

Published on Al-Islam.org (https://www.al-islam.org)

<u>Home</u> > <u>Lights on the Muhammadan Sunnah or Defence of the Hadith</u> > <u>Examples On Narrating Hadith</u>

By Meaning Hadith Of Islam And Faith > Hadith of Ali's Sahifah

Examples On Narrating Hadith By Meaning Hadith Of Islam And Faith

Muslim reports on the authority of Talhah ibn Ubayd Allah that he said: a furious man from the people of Najd, the reverberation of whom we would hear without apprehending what he was saying, came to the Messenger of Allah and approached him, starting to inquire about Islam. The Messenger of Allah said: It consists of five prayers during day and night. He asked: Are there other things incumbent upon me to do? He (S) said: No, unless you volunteer.

Then the Messenger of Allah referred him to the *zakat* (alms–due). He again said: Shall I have to do other than it? He (S) replied: No, unless you volunteer. He (Talhah) said: The man turned the back, exclaiming: By Allah, I shall never increase to or decrease anything from this. The Messenger thereat said: If he says the truth he will verily be successful. In another narration, he said: By the life of his father he shall be victorious should he utter the truth. Yet in another narration, he (S) said: By the life of his father, he will verily enter the Paradise if what he said is true.

In the hadith on Gabriel, Abu Hurayrah is reported to have said:

The Messenger of Allah said: Question me. But they felt awe of him, after which a man came and sat at his (S) knees saying: O Messenger of Allah, what is Islam? You should never take a partner to Allah, and establish the prayers, and take out *zakat* (of your properties), and fast the Month of Ramadan. He said: You said the truth. Then he said: O Messenger of Allah, what is faith (*iman*)? He (S) replied: It is to believe in Allah, His angels, His Book, meeting Him, His apostles, and the Unseen, and in Destiny as a whole. He said: You said the truth, adding: O Messenger of Allah, what is benevolence? He said: It is to fear Allah as if you are seeing Him, since if you see Him not He is verily seeing you...etc. We discussed this *hadith* in details in our book Shaykh al-mudirah, so it is better to refer to it with reading what Dr. Taha Husayn stated about it. 1

Abu Ayyub² is reported to have said: A man came to the Prophet and said to him: Inform me what act I can do to bring me near the heavens, and distance me from the Fire. He said: You should worship Allah

without taking anything a partner to Him, establish the prayers, and pay the *zakat*, and be kind to your relations. Then the Messenger of Allah said: If he heeds to what he was ordered to do he will verily enter paradise.

In another narration by Ibn Abi Shaybah, (he [S] said): "If he heeds to it..."

Abu Hurayrah is reported to have said: A bedouin came to the Messenger of Allah and said to him: O Messenger of Allah, guide me to an act that when I do I can enter paradise. He (S) said: You should worship Allah without taking anything into partnership to Him, establish the prescribed prayers, pay the *zakat*, and fast the Month of Ramadan. The man said: By Whom in Whose hand is my soul, I shall neither add anything to this nor omit from it. After he left, the Prophet said: Whoever likes to look at a man from paradise inhabitants, he is asked to look at this man.

In his comment on these traditions, al-Imam al-Nawawi said (in the very words): 3 "Know that any reference to hajj (pilgrimage) was never made in *hadith* of Talhah or Gabriel *hadith* through narration of Abu Hurayrah. Besides, in some other traditions no reference was made to fasting (*sawm*), nor to *zakat* in some others. In some of them doing kindness to uterine relations was mentioned, and paying out the *khums* (one-fifth) in some others, while no any reference to *iman* (faith) was made in some others. So there was diversity among these traditions in regard of several traits of faith (*iman*), by addition, cutting out, confirmation and omission.

A reply was given by al-Qadi 'lyad and other than him, that was epitomized and rectified by al-Shaykh Abu 'Amr ibn al-Salah, saying: This difference is not coming out from the Messenger of Allah, but it is dissimilarity among the narrators in memorization and exactitude. One of them was sufficed with narrating what he learnt by heart, conveying it without negating or confirming the additions of others.

Though his content with this is an attempt to show that what he reported was the whole of the *hadith*, but the contrary of this was proved when other trustworthy narrators reported the same *hadith*, demonstrating that his confining to it was only due to his failure to memorize the whole *hadith*. Don't you see the *hadith* of al–Nu'man ibn Nawfal, regarding whose traits the narrations differed, by addition and reduction, though the narrator of all of them being one and the same?

Following is *hadith* of al–Nu'man ibn Nawfal4: On the authority of Abu Sufyan, from Jabir, it is reported that the Prophet (S) was visited by al–Nu'man ibn Nawfal who said to him: O Messenger of Allah, do you believe that when I perform the prescribed prayers, deeming unlawful what is ordained unlawful, and deeming lawful what is lawful (in the Qur'an), I deserve to enter paradise? The Prophet (S) replied: Yes.

Al-A'mash, reports on the authority of Abu Salih and Abu Sufyan, from Jabir that he said: Al-Nu'man ibn Nawfal said: O Messenger of Allah, with the similar *hadith*, and they added to it, while I haven't added anything to it.

Hadith of I Married Her to You with What you Have

Hadith of I Married Her to You with What You Have5.

A woman came to the Prophet, intending to offer herself (for marriage) to him, whereat a man advanced forward saying: O Messenger of Allah, marry her to me. But since he owned nothing to present as a *mahr* (dowry) except some Qur'anic verses he was learning by heart, the Prophet said to him: "I married her to you (*ankahtukaha*) with what you have (in memory) of the Qur'an (as a *mahr*)". In another narration, he (S) said: "I married her to you (*zawwajtukaha*) with what you have of the Qur'an." Yet in a third narration, he said to him: "*Zawwajtukaha* (I married her to you) with what you have." In a fourth narration, he said: "I gave her in possession of you (*mallaktukaha*) with what you have." In a fifth narration: "I gave her in possession of you with what you have (memorized) of the Qur'an". In a sixth narration: "I marry her to you (*ankahtukaha*) on condition that you recite (Qur'an) for her and teach her." In a seventh narration: "*Amkannakuha* (I made you able to communicate marriage with her)". In an eighth narration: "Take her with what you have". These were eight differences in one expression.

Ibn Daqiq al-'Id is reported to have said: This being one word in one story, regarding which that much of difference occurred, with oneness of source of the *hadith*. Al-'Ala'i says: It is quite known that the Prophet has not uttered all these terms at that time, so he should have said only one of them, but it was expressed by the narrators by meaning only. One of them holding that marriage be consummated by the word of possession, arguing with its being cited in this *hadith*.

But his argumentation will be unable to stand when being contradicted with the other words. If he determines that this being the very word uttered by the Prophet and what is reported by others is only conveying the meaning of it! – his opponent would reverse it to him with claiming the opposite of his claim, the case in which no alternative would be left except to preponderate an external factor. This hadith and its alike were the only reasons that impelled Sibawayh and others to refuse considering hadith among the evidences for establishing any linguistic or grammatical rules, as it will be elucidated in its proper place of this book.

Hadith of Performing Prayers in Banu Qurayzah

Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of Ibn Umar that the Prophet (S) said on the day (Battle) of Ahzab: None of you should perform the 'asr (afternoon) prayers but only in Banu Qurayzah. Some of them catched the time of asr prayers while being still en route, when they said: We never pray till we reach them (Banu Qurayzah). Some others said: Rather we should perform prayers, we were not ordered to do so. Then they mentioned all that to the Prophet (S), but he did not reprimand or reproach anyone of them.

In expounding this *hadith*, Ibn Hajar is reported to have said: In all the versions of al–Bukhari and so also of Muslim the word *zuhr* (noon) prayers was recorded, with concurrence of both of them on reporting it

from one *shaykh* with one *isnad*. Also Abu Ya'la and others agreed with Muslim, and the same word was reported by Ibn Sa'd, whereas those believing in significations held it to be the 'asr.

Then Ibn Hajar said: Al-Bukhari has written it out of his memory, never observing the very words (of the Prophet) as was known in respect of his school 6 which permitting this. This was opposite of the belief held by Muslim, who used to be so keen in conveying the very (Prophet's) words, not permitting the same for those following him, and agreeing with him in conveying the same words, contrary to al-Bukhari.

The narrators have gone to extremes through narrating the *hadith* by (using) their own words and *asanid*, ascribing it then to the *Sunnah* books.

Al-'Iraqi in Sharh al-Alfiyyah, is reported to have said: Al-Bayhaqi in al-*Sunan* wa al-ma'rifah and al-Baghawi in Sharh al-Sunnah and others, used to narrate the *hadith* with their own words and *asanid* ascribing it then to al-Bukhari and Muslim, with words and denotations different from the original, as their purpose is to convey the meaning of the *hadith* not ascribing its words.

An example for this can be seen in al-Nawawi's saying in the hadith

"The Imams are from Quraysh", which was reported by the two *Shaykhs* (al-Bukhari and Muslim), though the words used in the Sahih being: "This affair (caliphate) will continue to be in Quraysh even when only two of them shall stay alive." As you see, there is so great difference between the two words and two meanings.

Hadith on Pollinating the Date Palms

Muslim reported on the authority of Musa ibn Talhah, from his father that he said: I and the Messenger of Allah passed by some people on the top of date palms, when he (S) asked: What are these people doing? I replied: They are pollinating them (trees)...they are inserting the male into the female, when she is pollinated. The Messenger of Allah said: I never believe this to be of any use or advantage. As soon as those people were apprised of this, they abandoned that act. Then the Messenger of Allah was told of this, when he said: If this (act) be of benefit to them, they can do it, as I am only surmising, so never reproach me for surmise. But if I relate to you something from Allah, you should heed to it, since I never lie against Allah, the Glorious and Exalted.

Rafi' ibn Khadij is reported to have said: The Prophet entered al-Madinah, while people were pollinating the date palms. Thereat he said: What are you doing? They replied: We were pollinating them. He said: It would be much better if you don't do that. Then they gave up that act, after which the date palms faded, (or he said) and they grew less. The narrator says: After that they informed the Prophet of what happened, when he said: I am only a human being, when ordering you to do something related to your religion you should heed to it. But when commanding you to do something from my opinion, I am only a

human being. (It is reported by Muslim and al-Nasa'i).

Hisham ibn Urwah, reports from his father, from A'ishah and Anas, that the Prophet passed by some people pollinating the trees, when he said:

Should you not do so, its produce would be better. But then the dates produced were bad (*shays*). Again he passed by them asking: What is the matter with your date palms? They replied: You told us to do so and so. He said: You are better aware of your world affairs.

In another narration by Ahmad, he (S) said: Whatever is related to your religion refer it to me, and whatever is related to your world, you are better aware of it. In another narration reported by Ibn Rushd in his book al-Tahsil wa al-bayan, he (S) said: "I am neither a farmer nor owner of date palms."

Hadith of Ali's Sahifah

The following *hadith* is reported by Ahmad, al-Shaykhan (al-Bukhari and Muslim) and authors of al-*Sunan* (books) with miscellaneous expressions. But al-Bukhari reported it under chapter kitab al-'ilm, on
the authority of Abu Juhayfah thus: I said to Ali: Do you have a (special) book? He said: No, except the
Book of Allah, or an understanding given to a Muslim man, or whatever is recorded in this *sahifah*. I said:
What does this *sahifah* contain? He said: (It contains) intellect and setting free of a captive, and that the
Muslim should not be killed for (killing) an infidel (*kafir*).

Under bab al-diyat, it is reported that he said: I asked Ali, may Allah be pleased with him: Do you (Ahl al-Bayt and Shi'ah) have anything other than the Qur'an? He replied: By Him Who has splitted the seed and created the air, we never have other than what this Qur'an contains, except a comprehension given to a man in his book, and what this Sahifah contains. I said: What does this sahifah contain? He said: Reason ('aql), and freeing the slave ... etc.

In Kitab al–Hajj, bab Haram al–Madinah, Ibrahim al–Taymi reports on the outhority of his father that he (A) said: We have nothing except the Book of Allah and this *sahifah* that is taken from the Prophet (S), in which he said: "*al–Madinah* is a sanctuary (*haram*) between 'Athir to so and so. Whoever causing a *hadath* (condition requiring *wudu*'), or giving shelter to a *muhdith* (one causing hadath), upon him shall be the curse of Allah and angels and all mankind. From him neither disposition nor justice will be accepted".

And he said: "Dhimmah (obligation) of Muslims is one. Whoever disgraces a Muslim upon him will be the curse of Allah, and angels and all people, and neither disposition nor Justice shall be accepted from him. Whoever takes as a patron someone without permission of his masters, upon him shall be the damnation of Allah, and angels and all people. Neither disposition nor justice will be accepted from him."

Under bab dhimmat al-Muslimin in Kitab al-jizyah, the *hadith* is reported thus: Ali addressed us saying: We have nor book to read except the Book of Allah and whatever is there in this *sahifah*. The audience

said: What does this *sahifah* contain? He said: It contains sarcasms and camels' teeth, and that al-Madinah being sanctified (*haram*) from 'Ir up to so and so region. Whoever causing any *hadath* (condition requiring *wudu*'), or giving shelter to a *muhdith* (one causing *hadath*), upon him shall be the curse of Allah and the angels and all people, and neither disposition nor justice will be accepted from him. Whoever takes as a supporter other than his masters, upon him will be the like of this. The obligation (*dhimmah*) of Muslims is one, and whoever disgraces any Muslim, upon him will be the same (curse).

Under bab: "The guilt of whoever making a covenant and breaching it then with a word," it is reported from Ali (A) that he said: We have written nothing from the Prophet (S) other than the Qur'an and whatever this *sahifah* contains: The Prophet (S) said: Al-Madinah is *haram* between 'Athir and so and so place (*kadha*). Whoever causing any *hadath* or giving shelter to a *muhdith*, upon him shall be the curse of Allah and the angels and all people. From his neither disposition nor justice shall be accepted. Obligation of Muslims is one; whoever violates sanctity of a Muslim, upon him shall be the curse of Allah and the angels and all people. No disposition or justice will be accepted from him. Whoever patronizing a people with no permission from his masters, upon him shall be the curse of Allah, and angels and all people, and no disposition or justice shall be accepted from him.

Under bab: "The guilt of that who disowns his masters by a word," he is reported to have said: We have no book to read other than the Book of Allah and this *sahifah*. Then he took it out, and it contained things like *jirahat* and teeth of the camels, and that al-Madinah is *haram*...etc. beside referring to the issues of taking a friend (wala') and obligation as previously mentioned.

And under bab: "Repugnance of penetration and disputation and extravagance in religion, from kitab ali'tisam bi lafz, it is reported: One day Ali addressed us from the pulpit saying: By God we have no book
to read except the Book of Allah and whatever this *sahifah* contains. When he opened it, we found in it
teeth of the camels, and al-Madinah is *haram* from 'Ir up to so and so region ... Whoever causing a
hadath in it, upon him shall be the curse of Allah ... and obligation of Muslims is one, calumniated by the
lowest of them. Whoever violates the sanctity of a Muslim upon him...etc. And whoever patronizes a
people without permission of his masters upon him ... But he said: Allah will never accept from him any
disposition or justice (as reported by al-Bukhari).

The narrations of Muslim and authors of *Sunan* give the same meaning of the ones reported by al–Bukhari, while Muslim referred to the two boundaries of al–Madinah, i.e. 'Ir and Thawr (two mountains). Al–Hafiz Ibn Hajar, in his comment on *hadith* of Ali, on the authority of Ibrahim al–Taymi from his father said: The *sahifah* included whatever is reported, i.e. every narrator was reporting something from it, either due to the situation necessitating mention of it alone, or because some of them could never memorize or hear whatever it contained.

Undoubtedly all that which was reported by them was only conveyed according to the denotation without any abidance by the original words as a whole, the fact entailing the occurrence of differences among

the expressions used by them. The narrators couldn't claim that he has read the traditions for them as a whole, and they have memorized or written them down from him, but rather their words indicate that he used to mention whatever they contained or some of it out of his memory. Besides, those for whom he read the traditions, have not written them down, but narrated whatever they memorized, including the Prophet's words and those summing up the meaning.

An example for this is the phrase "al-`aql and freeing the captive", and the word `aql indicates blood—money (diyah) of murder. It is called `aql as it is originally a camel that is tied, i.e. bound by shackles in the courtyard of the murdered man, or his relations deserving it. His words (teeth of camels) in some narrations give the meaning of the provisions stipulated for the teeth of the camels of blood—money (diyah) or sadaqah (alms) ... etc. Generally speaking, we know no one to have written from Amir al—Mu'minin any text of the Sahifah, nor that he himself to have written it according to the Prophet's order, as he said in the narration of Qatadah on the authority of Abu Hassan, that he heard something and committed it to writing briefly.

Should we have to comment on this *Sahifah* which is ascribed to Ali, and the various traditions it contained, that were recorded in *hadith* books, we want to say that we never have confidence in all the narrations cited in it whoever be their narrators. Sufficient be for us to notice what kind of narrations reported by Ibn Hajar.

The reason behind our suspicion lies in the fact that if Ali intended to write from the Messenger of Allah, that which seemed for him to be of benefit for Muslims, he would never be content with such a *Sahifah* that he – as reported – used to hold in the sheath of his sword. But he used to write thousands of traditions regarding all the rules concerning Muslims' affairs, being truthful in all his writings if he intended. Nevertheless we have extremely benefitted from the reports contained in this *Sahifah*, as it showed us clearly the extent of distortion caused by *riwayah* through meaning, and how it was detrimental to religion, language and literature, as will be soon demonstrated God–willing.

We conclude this chapter with a short comprehensive statement by Ibn Kathir in his book al-Ba'ith al-hathith. 7 After introducing those permitting narration of *hadith* through meaning, he said:

"Riwayah (narration) through meaning was prohibited by another group of traditionists, Jurisprudents and *usuli* scholars, with strong emphasis in this regard. This was supposed to be the matter of fact, but it never happened. Because the trend that was actually followed being narration of *hadith* through the meaning it was conveying, which is widely found in all *hadith* books with no exception. When going through biography of al–Bukhari, it will be found out that he was one among those who used to narrate *hadith* through meaning. The dear reader can refer to chapter "Standpoint of Grammarians toward *Hadith* Books" in this book.

^{1.} Mir'at al-Islam, pp. 211, 212.

^{2.} His name is Khalid ibn Zayd al-Ansari. Refer to Sharh al-Nawawi 'ala Muslim, vol. I, p. 172; Ibn Qutaybah's al-Ma'arif, p. 119.

- 3. Op. cit., vol. I, p. 215, margin by al-Qastallani.
- 4. Op. cit., vol. I, p. 175.
- <u>5.</u> I have not alluded here to the controversies among the fuqaha in regard of veracity of this hadith, due to divergence of its words. Refer to their books to realize what the narration by meaning did to hadith. Also see Fath al–Bari, vol. IX, pp. 168–176.
- 6. What is said by Ibn Hajar in regard of al-Bukhari is supported by what al-Khatib al-Baghdadi narrated about al-Bukhari by saying: There might be a hadith that I heard in Basrah and wrote in the Sham, and there might be a hadith that I heard in the Sham and wrote in Egypt. When he was asked: O Abu Abd Allah! (did you do so) completely? He kept silent (Ta'rikh al-Khatib, vol. II, p. 11). Haydar ibn Abi Ja'far, governor of Bukhara, said: One day Muhammad ibn Isma'il said to me: There might be a hadith that I heard in Basrah and wrote in the Sham, and there might be a hadith that I heard in the Sham and wrote in Egypt. I said to him: O Abu Abd Allah: Completely? He kept silent (Huda al-sari fi muqaddimat Fath al-Bari, vol. II, p. 201). See also the commentary on al-Bukhari's book among famous hadith books, in the chapter I dedicated for this in my book.
- 7. Al-Ba'ith al-hathith, pp. 165, 166.

Source URL:

https://www.al-islam.org/lights-muhammadan-sunnah-or-defence-hadith-mahmud-abu-rayyah/examp les-narrating-hadith-meaning