

The martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn

Suyuti recounts, “His martyrdom and death occurred on the day of ‘Ashura. On that day, the sun was obscured and the horizons remained red for the next six months. This redness, which had never been seen before his martyrdom, was then seen on a daily basis. It has been narrated that on the day of ‘Ashura every stone that was upturned in Bayt al-Muqaddas (Jerusalem) contained red blood under it.”¹

Imam al-Husayn (as), the Leader of the Youths of Paradise

One of Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn’s (as) exclusive virtues, according to authentic *hadiths*, which have been transmitted by both Sunnis and Shi’ahs from the Holy Prophet (S), is that these two are the leaders and masters of the youths of Paradise. This honor has not been granted to anyone except these two people.

Let us now examine and deliberate upon these *hadiths*.

Hadith

It has been recorded that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two masters and leaders of the youths of paradise.” This tradition has reached high fame and reputation and is classified among the firmly established *hadith* related in successive chains. Now, let us refer to and discuss the various versions of the *hadith* that have been recounted:

1. On his own chain of transmission [*sanad*], Khatib Baghdadi recounts that Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali (as) quoted the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

الحسن والحسين سيدا شباب أهل الجنة، وأبوهما خير منهما.

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the masters of the youths of Paradise and their father is better than these two.”²

2. On his own chain of transmission, Muttaqi al-Hindi recounts that Imam ‘Ali (as) narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) said to Fatimah (as),

ألا ترضين أن تكوني سيّدة نساء أهل الجنة، وأبنائك سيدي شباب أهل الجنة.

“Will you not be pleased that you will be the chief of the women of Paradise and your two children will be the chiefs of the youths of Paradise?”³

3. On his own chain of transmission, Ibn ‘Asakir recounts that Ibn ‘Abbas quoted the Holy Prophet (S) saying,

الحسن والحسين سيّدا شباب أهل الجنة، من أحبهما فقد أحبّني ومن أبغضهما فقد أبغضني.

“Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are both chiefs of the youths of Paradise. Anyone who loves them, surely loves me, and anyone who hates them, surely hates me.”⁴

Others who have narrated and recorded this *hadith* are listed in the following two groups:

A) The Prophet’s companions

This *hadith* has been recounted by many of the Prophet’s (S) companions including:

1. Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as).
2. Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as)
3. ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas
4. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Qahafah
5. ‘Umar ibn Khattab
6. ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar
7. Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah Ansari
8. ‘Abd Allah ibn Mas‘ud
9. Hudhayfah ibn Yaman
10. Jahm
11. Malik ibn Huwayrith Laythi

12. Qurrah ibn Ayas
13. Usamah ibn Zayd
14. Anas ibn Malik
15. Abu Hurayrah Dusi
16. Abu Sa'id Khudri
17. Bara' ibn 'Azib
18. 'Ali Hilali
19. Abu Ramathah
20. Buraydah

B) The Sunni 'Ulama'

Many Sunni scholars have also recorded and narrated this noble *hadith*. Among them are the following:

1. Khatib Baghdadi⁵
2. Ibn 'Asakir⁶
3. Tabarani⁷
4. Muttaqi al-Hindi⁸
5. Muhibb al-Din Tabari⁹
6. Haythami¹⁰
7. Abu Na'im Isfahani¹¹
8. Ibn Hammad Hanbali¹²
9. Waki'¹³
10. Ibn Majah¹⁴
11. Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi ¹⁵
12. Ganji Shafi'i¹⁶
13. Al-Tirmidhi¹⁷

14. Ahmad ibn Hanbal¹⁸
15. Dhahabi¹⁹
16. Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani²⁰
17. Baghawi²¹
18. Abu al-Qasim Sahmi²²
19. Nahbani²³
20. Ibn Hajar Haythami²⁴
21. Suyuti ²⁵
22. Daylami²⁶
23. Ibn Abi Shaybah²⁷
24. Nassa’i²⁸
25. Ibn Hibban²⁹
26. Sam‘ani³⁰
27. Suyuti³¹
28. Al-Mannawi³²
29. Al-Albani³³

Stipulation of the correctness and authenticity of this hadith

A number of Sunni scholars of *hadith* have stipulated and confirmed the correctness of this *hadith*:

1. Hafiz al-Ganji al-Shafi‘i says, “This *hadith* is healthy [*hasan*] and founded [*thabit*]...”³⁴
2. Abu al-Qasim Tabarani, the leader of Sunni scholars of *hadith*, has related the chain of transmission of this *hadith* in his “*Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir*”. At the same time, he comments on the spiritual state and position of Imam al-Husayn (as). He attributes this *hadith* to a number of the Prophet’s companions [*sahabah*] and names all of them... After that, he adds, “The close and strong connection of these chains of transmission to one another is enough to prove the correctness and authenticity of this *hadith*.”³⁵
3. Al-Hakim al-Neyshaburi says, “This *hadith*, including the part which says ‘and their father is better

than these two', is correct according to the conditions of the two *shaykhs* (i.e. Bukhari and Muslim), but they did not collect it."³⁶ Following this *hadith*, al-Neyshaburi states, "This is a *hadith* which can be authenticated in many ways, and I am surprised why these two did not narrate it."³⁷

4. Dhahabi says, "This *hadith* is authentic [*sahih*]."³⁸

5. Al-Tirmidhi says, "This *hadith* is noble and sound [*hasan*] but has been isolated and abandoned [*gharib*]."³⁹ Al-Tirmidhi also narrated this *hadith* on a different chain of transmission and adds a footnote at the end saying, "This *hadith* is sound and correct."⁴⁰

6. Al-Albani has approved the authentication done by al-Tirmidhi. He says, "The truth of the matter is what has been reported by al-Tirmidhi."⁴¹

Al-Tirmidhi says, "The chains of transmission of this *hadith* are authentic and the people mentioned in the line of transmission are all truthful according to the distinguished and upheld standards of narrating; in addition, Maysarah ibn Habib (one of the narrators of this *hadith*) is well known for his trustworthiness."

Al-Albani has also assented to the authentication done by Hakim and Dhahabi.⁴²

7. Haythami, in his book entitled, "*Majma' al-Zawa'id*", assents to the authenticity of the above mentioned *hadith* through the line of transmission of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri.⁴³

8. Mustafa ibn 'Aduwwi.⁴⁴

9. Huwayni Athari in his book entitled, "*Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'minin (as)*" has approved and assented to the authenticity of this *hadith*.⁴⁵

10. Al-Dani ibn Munir Al Zahawi.⁴⁶

11. Hamzah Ahmad al-Zayn, the renowned and celebrated researcher of the book entitled, "*Musnad Ahmad*" has categorized this *hadith* as authentic.⁴⁷

12. Ibn Hibban has reported this *hadith* in his "*Al-Sahih*".⁴⁸

This *hadith* has been recounted through so many chains of transmission that Suyuti and Sam'ani consider it to be consecutive [*mutawatir*].⁴⁹

Alterations and Distortions

This *hadith* is strong evidence to prove the rightful rank of Imam al-Hasan (as) and Imam al-Husayn (as). It proves beyond doubt that they belong to Paradise. This fact puts them in an enviable and exceptional position above the rest of the Holy Prophet's (S) companions. It is for this reason that some

have sought to remedy this situation in order to preserve the positions of their leaders and not fall behind these two.

Because of this, they have engaged in activities to change, alter and even distort the nature of this *hadith*. They have done so by way of removing certain parts from the *hadith*, adding extra parts to it, and even going so far as to forge and create a new *hadith* similar to the original, just for the sake of challenging this renowned *hadith* and raising the status of their leaders.

We will now examine and refute each of these alterations and distortions.

The First Alteration: The exception of Jesus Christ (as) and John the Baptist (as)

The *hadith* recounted by Tabarani mentions the prophets Jesus Christ (as) and John the Baptist (as) to be exceptions. He narrates that Allah's Prophet (S) addressed Fatimah (as) in the following way:

والله ما من نبي الآ وولد الأنبياء غيري، وإنّ أبنيك سيدا شباب اهل الجنة الآ ابني الخالة يحيى وعيسى

“I swear upon Allah! There was never a man who was raised to the prophethood unless he was the son of a former prophet, other than me. And these two, al-Hasan and al-Husayn, are certainly the chiefs of the youths of Paradise, other than Jesus and John.”[50](#)

Response

Firstly, we have to mention that Tabarani has narrated this *hadith* five times through five different chains of transmission. On the first four chains of transmission, he has repeated the *hadith* word by word, without any changes in the text at all, “Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the chiefs of the youths of Paradise.”

On the fifth chain, however, the part, ‘other than Jesus and John’ has been added. Since only the fifth chain of transmission has this added part, it is probable that this *hadith* has been altered and distorted through supplementation.

This *hadith*, as recounted by Abu Sa'id Khudri, also comprises the part ‘other than Jesus and John’ on some of his chains of transmission. He has however omitted it from other channels.[51](#)

It is possible for one to object and say, “These kinds of additions and omissions are found in a lot of *hadiths*. How can one prove that the part ‘other than Jesus and John’ is an alteration and distortion?”

We respond by saying that those *hadiths* that have either additions or omissions can be identified and corrected because they have been recounted by so many witnesses and on so many chains of

transmission which are independent of each other that the sheer popularity of their reportage is sufficient for them to be regarded as correct and adopted as authentic hadiths.

Secondly, the *hadith* comprising the part ‘other than Jesus and John’ has been attributed to either Imam ‘Ali (as) or Abu Sa‘id Khudri and the chains of transmission of both of these *hadiths* are disputable.

Let us now examine them carefully:

a. One of the transmitters mentioned on the chain of transmission attributed to Imam ‘Ali (as) is Asbat ibn Nasr. He is a reporter who has been reproached and severely scolded by many of the Sunni scholars of *hadith*.

Abu Hatam says, “I heard Abu Na‘im saying that he used to consider Asbat ibn Nasr as a weak [*da‘if*] and unreliable transmitter of *hadith*.”

Nassa‘i says, “He is not a strong [*qawi*] reporter.”

Saji categorises Asbat ibn Nasr among the weak transmitters of *hadith* and says, “He has narrated *hadiths* which are not reliable at all.”

Ibn Ma‘in does not even include or mention him among the reporters of *hadith*.⁵² Ibn Hajar has called him “the one who makes many mistakes.” [*kathir al-khata*]⁵³ When Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about Asbat ibn Nasr, he answered, “I do not narrate what he says regarding anyone.”⁵⁴ Dhahabi has classified him among the weak transmitters of *hadith*.⁵⁵

b. One of the transmitters mentioned in Abu Sa‘id Khudri’s chain of transmission of this particular *hadith* is Hakam ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman. He, too, is considered weak by some Sunni scholars of *hadith*.

Ibn Ma‘in categorises him among the weak transmitters of tradition.⁵⁶

Ibn Hajar says, “He is a man afflicted with a bad and weak memory.”⁵⁷

The Second alteration: distortion of the hadiths in favor of the Shaykhayn (Abu Bakr and ‘Umar)

Some have turned this noble *hadith* upside down by endeavoring to prove that it was said in favor of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. The reporters were careful not to overlook the fact that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar were old men at the advent of Islam; therefore, they changed the wording of the *hadith* by removing the word “*shabab*”, which means “youths”, and inserting in its place the word “*kuhul*”, which means “old men”.

We will now analyze and refute such *hadiths*:

1. The hadiths recounted by al-Tirmidhi

Al-Tirmidhi has narrated this *hadith* through three chains of transmission [*sanad*].

The first chain of transmission

حدَّثنا علي بن حُجر، اخبرنا وليد بن محمد الموقري عن الزهري، عن علي بن الحسين، عن علي بن ابي طالب، قال: كنت مع رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ اذ طلع ابوبكر، وعمر فقال رسول الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ: هذان سيدا كهول اهل الجنة من الاولين والآخرين الا النبيين والمرسلين، يا علي لا تخبرهما.

“This *hadith* was related by ‘Ali ibn Hujr who quoted Walid ibn Muhammad al-Mawqiri. He quoted al-Zuhri who quoted ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn who in turn quoted ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) who said, ‘I was in the presence of the Prophet of Allah (S) when he saw Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. The Prophet (S) said, ‘These two are the chiefs of the old people of Paradise, from the first to the last save the prophets and messengers. O ‘Ali, do not inform them of this.’”

This *hadith* has a number of weaknesses:

Firstly, al-Tirmidhi himself considered this *hadith* to be estranged and scarce [*gharib*].

Secondly, al-Tirmidhi himself says that Walid ibn Muhammad Mawwqiri, one of the transmitters on the chain of transmission of the *hadith*, is considered to be a weak and unreliable reporter of *hadith*.⁵⁸

Some other Sunni scholars of *hadith* also consider Walid ibn Muhammad Mawqiri to be among the weak transmitters of traditions, including:

1. Bukhari says, “His *hadiths* contain refutable parts.”⁵⁹
2. Abu Hatam says, “He is a weak transmitter of *hadith* [*da‘if al-hadith*].”
3. Ibn Hibban says, “He has forged *hadiths* and attributed them to Zuhri, and yet Zuhri never said those things at all... Therefore, relying on his *hadiths* and using them to deduce legal judgment is not permissible at all.”
4. Ibn al-Madini says, “His *hadiths* should not be recorded and recounted.”
5. Dhahabi has categorized him among weak narrators. He says, “Yahya discredited him and al-Daraqutni classified him among the weak narrators of *hadith*.”⁶⁰
6. Ibn Khuzaymah says, “I do not rely on his *hadiths*.”
7. Nassa’i considers him to be “a rejected and abandoned narrator” [*matruk al-hadith*] and adds that “Yahya ibn Ma‘in considered him to be an unreliable person.”

It is clear that it is not possible to use such weak traditions in logical argument.

Thirdly, one of the transmitters of this *hadith* is Zuhri who was one of the nobles and dignitaries of Bani Marwan's government. He could always be seen in the company of Bani Marwan's exclusive group. It is for this reason that his own sister considered him to be an immoral and corrupt man.⁶¹ In such a case, how can one trust him as a transmitter of *hadith*?

Shafi'i and Daraqutni have also characterized him as a person that misrepresents the truth through concealing facts (subreption) [*mudallis*]. Ibn Hajar has explicitly ranked him in 'the third level of subreption [*tadlis*]'.⁶² It should be borne in mind that subreption, which necessitates the distortion of truth, is a type of lying.

Fourthly, from the Sunni point of view, this *hadith* has the problem of discontinuity and cessation [*inqita'*] in transmission. During the lifetime of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as), Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as), from whom this *hadith* has been quoted, was not old enough to be able to directly recount a *hadith* from Imam 'Ali (as).

This dilemma, of course, is not faced by the Shi'ahs who can easily solve the problem of discontinuity and cessation, because their Imams (as) have superseded each other in an unbroken chain of succession. Therefore, there is no such thing as 'a broken chain of transmission' in *hadith* transmitted through the Imams, because every Imam quotes his father, who in turn quotes his father, until the quotation reaches their ancestor the Holy Prophet (S).

Fifthly, all people in heaven are youths. There are no old men in heaven at all. (This issue is discussed in more detail in a later section entitled 'The Problem with the Text of This *Hadith*'.)

Sixthly, why would the Holy Prophet (S) be disinclined to let Imam 'Ali (as) expose this *hadith*?

The second chain of transmission

On his second chain of transmission, al-Tirmidhi has quoted this same *hadith* from Hasan ibn Sabah Bazar. Hasan Bazar quoted it from Muhammad ibn Kathir, from al-Awza'i, from Qutadah, from Anas ibn Malik, and Anas ibn Malik quoted it from the Holy Prophet (S). It will be shown that this chain of transmission has weaknesses also, and its falsity can therefore be proven.

Firstly, al-Tirmidhi considers this *hadith*, like the previous one, to be estranged and scarce [*gharib*].

Secondly, one of the transmitters on the chain of transmission is Muhammad ibn Kathir Masisi. He is considered a weak narrator of *hadith* by a number of Sunni scholars of *hadith*. Some of the scholars who consider and categorize him to be a weak narrator are as follows:

1. Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, "The name of Muhammad ibn Kathir was mentioned in my father's presence.

My father seriously rebuked him as a weak narrator of *hadith* and called him as one whose *hadiths* should be denied [*munkir al-hadith*].”

2. Salih ibn Ahmad quotes his father as saying, “In my opinion, he is not trustworthy [thaqah].”

3. Some people said to Ibn al-Madini, “This *hadith* has been narrated by Muhammad ibn Kathir. He quotes it from al-Awza’i, who quotes from Qutadah, and Qutadah quotes from Anas.” Ibn al-Madini answered, “In the past I had the desire to meet this *shaykh*, but now I do not wish to do so anymore.”

4. Abu Dawud says, “He did not understand or comprehend *hadith* at all.”[63](#)

5. Abu Ahmad Hakim does not consider Muhammad ibn Kathir to be a strong Sunni narrator of *hadith*.

6. Nassa’i presents him as one who is “full of mistakes” [*kathir al-khata*’].

Thirdly, another narrator on this chain of transmission is Qutadah who has been introduced as a frontrunner in the misrepresentation of facts [*tadlis*].[64](#)

The third chain of transmission

On his third chain of transmission, al-Tirmidhi has quoted this *hadith* from Y’aqub ibn Ibrahim Dawraqi. Y’aqub ibn Ibrahim Dawraqi quotes it from Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah. Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah quotes from Dawud. Dawud quotes from Shi’bi and Shi’bi from Harith. Harith quotes from ‘Ali (as), and Imam ‘Ali (as) quotes it from the Holy Prophet (S).

This chain of transmission, like the others before, has various weaknesses.

Firstly, Nassa’i and other Sunni scholars of *hadith* have stipulated in a clear and firm way that Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah is a misrepresenter of facts [*mudallis*].

Ibn Hajar has also classified him as belonging to the third level of subreption and distortion of facts [*tadlis*]. Nevertheless, he has spared him harsh words and instead has apologetically said, “He has only engaged in subreption regarding trustworthy people.”

However, if it were true that all the reporters were trustworthy people, why was it necessary to engage in subreption at all? Subreption which is intentional misrepresentation through the concealment of pertinent facts is considered by the majority of Sunni scholars as one of many types of lying [*kidhb*].[65](#)

Secondly, one of the narrators on the chain of transmission of this *hadith* is Dawud ibn Abi Hind. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has described him as ‘a man full of anxiety and unease when confronted by the scholars of *hadith*, and a person about whom there are many differing opinions among the scholars [*‘ulama*]’.[66](#)

Thirdly, it is surprising that Sha’bi has quoted a *hadith* from Harith, because he himself considers Harith to be a liar [*kadhib*]. We will discuss this matter in the next discussion.

2. The hadith recounted by Ibn Majah

Ibn Majah has narrated this *hadith* through two chains of transmission [*sanad*].

The first chain of transmission

On his first chain of transmission, Ibn Majah quotes this *hadith* from Hisham ibn ‘Ammar, from Sufyan, from Hasan ibn ‘Amarah, from Faras, from Shi‘bi. Sha‘bi quotes the *hadith* from ‘Ali (as), and ‘Ali (as) quotes it from the Holy Prophet (S).[67](#)

Problems concerning this chain of transmission:

Firstly, one of the transmitters on this chain of transmission is Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah. He is widely believed to be a liar and a distorter of *hadith*. Lying and distortion of facts [*tadlis*] occurs when a transmitter attributes statements to someone when in actual fact he did not hear them from that person.

Secondly, another person named as one of the transmitters of this *hadith* is Hasan ibn ‘Amarah. He is believed to be worse at distorting facts than Sufyan ibn ‘Uyaynah. All the Sunni leaders and scholars have classified him among the weak transmitters of *hadith*. Among those who consider him to be a weak reporter are:

1. Al-Bayhaqi says, “He was abandoned [*matruk*] as a narrator. No reliable verdict can be deduced on the basis of his *hadiths*.”[68](#)
2. Al-Daraqutni has classified him among the weak narrators of *hadith*.[69](#)
3. In his book called “*Majruhin*”, Ibn Hibban has mentioned him as a weak narrator of *hadith*.[70](#)
4. Yahya ibn Mu‘in has classified him among the unworthy transmitters of *hadith*.
5. Ibn Hibban quotes Shu‘bah as saying, “We do not have any problem with *hadiths* that he narrated, just as we would not have any problem if he were to commit fornication or adultery.” Shu‘bah said this to mean that the weight of these two sins, recounting distorted or false *hadith* and committing adultery or fornication, are equal.

Thirdly, Shi‘bi, one of the transmitters on this chain of transmission, is a person who cunningly found his way into the government of Bani Umayyah. He was the private tutor of ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan’s children. He was also the high judge and jurist during the reign of Hajjaj in Kufah.[71](#)

It is narrated that Ahnaf said to him, “You should judge between people according to Allah’s decrees.” He replied, “I do not judge according to my Lord’s decrees. I judge according to my own decrees.”[72](#)

Ibn Abi al-Hadid recounts, “Jamilah, the daughter of ‘Isa ibn Jarad, was a very beautiful woman. One day she lodged a complaint with the high court against one of her enemies. Shi‘bi judged in favor of the

beautiful woman. Because of this judgment, Hudhayl Ashja'i composed a poem that alluded to the unfair judgment."⁷³

Fourthly, Shi'bi quotes this *hadith* from Harith, while he himself always accused Harith of lying.

In the introduction of his book entitled "*Al-Sahih*", Muslim says that he heard Shi'bi saying, "Harith A'war Hamadani used to be one of our transmitters of *hadith*, and he is certainly a habitual liar."⁷⁴

Ibn Hibban quotes from Shi'bi saying, "Harith narrated for us and I bear witness that he is surely one of the depraved liars."⁷⁵

Ibn Hajar, while narrating an account of Harith, says, "Shi'bi considers him to be a liar. He has also been considered to be a heretic, and weaknesses can be found in the *hadith* he recounts."⁷⁶

Nuwi in his book entitled, "*Khulasah*" says, "There is unanimity among Sunni scholars of *hadith* that Harith is a weak transmitter of *hadith* because he is a liar."⁷⁷

Fatani says, "Harith ibn 'Abd Allah Hamadani A'war was one of the scholars in the period of the *tabi'in*⁷⁸, but Shi'bi and Ibn al-Madini consider him to be a liar."⁷⁹

The second chain of transmission

On this chain of transmission, Ibn Majah quotes this *hadith* from Abu Shu'ayb Salih ibn Haytham Ta'i who quotes from 'Abd al-Qudus ibn Bakr ibn Khunays. 'Abd al-Qudus ibn Bakr ibn Khanays quotes from Malik ibn Mughul who quotes from 'Awn ibn Abi Juhayfah. 'Awn ibn Abi Juhayfah quotes from his father who finally quotes from the Holy Prophet (S).

To substantiate the falsity of this *hadith*, suffice it to say that one of the narrators on the chain of transmission is 'Abd al-Qudus. He is a person about whom Ibn Hajar says, "Mahmud ibn Ghaylan relates that Ahmad, Ibn Mu'in and Khaythamah said that they deleted and cancelled all the *hadith* which he had recounted for them."⁸⁰

3. The hadith narrated by Haythami

Haythami has narrated this same *hadith*. On his chain of transmission, he quotes from ibn Juhayfah who quotes from Allah's Prophet (S).⁸¹

The problem with this transmission is that one of the other narrators included on his chain of transmission is Khunays ibn Bakr ibn Khunays who has been classified among the weak narrators of *hadith* by Salih ibn Jazrah.⁸²

4. The hadith recounted by Dulabi

Dulabi has recounted this *hadith* on a different chain of transmission through ibn Juhayfah from the

Prophet of Allah (S). One of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Khunays ibn Bakr ibn Khunays who has already been classified among the weak transmitters of *hadith*.

5. The *hadith* recounted by ‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal

‘Abd Allah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal has also recounted this *hadith* from the Holy Prophet (S).⁸³ However, one of the narrators on his chain of transmission is ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar Yamani whom Dhahabi has described to be obscure, vague and ambiguous.⁸⁴ Another narrator on his chain of transmission is Hasan ibn Zayd, who was Mansur’s caretaker in Medina and was one of the companions of Mahdi ‘Abbasi after that. Ibn ‘Uday says, “His *hadith* are controversial and difficult to accept.”⁸⁵ In addition, Fatani says, “He is a weak transmitter of *hadith*.”⁸⁶

6. The *hadiths* recounted by Khatib Baghdadi

Baghdadi has narrated this *hadith* on four chains of transmission:

The first chain of transmission

Baghdadi has narrated this *hadith* on a chain of transmission through Anas ibn Malik.⁸⁷ However, one of the narrators on his chain of transmission is Yahya ibn ‘Anbasah. We are compelled to consider this chain of transmission weak for the following reasons:

Ibn Hibban has mentioned Yahya ibn ‘Anbasah in his book, “*Al-Majruhin*”. Ibn Hibban writes, “He is the leader of all imposters [*shaykh al-dajjal*]. He has forged *hadith* and attributed them to Ibn ‘Uyaynah, Dawud ibn Abi Hind, Abi Hanifah and other trusted narrators of *hadith*. Quoting *hadith* from him is not acceptable at all.”⁸⁸

Daraqutni has described him as an impostor [*dajjal*].

Ibn ‘Uday says, “He rejects authentic *hadith* [*munkir al-hadith*]. Therefore, his position (as a relater of *hadith*) is clear.”⁸⁹

Dhahabi has included him in his “*Diwan al-Du‘afa’ wa al-Matrukin*” (the Collection of the Weak and Rejected Transmitters of *Hadith*).⁹⁰

In addition, one of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Hamid Tawil, about whom Dhahabi says, “We do not know who he is.”⁹¹

The second chain of transmission

Baghdadi has quoted this *hadith* from Imam ‘Ali (as), and Imam ‘Ali (as) is said to have quoted it from the Holy Prophet (S). One of the narrators included on this chain of transmission is Bashshar ibn Musa al-Khaffaf. Bukhari has described Bashshar ibn Musa al-Khaffaf to be a man who rejects authentic

hadith [*munkir al-hadith*], preferring distorted and/or altered ones instead. Ibn Mu‘in has described him as an impostor [*dajjal*] and Abu Zar‘ah considers him to be a weak narrator of *hadith* [*da‘if*].[92](#)

Other narrators on this chain of transmission are Shi‘bi and Harith, whom have already been discussed and classified among distorters and weak narrators of *hadith*.

[The third chain of transmission](#)

On his third chain of transmission, Baghdadi has quoted this *hadith* from Ibn ‘Abbas on two different channels.[93](#)

One of the narrators on the first chain of transmission is ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Musa, whom the Sunni scholars of *hadith* have described as a hot and firebrand Shi‘ah. It is therefore extremely unlikely that he could really have recounted such a *hadith*.[94](#) Additionally, Ahmad ibn Hanbal has explicitly ordered transmitters of *hadith* not to quote his *hadith*.[95](#)

Furthermore, one of the narrators on the first chain of transmission is Yunus ibn Abi Ishaq, whom some Sunni scholars of *hadith* have classified among the weak [*da‘if*] narrators. Ahmad ibn Hanbal considers Yunus to be a weak transmitter and *mudtarib al-hadith*; (i.e. *hadiths* related by him are shaky and unfounded).[96](#)

One of the narrators on this second chain of transmission is Talhah ibn ‘Amru, whom most of the transmitters and scholars of *hadith* consider to be a weak reporter. Ahmad ibn Hanbal considers him to be worthless altogether [*la shay’*] and believes that *hadith* related by him are rejected. Ibn Ma‘in has classified him among the weak transmitters and Jawzajani says his traditions are not satisfactory.

Abu Hatam has classified him among the weak narrators. Bukhari says he is worthless and Nassa’i considers him to be a rejected, abandoned [*matruk al-hadith*] and untrustworthy [*ghayr-u thaqah*] reporter. Ibn al-Madini says he is a weak and worthless transmitter while Ibn Hazm considers him to be the greatest of liars and believes that *hadiths* related by him must be rejected.

Ibn Hibban says, “He attributes *hadiths* to trustworthy people, but these *hadiths* cannot be traced back to or found in the actual statements of these people.”[97](#)

[The fourth chain of transmission](#)

This *hadith* has also been narrated on a chain of transmission which goes back to Ibn ‘Abbas. One of the transmitters on that chain of transmission is Talhah ibn ‘Amru, whose position has already been analyzed.

Baghdadi has recounted this *hadith* in his book called “Mawdi‘h Awham al-Jam‘ wa al-Tafriq”.[98](#) However, one of the narrators on this chain of transmission is ‘Akramah ibn Ibrahim, about whom Hibban says, “He distorts *hadith* and uses them in instances where they do not apply.

It is for this reason that deducing evidence for the purpose of passing legal judgment is not permissible, if the basis for such a verdict is a hadith related by him.” Ibn Mu‘in and Abu Dawud have described him as a worthless person and Nassa’i has categorized him to be among the weak narrators of hadith.[99](#)

[The hadith recounted by Ibn Hajar](#)

Ibn Hajar has quoted this *hadith* from Ibn ‘Umar in his book “*Lisan al-Mizan*”.[100](#) One of the narrators on this chain of transmission is ‘Ubayd Allah ibn ‘Umar.

Ibn Hajar quotes Ahmad ibn Hanbal saying, “For some time, we used to burn *hadiths* reported by him.” Jawzajani considers him to be a weak spirited man [*da‘if al-amr*]. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has listed a number of people who have classified and recorded his other weaknesses [*tad‘ifat*].[101](#)

[The hadith recounted by Ibn al-Najjar](#)

In the book called, “*Tarikh-e Baghdad*” (The History of Baghdad), Ibn al-Najjar has narrated this *hadith* on his own chain of transmission from Anas. One of the transmitters on this chain of transmission is Muhammad ibn Kathir whom we have already categorized among the weak transmitters.

[The hadith recounted by Ibn ‘Asakir](#)

Ibn ‘Asakir has recounted this *hadith* on his own chain of transmission. He quotes it from al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as). One of the transmitters on his chain of transmission is Muhammad ibn Yunus Qarashi Kadimi. Daraqutni has accused him of forging and creating new *hadiths*. Ibn Hibban says, “He used to forge *hadith*.”

He has falsely attributed more than a thousand invented *hadiths* to trustworthy people.” Ibn ‘Uday says, “He is accused of forging *hadith*. It is for this reason that most of our scholars abandoned and rejected *hadiths* reported by him.”

[The hadith recounted by Ibn Abi Shaybah](#)

Ibn Abi Shaybah has quoted this *hadith* from Imam ‘Ali (as). One of the narrators on his chain of transmission is Musa ibn ‘Ubaydah Rabadhi, about whom Ahmad ibn Hanbal says, “The *hadiths* he recounts are not worthy of being recorded.” Nassa’i and others have classified him among weak transmitters of *hadith*.

Ibn ‘Uday says, “There is apparent weakness in the *hadiths* he reports.” Ibn Mu‘in has described him as a worthless narrator. Yahya ibn Sa‘id says, “We abstain from *hadiths* recounted by him.”

Likewise, one of the transmitters mentioned on this chain of narration is Abi Ma‘adh. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has prohibited narrating *hadiths* related by him. Ibn Mu‘in has described him as a worthless reporter. Jawzajani has nullified him altogether. Abu Dawud and Daraqutni have described him as an abandoned

and obsolete reporter. [102](#)

In addition, ‘Ya Abi al-Khattab’, the person from whom Abi Ma‘adh quotes this *hadith*, is unknown.

[The hadith recounted by Tahawi](#)

Tahawi has narrated this *hadith* on four chains of transmission in the book called, “*Mushkil al-Athar*”.

[The first chain of transmission](#)

This *hadith* has been quoted from Anas ibn Malik. One of the people on this chain of transmission is Muhammad ibn Kathir San‘a‘i, whose weaknesses and shortcomings we have already mentioned.

[The second chain of transmission](#)

On this chain of transmission, the *hadith* has been quoted from Imam ‘Ali (as). The person that quoted this *hadith* from Imam ‘Ali (as) is Abi Janab Yahya ibn Abi Hayyah Kalbi. Yahya ibn Qattan did not consider quoting traditions narrated by him to be lawful [*halal*].

Falas has described him as an abandoned and obsolete reporter of *hadith*. Nassa‘i and Daraqutni and ‘Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah have called him a weak narrator. [103](#)

Ibn Hibban says, “He used to attribute what he heard from weak reporters to trustworthy people... That is why Yahya ibn Qattan has considered *hadiths* related by him to be baseless and groundless. Ahmad ibn Hanbal has viciously attacked him.” [104](#)

Furthermore, one of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Shi‘bi, whom we have already shown to be a weak reporter.

[The third chain of transmission](#)

On the third chain of transmission, Tahawi has also quoted this *hadith* from Imam ‘Ali (as). One of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Shi‘bi who quotes this *hadith* from Harith. We have already shown both Shi‘bi and Harith to be weak reporters of *hadith*.

[The fourth chain of transmission](#)

On the fourth chain of transmission, this *hadith* has been quoted from Abu Sa‘id Khudri. Suffice it to say that one of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Asbagh ibn Faraj who was one of the chiefs of Bani Umayyah. [105](#)

Another person on this chain of transmission is ‘Ali ibn ‘Abbas. Hibban has mentioned him in his book “*Al-Majruhin*”. Hibban considers legal judgment deduced by relying on *hadiths* related by ‘Ali ibn ‘Abbas to be null and void. [106](#)

Another problem with this chain of transmission is that one of the narrators is Kathir al-Nida', whom Dhahabi has included in his "*Diwan al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin*" (the Collection of the Weak and Rejected Transmitters of *Hadith*). [107](#)

[The hadith recounted by Ibn Abi Hatam](#)

Ibn Abi Hatam has narrated this *hadith* on three chains of transmission, but he himself has nullified all the three chains. [108](#)

[The hadith narrated by Tabarani](#)

Tabarani has narrated this *hadith* on two chains of transmission:

[The first chain of transmission](#)

On this chain of transmission, Juhayfah has quoted this *hadith* from the Holy Prophet (S). [109](#) One of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Khunays ibn Bakr, who has been considered a weak reporter by Salih Jazrah. Buysari has also criticized him. [110](#)

[The second chain of transmission](#)

On this chain of transmission, Anas ibn Malik has quoted this *hadith* from the Holy Prophet (S). One of the narrators on this chain of transmission is Muhammad ibn Kathir, whom we have already shown to be a weak reporter.

[The hadith narrated by Ibn Qutaybah](#)

This *hadith* has been recorded in the first chapter of his book. Suffice it to say that one of the narrators on his chain of transmission is Nuh ibn Abi Maryam, about whom Ibn Hibban has said, "He used to forge and counterfeit chains of transmission. He has narrated *hadiths* from trustworthy people which cannot be found or traced to their actual narrations. Therefore, deducing legal proof and judgment [*ihitijaj*] by relying on *hadiths* reported by him is not permissible at all." [111](#)

Muslim and other scholars of *hadith* have referred to him as a disparaged narrator [*matruk al-hadith*] and Bukhari has called him a rejecter of *hadith* [*munkir al-hadith*]. Hakim and Ibn al-Jawzi have called him a forger of *hadith*. [112](#) Ibn al-Jawzi has mentioned the *hadiths* he forged in several places. Hakim says this about him, "He has been blessed with everything except truthfulness." [113](#)

[Conclusion](#)

The previous traditions were documented *hadiths* which some have narrated as regards the issue of Abu Bakr and 'Umar being the leaders of the elderly of heaven. However, it has been clearly shown that none of the chains of transmission for this *hadith* is authentic or correct.

Others, too, have narrated this *hadith* in their books, but they have narrated the *hadith* in such a way that it gives rise to cessation and discontinuity of transmitters on the chains of transmission, which classifies them as weak *hadiths*.

The problem with the text of this hadith

The fundamental problem with the text of this *hadith* is that Abu Bakr and ‘Umar have been called ‘the two leaders of the elderly of Paradise’ whereas other texts of *hadith* explicitly state that there are no old people in heaven; on the contrary, such *hadiths* state that the people in Paradise are all youths aged thirty. Note the following:

1. Abu Hurayrah has recounted that the Holy Prophet (S) said, “The people that are destined to enter paradise will be tall, will have no beards on their faces, will have curly thick hair on their heads and will be thirty years of age. Their youth will be endless and their clothes will not wear out.”[114](#)
2. Abu Sa‘id Khudri narrated from the Holy Prophet (S) that he said, “Whoever dies, whether young or old and is destined to Paradise will enter as a thirty-year-old youth and his age will never be increased. Those entering the Hell will be of the same age.”[115](#)

- [1.](#) Tarikh al-Khulafa’, p. 160.
- [2.](#) Tarikh-e Baghdad, vol. 1, p. 140; Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 167.
- [3.](#) Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 16, p. 281.
- [4.](#) Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, p. 45.
- [5.](#) Tarikh-e Baghdad, vol. 1, p. 140.
- [6.](#) Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, p. 41.
- [7.](#) Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabir, vol. 3, pp. 35–36.
- [8.](#) Kanz al-‘Ummal, vol. 13, p. 97.
- [9.](#) Dhakha‘ir al-‘Uqba, p. 129.
- [10.](#) Majma‘ al-Zawa‘id, vol. 9, p. 182.
- [11.](#) Hiliat al-Awliya’, vol. 4, p. 139.
- [12.](#) Shadharat al-Dhahab, vol. 1, p. 85.
- [13.](#) Akhbar al-Qudat, vol. 2, p. 200.
- [14.](#) Sunan ibn Majah, vol. 1, p. 44.
- [15.](#) Al-Mustadrak ‘ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 167.
- [16.](#) Al-Kifayat al-Talib, p. 341.
- [17.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 660.
- [18.](#) Al-Musnad, vol. 5, pp. 391–392.
- [19.](#) Tarikh al-Islam (The History of Islam), vol. 2, p. 90; Siyr A‘lam al-Nubala’, vol. 3, p. 168.
- [20.](#) Al-Isabah, vol. 1, p. 256.
- [21.](#) Mu‘jam al-Sahabah, p. 22.
- [22.](#) Tarikh Jurjan, p. 395.
- [23.](#) Al-Fath al-Kabir, vol. 2, p. 80.
- [24.](#) Al-Sawa‘iq al-Muhriqah, p. 114.
- [25.](#) Al-Jami‘ al-Saghir, vol. 1, p. 379.
- [26.](#) Firdaws al-Akhbar, vol. 5, p. 76.
- [27.](#) Al-Musannaf, vol. 12, p. 96.

- [28.](#) Al-Khasa'is, p. 36.
- [29.](#) Ibn Hibban, Al-Sahih, vol. 15, p. 413.
- [30.](#) Al-Ansab, vol. 3, p. 477.
- [31.](#) Al-Jami' al-Saghir.
- [32.](#) Fayd al-Qadir, vol. 3, p. 550.
- [33.](#) Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah, vol. 2, p. 424.
- [34.](#) Kifayat al-Talib, p. 341.
- [35.](#) Kifayat al-Talib, as narrated by Tabarani.
- [36.](#) Al-Mustadrak 'ala al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 167.
- [37.](#) Ibid.
- [38.](#) Ibid.
- [39.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 5, p. 660.
- [40.](#) Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi, according to the commentary of al-Tirmidhi, vol. 10, p. 272.
- [41.](#) Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah, vol. 2, pp. 423–426.
- [42.](#) Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Sahihah, vol. 2, p. 424.
- [43.](#) Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 201.
- [44.](#) Al-Sahih al-Musnad min Fada'il al-Sahabah, p. 257.
- [45.](#) Tahdhib-u Khasa'is al-Imam 'Ali (as), p. 99, hadith 124.
- [46.](#) Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'minin (as), as researched by Al Zahawi, p. 107, hadith 140.
- [47.](#) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, as researched by Hamzah Ahmad al-Zayn, vol 1, pp. 101, 195, 204, 259.
- [48.](#) Sahih ibn Hibban, vol. 15, p. 413, printed by Mu'assisah al-Risalah.
- [49.](#) Tuhfah al-Ahwadhi, vol. 10, p. 186; Fayd al-Qadir, vol. 3, p. 550; Al-Ansab, vol. 3, p. 477.
- [50.](#) Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 3, pp. 35–36.
- [51.](#) Ibid., p. 38.
- [52.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 1, p. 212.
- [53.](#) Taqrib al-Tahdhib, p. 53.
- [54.](#) Al-'Ilal wa Ma'rifat al-Rijal, p. 248.
- [55.](#) Al-Mughni fi al-Du'afa', vol. 1, p. 66; Diwan al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin, p. 16.
- [56.](#) Ibn Abi Hatam, Al-Jarh wa al-Ta'dil, vol. 1, p. 123; Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 431.
- [57.](#) Taqrib al-Tahdhib, vol. 1, p. 191.
- [58.](#) Tuhfah al-Ahwadhi, vol. 10, pp. 149–150.
- [59.](#) Al-Du'afa' al-Kabir, p. 166.
- [60.](#) Diwan al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin, p. 332.
- [61.](#) Ibn 'Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Damishq, vol. 2, p. 65.
- [62.](#) Tabaqat al-Mudallisin, p. 27.
- [63.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, and Lisan al-Mizan translated by Muhammad ibn Kathir.
- [64.](#) Nasb al-Rayah, vol. 3, p. 155; Tahqiq al-Ghayah, p. 309; Ibn Hajar, Tabaqat al-Mudallisin, p. 16.
- [65.](#) Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, Al-Kifayah, p. 355, as narrated by Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj.
- [66.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 3, p. 205.
- [67.](#) Ibn Majah, Sunan, vol. 1, pp. 36–38.
- [68.](#) Al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Da'ifah, vol. 3, p. 66.
- [69.](#) Ibid.
- [70.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 1, p. 224.
- [71.](#) Waki', Akhbar al-Qudat, vol. 2, pp. 421–426.
- [72.](#) Ibid., p. 427.
- [73.](#) Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah, vol. 17, p. 66.
- [74.](#) Muslim, Al-Sahih, with Commentary by Nuwi, vol. 1, p. 97.
- [75.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 1, p. 216.

- [76.](#) Taqrib al-Tahdhib, vol. 1, p. 141.
- [77.](#) Tahqiq al-Ghayah bi Tartib al-Ruwat al-Mutarjim lahum fi Nasb al-Rayah, p. 120.
- [78.](#) Those who did not see or meet the Prophet in person but met or saw his companions.
- [79.](#) Tadhkirah al-Mawdu'at, p. 248.
- [80.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 6, p. 369.
- [81.](#) Mawarid al-Diman ila Zawa'id ibn Hibban, p. 538.
- [82.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 1, p. 669; Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 411; Dhahabi, Al-Mughni, p. 215.
- [83.](#) Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Al-Musnad, vol. 1, p. 80.
- [84.](#) Al-Mughni, p. 35; Diwan al-Du'afa', p. 175.
- [85.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 1, p. 492.
- [86.](#) Qanun al-Mawdu'at, p. 249.
- [87.](#) Tarikh-e Baghdad, vol. 5, p. 307.
- [88.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 3, p. 124.
- [89.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 4, p. 400.
- [90.](#) Diwan al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin, p. 339.
- [91.](#) Al-Mughni, p. 196.
- [92.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 1, p. 441.
- [93.](#) Tarikh-e Baghdad, vol. 10, p. 192.
- [94.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 3, p. 16.
- [95.](#) Ibid.
- [96.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 11, p. 434.
- [97.](#) Ibid., vol. 5, p. 8; Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 2, p. 8; Ibn Hazm, Al-Ahkam, vol. 7, p. 101; Al-Mahalli, vol. 11, p. 276; Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 2, p. 340; Tarikh al-Bukhari (al-Kabir), vol. 4, p. 350.
- [98.](#) Mawdih Awham al-Jam' wa al-Tafriq, vol. 2, p. 178, printed in Haidar Abad.
- [99.](#) Ibn Hibban, Al-Majruhin; Dhahabi, Mizan al-I'tidal.
- [100.](#) Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 3, p. 427.
- [101.](#) Ibid.
- [102.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 2, p. 196.
- [103.](#) Ibid., vol. 4, p. 371.
- [104.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 3, p. 111.
- [105.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, trans. Asbagh ibn Faraj.
- [106.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 2, p. 104.
- [107.](#) Divan al-Du'afa' wa al-Matrukin, p. 256.
- [108.](#) 'Ilal al-Hadith, vol. 2, p. 382, Salafiyah Publications, Egypt.
- [109.](#) Al-Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 22, p. 85-86.
- [110.](#) Al-Zawa'id, vol. 8, p. 1.
- [111.](#) Kitab al-Majruhin, vol. 3, p. 48.
- [112.](#) Mizan al-I'tidal, vol. 4, p. 279; Ibn al-Jawzi, Al-Mawdu'at al-Kubra (A Great Collection of Fabricated Traditions), vol. 1, p. 41.
- [113.](#) Tahdhib al-Tahdhib, vol. 10, p. 488.
- [114.](#) Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, vol. 4, p. 683; Al-Darami, Sunan, vol. 2, p. 335; Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 10, p. 398.
- [115.](#) Al-Taj al-Jami' li'l-Usul, vol. 5, p. 375.

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