long as their deployment lasted.
2. The Messenger never intended either Abū Bakr or ‘Umar to be his *khalīfah*. Otherwise, he would not have sent them away from Madīnah during what obviously were his very last days on the earth.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣābah fī Tamayyūz al-ṣaḥābah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1415 H) [annotators: Shaykh ‘Ādil Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Mawjūd and Shaykh ‘Alī Muḥammad Ma’ūḍ], vol. 1, p. 202, # 89

3. The story of Abū Bakr's leadership of ṣalāt in the Prophet's mosque is false. If Abū Bakr was in Madīnah, it was only because he had mutinied from the Islāmic army. Mutineers are never rewarded with any form of leadership in Islām.

Understandably, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) was very disturbed:

قال الرافضي التاسع أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال جهمزوا جيش أسامة وكرر الأمر بتنفيذه وكان فيهم أبو بكر وعمر وعثمان ولم ينفذ أمير المؤمنين لأنه أراد منعهم من التوثب على الخلافة بعده فلم يقبلوا منه

والجواب من وجوه أحدها المطالبة بصحة النقل فإن هذا لا يروي بإسناد معروف ولا صححه أحد من علماء النقل ومعلوم أن الاحتجاج بالمتقولات لا يسوغ إلا بعد قيام الحجة بثبوتها ولا فيمكن أن يقول كل أحد ما شاء

الثاني أن هذا كذب بإجماع علماء النقل فلم يكن في جيش أسامة لا أبو بكر ولا عثمان وإنما قد قيل إنه كان فيه عمر وقد تواتر عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه استخلف أبا بكر على الصلاة حتي مات وصلى أبو بكر رضي الله عنه الصبح يوم موته وقد كشف سبف الحجره فراهم صفوفًا خلف أبي بكر فسر بذلك فكيف يكون مع هذا قد أمره أن يخرج في جيش أسامة

The Rāfiḍī said: "The ninth (point) is that the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said: "Mobilize the army of Usāmah" and repeatedly gave the order for its dispatch. And among them (i.e. the soldiers under Usāmah) were Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān. But, he did not conscript Amīr al-Mūminīn, because he (the Prophet) intended to prevent them (i.e. those in the army) from jumping over the *khilāfah* after him. But, they did not accept it from him".

The answer is from a number of angles. One of them is request for evidence of the authenticity of the report. **This is because this (claim) is not narrated with any known chain, and none of the scholars of narrations ever declared it authentic.** It is, of course, known that the use of reports as evidence is not permissible except after providing proof of their authenticity. Otherwise, everyone would say whatever he likes.

The second (answer) is that this (report) is a lie by the consensus of the scholars of narrations. Therefore, neither Abū Bakr nor ‘Uthmān was in the army of Usāmah. It is only said that ‘Umar was in it. Meanwhile, it has been narrated in *mutawātir* reports from the Prophet, peace be upon him, that he deputized Abū Bakr to lead the *ṣalāt* until he (the Prophet) died. Moreover, Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him, performed the *Ṣubḥ* (early morning) prayer of the day of his (i.e. the Prophet’s) death. He (the Prophet) had drawn the curtain of the room, and saw them in congregational rows behind Abū Bakr, and he was pleased with that. So, with this, how could he (i.e. the Prophet) have ordered him (i.e. Abū Bakr) to go out with the army of Usāmah?⁶⁹

Here, our Shaykh has muddled things up. First and foremost, according to the “*ṣaḥīḥ*” *ḥadīth* of ‘Āishah, the Messenger – during his lifetime - literally took over the *ṣalāt* from Abū Bakr, thereby effectively terminating the latter’s alleged appointment (assuming it ever existed). It was the *Zuḥr* prayer of that Monday, and that was the last recorded *ṣalāt* of the Prophet. As such, Abū Bakr’s prayer leadership – even if it had been true – was cut off before the Messenger’s death.

Besides, Ibn Taymiyyah submitted that the reports about Abū Bakr’s conscription into Usāmah’s army had no known chains. How true was this claim? Our Shaykh further stated that *all* the Sunnī scholars of narrations, without a single exception, from the time of the Prophet up to his own lifetime, had explicitly declared those same narrations as “a lie”. So, we should be able to easily harvest from hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of ancient Sunnī books tons of statements to that effect. The truth, however, is the opposite. Mālik b. Anas (d. 179 H), Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181 H), al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204 H), al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 204 H), ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī (d. 211 H), al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219 H), Ibn Ja’d (d. 230 H), Ibn Sa’d (d. 230 H), Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235 H), Ibn Rāhwayh (d. 238 H), Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 H), al-Dārimī (d. 255 H), al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H), Muslim (d. 261 H), Ibn Majah (d. 273 H), Abū Dāwud (d. 275 H), Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276 H), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279 H), Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim (d. 287 H), al-Bazzār (d. 292 H), al-Nasāī (d. 303 H), Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311 H), al-‘Aqilī (d. 322 H), Ibn Abī Ḥatīm (d. 327 H), Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354 H), al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360 H), al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385 H), Ibn Shāhīn (d. 385 H), al-Ḥākim (d. 403 H), al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 H), al-Baghdādī (d. 463 H), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463 H), al-Khawarazmī (d. 568

⁶⁹ Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm b. Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, *Minḥaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qurṭubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muḥammad Rashād Sālīm], vol. 8, pp. 292-293

H), Ibn Asākir (571 H), and al-Nawāwī (d. 676 H) did NOT declare *rimāyāt* about Abū Bakr's conscription into Usāmah's army as "a lie" in *any* of their books! In fact, Ibn Taymiyyah – from all indications – was the first ever human being to describe them as "a lie".

Further exposing the "lie" of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah is this report by Imām Ibn Asākir:

أخبرنا أبو بكر وجيه بن طاهر أنا أبو حامد الأزهرى أنا أبو محمد المخلافي أنا المؤمل
بن الحسن نا أحمد بن منصور نا أبو النضر هاشم بن القاسم نا عاصم بن محمد عن
عبيد الله بن عمر عن نافع عن ابن عمر أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم استعمل
أسامة بن زيد على جيش فيهم أبو بكر وعمر فطعن الناس في عمله فخطب النبي صلى
الله عليه وسلم الناس ثم قال قد بلغني أنكم قد طعنتم في عمل أسامة وفي عمل أبيه
قبله وإن أباه خليف للإمارة وإنه خليف للأمرة يعني أسامة وإنه لمن أحب الناس إلي
فأوصيكم به

Abū Bakr Wajīh b. Ṭāhir – Abū Ḥāmid al-Azharī – Abū Muḥammad al-Makhladī – al-Muammal b. al-Ḥasan – Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr – Abū al-Naḍr Ḥāshim b. al-Qāsim – ‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad – ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, appointed Usāmah b. Zayd as the commander over an army WHICH INCLUDED ABŪ BAKR AND ‘UMAR. But, the people criticized his appointment. So, the Prophet, peace be upon him, addressed the people, and then said: "News has reached me that you have criticized the appointment of Usāmah and the appointment of his father before him. His father deserved the appointment as *amīr*, and he too deserves the appointment as *amīr*, that is Usāmah. He is also one of the most beloved people to me. Therefore, I advise you concerning him."⁷⁰

We know that – contrary to the wild claim of Ibn Taymiyyah – the narration actually has a known chain of transmission! So, what is its authenticity? Imām al-Dhahabī (d. 748 H) states about the first narrator:

⁷⁰ Abū al-Qāsim ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Habat Allāh b. ‘Abd Allāh, Ibn Asākir al-Shāfi‘ī, *Tārīkh Madīnah Dimashq* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: ‘Alī Shīrī], vol. 8, p. 60

وجيه بن طاهر ابن محمد بن محمد بن أحمد، الشيخ العالم العدل، مسند خراسان، أبو بكر، أخو زاهر الشحامي النيسابوري

Wajih b. Tāhir b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, the Shaykh, the scholar, **the trustworthy**, the top scholar of Khurāsān, Abū Bakr, brother of Zāhir, al-Shahāmī, al-Naysābūrī.⁷¹

Concerning the second narrator, al-Dhahabī similarly declares:

الأزهري: العدل، المسند، الصدوق، أبو حامد، أحمد بن الحسن بن محمد ابن الحسن بن أزهر الأزهري، النيسابوري، الشروطي، من أولاد المحدثين.

Al-Azharī: **the trustworthy, the top scholar, the highly truthful**, Abū Ḥāmid, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Azhar al-Azharī, al-Naysābūrī, al-Shurūṭī, from the descendants of *ḥadīth* scholars.⁷²

So, what about the third narrator? Al-Dhahabī has this verdict about him too:

المخلافي: الإمام الصادق المسند، أبو محمد، الحسن بن أحمد بن محمد بن الحسن بن علي بن مخلد بن شيخان المخلافي النيسابوري العدل

Al-Makhladī: **The truthful Imām, the top scholar**, Abū Muḥammad, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Mukhlid b. Shaybān al-Mukhlidī al-Naysābūrī, **the trustworthy**.⁷³

Then, we proceed to the fourth narrator, and the words of al-Dhahabī concerning him:

المؤمل بن الحسن ابن عيسى بن ماسرجس المولى، الرئيس الامام المحدث المتقن، صدر خراسان، أبو الوفاء الماسرجسي النيسابوري.

⁷¹ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Uthmān al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar A’lām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the twentieth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnāūṭ and Muḥammad Na’īm al-‘Arqisūsī], vol. 20, p. 109, # 67

⁷² *Ibid*, vol. 18, p. 254, # 127

⁷³ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ‘Uthmān al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar A’lām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the sixteenth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnāūṭ and Akram al-Būshī], vol. 16, p. 539, # 395

Al-Muammal b. al-Ḥasan b. ʿĪsā b. Māsarijsa the freed slave, **the leader, the Imām, the *ḥadīth* scientist, the extremely precise narrator, the foremost in Khurāsān**, Abū al-Wafā al-Māsarijsi al-Naysābūrī.⁷⁴

The fifth narrator is like that too, as stated by al-Ḥāfiẓ:

أحمد بن منصور بن سيار البغدادي الرمادي أبو بكر ثقة حافظ طعن فيه أبو داود
لمذهبه في الوقف في القرآن

Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr b. Sayyār al-Baghdādī al-Ramādī, Abū Bakr: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy), a *ḥadīth* scientist**. Abū Dāwud criticized him due to his opinion of neutrality concerning (the creation of) the Qurʾān.⁷⁵

Imām al-Dhahabī confirms:

الرمادي: الامام الحافظ الضابط، أبو بكر، أحمد بن منصور بن سيار بن معارك،
الرمادي البغدادي.

Al-Ramādī: **the Imām, the *ḥadīth* scientist, the accurate narrator**, Abū Bakr, Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr b. Sayyār b. Muʿarik, al-Ramādī al-Baghdādī.⁷⁶

Al-Ḥāfiẓ has these words on the sixth narrator as well:

هاشم بن القاسم بن مسلم الليثي مولاهم البغدادي أبو النضر مشهور بكنيته ولقبه
قيصر ثقة ثبت

Hāshim b. al-Qāsim b. Muslim al-Laythī, their freed slave, al-Baghdādī, Abū al-Naḍr, well-known with his *kunya* and nickname Qayṣar: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy), *thabt* (accurate)**.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the fifteenth volume: Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ and Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq], vol. 15, pp. 21-22, # 9

⁷⁵ Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Taqrib al-Tabdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-ʿIlmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā], vol. 1, p. 47, # 113

⁷⁶ Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar Aʿlām al-Nubalā* (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risālah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the fifteenth volume: Shuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ and Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq], vol. 15, p. 389, # 170

About the seventh narrator, al-Ḥāfiẓ proceeds:

عاصم بن محمد بن زيد بن عبد الله بن عمر بن الخطاب العمري المدني ثقة

‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad b. Zayd b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Umarī al-Madanī: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.⁷⁸

He equally states concerning the eighth narrator:

عبيد الله بن عمر بن حفص بن عاصم بن عمر بن الخطاب العمري المدني أبو عثمان
ثقة ثبت

‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Umarī al-Madanī, Abū ‘Uthmān: **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**.⁷⁹

And, with regards to the last narrator, he declares:

نافع أبو عبد الله المدني مولى ابن عمر ثقة ثبت فقيه مشهور

Nāfi’, Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Madanī, freed slave of Ibn ‘Umar: **Thiqah (trustworthy), thabt (accurate)**, a well-known jurist.⁸⁰

So, the chain is fully connected and all the narrators are trusted people. Therefore, it is *ṣaḥiḥ*, or at least *ḥasan*.

Furthermore, there is a *mutāba’ah* for Āṣim b. Muḥammad, documented by Imām al-Bazzār:

حدثنا محمد بن حسان الأزرق، حدثنا أبو النضر، حدثنا عاصم بن عمر، عن عبيد
الله بن عمر، عن نافع، عن ابن عمر أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم استعمل أسامة
بن زيد على جيش فيهم أبو بكر وعمر فطعن الناس في عمله ، فخطب النبي صلى الله

⁷⁷ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrib al-Tabḍih* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā], vol. 2, p. 261, # 7282

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 459, # 3089

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 637, # 4340

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 239, # 7111

عليه وسلم فقال قد بلغني أنكم طعنتم في عمل أسامة وفي عمل أبيه من قبله، وإن أباه كان خليقا للإمارة وإنه لخليق للإمارة يعني أسامة وإنه لمن أحب الناس إلى ولني أوصيكم به أحسبه قال خيرا.

Muḥammad b. Ḥassān al-Azraq – Abū al-Naḍr – ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar – ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, appointed Usāmah b. Zayd as commander over an army which included Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. So, people criticized his appointment. As a result, the Prophet, peace be upon him, delivered a sermon and said, “News has reached me that you criticized the appointment of Usāmah and the appointment of his father before him. Verily, his father deserved the appointment as *amir*, and he too deserves the appointment as *amir*, that is Usāmah. He is also one of the most beloved of mankind to me. I advise you to think good of him.”⁸¹

Al-Bazzār comments:

وهذا الحديث لا نعلم رواه عن عبيد الله بن بن عمر إلا عاصم بن عمر، وإنما يعرف من حديث موسى بن عقبة، عن سالم، عن أبيه.

We do not know anyone who has narrated this *ḥadīth* from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar except ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar, **and it is only known through the *ḥadīth* of Mūsā b. ‘Uqbah, from Sālim, from his father.**⁸²

The mistake of al-Bazzār is apparent. ‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad also narrated it from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar, apart from ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar. Obviously, al-Bazzār did not have sufficient information concerning the transmission of this *ḥadīth*. In fact, his mistake becomes clearer when we consider his statement that the narration is known only through the *ḥadīth* of Mūsā b. ‘Uqbah. If, by the *ḥadīth* of this Mūsā, he meant the narration on Usāmah’s army without the explicit mention of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar (and this is most likely al-Bazzār’s position), then certainly he was in error, as ‘Abd Allāh b.

⁸¹ Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. ‘Abd al-Khālīq al-Bazzār, *Musnad al-Bazzār* (Maḍīnah al-Munawwarah: Maktabah al-‘Ulūm wa al-Ḥukm; 1st edition) [annotator: ‘Ādil b. Sa’d], vol. 12, p. 155, # 5754

⁸² *Ibid*

Dīnār also related that. In any case, the misjudgements of scholars are never accepted as proofs in academic researches.

In the chain of ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar above, we already know that Abū al-Naḍr, ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar and Nāfi’ were *thiqah* (trustworthy). So, we are left with only Muḥammad b. Ḥassān al-Azraq and ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar to investigate. Well, al-Azraq too is *thiqah* (trustworthy) according to al-Ḥāfiẓ:

محمد بن حسان بن فيروز الشيباني الأزرق أبو جعفر البغدادي التاجر أصله من
واسط ثقة

Muḥammad b. Ḥassān b. Fayrūz al-Shaybānī al-Azraq, Abū Ja’far al-Baghādī al-Tājir, his root was from Wāṣit: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.⁸³

However, as confirmed by al-Ḥāfiẓ, ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar was weak:

عاصم بن عمر بن حفص بن عاصم بن عمر بن الخطاب العمري أبو عمر المدني ضعيف
من السابعة وهو أخو عبيد الله العمري.

‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-‘Umarī, Abū ‘Umar al-Madanī: **Da’if (weak)**. He was from the seventh (*tabaqah*), and he was the brother of ‘Ubayd Allāh al-‘Umarī.⁸⁴

Yet, the chain of al-Bazzār is *ṣaḥiḥ li ghayrihi* due to the corroboration of ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar by ‘Āṣim b. Muḥammad, from ‘Ubayd Allāh in the *riwāyah* of Ibn Asākir.

Finally, Imām Ibn Sa’d has a third report:

حدثنا عبد الوهاب بن عطاء العجلي قال أخبرنا العمري عن نافع عن بن عمر أن
النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بعث سرية فيهم أبو بكر وعمر استعمل عليهم أسامة بن
زيد فكان الناس طعنوا فيه أي في صغره فبلغ ذلك رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
فصعد المنبر فحمد الله وأثنى عليه وقال إن الناس قد طعنوا في إمارة أسامة وقد كانوا

⁸³ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Tabaḍhib* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā], vol. 2, p. 66, # 5827

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 458, # 3079

طعنوا في إمارة أبيه من قبله وإنها خليقان لها وإنه لمن أحب الناس إلي إلا فأوصيكم
بأسامة خيرا

‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Aṭā al-‘Ijlī – al-‘Umarī – Nāfi’ – Ibn ‘Umar:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, deployed an army. **Among them were Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. He appointed Usāmah b. Zayd over them as their commander.** So, people criticized it, that was his young age. News of that reached the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him. Therefore, he climbed the pulpit, thanked Allāh and extolled Him, and said, “People have criticized the appointment of Usāmah as *amīr*. They had earlier criticized the appointment of his father as *amīr* before him. Yet, both of them (i.e. Usāmah and his father) deserve it (i.e. the commandership), and he (Usāmah) is one of the most beloved of mankind to me. Verily, I advise you to be good to Usāmah.”⁸⁵

We know about Nāfi’ already. So, we only have to investigate the first and second narrators. Al-Ḥāfiẓ says about the first narrator:

عبد الوهاب بن عطاء الخفاف أبو نصر العجلي مولا هم البصري نزيل بغداد صدوق
ربما أخطأ أنكروا عليه حديثا في العباس يقال دلسته عن ثور

‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Aṭā al-Khaffāf, Abū Naṣr al-‘Ijlī, their freed slave, al-Baṣrī, a resident of Baghdād: **Ṣadūq (very truthful)**, maybe he made mistakes. They denied a *ḥadīth* from him about al-‘Abbās. It is said that he narrated it in an ‘*an-‘an*’ manner from Thawr.⁸⁶

The second narrator is al-‘Umarī. His name is ‘Abd Allāh. Al-Ḥāfiẓ declares concerning him:

عبد الله بن عمر بن حفص بن عاصم بن عمر بن الخطاب أبو عبد الرحمن العمري
المدني ضعيف عابد

⁸⁵ Muḥammad b. Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Sādir), vol. 2, p. 249

⁸⁶ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Ṭabdhīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā], vol. 1, pp. 626-627, # 4276

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āṣim b. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Abū ‘Abd al-Rahman al-‘Umarī al-Madanī: **Ḍa‘īf (weak), a great worshipper of Allāh.**⁸⁷

However, this defect in the chain of Ibn Sa’d is removed by the corroboration of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar by ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar. Both have transmitted the same report from the same Nāfi’. As such, the *sanad* of Ibn Sa’d is *ḥasan li ghayrih* due to al-Khaṭṭāb.

So, there is a *ṣaḥiḥ li dhātibi* (i.e. independently *ṣaḥiḥ*) or *ḥasan li dhātibi* (i.e. independently *ḥasan*) chain for the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar which places Abū Bakr and ‘Umar in the army of Usāmah. There is another, which is *ṣaḥiḥ li ghayrih* (i.e. *ṣaḥiḥ* by corroboration), and there is a third that is *ḥasan li ghayrih* (i.e. *ḥasan* by corroboration). Each of these chains sufficiently establishes the fact that both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were conscripts under Usāmah’s command. Of course, the army of Usāmah was mobilized on Saturday, two days before the final breath of the Messenger of Allāh.

Among the Sunnī scholars of narrations, one of their earliest to affirm this fact was ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr. Imām Ibn Ḥibbān says concerning him:

عروة بن الزبير بن العوام القرشي أخو عبد الله بن الزبير أمهم أسماء بنت أبي بكر
الصدّيق من فقهاء المدينة وأفاضل التابعين وعباد قرش

‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām al-Qurshī, the brother of ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr. Their mother was Asmā bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. He was one of the jurists of Madīnah, **and one of the best of the Ṭābi‘īn**, and one of the devout worshippers from Quraysh.⁸⁸

Al-Ḥāfiẓ, who grades him “*thiqah*” (trustworthy)⁸⁹, further states that he narrated from many of the Ṣaḥābah, including his father (al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām), his mother Asmā bint Abī Bakr, Umm al-Mūminīn ‘Āishah, Amīr al-Mūminīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *‘alaihi al-salām*, Zayd b. Thābit, Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn ‘Umar, Usāmah b. Zayd, Abū Ayūb al-Anṣārī, Abū Hurayrah,

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, vol. 1, p. 516, # 3500

⁸⁸ Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Ḥibbān b. Aḥmad al-Tamīmī al-Bustī, *Mashābir ‘Ulamā al-Amṣār* (Dār al-Wafā li al-Ṭabā‘at wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Marzūq ‘Alī Ibrāhīm], p. 105, # 428

⁸⁹ See Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrib al-Tabḍīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā], vol. 1, p. 671, # 4577

Umm Salamah, and Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī⁹⁰. Apparently, ‘Urwah was no small fish in Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship. So, did he really claim that the report – which states that Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were part of Usāmah’s army – was “a lie”, as alleged by Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah?

Imām Ibn Abī Shaybah records his clear testimony here:

حدثنا عبد الرحيم بن سليمان عن هشام بن عروة عن أبيه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان قطع بعثا قبل موته وأمر عليهم أسامة بن زيد، وفي ذلك البعث أبو بكر وعمر

‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Sulaymān – Hishām b. ‘Urwah – his father (‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr):

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, deployed an army before his death and appointed Usāmah b. Zayd as the *amīr* over them. In that army were Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.⁹¹

The first narrator is *thiqah* (trustworthy), as stated by al-Ḥāfiẓ:

عبد الرحيم بن سليمان الكناني أو الطائي أبو علي الأشل المروزي نزيل الكوفة ثقة

‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Sulaymān al-Kanānī or al-Ṭāī, Abū ‘Alī al-Ushil al-Marūzī, a resident of Kūfah: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**.⁹²

Hishām too, the son of ‘Urwah, was like that, according to al-Ḥāfiẓ:

هشام بن عروة بن الزبير بن العوام الأسدي ثقة فقيه ربما دلس

Hishām b. ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām al-Asadī: **Thiqah (trustworthy)**, a jurist, maybe he did *tadlis*.⁹³

⁹⁰ See Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Tabḍīb al-Tabḍīb* (Dār al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1404 H), vol. 7, pp. 163-164, # 352

⁹¹ ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī Shaybah Ibrāhīm b. ‘Uthmān b. Abī Bakr b. Abī Shaybah al-Kūfī al-‘Ubsī, *Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah fī al-Aḥādīth wa al-Athār* (Dār al-Fikr; 1st edition, 1409 H) [annotator: Prof. Sa‘īd al-Laḥām], vol. 7, p. 532, # 3

⁹² Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Taqrīb al-Tabḍīb* (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā], vol. 1, p. 598, # 4070

⁹³ *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 267, # 7328

So, the chain is *ṣaḥīḥ* up to ‘Urwah. Shaykh Dr. Asad confirms this while treating another *riwāyah*:

حدثنا أبو بكر بن أبي شيبة حدثنا عبد الرحيم بن سليمان عن هشام بن عروة عن
أبيه عن عائشة ... إسناده صحيح

Abū Bakr b. Abī Shaybah – ‘Abd al-Raḥīm b. Sulaymān – Hishām b.
‘Urwah – his father – ‘Āishah ... **Its chain is *ṣaḥīḥ*.**⁹⁴

He actually believed the incident to have been true, and had taught it to his son! So, basically, the following claims of Ibn Taymiyyah are false:

1. The *ḥadīth* mentioning Abū Bakr in the army of Usāmah is false.
2. All the Sunnī scholars of narrations, up till his time, had each explicitly declared that *ḥadīth* to have been “a lie”.
3. The *ḥadīth* does not have any known chain of narration.

The truth, as we have proved through Allāh’s Grace, is below:

1. That *ḥadīth* has been narrated by one independently *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan* chain.
2. It has also been narrated by one *ṣaḥīḥ li ghayrihi* chain, as well as another which is *ḥasan li ghayrihi*.
3. No scholar before Ibn Taymiyyah ever called the *ḥadīth* “a lie” – not a single one!
4. Instead, ‘Urwah, who was one of the greatest scholars of narrations in Sunnī Islām affirmed that both Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were *really* in the army of Usāmah!

So, Abū Bakr was conscripted into the army of Usāmah during the Prophet’s fatal illness. Moreover, it was only the despatch of the army for war that occurred on Saturday, two days before the Messenger’s death. The army itself had been formed long before then. Al-Ḥāfiẓ comes in once again:

⁹⁴ Abū Ya’lā Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Muthannā al-Mawṣilī al-Tamīmī, *Musnad* (Damascus: Dār al-Māmūn li al-Turāth; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Ḥusayn Salīm Asad], vol. 7, p. 425, # 4447

قوله (باب بعث النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أسامة بن زيد في مرضه الذي توفي فيه) إنما أخر المصنف هذه الترجمة لما جاء أنه كان تجهيز أسامة يوم السبت قبل موت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بيومين وكان ابتداء ذلك قبل مرض النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فندب الناس لغزو الروم في آخر صفر ودعا أسامة فقال سر إلى موضع مقتل أبيك فأوطئهم الخيل فقد وليتكَ هذا الجيش ... فبدأ برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وجعه في اليوم الثالث فعقد لأسامة لواء بيده فأخذه أسامة فدفعه إلى بريدة وعسكر بالجرف وكان ممن انتدب مع أسامة كبار المهاجرين والأنصار منهم أبو بكر وعمر ... ثم أشتد برسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وجعه فقال أنفذوا بعث أسامة

His statement (Chapter on the Appointment of Usāmah b. Zayd by the Prophet, peace be upon him, during his Fatal Illness): The author (i.e. al-Bukhārī) has only given this biography a late timing due to what is narrated that the mobilization of Usāmah (for war) was on Saturday, two days before the death of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Meanwhile, the beginning of that was before the illness of the Prophet, peace be upon him. He had delegated people to go to war with Rome at the end of Ṣafar and called Usāmah and said, "Go to the place where your father was martyred. Equip them with the horses, for I have appointed you as the *walī* of this army...."

Then, the illness of the Messenger of Allāh began on the third day (of the next month, Rabī' al-Awwal), and he passed the flag to Usāmah, who in turn passed to Buraydah. Solders were (camped) at al-Jurf. Among those conscripted with Usāmah were senior Muhājirūn and Anṣār, among them Abū Bakr, 'Umar ... Then, the illness of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, became serious, and he said, "Dispatch the army of Usāmah."⁹⁵

The Prophet of Allāh died on the 12th of Rabī' al-Awwal. His formation of the army of Usāmah occurred in the end of the preceding month – Ṣafar - before his fatal illness. On the 3rd day of Rabī' al-Awwal, nine days from his death, he passed the flag of war to Usāmah, the commander. His soldiers were already at their military camp at al-Jurf. He included the senior Muhājirūn and Anṣār in the army, and made Usāmah – a teenager – their *amīr*. Abū Bakr and 'Umar were among the soldiers under him. The Messenger's illness became very serious on Thursday, such that he was

⁹⁵ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah li al-Ṭabāʾah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 8, p. 115

unable to lead the *ʿIshā* prayer of its evening. On the following Saturday – two days before his demise - he gave an order for the dispatch of the army for war.

Both Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were soldiers under Usāmah in this expedition. So, they were supposed to be with their colleagues at al-Jurf. But, they both jumped camp and stayed in Madīnah instead! This, undeniably, was in unmistakable disobedience to the Command of Allāh and His Messenger. This made them mutineers. Interestingly, our brothers from the Ahl al-Sunnah want us to believe that one of these mutineers was then rewarded by the *Rasūl* with leadership of the *ṣalāt* in his mosque?! How is that even logical? Moreover, their only evidence are only a bunch of warring reports, each of them slashing the throat of the other! Besides, Abū Bakr was NOT even qualified to lead either the Messenger or the Ṣaḥābah in *ṣalāt*, to begin with! Why then would the Prophet of Allāh appoint an unqualified mutineer as *ṣalāt* leader for his obedient, qualified disciples?

8 WERE THE ṢAḤĀBAH EXPECTING ABŪ BAKR'S REIGN?

Or, was it a sudden affair for them? The Ahl al-Sunnah often insist that Abū Bakr's alleged leadership of *ṣalāt* was effectively his appointment by the Prophet, *ṣallallāhu 'alaihi wa 'ālihi*, as the first *khalīfah* over the *Ummah*. Normally, if this had been the case, then all of the Ṣaḥābah would have regarded Abū Bakr's "succession" to the Messenger a natural process. In fact, every single one of them would have considered Abū Bakr the *khalīfah*-designate; and they all would have been shocked if he had not become the ruler after Muḥammad. However, it seems that the reverse was the reality. The Ṣaḥābah were surprised when they learnt that Abū Bakr was claiming the *khalīfah*. They apparently were not expecting him to be their next ruler. This is what Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256 H) reports:

حدثنا عبد العزيز بن عبد الله حدثني إبراهيم بن سعد عن صالح عن ابن شهاب عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله بن عتبة بن مسعود عن ابن عباس قال : كنت أقرئ رجلا من المهاجرين منهم عبد الرحمن بن عوف فبينما أنا في منزله بنى وهو عند عمر بن الخطاب في آخر حجة حجها إذ رجع إلي عبد الرحمن فقال لو رأيت رجلا أتى أمير المؤمنين اليوم فقال يا أمير المؤمنين هل لك في فلان ؟ يقول لو قد مات عمر لقد بايعت فلانا فوالله ما كانت بيعة أبي بكر إلا فلتة فتمت فغضب عمر ثم قال إني إن شاء الله لقاتم العشيّة في الناس فحذرهم هؤلاء الذين يريدون أن يغضبوهم أمورهم... فجلس عمر على المنبر فلما سكّت المؤذنون قام فأثنى على الله بما هو أهله ثم قال أما بعد ... إنه بلغني فائل منكم يقول والله لو قد مات عمر بايعت فلانا فلا يغترن

امروء أن يقول إنما كانت بيعة أبي بكر فلتنة وتمت ألا وإنها قد كانت كذلك ولكن الله وقى شرها وليس فيكم من تقطع الأعناق إليه مثل أبي بكر من بايع رجلا من غير مشورة من المسلمين فلا يتابع هو ولا الذي تابعه تغرة أن يقتلا وإنه قد كان من خبرنا حين توفي الله نبيه صلى الله عليه وسلم أن الأنصار خالفونا واجتمعوا بأسرهم في سقيفة بني ساعدة وخالف عنا علي والزبير ومن معهم واجتمع المهاجرون إلى أبي بكر فقلت لأبي بكر يا أبا بكر انطلق بنا إلى إخواننا هؤلاء من الأنصار فانطلقنا نريدهم فلما دنونا منهم لقينا منهم رجلا صالحا فذكرنا ما تأملنا عليه القوم فقالا أين تريدون يا معشر المهاجرين ؟ فقلنا نريد إخواننا هؤلاء من الأنصار فقالا لا عليكم أن لا تقرؤهم اقضوا أمركم فقلت والله لنأتينهم فانطلقنا حتى أتيناهم في سقيفة بني ساعدة فإذا رجل مزمل بين ظهرانيهم فقلت من هذا ؟ فقالوا هذا سعد بن عبادة فقلت ما له ؟ قالوا يوعك فلما جلسنا قليلا تشهد خطيبهم فأثنى على الله بما هو أهله ثم قال أما بعد فنحن أنصار الله وكتيبة الإسلام وأتم معشر المهاجرين رهط وقد دفت دافة من قومكم فإذا هم يريدون أن يختزلونا من أصلنا وأن يحضنونا من الأمر . فلما سكت أردت أن أتكلم وكنت قد زورت مقالة أعجبتني أردت أن أقدمها بين يدي أبي بكر وكنت أداري منه بعض الحد فلما أردت أن أتكلم قال أبو بكر على رسلك فكرهت أن أغضبه فتكلم أبو بكر فكان هو أحلم مني وأوقر والله ما ترك من كلمة أعجبتني في تزويري إلا قال في بديته مثلها أو أفضل منها حتى سكت فقال ما ذكرتكم فيكم من خير فأتتم له أهل ولن يعرف هذا الأمر إلا لهذا الحلي من قریش هم أوسط العرب نسبا ودارا.

'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd Allāh – Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd – Ṣāliḥ – Ibn Shihāb – 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Utbah b. Mas'ūd – Ibn 'Abbās:

I used to teach *qirat* to some men from the Muhājirūn, among them were 'Abd al-Raḥman b. 'Awf. So, while I was in his house in Minā, and he was with 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb during the last *Hajj* which he performed, 'Abd al-Raḥman came to me and said, "If only you had seen a man who came to Amīr al-Mūminīn today, saying: 'O Amīr al-Mūminīn! What do you say about so-and-so? He says, "**When 'Umar dies, I will pledge allegiance to so-and-so, for, I swear by Allāh, the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr was nothing but an error and it succeeded.**" So, 'Umar became angry. Then, he said, '*Inshā Allāh*, I will stand before the people tonight and will warn them against these people who want to usurp their affairs...".

So, 'Umar sat on the pulpit, and when the muezzins became silent, he stood up. He praised Allāh as He deserved. Then he said:

"Now then ... **I have been informed that a speaker amongst you says, 'I swear by Allāh, when 'Umar dies, I will pledge allegiance to so-and-so.'** One should not deceive oneself by saying that the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr was an error and it succeeded. NO DOUBT, IT WAS SURELY LIKE THAT. However, Allāh saved from its EVIL. And there is none amongst you towards whom throats are slit like Abū Bakr. **Whosoever pledges allegiance to anyone without consultation with the Muslims, then neither that person nor the person to whom the pledge of allegiance was given, is to be supported. Rather, they both should be killed.**

And, verily, there was someone who informed us when Allāh took the life of His Prophet, peace be upon him, that **the Anṣār opposed us and gathered, all of them, at Saqīfah Banī Sā'idah; and 'Alī, al-Zubayr and whoever was with them both, also opposed us; and the Muhājirūn gathered towards Abū Bakr.** So, I said to Abū Bakr, 'O Abū Bakr! Let us go to these brothers of ours from the Anṣār'. As a result, we went, seeking them. When we approached them, two righteous men from them met us, and informed us of the final decision of the people, and both of them said, 'O group of Muhājirūn, where are you going?' Then, we said, 'We are going to these brothers of ours from the Anṣār.' They said, 'You should not go near them. Decide your affair.' So, I said, 'I swear by Allāh, we will go to them.' Therefore, we went until we reached them at Saqīfah Banī Sā'idah. There was a wrapped man amongst them. Then, I said, 'Who is that?' They said, 'This is Sa'd b. 'Ubadah.' Then, I said, 'What is wrong with him?' They said, 'He is sick.'

After we had sat for a little period, their speaker testified. He praised Allāh as He deserved. Then, he said, 'Now then, we are the Anṣār (Helpers) of Allāh and the battalion of Islām, and you Muhājirūn are a small group. Some people from your people have come, seeking to cut us off from our root and to prevent us from authority.' When he became silent, I intended to talk and I had prepared a speech which I really loved. I intended to deliver it in the presence of Abū Bakr, and I used to avoid provoking him. So, when I wanted to speak, Abū Bakr said, 'Wait a while', and I hated to make him angry. Therefore, Abū Bakr spoke, and he was more patient and more dignified than I was. I swear by Allāh, he did not miss a sentence that I really loved from my

prepared speech, except that he said the like of it or better than it spontaneously, until he fell silent. So, he said, 'What you stated about yourself in terms of good things, you truly deserve it. **And this authority will never be recognized except for this living person from Quraysh. They are the best of the Arabs in terms of lineage and family.**'"⁹⁶

‘Umar, who told his staunchly pro-Abū Bakr version of what happened, nonetheless gives us insights into the state of the *Ummah* immediately after the death of its Prophet. The Ṣaḥābah were divided into three political camps:

- (a) the camp of Abū Bakr and his supporters;
- (b) the camp of ‘Alī, *‘alaihi al-salām*, supported by al-Zubayr, and their supporters; and
- (c) the camp of the Anṣār.

The Anṣār held the military advantage, being the overwhelming majority of the Islāmic soldiers. The Muhājirūn were only a small group, with little or no numerical or military significance. Yet, they were nonetheless divided into the opposing camps of Abū Bakr and ‘Alī. What we get from all this, is that the Anṣār – who had numerical and military strength – were united while the Muhājirūn – despite their serious numerical and military disadvantages – were divided.

Naturally, whoever controlled the Anṣār would hold the real political and military powers. ‘Umar was well aware of this. Therefore, instead of going to the camp of ‘Alī to resolve the political dispute, he took the party of Abū Bakr to the Anṣār, to try to win them over. Moreover, looking at the arguments of Abū Bakr against the Anṣār, one understands fully why he would never have gone to ‘Alī anyway, even if the latter had had the numerical and military advantages. Abū Bakr argued on the strengths of lineage and family. The tribe of Quraysh were of the best human lineage, and they were the best family. So, the Muslims – especially those in other parts of Arabia – would never recognize the rule of a *khalīfah* from the Anṣār. This tactic was clearly to make the Anṣār see the futility of their political efforts. They were not from Quraysh, and the generality of the Muslims would never accept the rule of a non-Qurayshī. The strategy worked, and the Anṣār backed down, and supported Abū Bakr instead.

⁹⁶ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥīrah al-Bukhārī al-Ju‘fī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Mukhtaṣar* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr; 3rd edition, 1407 H) [annotator: Dr. Muṣṭafā Dīb al-Baghā], vol. 6, p. 2503, # 6442

As for ‘Alī, he was also from Quraysh. As such, Abū Bakr’s arguments about lineage and family would not have worked in his case. In fact, they would have backfired terribly. Imām Muslim (d. 261 H) documents that the Messenger of Allāh had declared the Banū Hāshim as the best of Quraysh:

حدثنا محمد بن مهران الرازي ومحمد بن عبد الرحمن بن سهم جميعا عن الوليد قال
ابن مهران حدثنا الوليد بن مسلم حدثنا الأوزاعي عن أبي عمار شداد أنه سمع
واثلة بن الأسقع يقول سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم يقول إن الله
اصطفى كنانة من ولد إسماعيل واصطفى قريشا من كنانة واصطفى من قريش
بني هاشم واصطفاني من بني هاشم

Muḥammad b. Mihrān al-Rāzī and Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥman b. Sahm – al-Walīd b. Muslim – al-Awzā’ī – Abū ‘Ammār Shaddād – Wāthilah b. al-Asqā’:

I heard the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, saying: “Verily, Allāh chose Kinānah from the children of Ismā’īl, and chose Quraysh from Kinānah, **and He chose Banū Hāshim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banū Hāshim**”.⁹⁷

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

وهذا كله بناء على أن الصلاة والسلام على آل محمد وأهل بيته تقتضي أن يكونوا
أفضل من سائر أهل البيوت وهذا مذهب أهل السنة والجماعة الذين يقولون
بنو هاشم أفضل قريش وقريش أفضل العرب والعرب أفضل بني آدم وهذا هو
المنقول عن أئمة السنة كما ذكره حرب الكرماني عمن لقيهم مثل أحمد وإسحاق
وسعيد بن منصور وعبد الله بن الزبير الحميدي وغيرهم وذهبت طائفة إلى منع
التفضيل بذلك كما ذكره القاضي أبو بكر والقاضي أبو يعلى في المعتمد وغيرهما و
الأول أصح فإنه قد ثبت عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم في الصحيح أنه قال لأن
الله اصطفى كنانة من ولد إسماعيل واصطفى قريش من كنانة واصطفى هاشما
من قريش واصطفاني من بني هاشم

⁹⁷ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 4, p. 1782, # 2276 (1)

All of this is based upon the fact that sending *ṣalāt* and *salām* upon the family of Muḥammad and his Ahl al-Bayt establishes absolutely that they are better than all other people. **And this is the position of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, who say that Banū Hāshim are the best of Quraysh, and that Quraysh are the best of the Arabs, and that Arabs are the best of the Children of Ādam. This is narrated from the Imāms of the Sunnah - as Ḥarb al-Kirmānī mentioned from those who met them - such as Aḥmad, Ishāq, Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī and others.** A group are of the opinion that superiority cannot be established through that, as stated by al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr, and by al-Qāḍī Abū Ya'lā in *al-Mu'tamad*, and others. **However, the first opinion is more correct, for it is authentically narrated in the ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth that the Prophet, peace be upon him, said, "Verily, Allāh chose Kinānah from the children of Ismā'īl, and chose Quraysh from Kinānah, and He chose Hāshim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banū Hāshim"**⁹⁸

Meanwhile, Amīr al-Mūminīn 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was from Banū Hāshim like the Messenger, while Abū Bakr was not. Therefore, in terms of lineage, 'Alī was superior to Abū Bakr.

Moreover, Imām Aḥmad (d. 241 H) further records:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبي ثنا أبو نعيم عن سفيان عن يزيد بن أبي زياد عن عبد الله بن الحرث بن نوفل عن المطلب بن أبي وداعة قال قال العباس بلغه بعض ما يقول الناس قال فصعد المنبر فقال من أنا قالوا أنت رسول الله فقال أنا محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب ان الله خلق الخلق فجعلني في خير خلقه وجعلهم فرقين فجعلني في خير فرقة وخلق القبائل فجعلني في خير قبيلة وجعلهم بيوتا فجعلني في خيرهم بيتا فأنا خيركم بيتا وخيركم نفسا

'Abd Allāh (b. Aḥmad) – my father (Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal) – Abū Na'īm – Sufyān – Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād – 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥarith b. Nawfal – al-Muṭalib b. Abī Wadā'ah – al-'Abbās:

The words of some people reached him. So, he climbed the pulpit

⁹⁸ Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm b. Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah* (Muasassat Qur'ubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muḥammad Rashād Sālim], vol. 7, pp. 243-244

and asked, "Who am I?" They answered, "You are the Messenger of Allāh." So, he said, "I am Muḥammad, the son of 'Abd Allāh, the son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Verily, Allāh created the creation and put me among the best of His creation. He made them into two groups, and put me in the best group. **He created the tribes and put me in the best tribe. He created homes and put me among those of them with the best home. So, I am of the best home among you, and I am of the best personality among you.**"⁹⁹

Shaykh al-Arnāūṭ comments:

حسن لغيره

It is *ḥasan* due to supporting evidence¹⁰⁰.

'Allāmah al-Albānī also says concerning the *ḥadīth*:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*¹⁰¹

Here, we know that Quraysh – the tribe of Muḥammad – is the best of all tribes. Of course, Banū Hāshim are the best of the clans of Quraysh. Also, we equally know from the *ḥadīth* that the house of Muḥammad – his family – is the best of all families. 'Alī belonged to this same house of the Prophet, and Abū Bakr did not. So, 'Alī beat Abū Bakr completely on lineage and family. No wonder, Abū Bakr made no attempt to go to him. Instead, he rushed to the camp with weaker claims in terms of lineage and family, and defeated them on both accounts.

Interestingly, the fact that the Anṣār submitted to Abū Bakr's arguments about lineage and family shows that the generality of the Ṣaḥābah considered both as the primary criteria for the *khilāfah*. Moreover, the fact that they would not recognize the authority of any *khilāfah* from the Anṣār - however pious, knowledgeable and competent - reveals that they viewed the

⁹⁹ Abū 'Abd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī, *Musnad* (Cairo: Muasassat Qurṭubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnāūṭ], vol. 1, p. 210, # 1788

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁰¹ Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Ḥajj Nūḥ b. Tajātī b. Ādam al-Ashqūdī al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ wa Ziyādātuhū* (Al-Maktab al-Islāmī), vol. 1, p. 309, # 1472

ḵbilāfab only as a dynasty, the dynasty of the offspring of Quraysh. In order to make this clearer, if the Ahl al-Sunnah were to choose a *ḵbalīfab* today, they would only pick a man from Quraysh even if there are millions of far better candidates within the *Ummah* from the other tribes and races. This tells that the most very first criterion for leadership in Sunnī Islām is the tribe of the ruler; and that is exactly why it is a dynasty.

The Prophet of Allāh also limited the *ḵbilāfab* to a specific family within the Quraysh. Therefore, if you are not from that family, you are not a legitimate *ḵbalīfab*. Imām Ibn Abī Shaybah (d. 235 H) reports:

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

Abū Dāwud ‘Umar b. Sa’d – Sharīk – al-Rukayn – al-Qāsim b. Ḥassān – Zayd b. Thābit – the Prophet:

“I have left behind over you the two all-comprehensive *ḵhalīfahs*: the Book of Allāh and my offspring. Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹⁰²

The annotators declare:

والحديث صحيح

The *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.¹⁰³

Imām Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim (d. 287 H) has recorded it as well:

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 وإلهما لن يتفرقا حتى يرذا علي الحوض.

¹⁰² Abū Bakr ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Shaybah, *Musnad Ibn Abī Shaybah* (Riyādh: Dār al-Waṭan; 1st edition, 1418 H) [annotators: ‘Ādil b. Yūsuf al-‘Azāzī and Aḥmad b. Farīd al-Mazīdī], vol. 1, p. 108

¹⁰³ *Ibid*

Abū Bakr – ‘Amr b. Sa’d Abū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī – Sharīk – al-Rukayn – al-Qāsim b. Ḥassān – Zayd b. Thābit:

The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, said, **“I am leaving behind over you the two *khalīfahs* after me: the Book of Allāh and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.** Verily, both shall never separate from each other until they meet me at the Lake-Fount.”¹⁰⁴

And ‘Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) states:

حديث صحيح.

It is a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*.¹⁰⁵

Apparently, if you are not from the offspring of Muḥammad, from his Ahl al-Bayt, you are nothing but an illegitimate *khalīfah*. It is that simple and straightforward. Abū Bakr, without any doubt, was NOT from the offspring of the Prophet, neither by blood nor by special designation. As for ‘Alī, he was *specifically* included within that blessed offspring by the Messenger himself, on the Command of Allāh, for the specific purpose of the *khalāfah*. Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim (d. 287 H) again documents:

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.

Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā – Yahyā b. Ḥammād – Abū ‘Awānah – Yahyā b. Sulaym Abū Balj – ‘Amr b. Maymūn – Ibn ‘Abbās: The Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, **said to ‘Alī:** “You are to me of the status of Hārūn to Mūsā, with the exception that you are not a prophet. **And you are my *khalīfah* over every believer after me.**”¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Abū Bakr b. Abī ‘Āṣim, Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Mukhlid al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (al-Maktab al-Islāmī; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, pp. 350-351, # 754

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, vol. 2, p. 351, # 754

¹⁰⁶ Abū Bakr b. Abī ‘Āṣim, Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Mukhlid al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (Dār al-Ṣamī‘ī li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī‘) [annotator: Dr. Bāsīm b. Fayṣal al-Jawābirah], vol. 1, pp. 799-800, # 1222

Dr. al-Jawābirah says:

إسناده حسن.

Its chain is *hasan*.¹⁰⁷

And ‘Allāmah al-Albānī (d. 1420 H) backs him:

إسناده حسن

Its chain is *hasan*.¹⁰⁸

So, obviously, the Prophet had already fully settled the issues of *al-ḵhilāfah* before he died:

- (a) ‘Alī was the first *ḵhalīfah* immediately after him;
- (b) then, the *ḵhilāfah* passes, after ‘Alī, to the children of Fāṭimah till the Day of *al-Qiyāmah*.

This was the Decree of Allāh, and it shall be in force till the end of our planet. Clearly, there was never any vacancy in the *ḵhilāfah* at all, and there will never be. The very moment that the Messenger of the Lord departed, all his powers, authorities and leadership responsibilities naturally passed to Amīr al-Mūminīn, his publicly designated successor. However, Allāh had also revealed to His Prophet that the *Ummah* generally would betray ‘Alī after him. Imām al-Ḥākim (d. 403 H) records:

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

Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar b. Aḥmad al-Jamḥī – ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz – ‘Amr b.
‘Awn – Hushaym – Ismā‘īl b. Sālim – Abū Idrīs al-Awdī – ‘Alī, may
Allāh be pleased with him:

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁸ Abū Bakr b. Abī ‘Āshim, Aḥmad b. ‘Amr b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Mukhlid al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (al-Maktab al-Islāmī; 1st edition, 1400 H) [annotator: Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī], vol. 2, p. 565, # 1188

“Verily, part of what the Prophet, peace be upon him, told me is that **the Ummah would soon betray me after him.**”¹⁰⁹

Al-Ḥākim says:

هذا حديث صحيح الإسناد

This *ḥadīth* has a *ṣaḥīḥ* chain.¹¹⁰

Imām al-Dhahabī (d. 748 H) agrees:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*¹¹¹

Al-Ḥākim also reports:

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 Ḥayyān al-Asadī:

I heard ‘Alī saying: The Messenger of Allāh, 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.¹¹²

Then he again declares:

صحيح

¹⁰⁹ Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Atā], vol. 3, p. 150, # 4676

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*

¹¹¹ *Ibid*

¹¹² *Ibid*, vol. 3, p. 153, # 4686

*Ṣaḥīḥ*¹¹³

And al-Dhahabī, once more, concurs with him:

صحيح

*Ṣaḥīḥ*¹¹⁴

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852 H) copies as well:

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 الأبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : سيغدونك من بعدي

Al-Faḍl, Abū Na‘īm – Fiṭr b. Khalīfah – Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit – Tha‘labah b. Yazīd:

I heard ‘Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, saying: “I swear by Allāh, verily, the *Ummī* Prophet, peace be upon him, told me: **“They will soon betray you after me.”**¹¹⁵

The Salafī annotator, ‘Abd Allāh al-Shahrī, comments:

فالحديث حسن لغيره

The *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan li ghayrihi*.¹¹⁶

And they *did* betray him immediately after the death of the Messenger of Allāh, exactly as prophesied. The Anṣār opted to take advantage of their numerical and military powers by installing one of their members, instead of pledging allegiance to the divinely designated *khalīfah*. They were staging a coup. But, they did not succeed, thanks to the early intervention of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Meanwhile, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar themselves were

¹¹³ *Ibid*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹¹⁵ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Maṭālib al-‘Alīyah bi Zawā'id al-Masānīd al-Thamāniyyah* (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āshimah; 1st edition, 1420 H) [annotator: ‘Abd Allāh b. Zāfir b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Shahrī], vol. 16, p. 64, # 3919

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, vol. 16, p. 67, # 3921

supposed to be on their way to faraway Palestine at that very moment, as foot soldiers under the command of Usāmah. They both however defied the Prophet's conscription order, and refused to leave al-Madīnah or to join the marching army. Moreover, rather than pledging allegiance to the *khalīfah* of the Messenger, the duo successfully won the Anṣār to their side and seized the political *khalīfah*! To use contemporary terms, Abū Bakr and 'Umar, with the backing of the Anṣār, staged a successful coup against 'Alī, who had earlier been declared *khalīfah* by Muḥammad himself – apparently, on the Order of Allāh. No wonder, Imām 'Alī called both Abū Bakr and 'Umar traitors and dishonest liars. Imām Muslim quotes 'Umar saying to him (i.e. 'Alī) and 'Abbās:

فلما توفي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال أبو بكر أنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ... فرأيتاه كاذبا آتما غادرا خائنا والله يعلم إنه لصادق بار راشد تابع للحق ثم توفي أبو بكر وأنا ولي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وولي أبا بكر فرأيتاني كاذبا آتما غادرا خائنا

When the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, died, **Abū Bakr said: "I am the *walī* of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him" ... So both of you ('Alī and 'Abbās) thought him (i.e. Abū Bakr) to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest.** And Allāh knows that he was really truthful, pious, rightly-guided and a follower of the truth. **Abū Bakr died and I became the *walī* of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon him, and the *walī* of Abū Bakr. So both of you thought me to be a liar, sinful, A TRAITOR and dishonest.**¹¹⁷

But, is that why someone said this:

لو قد مات عمر لقد بايعت فلانا فوالله ما كانت بيعة أبي بكر إلا فلتة فتمت

When 'Umar dies, I will pledge allegiance to so-and-so, for, **I swear by Allāh, the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr was nothing but an error and it succeeded.**

It was undeniably an "error". However, it succeeded. In other words, it was illegal. The *Ummah* should not have done it. But, it succeeded and gave him power nonetheless. So, the people obeyed him. What is more interesting here is 'Umar's response to this statement:

¹¹⁷ Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī) [annotator: Muḥammad Fuād 'Abd al-Bāqī], vol. 3, p. 1376, #1757

ألا وإنها قد كانت كذلك ولكن الله وقى شرها

No doubt, IT WAS SURELY LIKE THAT. However, Allāh saved from its EVIL.

This is the man, who was the most instrumental in bringing Abū Bakr to power, confessing that the pledge of allegiance given to him was surely an “evil” error. However, according to him, Allāh saved from its “evil”. So, that somehow justifies it, in his view! But, has Allāh *really* saved the *Ummah* from the “evil” of the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr? When one considers how it has divided us into sects, some killing the others because of it, then one sees that its “evil” clearly still lives with us.

Meanwhile, even though the word used *faltah* (فلتة) truly means “error”¹¹⁸, the Ahl al-Sunnah do not like that meaning. They prefer one of its other meanings, as al-Ḥāfiẓ does:

قوله (فوالله ما كانت بيعة أبي بكر إلا فلتة) بفتح الفاء وسكون اللام بعدها مشناة ثم تاء تأنيت أي خجاة

His statement (I swear by Allāh, the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr was nothing but a *faltah*), **meaning a SURPRISE**.¹¹⁹

In other words, the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr was “a surprise” to the generality of the Ṣaḥābah. When they heard about it, they wondered: how come? Well, even this meaning of *faltah*, which the Sunnīs prefer, still supports our position. Why was the rise of Abū Bakr to power “a surprise”, as ‘Umar himself testified? If he had been leading the Ṣaḥābah in *ṣalāt*, and this had somehow translated into his appointment as *ḵhalīfah*-designate, why then would anyone find the pledge of allegiance given to him surprising? After all, all the Ṣaḥābah would have been expecting him to assume the *ḵhalīfah*, if the Sunnī claims had been true. In fact, it would have been the other way round: they would have been surprised if anyone else, other than Abū Bakr, had received the pledge of allegiance. So, apparently,

¹¹⁸ Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, *al-Mawrid: A Modern Arabic-English Dictionary* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li al-Malāyīn; 7th edition, 1995 CE), p. 833; Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan (Ithaca, New York: Spoken Languages Services; 3rd edition, 1976 CE), p. 725

¹¹⁹ Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah li al-Ṭabā‘ah wa al-Nashr; 2nd edition), vol. 12, p. 129

the Ṣaḥābah were NOT expecting Abū Bakr to be the *ḵhalīfah* immediately after the Messenger of Allāh. This was why it was “a surprise” to them when they heard his name being linked with the *ḵhalīfah*! However, he had already secured the allegiance of the Islāmic army, and literally held the military power of the *Ummah*. Therefore, the Ṣaḥābah were presented with only a *fiat accompli*.

But, this definition of al-Ḥāfiẓ does not explain the evil nature of Abū Bakr’s authority. The fact that something is a “surprise” does not necessarily make it “evil”. By contrast, when it is “illegal”, then it is necessarily “evil”. ‘Umar himself described the pledge of allegiance sworn to Abū Bakr with evil:

ألا وإنها قد كانت كذلك ولكن الله وقى شرها

No doubt, **IT WAS SURELY LIKE THAT. However, Allāh saved from ITS EVIL.**

These words of ‘Umar are extremely significant, indeed. He was the staunchest supporter and defender of Abū Bakr’s rule. The fact that even he qualified that same regime of his role model with “evil” reveals that the matter was so glaring that denying it would do no good. He instead merely offered a blind defence: Allāh saved from “its evil”. Of course, its evil still rules the world of Islām today – with rapidly growing sectarian killings spreading everywhere. Everything, all this evil, stemmed from the pledge of allegiance given to Abū Bakr, by the Anṣār, at Saqīfah on that fateful day.

‘Umar also added:

وإنها قد كانت كذلك ولكن الله وقى شرها وليس فيكم من تقطع الأعناق إليه مثل أبي بكر من بايع رجلا من غير مشورة من المسلمين فلا يتابع هو ولا الذي تابعه تغرة أن يقتلا

No doubt, it was surely like that. However, Allāh saved from its evil. And there is none amongst you towards whom throats are slit like Abū Bakr. **Whosoever pledges allegiance to anyone without consultation with the Muslims, then neither that person nor the person to whom the pledge of allegiance was given, is to be supported. Rather, they both should be killed.**

Here, he mentioned the exact method through which Abū Bakr came to

power. 'Umar, his colleagues and the Anṣār pledged allegiance to him *without* consulting the other Muslims. The son of al-Khaṭṭāb then recommended the death sentence for whosoever achieved the *khalāfah* again through the “Abū Bakr” method. Such a *khalīfah* and all his supporters should be executed. This is very telling, especially on the meaning of *faltah* in the *athar*. If the “Abū Bakr” method had been legal, then whosoever adopted it would not have deserved death. So, it was illegal, and therefore “an error”, which bore “evil” for this *Ummah*.

In any case, whether *faltah* is translated as “error” or “surprise”, the direct implication is still that the Ṣaḥābah were not expecting Abū Bakr to become their *khalīfah*. Imagine: would this have been the case if all those Sunnī claims about Abū Bakr – including his alleged leadership of *ṣalāt* and its overstretched implications – had been true?

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