

249333 - Does the command to follow the Prophet's family "Ahl al-Bayt" support the Shi'i view?

the question

I have read the hadith about the two weightly things. I was always told it is quran and sunnah but the hadeeth says quran and ahle bait. So does it mean in the sense that follow quran and hadeeth narrated by ahle bait? And if yes then aren't shia right then in the sense that their books contain more hadith from ahle bait but sunnis more from other sahabis. I am confused. Please clear this

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

It is soundly narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam that he said:

One day the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stood and addressed us at a watering place called Khumm, between Makkah and Madinah. He praised and glorified Allah, and he exhorted and reminded us, then he said: "To proceed: O people, I am only human, and soon the messenger of my Lord will come to me and I will respond. I am leaving among you two weighty things, the first of which is the Book of Allah in which is guidance and light. Follow the Book of Allah and hold fast to it." And he encouraged us to adhere to the Book of Allah, then he said: "And the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household, I remind you of Allah with regard to the people of my household." Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh, no. 2408.

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It was also narrated in other versions, such as that narrated by at-Tirmidhi: "I am leaving among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray after I am gone, and one of the two is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, which is a rope extended from heaven to earth, and my family, the people of my household (ahl bayti). These two will never be separated until they come to me at the Cistern, so watch how you deal with them after I am gone.

And there are other versions that were narrated by Ahmad, at-Tabaraani and others, although there are some reservations about their isnaads. That has been discussed previously in the answer to question no. [195801](#).

Secondly:

It is impossible that the meaning of the hadith could be as the questioner mentioned, that it is obligatory to refer to the imams of ahl al-bayt in the event of a dispute, and what that implies of their infallibility and that they are to be regarded as a source of legislation (sharee'ah) after the Book of Allah. That is for two reasons:

The first reason is shar'i, namely that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has commanded us to refer to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the event of a dispute. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Obey Allâh and obey the Messenger (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allâh and His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), if you believe in Allâh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination"

[an-Nisa' 4:59].

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Thus it is known to every Muslim that there is no one whose opinion is not subject to being accepted or rejected, except the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

The Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) differed amongst themselves concerning many issues, yet the view of 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib, al-'Abbaas or 'Uqayl ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with them) was never taken as overruling others.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The truth is not completely on the side of anyone except the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). If the truth was always on the side of 'Ali, then that would imply that he was infallible like the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and they [i.e., the Raafidis] claim that in their ignorance, but whoever is aware that he had no greater claim to infallibility than Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmaan and others – none of whom was infallible – will realise that they are lying.

His fatwas are akin to the fatwas of 'Umar and 'Uthmaan, and he is not more likely to be correct than they were.

End quote from Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 4/241.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) rebuked 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) regarding some issues, which indicates that he was not infallible. It is proven in as-Saheehayn that he 'rebuked him when he wanted to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl at the time when he was already married to Faatimah, and he said: "Banu al-Mugheerah asked me for permission to give their daughter in marriage to 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib, but I will not give permission, then I will not give permission, then I will not give permission, unless the son of Abu Taalib wants to divorce my daughter and marry their daughter, for verily Faatimah is part of me; what grieves her grieves me, and what upsets her upsets me.

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Similarly, he rebuked him when he came to him and Faatimah at night and said to them: “Why don’t you both get up and pray?” and ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Our souls are in the hand of Allah; if it were His will to wake us up, He would do so. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) left, striking his thigh with his hand and saying, “But, man is ever more quarrelsome than anything” [al-Kahf 18:54].

Similarly, after the death of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) gave a fatwa ruling that if a woman’s husband dies when she is pregnant, she should observe ‘iddah for the longer of the two waiting periods, and he did not realise that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had given a fatwa to Subay’ah al-Aslamiyyah ruling that it became permissible for her to remarry (i.e., her ‘iddah had ended) when she gave birth, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told Abu’s-Sanaabil ibn Ba’kak that he had been mistaken when he gave her a fatwa saying that she should observe ‘iddah for the longer of the two waiting periods, saying, “Abu’s-Sanaabil lied.”

See the answer to question no. [140226](#).

The second reason is rational and realistic, which is that the ahl al-bayt nowadays differ greatly. Some of them are of Ahl as-Sunnah; some of them are Sufis, some are Zaydis, some are Ithna ‘Ashari Raafidis, and some are other things, so how can the questioner be so confused that he is inclined towards the most mendacious of these groups concerning Ahl al-Bayt and the group that is most contrary to their way? And is the worst in casting aspersions upon the honour of the head of the family (namely the Prophet – blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) by making accusations against his wife and the dearest of his spouses to him, namely the Mother of the Believers ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), when she is the one whom he continued to love until the end of his days, and he asked his other wives for permission to let him be nursed in her house until he passed away in her lap.

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The imams of the family of Ahl al-Bayt are unanimously agreed that Abu Bakr and 'Umar take precedence in terms of leadership and virtue, whereas the Raafidis today are the most hate-filled of all people towards them – Allah forbid.

Moreover, their restricting the meaning of this hadith to 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) and eleven of his descendants only is a clear misinterpretation, even though the conclusion of this hadith reflects that. What I am referring to is the hadith of the “two weighty matters” in Saheeh Muslim. Zayd ibn 'Arqam said at the end of the hadith, when he was asked who are Ahl al-Bayt: The people of his household are those to whom zakaah is forbidden after he is gone. They are the family of 'Ali, the family of 'Aqeel, the family of Ja'far, and the family of 'Abbaas.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said in Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah (7/395):

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said concerning his family: “They and the Book will never be separated until they both come to him at the Cistern.” And he is the most truthful one, so this indicates that the consensus of the (Prophet's) family constitutes proof. This is the view of a number of our companions, and it was mentioned by al-Qaadi in al-Mu'tamad.

But the family are all of Banu Haashim: the sons of al-'Abbaas, the sons of 'Ali, the sons of al-Haarith ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, all the sons of Abu Taalib, and others. 'Ali on his own is not the entire family, and the leader of the family is the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

What may confirm that is the fact that the scholars of the family such as Ibn 'Abbaas and others did not regard it as obligatory to follow 'Ali in everything he said, and 'Ali did not regard it as obligatory for people to obey him in every fatwa he issued, and it is not known that any of the imams of the early generations, among Banu Haashim or otherwise, said that it is obligatory to follow 'Ali in everything he says...

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... The family were not unanimously agreed on 'Ali's leadership or superiority; rather the imams of the family, such as Ibn 'Abbaas and others, gave precedence to Abu Bakr and 'Umar in terms of leadership and superiority, as did the rest of Banu Haashim such as the descendants of al-'Abbaas and Ja'far, and most of the descendants of 'Ali, who approved of the leadership of Abu Bakr and 'Umar; moreover, some of them were companions of Imam Maalik, Abu Haneefah, ash-Shaafa'i, Ahmad and others, who were many times greater in number than those who followed the Imamis.

What is proven in reports from all the scholars of Ahl al-Bayt from Banu Haashim among the Taabi'een and the following generation, including the descendants of al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, the descendants of al-Hasan and others, is that they loved Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and they gave them precedence over 'Ali. The reports from them are proven and mutawaatir.

Al-Haafiz Abu'l-Hasan ad-Daaraqutni wrote a book entitled Thana' as-Sahaabah 'ala al-Qaraabah wa Thana' al-Qaraabah 'ala as-Sahaabah, in which he stated some of that, as did each of the hadith scholars who wrote books about the Sunnah, such as the book as-Sunnah by 'Abdullah ibn Ahmad, as-Sunnah by al-Khallaal, as-Sunnah by Ibn Battah, as-Sunnah by al-Aajurri, al-Laalkaa'i, al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Dharr al-Harawi, at-Talamanki, Ibn Hafs ibn Shaaheen and many more books, such as Fadaa'il as-Sahaabah by Imam Ahmad and Abu Nu'aym, and the Tafseer of ath-Tha'labi, which mention of the virtues of the three caliphs that which is the greatest proof against them. End quote.

Thirdly:

Based on the above, it is clear to us that what is meant by the hadith of Zayd ibn Arqam in Saheeh Muslim is a command to honour and respect Ahl al-Bayt and to hold them in high esteem, because of their closeness to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

With regard to the additions of at-Tirmidhi and others, such as the command to follow the family (of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)), the most that can be said concerning

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them - if they are indeed sound - is that if the family of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) unanimously agree on a verdict concerning an issue, then their view is to be regarded as binding proof, as was stated by al-Qaadi Abu Ya'laa among the Hanafis and others of Ahl as-Sunnah. There is nothing in that to support the view of the Raafidis at all; rather the opposite is true.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Ahl al-Bayt - praise be to Allah - never unanimously agreed on any of the ideas that are unique to the Raafidi madhhab; rather they are the ones who are innocent of those ideas and far above any involvement in such matters.

End quote from Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyah (7/395).

What is meant by the family whose consensus constitutes proof are the scholars of the Ahl al-Bayt who adhere to the teachings of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him); it does not refer to everyone who belongs to Banu Haashim, even if he is ignorant or an evildoer or an innovator.

Al-Mulla 'Ali al-Qaari said: The members of the household are usually more knowledgeable about the head of the household and his situation. So what is meant by them (the family or household of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) is the people of knowledge among them, the ones who are aware of his character and attitude, who have knowledge of his path, and who have knowledge of his decrees and wisdom. Thus they are fit to be mentioned alongside the Book of Allah, may He be glorified, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): "and [will] instruct them in the Book (this Qur'ân) and Al-Hikmah (full knowledge of the Islâmic laws and jurisprudence or wisdom or Prophethood)" [al-Baqarah 2:129].

End quote from Mirqaat al-Masaabeeh (9/3975).

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Al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is well-known that this hadith is among the things quoted as evidence by the Shi'ah, and they kept on quoting it until some of the Ahl as-Sunnah began to think that they were right, but all of them are deluded, on two counts:

1. What the hadith refers to, when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said "my family" is broader in scope than the narrow interpretation of the Shi'ah. This is something that Ahl as-Sunnah would not reject; rather they adhere to that, namely that it refers to the members of the household of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). This is stated clearly in some versions of the hadith, such as the version which says, "my family are the members of my household." The members of his household are, first and foremost, his wives, including as-Siddeeqah 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her). The fact that the Shi'ah restrict the meaning of "ahl al-bayt" in this verse to 'Ali, Faatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them), to the exclusion of the Prophet's wives, is an example of their distortion of the verses of Allah, may He be exalted, in support of their whims and desires...

2. What is specifically meant by the members of the household is the righteous scholars among them, who adhere to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Imam Abu Ja'far at-Tahhaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The "family" are the members of his household (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) who adhere to his religion and follow in his footsteps.

Conclusion: the mention, in this hadith, of the members of his household, alongside the Qur'an, is like the mention of the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs alongside the Sunnah (way) of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the hadith: "I urge you to adhere to my way (Sunnah) and the way of the Rightly Guided Caliphs..."

Once you understand the above, the hadith offers strong support for the hadith in al-Muwatta' which says: "I am leaving among you two things; you will never go astray so long as you adhere to

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them: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger.”

End quote from Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah (4/260).

And Allah knows best.