

Letter 28

Thul-Hijjah 19, 1329

I. The Status Hadith Stands on Most Solid Grounds

1) Al-Amidi has done nobody injustice except his own self by casting doubt about the authenticity of this hadith which is one of the most accurate *sunan* and a most solid legacy.

II. Binding Proofs

2) Nobody else has doubted its accuracy, nor did anyone else dare to argue about its grounds. Even al-Thahbi, who is a most prejudiced narrator, has admitted its accuracy in his *Talkhis Al-Mustadrak*¹. Ibn Hajar al-Haithami, in spite of his antagonistic views embedded in his *Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa*, has quoted this hadith in his chapter on "Al-Shubuhah," citing statements by the foremost narrators of hadith testifying to its accuracy; so, refer to that book. Had this hadith not been accurate, al-Bukhari would not have included it in his book, in spite of his prejudice when it comes to counting 'Ali's merits and those of Ahl al-Bayt (as).

Mu'awiyah was the leader of the oppressive gang. He stood in enmity against the Commander of the Faithful (as), fought him, cursed him from Muslims' pulpits and ordered people to do likewise. Yet, in spite of his insolent hostility, he never doubted the status hadith. Nor has Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas exaggerated when he, according to Muslim, was asked by Mu'awiyah why he hesitated to denounce "Abu Turab;" he answered him by saying:² "

I remember three ahadith of the Messenger of Allah which I have personally heard, because of which I shall never curse him. Had I had just one of his exclusive merits, it would have been more precious for me than a herd of the choicest red camels. I have heard the Messenger of Allah (S), who was then accompanied by a few people participating in some of his campaigns, saying to 'Ali: 'Are you not pleased that your status to me is similar to that of Aaron to Moses except that there will be no Prophet after me?'"³ Mu'awiyah was dumbfounded, and he could not utter a word or pressure Sa'd.

In addition to all of this, Mu'awiyah himself has narrated the same hadith. Ibn Hajar says in his book *Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqa*:⁴ "Ahmad has said that a man once asked Mu'awiyah a question and his answer was: 'Forward your question to 'Ali because he is more knowledgeable.' Yet the man said: 'Your own answer to this matter is dearer to me than that of 'Ali.'"

Mu'awiyah was angry, and he said: 'What a bad statement you have uttered! You hate a man whom the Messenger of Allah used to gorge with knowledge? He even told him that his status to him was like that of Aaron to Moses except that there would be no Prophet after him? Whenever 'Umar was confused about a matter, he sought 'Ali's advice...."⁵ In short, the status hadith is considered, according to the consensus of all Muslims, regardless of their sects and inclinations, to be authentic.

III. Its Sunni Narrators

3) Authors of both *Al-Jami' Baynal Sihah Al-Sitta* and *Al-Jami' Bayna Rijal al-Sahihain* have quoted it, and it is included in Bukhari's chapter on the Battle of Tabuk in his *Sahih*, in Muslim's chapter on 'Ali's merits in his *Sahih*, in a chapter on the attributes of the Prophet's companions in Ibn Majah's *sunan*, and in a chapter on 'Ali's merits in Hakim's *Al-Mustadrak*. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal has quoted it in his *Musnad* from several different reporters. Ibn 'Abbas, Asma' bint 'Amis, Abu Sa'd al-Khudri, Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan,⁶ and many other companions have all narrated it as recorded in the *musnad*.

Al-Tabrani has quoted it as narrated by Asma' bint 'Amis, Umm Salamah, Habis ibn Janadah, Ibn 'Umar, 'Ali ibn Abu Talib (as),⁷ and many others. Al-Bazzaz has included it in his *Musnad*,⁸ and so has al-Tirmithi in his *Sahih*⁹ depending on the authority of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri. In *Al-Isti'ab*, in a chapter dealing with 'Ali, the author quotes Ibn 'Abdul Birr narrating it, then he comments thus: "This is one of the most reliable and accurate ahadith narrated about the Prophet by Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas." Sa'd's references are Umarous and are Umarated by Ibn Abu Khayth'amah and others. Ibn 'Abbas, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Umm Salamah, Asma' bint Amis, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah, and quite a few other traditionists have all narrated it."

As a matter of fact, whoever researches the Battle of Tabuk and refers to books of traditions and biographies will find them mentioning this hadith. Those who have written biographies of 'Ali, among authors of glossaries of ancient as well as modern times, regardless of their inclinations and sectarian preferences, have all quoted this hadith. It is also quoted by anyone who writes about the merits of Ahl al-Bayt, those of the Imams among the companions of the Prophet (S) such as Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and by others before or after his time. It is a hadith taken for granted by all past Muslim generations.

IV. Why al-Amidi Suspects It

4) There is no lesson to learn about the doubt cast by al-Amidi regarding this hadith in his *Musnad*, since the man knows nothing about the science of traditions, and his knowledge about *musnads* and narrators is the knowledge of illiterate commoners who do not know the meaning of hadith. In fact, his

own extensive knowledge in the science of usul is the reason why he has fallen in such a dilemma. According to the requirements of usul, he saw it to be a correct hadith which he could not get rid of except by suspecting its isnad, thinking that that would be possible. Indeed, that was only his unattainable desire, and peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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- [1.](#) Letter No. 26 contains his admission of its authenticity.
- [2.](#) This occurs in his section dealing with 'Ali's virtues at the beginning of page 324, Vol. 2, of his Sahih.
- [3.](#) Al-Hakim, too, quotes it at the beginning of page 109, Vol. 3, of his Al-Mustadrak, admitting its authenticity due to its being endorsed by Muslim.
- [4.](#) This occurs in the fifth maqsad of Al-Maqasid when the author discusses verse 14 in Section 11, page 107, of Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa.
- [5.](#) He says that others have quoted it, and that some added to it "Get up; may Allah never allow you to stand up," and his name is omitted from the diwan, to the end of his quotation on page 107 of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. This proves that a group of late traditionists besides Ahmad has quoted the status hadith from Mu'awiyah.
- [6.](#) As we mentioned in the beginning of this Letter, quoting the fifth maqsad of the Maqasid of verse 14 of the verses discussed in Chapter 11, Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa, page 107.
- [7.](#) As Ibn Hajar describes in the first hadith of the forty ones which he discusses in the second section of chapter 9, page 72, of his Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqa. Al-Sayyuti has stated the following while discussing 'Ali (as) in his chapter on the righteous caliphs: "Al-Tabrani has quoted this hadith from all these men, adding to them Asma' bint Qays."
- [8.](#) Al-Sayyuti indicates so while discussing 'Ali (as) in his chapter on the caliphs on page 65.
- [9.](#) As attested to by hadith 2504 of the hadith of Kanz al-'Ummal, page 152, Volume 6.

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