

Islamic Queries+

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ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE



دار النشر الإسلامي

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Published by www.iph.ca & www.al-mubin.org



The below Q&A was extracted from:
<http://www.islamquest.net/fa/archive/question/az21786>

The Ten Promised Paradise

Question

In the [Prophetic] traditions (*riwāyāt*), is it mentioned that there are ten companions of the Prophet of Islam ﷺ who have been promised Paradise? If such a statement does exist, then our follow-up question is: Is this tradition considered authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) or not?

Answer

In the sources of the Ahl as-Sunnah, there is a tradition present which is commonly referred to as the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’ [العشرة المبشرون بالجنة - *al-‘ashara al-mubashsirūn bil jannah*] in which it is stated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ gave the glad tidings of Paradise to ten of his companions. Therefore, the Ahl as-Sunnah commonly refer to those companions with the title of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise,’ and these include: Abū Bakr [b. Abū Qahāfah], ‘Umar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb], ‘Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib], ‘Uthmān [b. al-Affān], Ṭalḥa [b. ‘Ubaydullāh], Zubayr [b. al-‘Awwām], Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, ‘Abd

al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, Sa‘īd b. Zayd bin ‘Umrū b. Nufayl and ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd.¹

However the Shī‘a reject such traditions based on their own strong arguments and consider these [types of traditions] as fabrications.² As for the proofs which the Shī‘a scholars bring forth to reject such types of traditions, we relate some of them below:

1. A careful study [of the Islamic texts] clearly show that this purported tradition was narrated by Sa‘īd b. Zayd³ and Zubayr b. al-Awwām (whom we will speak about shortly) – however they themselves are within this classification of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’. In addition, history has shown that no other companions ever asked these specific ten individuals why, up until that point in time [when this narration was first brought up within the Muslim society] had it been kept hidden!

How is it possible that in this “tradition”, someone like Imām ‘Alī ﷺ can be regarded as being one of the people of Paradise and at the same time,

¹ Bayhaqī, Aḥmad bin Ḥusayn, *Al-‘Itiqād wa al-Hidāyah ilā Sabīl al-Rishād ‘alā Madhab al-Salaf wa Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth*; researched by Aḥmad ‘Eṣṣām Kātib, p. 332, Dār al-Afāq al-Jadīd Publishers, Beirut, First Print, 1401 AH; Muḥammad bin ‘Abdullāh Ḥākīm al-Nishābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, researched by Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā, vol. 3, p. 439, Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, First Print, 1411 AH; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Dhahabī, *Sayr A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 1, p. 104, Mu‘asissah al-Risālah, 1405 AH.

² See Syed Murtaḍa bin Dā‘ī Ḥasanī Rāzī, *Tabṣira al-‘Awwām fī Ma‘rifah Muqālāt al-An‘ām*, pp. 242-244, Published by Asāṭir, Tehran, Second Edition, 1364 s; ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, *al-Ghādir fī al-Kitāb wa al-Sunnah wa al-Adab*, vol. 10, pp. 162-183, Markaz al-Gahdir lil Darāsāt al-Islāmiyyah, Qum, first edition, 1416 AH.

³ The chain of narrators of this tradition is as follows: It was narrated from Ṣāliḥ b. Mismār al-Marwazī that he said, it was been narrated from Ibnu Abī Fadayk from Mūsā b. Ya‘qūb from ‘Umar b. Sa‘īd from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥumayd from his father that Sa‘īd b. Zayd related from a person that the Messenger of Allah, peace and prayers of God be upon him, said, ‘There are ten which will be in Paradise: Abū Bakr will be in Paradise, ‘Umar will be in Paradise, and ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī and Zubayr and Ṭalḥa and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Abū ‘Ubayda and Sa‘ad bin Abī Waqqās.’; Muḥammad bin ‘Isā Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, vol. 5, p. 648, Shirka Maktaba wa Maṭba‘a Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī Press, Egypt, Second Edition, 1395 AH.

individuals who clearly broke their pledge of allegiance (*bay'ah*) to him and rejected him [and his authority] - such as Sa'ad b. Abi Waqqāṣ, and those who launched armed rebellions against the caliphate of Imām 'Alī ﷺ, such as Ṭalha and Zubayr, can also be included in this list!

2. In some of the books of Shī'a traditions it is mentioned that when the tradition of the 'Ten Promised Paradise' was being related, Zubayr b. al-Awwām went to Imam 'Alī ﷺ and reminded him of this tradition however the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī ﷺ categorically rejected this tradition to his face.

The books of tradition mention that:

When the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī ﷺ went face to face in the Battle of the Camel (*Ma'rikah al-Jamal*) against the people of Baṣrah (Irāq), the Imām called upon Zubayr and said: "O Abā 'Abdillāh!⁴ Come out [of your tent]."

The companions present said to Imām 'Alī ﷺ: "Will you go to Zubayr - a man who has broken his pledge of allegiance to you while he is mounted on his horse and is fully protected with weapons, while you are on your donkey and without any weapons!?"

Imām 'Alī ﷺ replied to them stating: "I have a promise granted to me by Allāh of full protection. Also, keep in mind that no one is able to run away from their own appointed period of death. I will definitely not die in this battle nor will I be killed; rather this - my death - will be at the hands of the worst person of this nation -

⁴ Abā 'Abdillāh is a patronym for Zubayr.

just as the she-camel of Ṣāliḥ was killed by the worst of people from the tribe of Thamūd.”

At this point Zubayr came forward and Imām ‘Alī ؑ said to him: “Where is Ṭalḥa? Bring him with you as well.”

Ṭalḥa also came out and then the Imām said to these two: “I adjure the two of you by the name of Allāh that do the two of you, those who are carriers of the knowledge from the family of Muḥammad, and in addition to the two of you, ‘Āysha the daughter of Abū Bakr, don’t all of you know that the people who will take part in the Battle of the Camel and the people of the Battle of Nahrawān have been maledicted⁵ against by the Prophet ﷺ, and anyone who seeks to plot against me are the losers [in this world and in the next]?”

To this, Zubayr retorted: “How is it possible that we would be imprecated against while we are the people of Paradise?”

Imām ‘Alī ؑ replied: “If I considered you to be from the people of Paradise, then I would not have considered war against you to be permissible!”

Zubayr replied: “On the Day of the Battle of Uḥud, did you not hear the Prophet saying that: ‘Ṭalḥa is deserving of Paradise.’ In addition to this, the Prophet said: ‘Whoever wishes to see a martyr (*shahīd*) who is alive and walks on the earth, should look towards Ṭalḥa.” Also did you not hear the Prophet say that: ‘There are ten individuals from amongst the Quraysh who are Paradise-bound?!’

⁵ The process of invoking the *la‘n* – also known as evoking a prayer to *anathematize* an individual. This is a curse solemnly pronounced via a supplication (*du‘ā*) upon a person or group of people in which one is asking Allāh ﷻ to withdraw His mercy from that person/people and punish them for their evil actions. (Tr.)

To this, the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī ﷺ replied: ‘Enumerate who those people are.’

Zubayr replied: ‘They are Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, me (Zubayr), Ṭalḥa...’ and he continued to recount the names and went on to mention: ‘...Abū ‘Ubaydah Jarrāh, Sa‘id bin Zayd bin ‘Umrū bin Nufayl.’

When he finished, Imām ‘Alī ﷺ said to him: ‘You have only mentioned nine names! Who is the tenth?’

To this, Zubayr said: ‘It is you!’

‘Alī then said to him: ‘So you bear witness that I am one of the people of Paradise, however that which you and your companions claim is something which I categorically reject! I swear by Allāh that some of the names of the individuals which you have just taken will be residing in a coffin, housed in a well, lying in the deepest recesses of Hell. On the top of that well is an access gate which covers, made of stone, and anytime Allāh wishes to ignite the fire of Hell, He will move that rock from its place and will ignite the fire of Hell from that well [and those who are within it]. This is something which I myself heard the Messenger [of Allāh] mention and had this not been the case, then surely Allāh would have allowed you to become victorious over me and you would have been successful in shedding my blood; [however if I am speaking the truth] then know that we will be victorious over you and your companions [in this battle].’

Zubayr left this encounter and returned back to his tent, crying.⁶

In addition to this, the Noble Prophet ﷺ had given the glad tidings [of Paradise] on numerous occasions to various believers. For example, it is narrated that he said, time and time again that Imām ‘Alī ؑ and his followers (*shī‘a*) shall be in paradise.”⁷

Or according to other traditions, the Prophet has been quoted as saying, “Paradise is desirous of four individuals: ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, ‘Ammār, Salmān and Miqdād.”⁸

⁶ Ibn ‘Uqdah Kūfī, Aḥmed bin Muḥammad, *Fadhā’il Amīr al-Mo’minīn ‘alayhi al-salām*, research and proofread by ‘Abd al-Razzāq Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ḥirz al-Dīn, pp. 166-167, Published by Dalīl Mā, Qum, First Print 1424 AH; Shaykh Mufīd, *al-Kāfi’a fi Ibtāl Tawbah al-Khā’ia*, research and proofread by Zamānī Nizhād, pp. 24-25, Printed by Kongara Shaykh Mufīd, Qum, First Print, 1413 AH; ‘Alī bin Muḥammad Khazzāz Rāzī, *Kifāya al-Athar fi al-Naṣṣ ‘alā al-‘Immah al-Ithnā ‘Ashar*, Research and proofread by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥusaynī Khukamarī, pp. 114-115, Published by Bīdār Publishers, Qum, 1401 AH; Sulaym bin Qays Hilālī, *Kitāb Sulaym bin Qays al-Hilālī*, research and proofread by Muḥammad Anṣārī Zanjan Khū’aynī, vol. 2, pp. 798-799, Published by Al-Hādī Publishers, Qum, First Print, 1405 AH; Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ṭabarsī, *Al-Ihtijāj ‘alā Ahl al-Lujāj*, research and proofread by Muḥammad Bāqir Khurasān, v. 1, p. 162, Published Murtaḍhā Publishers, Mashhad, First Print, 1403 AH.

⁷ Ṭabarī, Amelī Kabīr, Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Rustam, *al-Mustarshid fi Imāmah ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ‘alayhi al-salām*, researched and edited by Aḥmad Maḥmūd, p. 401, Published by Kūshānpūr Publishers, Qum, First Edition, 1415 AH; Syed Hāshim Baḥrānī, *Al-Burhān fi Tafīr al-Qur’an*, v. 5, p. 347, Published by Bunyād Bī’tah, Tehran, First Edition, 1416 AH; Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh Abū Na’īm Isfahānī, *Ḥilyah al-Awliyā’ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā’*, vol. 4, p. 329, Published by al-Sa’adah bi Jiwār Muḥāfiḍha Miṣr, 1394 AH; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn Moghāzeli, *Manāqib Amīr al-Mo’minīn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib raḍhi Allāhu ‘anhu*, Researcher: Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Turkī bin ‘Abd Allāh Wadī’, pp. 305 and 357, Dār al-Athār Publishers, Sana‘ā, First Edition, 1424 AH.

⁸ Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl*, Researched and Edited by ‘Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, vol. 1, p. 303, Published by Daftar Intishārāt Islāmī, Qum, First dition, 1362 s; Ismā’īl bin ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr Baṣrī, *Jāmi’ al-Masānīd wa Sunan al-Hādī li Aqḥam Sunan*, vol. 3, p. 495, Published by Dār Khīḍr li Ṭabā’ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, Beirut, Second Edition, 1419 AH; Majd al-Dīn Abū Al-Sa’ādāt al-Mubārak b. Muḥammed Ibn Athīr Jazarī, *Jāmi’ al-Uṣūl fi Aḥādīth al-Rasūl*, vol. 8, p 565, Published by Maktaba al-Ḥalawānī and Printed by Maṭba’ah al-Malāḥ, found in Maktabah Dār al-Bayān, First Edition, 1392 AH.

All of these traditions are present in the books, but the tradition of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’ does not contain any name of the righteous followers that supported ‘Alī ﷺ and really [in our opinion], the only reason that the name of Imām ‘Alī ﷺ, with all of its lustre and gleam which it has, has been mentioned in the apparent tradition of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’ is because of the fact that his status is something which is beyond doubt.

In addition, [it is our belief that] the only reason why his name was even inserted into this false tradition was that the fabricators felt that by mentioning the name of ‘Alī ﷺ, they would be able to mislead others into believing that this tradition was authentic [through putting his name along side these nine other individuals]!

Indeed what an interesting combination in which exact opposites are seen in this fabricated tradition!

Is it possible to even presume that someone who would unjustly fight against Imam ‘Alī ﷺ could actually have a place reserved for himself in Paradise, while we know that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ has clearly stated that: “Whosoever fights with Ali, it is as if they have fought against me.”⁹

Going back to the discussion about Zubayr, we should realize that he is that same person about whom ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb has been quoted as saying the following:

فقال عمر: أفلا أخبركم عن أنفسكم؟ قال: قل: فإننا لو استعفيناك لم تعفنا.
فقال: أما أنت يا زبير، فوعق لقس مؤمن الرضا كافر الغضب يوما إنسان و
يوما شيطان، و لعلها لو أفضت إليك ظلت يومك تلاطم بالبطحاء على مد

⁹ Khazzāz Rāzī, ‘Ali bin Muḥammad, *Kifāyah al-Athar fī al-Naṣṣ ‘alā al-A’immah al-Ithnā ‘Ashar*, Research and Corrected by ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥusaynī Kūhkamarī, p. 181, Published by Bidār, Qum, 1401 AH; Shaykh Ṣadūq, *I’tiqādāt al-Imāmiyyah*, p. 105, Published by the Kongareh Shaykh Mufid, Qum, Second Edition, 1414 AH.

من شعير. أفرأيت إن أفضت إليك فليت شعري من يكون للناس يوم تكون
شيطاناً و من يكون يوم تغضب و ما كان الله ليجمع لك أمر هذه الأمة و
أنت على هذه الصفة.

Then ‘Umar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb] said: “Should I not inform you all about your true natures?” He (Zubayr b. al-Awwām) replied: “Speak. For you will not spare us even if we beg you to spare us!” Then Umar [b. al-Khaṭṭāb] said: “As for you O Zubayr (b. al-Awwām)! You are an ill-mannered, impatient and greedy person, faithful [displaying your belief in Islam] in [times of] happiness and [acting] blasphemous when filled with anger; one day, you [act as a] human, while [you act as a] devil the next day. If I was to transfer this (*khilāfa*) over to you, you would probably waste your days in Baḥā¹⁰ fighting people over a kilogram or a half a kilogram of barley. Do you not see [the consequences], if I was to hand this (*khilāfa*) over to you? If only I had a way to know who would look after the people on the days when you come out as a devil, and who would protect them on the days when you are filled with anger! Allāh ﷻ will never give you control over this nation as long as you are tainted by such characteristics.”¹¹

In addition, Ṭalḥa who was also mentioned in the purported tradition of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise’, is that same individual who during the lead up to the Battle of the Camel was approached by the Commander of the Faithful

¹⁰ A part of the city of Riyāḍ in current day Saudi Arabia. (Tr.)

¹¹ Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Hebba Allāh, *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāgha*, Research and Proofread by Muḥammad Abū Al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, vol. 1, p. 185, Published by Maktaba Ayatullāh al-Mar‘ashī al-Najafī, Qum, First Edition, 1404 AH.

‘Alī ﷺ and was asked if he recalled hearing the tradition of *wilāyah* or not - to which he ended up stating that it was due to the fact that he just happened to forget the *ḥadīth of Ghadīr*¹² - thus he tried to excuse himself and his actions in the Battle of the Camel. In the end, he ended up being killed by an arrow shot by Marwān (who killed him to avenge the blood of ‘Uthmān).¹³

Therefore, Ṭalḥa ended up being killed and leaving this world while he had disobeyed the Imām of his time.

With all of this, is it really possible to assume that the legitimate leader of the Islamic state and the one who had worked against him in a frenzied state can both be considered as being eligible to make it into Paradise?

In addition it has been narrated in traditions that: “One day, when verse 53 of Sūrah al-Aḥzāb¹⁴ was sent down [to the Prophet ﷺ], Ṭalḥa said to a group of people whom he was with that:

¹² Ḥākim Nishābūrī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, *Al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, Research by Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Qādir ‘Aṭā, vol. 3, p. 419, Published by Dar al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, Beirut, First Print, 1411 AH; ‘Alī bin Abī Bakr Haythamī, *Kashf al-Astār ‘an Zawā’id al-Bazār*, Research by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān A’dhamī, vol. 3, pp. 186-187, Published by Mu’assisah al-Risālah, Beirut, First Print, 1399 AH.

¹³ Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh, *Al-Istī‘āb fī Ma’rifah al-Aṣḥāb*, Research by ‘Alī Muḥammad Al-Bejāwī, vol. 2, p. 766, Published by Dār al-Jil, Beirut, First Print, 1412 AH; Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, Researched by Suhayl, Zirkilī, Riyāḍ, vol. 2, pp. 246-247, Published by Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, First Print, 1417 AH.

¹⁴ This verse reads:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرٍ نَاظِرِينَ إِنَاءَهُ
وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا فَإِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا وَلَا مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ لِحَدِيثٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ
يُؤْذَى النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَإِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ
مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا
أَنْ تُنْكَحُوا أَرْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا﴾

O you who believe! do not enter the houses of the Prophet unless permission is given to you for a meal, not waiting for its cooking being finished - but when you are invited, then enter, and when you have taken the food, then disperse - not

‘What benefit does this ruling of the *ḥijāb* have today for the Messenger of Allāh, as tomorrow when he dies, I am going to go ahead and marry [his wife] ‘Āyeshā anyway!’

When the Prophet heard these words, he became extremely upset and annoyed at this statement of Ṭalḥa.¹⁵

With all of this which is present in the life of Ṭalḥa, how is it possible to believe that he is regarded to be one of the ‘Ten Promised Paradise,’ and that all of these ten are at one rank and status, and that they are individuals with an illustrious track record who are making it to Paradise!



*O Allāh! Send Your prayers upon Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad!*¹⁶

seeking to listen to talk; surely this gives the Prophet trouble, but he forbears you, and Allah does not forbear from the truth. And when you ask of them any goods, ask them from behind a curtain; this is purer for your hearts and (for) their hearts; and it does not behove you that you should give trouble to the Messenger of Allah, nor that you should marry his wives after him ever; surely this is grievous in the sight of Allah.

¹⁵ Qurṭubī, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Al-ġāmī li Aḥkām al-Qurān*, vol. 14, p. 228, Published by Intishārāt Nāṣir Khusrūw, Tehran, First Printing, 1364 AH.

¹⁶ We wish to thank Sayyid Sibtain Kazmi of Brisbane, Australia for assistance rendered in the translation of a portion of this Islamic Query.