

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

I am the House of Wisdom, and ‘Alī is its Door Imām ‘Alī al-Qārī ¹

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Mishkāt al Maṣābiḥ, 6096:

[Also narrated] from him is that he said: RasūlAllāh ﷺ said: “I am the house of wisdom and ‘Alī is its door”²

Reported by al-Tirmidhī³ who said: “This is an uncommon⁴ narration [*Ḥadīth gharīb*.]” And he said: “Some have reported it from Sharīk and they did not mention Al-Ṣunābiḥīy in their chain. We do not know this Ḥadīth from any reliable narrator except Sharīk.”

[Also narrated] from him: that is, narrated by ‘Alī ؑ⁵

is that he said: RasūlAllāh ṣallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam said: “I am the house of wisdom: in

¹ *Mirqāt al-Mafātīḥ*, vol.11/pg.252

² *Ana dār al-ḥikmah wa ‘Alī bābuhā*

³ Tirmidhi in *Sunan*; Ḥadīth no.3744 [20:73]

⁴ I.e. it is narrated via one chain only.

⁵ Because the previous Ḥadīth in *Mishkāt*, no.6095 is also narrated by ‘Alī ؑ

another report: “I am the city of knowledge” [*ana madīnat al-‘ilm.*] In another narration [of Al-Maṣābīḥ]: “I am the house of knowledge” [*ana dār al-‘ilm.*]

and ‘Alī is its door: that is, one of its doors.[*bābun min abwābihā.*] Another report has this addition: “Whosoever seeks knowledge, let them come through its door.”⁶ And the meaning is to enter [the city/house of knowledge] from one of its doors.

However, this specific mention is an indication of the pre-eminence [of ‘Alī]; and indeed, he is greater in rank and knowledge compared to many other Companions. This also affirms that all Companions are like doors [to the house of wisdom] as RasūlAllāh ﷺ has said: “My companions are like the stars; if you follow any of them, you will be guided”.⁷ That is, you will be guided in spite of the difference in their luminosity.

This is also established from the fact that their Successors [*tābi‘īn*] took various sciences of Canon Law [*sharī‘ah*] like Qur’ān recitation, Qur’ānic exegesis, Ḥadīth and Fiqh from numerous Companions other than just ‘Alī ﷺ. This shows that the ‘door’ is not exclusive and restricted only to ‘Alī, except the door of judiciary [*bāb al-qaḍā’a*]; because it has been reported in his praise: “Alī is the foremost judge amongst you’ [*aqḍākum ‘alī*].

Similarly, such distinctions have been given to other Companions like

a) Ubayy: ‘he is the best in recitation amongst you.’

b) Zayd b. Thābit: ‘he is the most knowledgeable amongst you regarding inheritance.’

c) Mu’ādh b. Jabal: ‘he is the most knowledgeable amongst you concerning the lawful and unlawful’⁸

⁶ Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak*, 3/127.

⁷ *aṣ-ḥabī ka’n nujūm fa bi ayyihim iqtadaytum ihtadaytum*

⁸ *Al-Bukhārī*, 4481, in the words of ‘Umar ﷺ: ‘the foremost in Qur’ān recitation is Ubayy and judgement is ‘Alī.’ [*aqra-unā Ubayy wa aqḍānā ‘Alī*]

Tirmidhī in *Sunan*, Ḥadīth no.3816 from Anas b. Mālik: ‘The most merciful towards my followers among my followers is Abū Bakr, the strictest in following the command of Allāh is ‘Umar; the most bashful amongst them is ‘Uthmān; the most accurate in recitation of the Book of Allāh is Ubayy b. Ka’ab; the most knowledgeable about inheritance laws is Zayd b. Thābit; the most knowledgeable about lawful and forbidden is Mu’ādh b. Jabal; and verily every nation has its trustee and the trustee of this nation is Abū ‘Ubaydah b. Al-Jarrāḥ.’ Tirmidhi says it is *ḥasan saḥīḥ*.

There are other narrations that indicate the plenitude of his knowledge like the report from Ma'qil b. Yasār [in *Al-Riyāḍ*] that he said: I helped RasūlAllāh ﷺ with ablution. He then asked: 'Will you come with me to visit Fāṭimah?' I said: 'Yes.' He rose up leaning upon me saying: 'The weight will be borne by someone else and you will get the reward for it'

[Ma'qil] said: I did not feel a thing until we entered Faṭimah's house and asked: 'How are you feeling now?' She said: 'My pain and hardship has increased, my hunger and need has worsened and my sickness has prolonged.'

'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said: I have found in the very handwriting of my father about this Ḥadīth that he mentioned [the Prophet ﷺ saying]: 'Are you not content that your husband is the foremost in Islām and is the most knowledgeable and the greatest in forbearance?''⁹

People asked Ibn 'Abbās: 'What kind of a man was 'Alī?' and he answered: 'He was full of wisdom, knowledge, strength and the ability to help others; in addition to his nearness to RasūlAllāh ﷺ in being his kin.'¹⁰

Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib said that 'Umar would seek refuge from [facing] a dilemma in the absence of Abū Ḥasan.¹¹

Tayyibī said: 'Perhaps it is these praises that makes the Shi'ah to conclude that knowledge and wisdom is restricted and exclusive to 'Alī ؑ and none can achieve it, except through his mediation. Because one enters a house through the door as Allāh ta'ālā has ordered: **'Enter houses by their doors'**¹².

⁹ Reported in *Musnad Imām Aḥmad*, 5/26. *Majma' al-Zawā'id*: no.14595.

¹⁰ Narrated by *Imām Aḥmad* in Eulogies.

¹¹ 'Alī b. Abū Ṭalib whose appellation was Abu al-Ḥasan ؑ. It means Sayyidunā 'Umar expected 'Ali ؑ to be around to seek his advice when he was faced with a dilemma.

¹² Al-Baqarah, v.189

This argument [of the shi'ah] is not valid; because the house of paradise is not as extensive as the house of wisdom, yet it has eight doors.¹³

Reported by al-Tirmidhī who said: “This is an uncommon narration [*Ḥadīth gharīb*]: That is, its chain is uncommon.

And he said: that is, Tirmidhī.

“Some have reported it from **Sharīk**: Sharīk b. ‘Abdullāh, the Judge of Baghdad as mentioned by the exegete.

and they did not mention: those who have narrated this Ḥadīth [from Sharīk.]

in it: that is, in their chain.

Al-Ṣunābiḥīy: with a *ḍammah* on ṣād, followed by *kasrah* on [bā] with one dot, and [hā] without any dot.

We do not know this Ḥadīth from any reliable narrator except Sharīk.”: the exception should be read: *ghayra* with a *naṣb*. It is said that in some copies of Sunan, it is written ‘*an sharīk*’ instead of *ghayra sharīk*. Allāh ta’ālā knows best.

Also know, that the Ḥadīth, “**I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its door’**” is reported by Al-Ḥākim in his *Al-Mustadrak*, in the Chapter of Eulogies [*Bāb al-Manāqib*] narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās; and he said that it was a rigorously authenticated [*ṣaḥīḥ*] narration.

Dhahabī criticized it and said: ‘Rather, it is a forgery.’

Abū Zur’ah said: ‘How many have been embarrassed by it!’

Yaḥyā b. Ma’īn said: “It is baseless.” Abū Ḥātim and Yaḥyā b. Sa’īd said likewise.

¹³ That is, a more extensive house would naturally have more doors.

Dār Quṭnī said: “It is established”

Tirmidhī reported it in his *Al-Jāmi'* under Eulogies and said: “it is rejected.”

Bukhārī said similarly: “there is not a sound chain for this narration.”

Ibn Al-Jawzī included it in his *Al-Mawḍū'āt*¹⁴

Ibn Daqīq al-Īd said: “This Ḥadīth is not proven.”

It is also said that it is a falsehood.

However, Ḥāfiẓ Abū Sa'īd al-‘Alā'ī said: “The correct view is, that it is a fair report [*ḥasan*] because of its numerous routes; neither sound [*ṣaḥīḥ*] nor weak [*ḍa'īf*] leave alone its being forged [*mawḍū'*].” This was mentioned by Al-Zarkashī.

Ḥāfiẓ [Ibn Ḥajar] Al-‘Asqalānī was asked about it and he said: “It is fair. Neither sound like Al-Ḥākim said, nor forged like Ibn al-Jawzī said.”¹⁵

Al-Suyūṭī said: ‘I have explained the statements of Ibn Ḥajar and Al-‘Alā'ī in [my book]: *Critique of Forgeries*.’¹⁶

In a report of [*Musnad*] *Al-Firdaws*: ‘I am the city of knowledge; Abū Bakr is its foundation; ‘Umar its enclosure; ‘Uthmān the roof and ‘Alī its door.’¹⁷

Some have given a peculiar and aberrant explanation and said: “‘Alī is its door’ means, the

¹⁴ *Book of Forgeries* by Ibn al-Jawzī

¹⁵ *innāhu ḥasan; lā ṣaḥīḥ kamā qāl al-Ḥākim; wa lā mawḍū' kamā qāl Ibn al-Jawzī*

¹⁶ The book: *Al-Ta'qqubāt 'alā al-Mawḍū'āt Ibn al-Jawzī*

¹⁷ *Musnad al-Firdaws*, 1/43, Ḥadīth no.105

door is high analogous to Ya'qūb's recitation in which he recited: *ṣirātun 'aliyyun mustaqīm*, with *tanwīn* and *raf'a* on the second word.¹⁸



¹⁸ Al-Ḥijr, 15:41; whereas the regular recitation of Al-Ḥafṣ is *ṣirātun 'alayya mustaqīm*