

## Part 2: An evaluation of Sahih Muslim

### Ibrahim Bin Abdullah Sa'adi and Sahih Muslim

It is said that Muslim Bin Hajjaj Naishaburi used to question the credibility of reliable Sunni reporters without having any sound reason. From among such reporters, is Ibrahim Bin Abdullah Sa'adi.

Commenting on Ibrahim Bin Abdullah, Dahabi says that he was truthful reporting traditions from Yazid Bin Harown and others.

According to Abu Abdullah Hakim, Ibrahim used to belittle Muslim and that was the reason why Muslim criticizes him without having any sound reason. [1](#)

It goes without saying that such an action by Muslim undermines his justice, causing one not to rely on the traditions he has reported in his book. It is due to this that Ibn Jawzi says: It is a mistake that traditionists, under the influence of Satan, criticize each other on revenge basis and this is what that paves the ground for not considering them as the basis of Jarh and Ta'adi (criticizing and praising), a methodology used by previous scholars to defend Islamic laws. [2](#)

### Abu Zar'ah Razi and Sahih Muslim

It is well-known among great scholars that Imam Abu Zar'ah Razi was critical of Sahih by Muslim Bin Hajjaj. Commenting on Ahmad Bin Isa Misri, he in his Tahdib Al-Tahdib and Mizan Al-Itidal says:

Sa'aeed Bard'ai says: Once I saw that somebody mentioned the name of Sahih Muslim in the presence of Abu Zar'a, but Abu Zar'ah said: They are the people who started an unwelcomed competition. To reach some commercial ends they embarked on writing such books [as Sahih Muslim]. [3](#)

In his Al-Amta'a, Abu Al-Fazl Adfavi says: Abu Zar'ah used to sharply criticize Sahih Bukhari saying that how one could consider it as authentic while it contained unauthentic traditions....

## Fabricated traditions in Sahih Bukhari

Now that we got acquainted with some of the causes why scholars, including Abu Zar'ah were critical of Muslim Bin Hajjaj Naishaburi, it is time to deal with some of the fabricated traditions he has narrated in his book.

### A fabricated tradition on Abu Talib

One of the fabricated traditions reported by Bukhari is the tradition that specifies 'Zahzah<sup>4</sup>' as a place where Abu Talib will dwell.

Muslim narrates from Ubaidullah Bin Umar Qawariri from Muhammad Bin Abu Bakr Muqaddami and Muhammad Bin Abd Al-Malik Amavi from Abu 'Awana, from Abd Al-Malik Bin Umair from Abdullah Bin Harith Bin Nawfal who said that Abbas Bin Abd Al-Mutallib, addressing Prophet (S) said: You have not been of any avail to your uncle (Abu Talib) (though) by Allah, he used to protect you and used to become angry on your behalf."

The Prophet said, "He is in a shallow fire, and had it not been for me, he would have been in the bottom of the (Hell) Fire."<sup>5</sup>

### Fabricated tradition rejected

All such traditions found in Bukhari or Muslim are false and untrue, fabricated in order to distort the image of Imam Ali (a.s), dwindle his position in the eyes of others and magnify [on the contrary] the position of his opponent, Abu Bakr. To reject Sunni traditions that proclaim Abu Talib as disbeliever, it is enough to refer to Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra and see what its author says in regard with Abu Talib: Waqidi quotes Ali as saying:

لما توفي ابو طالب اخبرت رسول الله ص فبكى بكاء شديدا ثم قال اذهب فاغسله و كفته و واره غفرالله له و رحمه

When Abu Talib died, I informed the Holy Prophet (S) [of this death]. He wept very much and said: Go, wash his body and shroud and bury him. May Allah forgive him and have mercy upon him.

Abbas then said: O Allah's Apostle! Do you wish he was forgiven? The Holy Prophet (S) said: Yes by Allah I wish he was forgiven. [After this happening] Allah's Apostle kept staying indoor for a few days asking Allah's forgiveness for him.

وصلت رحمك و جزاك الله خيرا

You did good to your relatives of kin. May Allah give you a good reward.<sup>6</sup>

All these aside, the family of the Holy Prophet (S) are unanimous that he was a believer and it is a proven fact that their consensus is a solid argument. Sunni scholars have also alluded to the consensus made by the family of Prophet (S). Quoting Ibn Athir in his Jami'a Al-Usul, the author of Rawda Al-Ahbab says:

زعم اهل البيت ان ابا طالب مات مسلما والله اعلم بصحته

The family of the Holy Prophet (S) thought that Abu Talib died as a Muslim but Allah alone knows whether or not this is correct.

It has to be reminded that Sunnis are of the view that it is their duty to follow the family of the Holy Prophet (S), while elaborating on Thaqalayn and Safina traditions.

If they are right [in their claim that they follow Prophet's progeny], they must accept Abu Talib as a believer for there is a consensus by the family of the Prophet (S) that he was a Muslim.

It has to be however mentioned that Muslim's traditions are not devoid of contradictions. The tradition reported by Bukhari states that Prophet interceded for Abu Talib with Allah before the Day of Resurrection, decreasing his punishment by putting him in a place where fire was shallow.

This is while Abu Sae'd's tradition shows that no intercession is made for the sake of Abu Talib and his punishment is not decreased. Prophet has accordingly only wished that he would be able to intercede for him on the Day of Judgment, helping him thus to leave the worst place in Hell for a place where fire flames are thin.

Thus some traditions are indicative of a decrease in punishment whereas others are not, underlining thus that there is some sort of inconsistency.

## **Tradition indicative of caliphate of Abu Bakr**

In Sahih Muslim, there is a tradition that indicates that the Holy Prophet (a.s) appointed Abu Bakr as his successor. This tradition which is totally false has appeared in Sahih Muslim in a chapter on 'excellences'. It is as under:

Ubaidullah Bin Sa'aeed narrated from Yazid Bin Harun from Ibrahim Bin Sa'ad from Salih Bin Kisan from Zuhri from Urwa who says:

A'isha reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) in his (last) illness asked her to call Abu Bakr, her father, and her brother too, so that he might write a document, for he feared that someone else might be desirous (of succeeding him) and that some claimant may say: I have better claim to it, whereas Allah and the Faithful do not substantiate the claim of anyone but that of Abu Bakr.[7](#)

Bukhari has also narrated this tradition in his Sahih in chapter on 'ill people'. He quotes the Holy Prophet (S) as saying: I wanted to send for Abu Bakr and his son so as to make an agreement on caliphate and disappoint those who desired for caliphate and thought that they were more qualified for the post, but I did not do it telling to myself that Allah did not like such things nor did the believers. According to another wording, Prophet says that 'believers refrain from it and Allah does not permit it either'.[8](#)

### Sunni scholars on this fabricated tradition

Commenting on this tradition, Nawavi says: This tradition is clearly indicative of the excellence and superiority of Abu Bakr. According to this tradition, prophet predicates about the events that take place after his death and the insistence of Muslims on the caliphate of Abu Bakr.[9](#)

Obviously this tradition is false, for Sunnis unanimously agree that the Prophet (S) did not install Abu Bakr as his successor. If the Prophet happened to say such a thing Sunni scholars would not resort to false arguments and difference would not emerge among them.

Commenting on this portion of the Prophet's word 'if Prophet were to choose his successor, whom would he choose? He emphatically says: This word indicates that Sunnis do not have any explicit statement from Prophet (S) regarding the caliphate of Abu Bakr. This is because according to this tradition it was the companions who unanimously accepted the caliphate of Abu Bakr due to his excellences.

If there were an explicit statement from Prophet regarding the caliphate of Abu Bakr or anyone else the people of Medina and others would not differ on it. The one who knew it would read it out to every one ironing out thus the difference existing among companions.

Since there was no such explicit statement from the Holy Prophet (S), in the beginning companions differed on the issue of caliphate. Later when a consensus began to emerge about the caliphate of Abu Bakr normalcy returned.

Touching the Shiite point of view in this regard, Nawavi says: The Shiite claim that there is explicit statement from Prophet concerning the caliphate of Ali (a.s) is false, rejected by all Muslims as baseless. There was also a consensus among Muslims during the time of Ali on the falsity of this claim. Ali also rejected Shiite claim when he said that Muslims did not have anything in their hands except the Holy Quran.[10](#)

To prove the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Nawavi appeals to the event of Saqifa, a thing that indicates that if Muslim's tradition were correct there were no need for such an argument! In short, if the said tradition were correct, Sunni scholars would use it to prove the caliphate of Abu Bakr and would not say that there is no explicit statement concerning the caliphate of Abu Bakr.

They presented other baseless arguments to prove their point of view for there was no such thing as explicit statement. Even if we consider the said tradition as a mere prediction, to appeal to it is better

than appealing to any other thing.

Accepting that there is no explicit statement from Prophet concerning the caliphate of Abu Bakr, Ibn Athir also says: The Shia and Bakria<sup>11</sup> claim that there is explicit statement from Prophet (S) concerning the Imamate of Ali or Abu Bakr is not acceptable, for such traditions are fabricated by some people but transmitted by many. Thus we cannot verify such traditions.<sup>12</sup>

He criticizes Bukhari and Muslim for narrating, out of love and affection, traditions concerning Abu Bakr and Umar, which are regarded as false and superstitious even by notable Sunni scholars.

## **Umar orders calling to prayer**

In his Sahih, in chapter on 'call to prayer', Muslim narrates another baseless tradition the text of which is as under:

Ishaq Bin Ibrahim Hanzali, Muhammad Bin Bakr, Muhammad Bin Rafi'a and Abd Al-Razzaq narrate the following tradition from Ibn Jarir. This tradition is also reported by Harun Bin Abdullah who (using his own terms) narrates it from Hajjaj Bin Muhammad from Nafi'a, Ibn Umar's slave, who quotes Abdullah Bin Umar as saying:

When the Muslims came to Medina, they gathered and sought to know the time of prayer but no one summoned them. One day they discussed the matter, and some of them said: Use something like the bell of the Christians and some of them said: Use horn like that of the Jews.

Umar said: Why may not we appointed someone who should call (people) to prayer? The Messenger of Allah (May peace be upon him) said: O Bilal, get up and summon (the people) to prayer.<sup>13</sup>

This tradition was fabricated by those who wanted to make up some excellences for Umar Bin Khattab. This tradition contradicts another Sunni tradition on calling to prayer. Sunan Abu Dawood and other Sunni sources state that calling to prayer was legalized after a dream one of the companions saw one night.

It has to be however mentioned that calling to prayer was legislated, as mentioned by Imam Ali (a.s) at Mi'araj night and it was Gabriel who [first] called [people] to prayer in Bayt Al-Maqdis. Thus other traditions concerning the legislation of calling to prayer are irrelevant fabricated by disbelievers.

## **Two contradictory traditions**

Among other baseless traditions reported by Muslim are two traditions that are in contradiction with each other. Bukhari has also reported though one of them. These two traditions deal with the place of prayer offered by Prophet (S) on Al-Adha Day in his Farewell Hajj.

Quoting Aisha and Jabir, Muslim introduces Mecca as the place where Prophet offered his prayer, whereas elsewhere like Bukhari, he quoting Ibn Umar, introduces Mina as the place where he offered his prayer. In his Al-Rijal, Mulla Ali Qari says: Concerning these two traditions Ibn Hazm says that one is no doubt false.

Sunni scholars are divided on the correct tradition from among these two traditions. Referring to the difference existing among Sunni scholars in this regard, Ibn Qayyim says: Thereupon on that day the Holy Prophet (S) returned to Mina though the place of his prayer on that day is a matter of controversy.

According to Sahih Muslim and Sahih Bukhari, on Al-Adha Day Prophet left Mina for Mecca but when he came back to Mina he offered his noon prayer [in Mina].

This is while according to Sahih Muslim (quoting 'Aisha and Jabir), Prophet (S) offered his noon prayer in Mecca.

Scholars have differed on which one of these two traditions is preferable. Ibn Hazm for instance has preferred the tradition that is reported from 'Aisha and Jabir. Some scholars have supported Ibn Hazm's point of view, saying that it is preferable due to the following:

- There are two persons who have reported this tradition and the tradition reported by two persons is preferable to the one reported by one person.
- 'Aisha was closer to the Prophet (S) than anyone else. This quality belongs to 'Aisha alone and cannot be shared by others.
- The methodology Jabir has followed in narrating the events of Farewell Hajj is more perfect than any other methodology. He recorded the details of the events of Farewell Hajj, ignoring not even the most trivial happenings such prophet's answering the call of nature and his taking ablution.
- He who does not ignore such trivial things, no doubt records correctly the place of the Prophet's prayer on Al-Adha Day.
- The Farewell Hajj happened in March in which days and nights are almost equal. Before the sun rise, Prophet left Muzdalifa for Mina where he spoke for people, slaughtered many fat she-camels and divided their flesh [among people]. People cooked their flesh and Prophet ate it.

Allah's Apostle did Ram-e-Jamara and shaved his head. He wore perfume and delivered a speech. He then began circumambulating Ka'aba. Afterwards, he drank Zamzam water and Hajjis also stopped over there.

It seems that to perform these acts takes long time and thus one cannot do them so quickly so as to be to go back to Mina (on May days) at noon and offer noon prayer over there.

- These two traditions are indicative of change and perseverance. Ibn Umar's tradition is in accordance with Prophet's habit of choosing a place among pilgrims while performing hajj rituals and prayers whereas Jabir and 'Aisha's tradition is in contrast with this routine procedure. Jabir and 'Aisha's tradition is preferable for it shows a change in prophet's behavior.

Others have preferred Ibn Umar's tradition due to the following:

- If Prophet (S) had offered noon prayer in Mecca companions would have offered noon prayer in congregation led by an Imam chosen by the Prophet, but such a thing is not reported. If Prophet were sure that he would not be able to return to Mina he would definitely choose a prayer leader for Muslims.

Since it is not reported that companions offered noon prayer in congregation, therefore we conclude that the companion offered their prayer as usual after the Holy Prophet (S).

- If Prophet had offered his noon prayer in Mecca, some Meccan natives would have prayed after him. If such a thing had happened, its news would have reached us. Since such a thing has not happened for sure we conclude that the Holy Prophet did not offer noon prayer in Mecca.

Some ignorant people have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as having said: O Meccans! Your prayer is complete but we are travellers [and therefore our prayer is not complete]. We must remind these people of the fact that he did not say it in his Farewell Hajj, but instead he said it in the year of the conquest of Mecca.

- Everybody knows that the Prophet offered [on that day] a two unit circumambulation prayer after finishing circumambulation. It is also plain that there were many Muslims around him watching him and following him in performing rituals.

After watching this, some people might have mistakenly thought that the Prophet was offering his noon prayer, especially if its time coincided with noon prayer. Though there is a room for such possibility the prayer the Prophet offered in Mina cannot be understood except as an obligatory prayer.

- The Prophet never offered any obligatory prayer in Mecca during performing hajj rituals. If he would do it, it would be remembered, but no one remembers such a thing. Throughout his stay in Mecca he used to offer his prayer in congregation at a place where he chose as a station.

- The consensus is in favor of Ibn Umar's tradition, whereas Jabir's tradition is recorded only by Muslim. Thus the tradition reported by Ibn Umar is more correct and authentic.

In addition, the one who has narrated Ibn Umar's tradition is better off than others in terms of having good memory, popularity and acceptability. One cannot compare Hatam Bin Ismael with Ubaidullah nor can one compare the memory of Ja'afar with that of Nafi'a.

- 'Aisha's tradition is not clear and decisive in regard with the time of Prophet's circumambulation. It

seems as if she suggests three different times for his circumambulation.

- He circumambulated at noon.
- He postponed circumambulation till the night fell.
- He did it during the last hours of that day.

Thus 'Aisha's tradition contrary to Ibn Umar's does not exactly specify the time the Prophet left Mina and the place of his prayer.

● No doubt, Ibn Umar's tradition is more authentic than 'Aisha's. This is because the chain that leads to 'Aisha includes Ibn Ishaq who is not accepted by scholars. Besides, he has not explicitly mentioned that he has heard it.

Instead he has simply used "An'ana" form of reporting in which one narrates the names of reporters in a specific order. Keeping all these in mind, how can one prefer 'Aisha's tradition to Ibn Umar's?

● 'Aisha's tradition does not clearly say that the Prophet offered his noon prayer in Mecca. This is because the text of this tradition includes the following:

The Holy Prophet (S) left Mina [for Mecca] in the end of that day. He offered his noon prayer and returned to Mina.

The Holy Prophet (S) who was in Mina during Tashriq days would perform Ram-e-Jamara (throwing stones at Satan's sculptures), at noon time. He would throw at every Jamara seven stones.

As you see, this tradition does not make it clear that the Prophet offered his noon prayer in Mecca. This is while Ibn Umar's tradition makes it clear that the Prophet left Mina [for Mecca] on Al-Adha Day and when he came back he offered his noon prayer in Mina.

Ibn Umar's tradition is narrated by the authors of all traditions books whereas 'Aisha's tradition is controversial. Thus these two traditions are not equal. [14](#)

## [First verse revealed to Prophet](#)

Among other fake traditions reported by Muslim is the tradition that says that the first verse revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) was [15](#)

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَدِينُ

According to Nawawi this tradition is weak if not false. In his Al-Ahkam Al-Sughra commenting on this

tradition, Abu Zar'ah says: This tradition clearly indicates that the first verse revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) was the first verse of chapter 'Alaq. This tradition narrated from 'Aisha is considered to be correct. Abu Musa 'Ash'ari and Ubaid Bin Umair have also narrated it.....

### **A tradition on the excellence of Abu Sufyan**

Among other baseless traditions reported by Muslim is the tradition he reports on the excellence of Abu Sufyan. Abbas Bin Abd Al-Adim 'Anbari narrates and Ahmad Bin Ja'afar Ma'aqari narrate from Nazr (Ibn Muhammad Yamami) from 'Akrama from Abu Zamil who quotes Ibn Abbas as saying: Muslims neither looked at Abu Sufyan (with respect) nor did they sit in his company.

He (Abu Sufyan) said to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him): Allah's Apostle, confer upon me three things. He replied in the affirmative. He (further) said: I have with me the most beautiful and the best (woman) Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan; marry her, whereupon he said: Yes. And he again said: Accept Mu'awiya to serve as your scribe.

He said: Yes. He again said: Make me the commander (of the Muslim army) so that I should fight against the unbelievers as I fought against the Muslims. He said: Yes. Abu Zumnail said: If he had not asked for these three things from Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him), he would have never conferred them upon him, for it was (his habit) to accede to everybody's (earnest) request. [16](#)

In his Zad Al-Ma'ad Ibn Qayyim says: 'Akrama Bin 'Ammar narrates from Abu Zamil from Ibn 'Abbas who says: [Muslims neither looked to Abu Sufyan (with respect) nor did they sit in his company. He (Abu Sufyan) said to Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him): Allah's Apostle, confer upon me three things.

He replied in the affirmative. He (further) said: I have with me the most beautiful and the best (woman) Umm Habiba, daughter of Abu Sufyan; marry her, whereupon he said: Yes. And he again said: Accept Mu'awiya to serve as your scribe. He said: Yes. He again said: Make me the commander (of the Muslim army) so that I should fight against the unbelievers as I fought against the Muslims. He said: Yes.

Abu Zumnail said: If he had not asked for these three things from Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him), he would have never conferred them upon him, for it was (his habit) to accede to everybody's (earnest) request.]

According to Ibn Qayyim this tradition is no doubt false and nobody is skeptic about it.

On the view of Abu Muhammad Bin Hazm, there is no doubt that this tradition is fake, fabricated by 'Akrama Bin 'Ammar.

On the basis of what Ibn Jawzi says this tradition is the result of the illusion from which some reporters are suffering.

Scholars have accused 'Akrama Bin 'Ammar of lying and fabricating this tradition. This is because

historians unanimously agree that Um Habiba was married to Ubaidullah Bin Jahsh and had a child from him. Ubaidullah and Um Habiba both of whom had embraced Islam migrated to Ethiopia where Ubaidullah embraced Christianity but Um Habiba remained as Muslim.

It was because of this that the Holy Prophet (S) sent some one before Najjash in order to ask him for the hand Um Habiba.

Najjashi married Um Habiba to the Prophet, after fixing a dowry for her on behalf of the Prophet (S). It has to be reminded that this event happened in the year 8 AH. After a ceasefire was reached between Muslims and non-Muslims (people of Quraish), Abu Sufyan came to Medina to see his daughter, Um Habiba. When he entered her house, Um Habiba folded Prophet's bed so that Abu Sufyan may not sit on it.

It is worth mentioning that all agrees that Abu Sufyan and Mu'awiyya embraced Islam in the year 8 AH during the conquest of Mecca.

According to this tradition Abu Sufyan asks the Prophet to make him the commander (of the Muslim army) so that he should fight against the unbelievers as he fought against the Muslims and the Prophet answers him in the affirmative. This is while no history makes a mention of Abu Sufyan being appointed as the commander of Muslim army by the Prophet (S).<sup>17</sup>

- <sup>1.</sup> Mizan Al-Itidal, vol. 1, p. 44.
- <sup>2.</sup> Talbis Iblis, p. 135.
- <sup>3.</sup> Mizan Al-itidal, vol. 1, p. 126.
- <sup>4.</sup> A place in Hell where fire flames are thin.
- <sup>5.</sup> Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 134.
- <sup>6.</sup> Al-Tabaqat Al-Kubra, vol. 1, pp. 123-4.
- <sup>7.</sup> Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, [tradition no.] 1857 and 2387.
- <sup>8.</sup> Sahih Bukhari, vol. 4, p. 218.
- <sup>9.</sup> Sharh Muslim Nawavi, vol. 15, p. 155.
- <sup>10.</sup> Sharh Muslim Nawavi, vol. 15, pp. 154 and 155.
- <sup>11.</sup> This is group who believes that Prophet (S) has something about the caliphate of Abu Bakr.
- <sup>12.</sup> Jami'a Al-Usul, vol. 1, p. 121.
- <sup>13.</sup> Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 285.
- <sup>14.</sup> Zad Al-Mi'ad, vol. 2, p. 280.
- <sup>15.</sup> Quran, Al-Muddaththiir, 1.
- <sup>16.</sup> Sahih Muslim, vol. 4, (traditions) 1945 and 3501.
- <sup>17.</sup> Zad Al-Ma'ad fi Huda Khair Al-Ibad, vol. 1, p. 110.