

'A Historical Shia Sunni Debate'

Abbreviations:

saww: - Sal lal la ho Allay hay Wa Aal lay he Wasallam

azwj: - Az Za Wa Jalla

asws: - Allay hay Salawat Wass Salam

AJFJ: Aja Allah hey wa Fara Jaak

ra: - Razi Allah^{-azwj}

La: - Laan Allah^{-azwj}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَ آلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ، وَسَلَّمْ تَسْلِيمًا.

In the Name of Allah^{-azwj} the Beneficent, the Merciful. The Praise is for Allah^{-azwj} Lord^{-azwj} of the Worlds, and Blessing be upon our Chief Muhammad^{-saww} and his^{-saww} Purified Progeny^{-asws}, and greetings with abundant greetings.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُمْ وَالْعَنُ أَعْدَاءَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

A Historical Shia Sunni Debate

An interesting centuries-old Shia-Sunni debate is presented, which remains relevant to current arguments between the two Islamic Sects.

الإحتجاج حُكِي عَنِ أَبِي الْهَدَيْلِ الْعَلَّافِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: دَخَلْتُ الرَّقَّةَ فَذَكَرْتُ لِي أَنَّ بَدَيْرَ زَكِيِّ رَجُلًا مَجْنُونًا حَسَنَ الْكَلَامِ فَأَتَيْتُهُ فَإِذَا أَنَا بِشَيْخٍ حَسَنِ الْهَيْئَةِ جَالِسًا عَلَى وَسَادَةٍ يُسْرَحُ رَأْسَهُ وَ لِحْيَتُهُ فَسَلَّمْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَدَّ السَّلَامَ وَ قَالَ مِمَّنْ يَكُونُ الرَّجُلُ

(The book) 'Al Ihtijaj' – It is narrated from Abu Al Huzeyl Al Allaf having said,

'I entered Al-Raqqa. It was mentioned to me that at Deyr Zaky there is an insane man of excellent speech. I went to him, and there I was with an old man of good appearance, seated upon a pillow, being of relaxed head and beard. I greeted unto him. He responded the greetings and said, 'From whom does the man happen to be?'

قَالَ قُلْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْعِرَاقِ قَالَ نَعَمْ أَهْلُ الظَّرْفِ وَ الْأَدَابِ قَالَ مِنْ أَيِّهَا أَنْتَ قُلْتُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَصْرَةِ قَالَ أَهْلُ التَّجَارِبِ وَ الْعِلْمِ قَالَ فَمَنْ أَيُّهُمْ أَنْتَ قُلْتُ أَبُو الْهَدَيْلِ الْعَلَّافُ قَالَ الْمُتَكَلِّمُ قُلْتُ بَلَى فَوَتَّبَعَنِي وَ سَادَتِيهِ وَ أَجْلَسَنِي عَلَيْهَا

He (the narrator) said, 'I said, 'From the people of Al-Iraq'. He said, 'Yes, the people of friendliness and etiquette'. He said, 'From which (part) of it are you?' I said, 'From the people of Al-Basra'. He said, 'People of experience and knowledge'. He said, 'From which of them are you?' I said, 'Abu Al-Huzeyl Al-Allaf'. He said, 'The speaker'. I said, 'Yes'. He leapt from his pillow and seated me upon it.

ثُمَّ قَالَ بَعْدَ كَلَامٍ جَرَى بَيْنَنَا مَا تَقُولُ فِي الْإِمَامَةِ قُلْتُ أَيُّ الْإِمَامَةِ تُرِيدُ قَالَ مَنْ تُقَدِّمُونَ بَعْدَ النَّبِيِّ ص قُلْتُ مَنْ قَدَّمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص قَالَ وَ مَنْ هُوَ قُلْتُ أَبُو بَكْرٍ

Then he said after some talk had flowed between us, 'What are you saying regarding the Imamate?' I said, 'Which Imamate do you intend?' He said, 'Whom are you placing forwards after the Prophet^{-saww}?' I said, 'The one who Rasool-Allah^{-saww} had advanced'. He said, 'And who is he?' I said, 'Abu Bakr'.

قَالَ لِي يَا أَبَا الْهَدَيْلِ وَ لِمَ قَدَّمْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُ لِأَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ص قَالَ قَدِّمُوا خَيْرَكُمْ وَ وَلُوا أَفْضَلَكُمْ وَ تَرَاضَى النَّاسُ بِهِ جَمِيعًا

He said to me, ‘O Abu Al-Huzeyl! And why are you advancing him?’ I said, ‘Because the Prophet^{-saww} had advanced their best one and placed their most superior in charge, and all the people were pleased with him’.

قَالَ يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ هَاهُنَا وَقَعْتَ أَمَا قَوْلُكَ إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ ص قَالَ قَدَّمُوا خَيْرَكُمْ وَوَلُّوا أَفْضَلَكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُوجِدُكَ أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ صَعِدَ الْمِنْبَرِ وَ قَالَ
وَلَيْتُكُمْ وَ لَسْتُ بِخَيْرِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانُوا كَذَبُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَدْ خَالَفُوا أَمْرَ النَّبِيِّ ص وَ إِنْ كَانَ هُوَ الْكَاذِبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ فَمَنْبَرُ النَّبِيِّ ص لَا يَصْعَدُهُ
الْكَاذِبُونَ-

He said, ‘O Abu Al-Huzeyl! Over here is a pitfall. As for your word that the Prophet^{-saww} had said: ‘Advance your best one and place your superior to be in charge’, so I can find for you that Abu Bakr had ascended the pulpit and said, ‘I am in charge of you all and I am not your best one’. If they have belied upon him, then they have opposed the order of the Prophet^{-saww}. And if he had lied upon himself, then the pulpit of the Prophet^{-saww}, the liars cannot ascend it.

وَ أَمَا قَوْلُكَ إِنَّ النَّاسَ تَرَاصَنُوا بِهِ فَإِنَّ أَكْثَرَ الْأَنْصَارِ قَالُوا مِنَّا أَمِيرٌ وَ مِنْكُمْ أَمِيرٌ وَ أَمَا الْمُهَاجِرُونَ فَإِنَّ زُبَيْرَ الْعَوَّامِ قَالَ لَا أَتَابِعُ إِلَّا عَلِيًّا
فَأَمَرَ بِهِ فَكَسِرَ سَيْفُهُ وَ جَاءَ أَبُو سُفْيَانَ بْنُ حَرْبٍ فَقَالَ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ إِنْ شِئْتَ لِأَمْلَأَنَّهَا حَيْلًا وَ رِجَالًا يَعْينِي الْمَدِينَةَ

And as for your words, ‘The people were pleased with him’, surely most of the Helpers had said, ‘There should be a commander from us and a commander from you’. And as for the Emigrants, Zubeyr Bin Al-Awwam had said, ‘I will not pledge allegiance except to Ali^{-asws}!’ So he was ordered with, and his sword was broken. And Abu Sufyan Bin Harb came and said, ‘O Abu Al-Hassan^{-asws}! If you^{-asws} so desire, I can fill it with cavalries and infantries’ – meaning Al-Medina.

وَ حَرَجَ سَلْمَانَ فَقَالَ كَرَدْنَا وَ نَكَرَدْنَا وَ نَدَانَدْنَا كَهْ چِه كَرَدْنَا وَ الْمِقْدَادُ وَ أَبُو ذَرٍّ فَهَؤُلَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرُونَ

And Salman^{-ra} went out and said, ‘*Kardand wa nakardand wa nadanand Keh Chi Kardand*’ (in Persian – ‘They did and did not do, and they did not know what to do’). And Al-Miqdad^{-ra} and Abu Zarr^{-ra}, they^{-ra} are the Emigrants.

أَخْبَرَنِي يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ عَنْ قِيَامِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ وَ قَوْلِهِ إِنَّ لِي شَيْطَانًا يَعْزِبُنِي فَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُونِي مُغْضَبًا فَاحْذَرُونِي لَا أَقَعُ فِي أَشْعَارِكُمْ وَ
أَبْسَارِكُمْ فَهُوَ يُخَيِّرُكُمْ عَلَى الْمِنْبَرِ أَيُّ مَجْنُونٌ وَ كَيْفَ يَجِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَلُّوا مَجْنُونًا

Inform me, O Abu Al-Huzeyl, about the standing by Abu Bakr upon the pulpit and his words, ‘There is a Satan^{-la} for me appearing to me. So when you see me angry, then beware I don’t fall into your slogans and your glad tidings’. So he informed them upon the pulpit, ‘I am insane, and how can it be permissible for you to make a madman to be a ruler’.

وَ أَخْبِرْنِي يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ عَنْ قِيَامِ عُمَرَ عَلَى الْمَنْبَرِ وَ قَوْلِهِ وَرَدَدْتُ أَيْ شَعْرَةَ فِي صَدْرِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ ثُمَّ قَامَ بَعْدَهَا بِجُمُعَةٍ فَقَالَ إِنَّ بَيْعَةَ أَبِي بَكْرٍ كَانَتْ فَلْتَةً وَفِي اللَّهِ شَرُّهَا فَمَنْ عَادَ إِلَيَّ مِنْهَا فَاقْتُلُوهُ فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ يَوْدُ أَنْ يَكُونَ شَعْرَةَ فِي صَدْرِ أَبِي بَكْرٍ يَأْمُرُ بِقَتْلِ مَنْ بَايَعَ مِثْلَهُ

And inform me, O Abu Al-Huzeyl, about the standing by Umar upon the pulpit and his words, ‘I am a hair in the chest of Abu Bakr’. Then he stood after it with Friday (Salat). He said, ‘The allegiance to Abu Bakr was an error. Allah^{-azwj} has Saved its evil. So the one who repeats to its like, kill him!’ While he loved to be a hair in the chest of Abu Bakr, he ordered with killing the one who pledged with the likes of him.

فَأَخْبِرْنِي يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ بِالَّذِي رَعِمَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَمْ يَسْتَخْلِفْ وَ أَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ اسْتَخْلَفَ عُمَرَ وَ أَنَّ عُمَرَ لَمْ يَسْتَخْلِفْ فَأَرَى أَمْرَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ مُتَنَاقِضًا

Inform me, O Abu Al-Huzeyl, of that which you claimed that the Prophet^{-saww} had not nominated a caliph, and that Abu Bakr had nominated Umar as caliph, and Umar did not nominate a caliph. So I see your matter between you all as being contradictory.

وَ أَخْبِرْنِي يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ عَنْ عُمَرَ حِينَ صَيَّرَهَا سُورَى فِي سِتَّةٍ وَ رَعِمَ أَنَّهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَقَالَ إِنْ خَالَفَ اثْنَانِ لِأَرْبَعَةٍ فَاقْتُلُوا الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَ إِنْ خَالَفَ ثَلَاثَةٌ لِثَلَاثَةٍ فَاقْتُلُوا الثَّلَاثَةَ الَّذِينَ فِيهِمْ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ فَهَذِهِ دِيَانَةٌ أَنْ يَأْمُرَ بِقَتْلِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

And inform me, O Abu Al-Huzeyl, about Umar when he made it to be a consultation among six, and he claimed that they are from the people of Paradise. He said, ‘If two oppose the four, then kill the two, and if three oppose the three, then kill the ones among whom is Abdul Rahman Bin Awf’. So this is a religion, that he orders with killing the people of Paradise?

وَ أَخْبِرْنِي يَا أَبَا الْهُدَيْلِ عَنْ عُمَرَ لَمَّا طُعِنَ دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ الْعَبَّاسِ قَالَ فَرَأَيْتُهُ جَزِعًا فَقُلْتُ يَا أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَا هَذَا الْجَزَعُ فَقَالَ يَا ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ مَا جَزَعِي لِأَجْلِي وَ لَكِنَّ جَزَعِي لِهَذَا الْأَمْرِ مِنْ يَلِيهِ بَعْدِي

And inform me, O Abu Al-Huzeyl, about Umar, when was stabbed. Abdullah Bin Al-Abbas entered to see him. He said, ‘I saw him in panic. I said, ‘O commander of the faithful! What is this panic?’ He said, ‘O Ibn Abbas! My panic is not for my reason, but my panic is for the command (caliphate), who should be in charge of it after me’.

قَالَ قُلْتُ وَهِيَ طَلْحَةَ بْنُ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ رَجُلٌ لَهُ حِدَّةٌ كَانَتِ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَعْرِفُهُ فَلَا أُوَلِيَّ أُمُورَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ حَدِيدًا

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘I said, ‘Place Talha Bin Ubeydullah in charge’. He said, ‘A man having temper for him. The Prophet^{-saww} had recognised it. A man of temper should not be in charge of the affairs of the Muslims’.

قَالَ قُلْتُ وَهِيَ الزُّبَيْرُ بْنُ الْعَوَّامِ قَالَ رَجُلٌ بِحَيْلٍ رَأَيْتُهُ يُمَاسِكُ امْرَأَتَهُ فِي كُبَّةٍ مِنْ غَزَلٍ فَلَا أُوَلِيَّ أُمُورَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ بِحَيْلًا

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘I said, ‘Place Al-Zubeyr Bin Al-Awwam in charge’. He said, ‘A stingy man. I saw him arguing with his wife regarding a ball of yarn. A stingy cannot be in charge of the affairs of the Muslims’.

قَالَ فُلْتُ وَهِيَ سَعْدُ بْنُ أَبِي وَقَّاصٍ قَالَ رَجُلٌ صَاحِبُ فَرَسٍ وَ قَوْسٍ وَ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَحْلَاسِ الْخِلَافَةِ

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘I said, ‘Place Sa’ad Bin Abi Waqas to be in charge’. He said, ‘A man who is a companion of a horse and a bow, and he isn’t from the saddlecloth of the caliphate’.

قُلْتُ وَهِيَ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ عَوْفٍ قَالَ رَجُلٌ لَيْسَ يُحْسِنُ أَنْ يَكْفِيَ عِيَالَهُ

I said, ‘Place Abdul Rahman Bin Awf to be in charge’. He said, ‘A man who isn’t good at sufficing his own dependants’.

قَالَ فُلْتُ وَهِيَ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ فَاسْتَوَى جَالِسًا وَقَالَ يَا ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ مَا وَاللَّهِ أَرَدْتُ بِهَذَا أَوْلَى رَجُلًا لَمْ يُحْسِنِ أَنْ يُطَلِّقَ امْرَأَتَهُ

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘I said, ‘Place Abdullah Bin Umar in charge’. He sat up straight and said, ‘O Ibn Abbas! By Allah^{-azwj}, I did not intend with this place in charge a man who isn’t good at divorcing his own wife!’

قُلْتُ وَهِيَ عُثْمَانَ بْنَ عَفَّانَ فَقَالَ وَاللَّهِ لَئِنْ وَلَّيْتُهُ لَيَحْمِلَنَّ آلُ أَبِي مُعَيْطٍ عَلَى رِقَابِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَ أَوْشَكَ إِنْ فَعَلْنَا أَنْ يَقْتُلُوهُ قَالَهَا ثَلَاثًا

O said, ‘Place Usman Bin Affan in charge’. He said, ‘By Allah^{-azwj}! If I were to place him in charge, he would carry the family of Abu Mueet upon the necks of Muslims, and there is no doubt that if we were to do so, they would kill him’ – saying it thrice.

قَالَ ثُمَّ سَكَتُ لِمَا أَعْرَفْتُ مِنْ مُعَانَدَتِهِ لِأَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ فَقَالَ لِي يَا ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ ادْكُرْ صَاحِبَكَ

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘Then he was silent, when I recognise his enmity towards Amir Al-Momineen Ali^{-asws} Bin Abu Talib^{-asws}’. He said to me, ‘O Ibn Abbas! Mention your companion’.

قَالَ فُلْتُ وَهِيَ عَلِيًّا قَالَ وَاللَّهِ مَا جَزَعَنِي إِلَّا لِمَا أَحَدْتُ الْحَقَّ مِنْ أَرْبَابِهِ وَاللَّهِ لَئِنْ وَلَّيْتُهُ لَيَحْمِلَنَّ عَلَيَّ الْمَحَجَّةَ الْعُظْمَى وَ إِنْ يُطِيعُوهُ يُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ

He (Ibn Abbas) said, ‘I said, ‘Place Ali^{-asws} in charge’. He said, ‘By Allah^{-azwj}! My panic isn’t except due to my having seized the rights from their owners. By Allah^{-azwj}! If I were to place him^{-asws} in charge, he^{-asws} will carry them upon the mighty arguments, and if they were to obey him^{-asws}, he^{-asws} will enter them into the Paradise’.

فَهُوَ يَقُولُ هَذَا ثُمَّ صَبَّرَهَا سُورَى بَيْنَ السِّتَةِ فَوَيْلٌ لَهُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ

He was saying this, then he made it to be a consultation between the six. So, woe be to him from his Lord^{-azwj!}

قَالَ أَبُو الْهَدَيْلِ بَيْنَا هُوَ يُكَلِّمُنِي إِذَا احْتَلَطَ وَ ذَهَبَ عَقْلُهُ فَأَحْبَرْتُ الْمَأْمُونَ بِقِصَّتِهِ وَ كَانَ مِنْ قِصَّتِهِ أَنْ ذُهِبَ بِمَالِهِ وَ ضِيَاعِهِ حِيلَةً وَ غَدْرًا

Abu Al-Huzeyl said, ‘While he was talking to me, when he got mixed up and his intellect was gone. I informed Al-Mamoun with his story, and it was from his story that the going away of his wealth and his estate was a means and an excuse.

فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَأْمُونَ فَجَاءَ بِهِ وَ عَالَجَهُ وَ كَانَ قَدْ ذَهَبَ عَقْلُهُ بِمَا صُنِعَ بِهِ فَرَدَّ عَلَيْهِ مَالَهُ وَ ضِيَاعَهُ وَ صَبَّرَهُ نَدِيمًا فَكَانَ الْمَأْمُونَ يَتَشَبَّعُ لِذَلِكَ وَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ حَالٍ.

Al-Mamoun sent for him. They came with him, and he treated him, and his intellect had gone due to what had been done with him. He returned his wealth to him, and his estate, and made him a close friend. Al-Mamoun was a Shia due to that. And the Praise is for Allah^{-azwj} upon every state”.¹

¹ Bihar Al Anwaar – V 49, The book of History – Ali Al Reza^{asws}, Ch 18 H 35