

1) Hadith Al-Thaqalayn: The Prophet At 'Arafat (Part 1)

It was 10 H (632 CE), during the last Hajj of the Messenger of Allah, sallallahu 'alaihi wa alihi. Muslims from all corners of the then Islamic world had gathered together at 'Arafat for the prescribed pilgrimage rites, under his leadership and guidance. It was here that the Prophet delivered one of the most significant sermons in the entire history of humankind. Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) records what happened:

حدثنا نصر بن عبد الرحمن الكوفي حدثنا زيد بن الحسن هو الأنماطي عن جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حجته يوم عرفة وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب فسمعتة يقول يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي

Nasr b. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Kufi – Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati – Ja'far b. Muhammad – his father – Jabir b. 'Abd Allah:

I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his Hajj on the Day of 'Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying: “O mankind! I have left behind over you¹ that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.”²

Al-Tirmidhi says on the riwayah:

وهذا حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه و زيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم

And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa'id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.³

‘Allamah al-Albani also has a simple comment:

صحيح

Sahih⁴

In his al-Sahihah, the ‘Allamah further states:

يا أيها الناس! إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أخذتم به لن تضلوا، كتاب الله"

". وعترتي أهل بيتي

أخرجه الترمذي (2 / 308) والطبراني (2680) عن زيد بن الحسن الأنمطي عن جعفر عن أبيه عن جابر بن عبد الله قال: " رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في حجته يوم عرفة، وهو على ناقته القصواء يخطب، فسمعتة يقول: " فذكره، وقال: " حديث حسن غريب من هذا الوجه، وزيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير ". واحد من أهل العلم

". قلت: قال أبو حاتم، منكر الحديث، وذكره ابن حبان في " الثقات ". وقال الحافظ: " ضعيف

قلت: لكن الحديث صحيح، فإن له شاهدا من حديث زيد بن أرقم

“O mankind! I have left behind over you that which if you hold fast to it you will never go astray: the Book of Allah and my offspring, my Ahl al-Bayt.”

Al-Tirmidhi (2/308) and al-Tabarani (2680) recorded it from Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati from Ja’far from his father from Jabir b. ‘Abd Allah, who said: “I saw the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, during his Hajj on the Day of ‘Arafat while he was on his camel, al-Qaswa, delivering a sermon, and I heard him saying” Then he (al-Tirmidhi) quoted it (i.e. the hadith), and said: “And this hadith is hasan gharib (i.e. has a hasan chain) from this route. As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa’id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.”

I (al-Albani) say: Abu Hatim said: “Munkar al-hadith” and Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat (The Trustworthy Narrators). Al-Hafiz said: “Dha’if”.

I (al-Albani) say: But the hadith is sahih, for – verily – it has a witness (shahid) in the hadith of Zayd b.

Arqam.5

These words of al-Albani explain his methodology in grading the hadith as sahih. Unlike al-Tirmidhi, he considers the chain of the report to be dha'if (weak), due to Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati. However, he believes that the Messenger did truly utter those words – as evidenced by the report of Zayd b. Arqam – at a location other than 'Arafat.

The claim that the Prophet delivered the hadith at 'Arafat, in addition to other places, comes only through the sanad of al-Anmati. As such, if his chain is dha'if, then it would be impossible to prove that those words were ever uttered at 'Arafat – even though there is no doubt that he said them at another place. Meanwhile, Imam al-Tirmidhi believed that the Messenger of Allah declared the hadith at 'Arafat, and later at Ghadir Khumm⁶. 'Allamah al-Albani explains how:

أقول: وجه ذلك أن جمع الترمذي بين لفظتي " غريب " و " حسن " إنما يعني في اصطلاحه أنه حسن لذاته

I say: The reason for that is whenever al-Tirmidhi says “hasan gharib”, he only means in his terminologies that its chain is independently hasan.⁷

So, basically, al-Tirmidhi considers al-Anmati to be reliable, and his sanad to be hasan. We could then conclude the following from the research up to this level:

Al-Tirmidhi considers the chain of al-Anmati to be independently hasan while al-Albani grades the same sanad as dha'if.

It is only the sanad of al-Anmati which establishes that the hadith was pronounced at 'Arafat too, in addition to Ghadir Khumm. Therefore, if the chain is dha'if, then there would be no evidence that the Prophet of Allah ever said those words at 'Arafat.

To al-Tirmidhi, the Messenger uttered delivered the hadith at 'Arafat, and later at Ghadir Khumm. However, in the opinion of al-Albani, it is NOT established that the Prophet made the statement at 'Arafat, even though it is true that he said them later at Ghadir Khumm.

In rejecting the reliability of Zayd b. al-Hasan al-Anmati, 'Allamah al-Albani has only Abu Hatim (d. 277 H) as his principal authority:

" وزيد بن الحسن قد روى عنه سعيد بن سليمان وغير واحد من أهل العلم "

" قلت: قال أبو حاتم، منكر الحديث، وذكره ابن حبان في " الثقات ". وقال الحافظ: " ضعيف "

(Al-Tirmidhi said): “As for Zayd b. al-Hasan, Sa’id b. Sulayman and others from the people of knowledge have narrated from him.”

I (al-Albani) say: Abu Hatim said: “Munkar al-hadith” and Ibn Hibban mentioned him in al-Thiqat (The Trustworthy Narrators). Al-Hafiz said: “Dha’if”.

We therefore know the following about al-Anmati:

Imam Ibn Hibban (d. 354 H) considers him thiqah (trustworthy), and has therefore included him in his al-Thiqat.

Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279 H) accepts al-Anmati’s ahadith as being independently hasan. This shows that he considers him reliable, most probably saduq (very truthful) in status.

Imam Abu Hatim (d. 277 H) calls him munkar al-hadith, meaning that his ahadith are “rejected”, very weak.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852 H) also declares al-Anmati to be dha’if.

Needless to say, Abu Hatim was the only classical scholar who deemed al-Anmati to be unreliable. Therefore, al-Hafiz – a much later scholar – apparently only adopted this negative rating.

As such, the primary, uncorroborated source of the criticism against al-Anmati was Abu Hatim only.

Al-Hafiz relied upon the statements of the classical scholars to classify narrators. Since Abu Hatim was the sole classical critic of al-Anmati, then al-Hafiz had certainly relied only upon the former for his “dha’if” grading.

All these point in one direction only: Abu Hatim is the sole, unsupported primary critic of al-Anmati. We confirm absolutely too that no other classical Sunni hadith scientist levelled any criticism against al-Anmati apart from Abu Hatim. Therefore, if the criticism of Abu Hatim falls, then everything against al-Anmati collapses with it. So, we ask: what is the probative value of uncorroborated testimonies of Abu Hatim concerning narrators? Imam al-Dhahabi provides the apposite answer:

إذا وثق أبو حاتم رجلا فتمسك بقوله، فإنه لا يوثق إلا رجلا صحيح الحديث، وإذا لين رجلا، أو قال فيه: لا يحتج به. فتوقف حتى ترى ما قال غيره فيه، فإن وثقه أحد، فلا تبني على تجريح أبي حاتم، فإنه متعنت في الرجال

When Abu Hatim declared a narrator to be thiqah (trustworthy), then hold fast to his statement, because he never declared a narrator to be thiqah except a narrator whose ahadith are sahih. When he weakened a narrator, or said about him “he is not accepted as a hujjah”, then pause until you have seen what others also said about him (i.e. that narrator). If there was A SINGLE other person who declared him (i.e. the narrator) to be thiqah (trustworthy), then do NOT adopt the criticism of Abu Hatim, because

he was pigheaded in rijal.⁸

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani also says about a narrator:

وفي الميزان أن أبا حاتم قال لا يحتج به فينتظر في ذلك وأبو حاتم عنده عنت وقد احتج به الجماعة

In al-Mizan, it is stated that Abu Hatim said “He is not accepted as a hujjah”. But, watch that carefully. There was pigheadedness in Abu Hatim. He (the narrator) has been accepted as a hujjah by the majority.⁹

This is self-explanatory and straightforward:

Whenever Abu Hatim was the only classical critic against a narrator, then investigation must be conducted to find out if any other classical hadithist contradicted him.

If there was a single classical hadith scientist who contradicted Abu Hatim, then the latter’s criticism must be rejected.

Abu Hatim was the only classical critic of al-Anmati, and he was contradicted by both al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Hibban.

As such, the criticism of Abu Hatim is worthless, and al-Anmati is indeed reliable – whether thiqah (trustworthy) or saduq (very truthful) – as indicated by Ibn Hibban and al-Tirmidhi.

With these findings, it is neatly established that the chain of al-Anmati is sahih, or at least hasan, as declared by Imam al-Tirmidhi. This in turn proves that the Prophet of Allah did truly deliver Hadith al-Thaqalayn at ‘Arafat, among other places.

^{1.} The word used in the hadith is fikum. This author himself previously translated it as “among you” or “amongst you”. However, upon further research, he concluded that the main preposition used – fi – has the following definitions in classical Arabic: “above”, “over”, “on”, “among”, “amongst”, and “in”. For instance, ‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) has stated concerning the phrase “fi” in his al-Sahihah, vol. 2, p. 715, # 925–12 (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1415 H):

قوله تعالى: {أأمنتم من في السماء}; أي: على السماء؛ أي: فوق العرش، وبذلك فسرها علماء السلف والخلف – ومنهم ابن عبد البر في "التمهيد"، والبيهقي في كتابيه: "الأسماء" و"الاعتقاد"

The Statement of Allah the Most High: {Do you feel secure that He Who is over [fi] the heaven} [67:16], meaning: over the sky; meaning: above the Throne. This is how the scholars of the Salaf and the Khalaf – among them Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in al-Tamhid and al-Bayhaqi in his books – al-Asma and al-l’itiqad – have interpreted it.

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) also writes in his Mukhtasar al-‘Uluw li al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azim (al-Maktab al-Islami; 2nd edition, 1412 H)[annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], pp. 245–246, #298:

قال أبو عبد الله الحاكم: قال الفقيه أبو بكر أحمد بن إسحاق الضبيعي النيسابوري: قد توضع العرب "في" موضع "على" قال الله تعالى: {فسيحوا في الأرض} وقال: {ولأصلبكنم في جذوع النخل} ومعناه على الأرض وعلى النخل، فكذلك قوله: {من في السماء} أي من على العرش، كما صححت الأخبار عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Hakim said: The jurist, Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Ishaq al-Dhab'i al-Naysaburi said: "The Arabs have used fi to mean 'ala (above, over). Allah the Most High says: {So travel freely [fi] over the earth} [9:2]. He also says: {I will surely crucify you [fi] above the trunks of date-palms} [20:71]. Its meaning is 'over the earth' and 'over the date-palms'. This is also the case with His Statement {Who is over [fi] the heaven}, meaning, Who is over the Throne, as sahih reports have indicated from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him."

The same term has been used in Hadith al-Thaqalayn. We now believe that it means "over" and "above" in the hadith because the Messenger of Allah was NOT placing the Qur'an and his offspring on equal footing with us in it. Rather, he was ordering us to "adhere" to them – thereby placing them above us, making them our leaders.

[2.](#) Abu 'Isa Muhammad b. 'Isa al-Sulami al-Tirmidhi, al-Jami' al-Sahih Sunan al-Tirmidhi (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani], vol. 5, p. 662 # 3786

[3.](#) Ibid

[4.](#) Ibid

[5.](#) Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 4, pp. 355–356, # 1761

[6.](#) We will later in this book present sahih Sunni reports – by Zayd b. Arqam and others – of the pronouncement of the hadith at a place called Ghadir Khumm.

[7.](#) Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha'ifah wa al-Mawdu'ah wa Athariyah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma'arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 2, p. 185, # 764

[8.](#) Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H), vol. 13, p. 260, # 129

[9.](#) Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hajar al-'Asqalani al-Shafi'i, Hadi al-Sari Muqaddimah Fath al-Bari (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-'Arabi; 4th edition, 1408 H), p. 441

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