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26. Hadith Al-Tair, Investigating Its Authenticity

Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728 H) states:

> حديث الطائر من المكذوبات الموضوعات عند أهل العلم

Hadith al-Tair is one of the fabricated lies in the opinion of the people of knowledge.[1]

Meanwhile, Imam Ibn Asakir (d. 571 H) records:

> أخبرنا أبو غالب بن البنا أنا أبو الحسين بن الأبنوسي أنا أبو الحسن الدارقطني نا محمد بن مخلد بن حفص نا حاتم بن الليث نا عبيد الله بن موسى عن عيسى بن عمر القارئ عن السدي نا أنس بن مالك قال أهدي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أطيار فقسمها وترك طيرا فقال اللهم ائتني بأحب خلقك إليك يأكل معي من هذا الطير فجاء علي بن أبي طالب فدخل يأكل معه من ذلك الطير

Abu Ghalib b. al-Bana – Abu al-Husayn b. al-Abnusi – Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqu□ni – Muhammad b. Mukhlid b. Hafs – Hatim b. al-Layth – ‘Ubayd Allah b. Musa – ‘Isa b. ‘Umar al-Qari – al-Suddi – Anas b. Malik:

Birds were given as gifts to the Messenger of Allah. So, he distributed them and left a bird. Then he said, “O Allah, bring to me **the most beloved to You of Your creation** to eat with me from this bird. **So, ‘Ali b. Abi Talib came** and entered and ate with him from that bird.[2]

Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) states about the first narrator:

> أبو غالب ابن البناء الشيخ الصالح الثقة، مسند بغداد، أبو غالب أحمد بن الإمام أبي علي الحسن بن أحمد بن عبد الله بن البناء البغدادي الحنبلي.

Abu Ghalib b. al-Bana: The righteous Shaykh, **the *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrator, the *hadith* transmitter of Baghdad**, Abu Ghalib Ahmad b. Imam Abu ‘Ali al-Hasan b. Ahmad b. ‘Abd Allah b. al-

Bana al-Baghdadi al-Hanbali.[3]

Concerning the second narrator, he further says:

> ابن الآبنوسي الشيخ الثقة، أبو الحسين، محمد بن أحمد بن محمد بن علي، ابن الآبنوسي البغدادي.

Ibn al-Abnusi: **The *thiqah* (trustworthy) Shaykh**, Abu al-Husayn, Muhamamd b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. ʻAli, Ibn al-Abnusi al-Baghdadi.[4]

The third narrator, Imam al-Daraqu□ni, needs no introduction. Nonetheless, let us get al-Dhahabi's words about him anyway:

> الدارقطني :الامام الحافظ المجود، شيخ الاسلام، علم الجهابذة، أبو الحسن، علي بن عمر بن أحمد بن مهدي بن مسعود بن النعمان بن دينار بن عبد الله البغدادي المقرئ المحدث

Al-Daraqu□ni: **The Imam, the excellent *hafiz* (*hadith* scientist), Shaykh al-Islam**, the signpost of the pundits, Abu al-Hasan ʻAli b. ʻUmar b. Ahmad b. Mahdi b. Mas'ud b. al-Nu'man b. Dinar b. ʻAbd Allah al-Baghdadi al-Maqri, **the *hadith* expert**.[5]

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) says about the fourth narrator:

> محمد بن مخلد بن حفص ... وهو ثقة ثقة ثقة مشهور

Muhammad b. Muhklid b. Hafs ... **He is *thiqah* (trustworthy), *thiqah* (trustworthy), *thiqah* (trustworthy)**, well-known.[6]

Imam al-Dhahabi tells us about the fifth narrator as well:

> حاتم بن الليث الحافظ المكثر الثقة، أبو الفضل، البغدادي الجوهري.

Hatim b. al-Layth: The *hadith* scientist, the prolific *hadith* narrator, **the *thiqah* (trustworthy) narrator**, Abu al-Fadhl, al-Baghdadi, al-Jawhari.[7]

Al-Hafiz returns to inform us about the sixth narrator:

> عبيد الله بن موسى بن أبي المختار باذام العبسي الكوفي أبو محمد ثقة كان يتشيع

ʻUbayd Allah b. Musa b. Abi al-Mukhtar al-ʻUbsi al-Kufi, Abu Muhammad: ***Thiqah* (trustworthy)**, he

was a Shi'i.[8]

Al-Hafiz proceeds about the seventh narrator too:

عيسى بن عمر الأسدي الهمداني بسكون الميم أبو عمر الكوفي القارئ ثقة

'Isa b. 'Umar al-Asadi al-Hamdani, Abu 'Umar al-Kufi al-Qari: ***Thiqah*** (**trustworthy**)[9]

Finally, 'Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) grades the last narrator, al-Suddi:

". وهذا سند حسن، رجاله ثقات غير السدي وهو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن وهو صدوق يهم. كما في " التقريب

This chain is *hasan*. Its narrators are trustworthy apart from **al-Suddi**, and he is Isma'il b. 'Abd al-Rahman. **He was *saduq*** (**very truthful**), and he hallucinated, as stated in *al-Taqrib*.[10]

He adds about him:

وهو ثقة احتج به مسلم واسمه إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن.

He is *thiqah* (**trustworthy**). (**Imam**) **Muslim has relied upon him as a *hujjah*** (**in his *Sahih***), and his name is Isma'il b. 'Abd al-Rahman.[11]

Shaykh al-Arnau؋ also states:

إسناده حسن لأجل السدي ـ وهو إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن بن أبي كريمة ـ وباقي رجاله ثقات

Its chain is *hasan* due to al-Suddi – and he is Isma'il b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Abi Karimah – and the other narrators are trustworthy.[12]

Shaykh Dr. Asad has the same grading for him:

حدثنا أبو همام حدثنا أبي عن زياد بن خيثمة عن إسماعيل السدي عن عكرمة عن ابن عباس ... إسناده حسن

Abu Hammam – my father – Ziyad b. Khaythamah – **Isma'il al-Suddi** – Ikrimah – Ibn 'Abbas .... **Its chain is *hasan***.[13]

Shaykh Dr. Al-A'zami is not left out either:

حدثنا علي بن شعيب حدثنا أبو النضر حدثنا الأشجعي عن سفيان عن السدي عن البهي عن عائشة.... إسناده حسن

'Ali b. Shu'ayb – Abu al-Nadhar – al-Ashja' – Sufyan – **al-Suddi** – al-Bahi – 'Aishah .... **Its chain is *hasan***.[14]

Interestingly, Imam Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 H) has documented a similar report of *Hadith al-Tair* as Imam Ibn Asakir:

قال المؤلف وقد انبأنا ابو القاسم الحريري قال انبأنا ابو طالب العشري قال انا الدارقطني قالنا انا محمد بن مخلد قال انا حاتم بن الليث قال انا عبيد الله بن موسى عن عيسى بن عمر القاري عن السدي قال انس اهدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه و سلم أطيار فقسمهن فقال اللهم ائتني بأحب خلقك اليك يأكل معي من هذا الطير فجاء علي بن ابي طالب فدخل فأكل معه من ذلك الطير

Abu al-Qasim al-Hariri – Abu Talib al-'Ashri – al-Daraqu□ni – Muhammad b. Mukhlid – Hatim b. al-Layth – ''Ubayd Allah b. Musa – 'Isa b. 'Umar al-Qari – al-Suddi – Anas:

Birds were given as gifts to the Messenger of Allah. So, he distributed them. Then he said, "O Allah, bring to me **the most beloved to You of Your creation** to eat with me from this bird. **So, 'Ali b. Abi Talib came** and entered and ate with him from that bird.[15]

This chain is basically the same as that which we have verified above in this chapter. 'Allamah al-Albani also has this comment about this report:

فقد رواه ابن الجوزي (363) بإسناده من طريق الدارقطني: نا محمد بن مخلد: نا حاتم بن الليث قال: نا عبيد الله بن موسى به.

وهذا إسناد رجاله كلهم ثقات، إلا ما في (السدي) من الخلاف ـ وهو (السدي الكبير) ، واسمه: إسماعيل بن عبد الرحمن

Ibn al-Jawzi (363) has recorded it with his chain from the route of al-Daraqu□ni – Muhammad b. Mukhlid – Hatim b. al-Layth – 'Ubayd Allah b. Musa with it (i.e. the full chain with the *hadith*).

All the narrators of this chain are trustworthy, except for the difference of opinions concerning al-Suddi, and he is al-Suddi al-Kabir, and his name is Isma'il b. 'Abd al-Rahman.[16]

Since al-Suddi too is *thiqah* (trustworthy), or at least *saduq* (very truthful) due to the disputes about him, the *sanad* is therefore either *sahih* or *hasan*. We go with the stricter ruling. As such, we declare that

chain of the *hadith* is *hasan* due to al-Suddi. All its narrators are reliable, and there is no disconnection whatsoever in the *sanad*.

Meanwhile, the *hadith* itself is absolutely *sahih* due to the existence of massive, overwhelming corroboration (*mutaba'at*) for al-Suddi. Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H), for instance, declares about *Hadith al-Tair*:

> وقد رواه عن أنس جماعة من أصحابه زيادة على ثلاثين نفسا

It has been narrated from Anas by a group of his companions, numbering **more than thirty** individuals.[17]

This establishes the *tawatur* of the *hadith* from Anas, and shoots the report of al-Suddi from the level of *hasan* to the highest *sahih* grade.

1. Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim b. Taymiyyah al-Harrani, Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah (Muasassat Qurtubah; 1st edition, 1406 H) [annotator: Dr. Muhammad Rashad Salim], vol. 7, p. 371
2. Abu al-Qasim 'Ali b. al-Hasan b. Habat Allah b. 'Abd Allah, Ibn Asakir al-Shafi'i, Tarikh Madinah Dimashq (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr; 1415 H) [annotator: 'Ali Shiri], vol. 42, p. 254
3. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 19, p. 603, # 352
4. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotators of the eighteenth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and Muhammad Na'im al-Arqisusi], vol. 18, p. 85, # 38
5. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 1413 H) [annotators of the sixteenth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and Akram al-Bushi], vol. 16, p. 449, # 332
6. Shihab al-Din Abu al-Fadhl Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Lisan al-Mizan (Beirut: Manshurat Muasassat al-A'lami li al-Matbu'at; 2nd edition, 1390 H), vol. 5, p. 374, # 1218
7. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. 'Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A'lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 4th edition, 1406 H) [annotators of the twelfth volume: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut and □alih al-Samar], vol. 12, p. 519, # 195
8. Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Hajar al-'Asqalani, Taqrib al-Tahdhib (Beirut: Dar al-Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah; 2nd edition, 1415 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 1, p. 640, # 4361
9. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 773, # 5330
10. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. □dam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-□ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 1, p. 802, # 440
11. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 622, # 311
12. Abu 'Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu'ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 3, p. 217, # 13301
13. Abu Ya'la Ahmad b. 'Ali b. Muthanna al-Mawsili al-Tamimi, Musnad (Damascus: Dar al-Mamun li al-Turath; 1st edition, 1404 H) [annotator: Dr. Husayn Salim Asad], vol. 4, p. 396, # 2518
14. Abu Bakr Muhammad b. Ishaq b. Khuzaymah al-Salami al-Naysaburi, □ahih (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami; 1390 H) [annotators: Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani and Dr. Muhammad Mustafa al-A'zami], vol. 3, p. 270, # 2049
15. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Ali b. al-Jawzi, al-'Ilal al-Mutanahiyyah fi al-Ahadith al-Wahiyyah (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1403 H) [annotator: Khalil al-Mays], vol. 1, p. 230, # 363
16. Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. □dam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Silsilah al-

Ahadith al-□ahihah wa Shayhun min Fiqhihah wa Fawaidihah (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ma'arif li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'; 1st edition, 1415 H), vol. 14, p. 174, # 6575

17. Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah al-Hakim al-Naysaburi, al-Mustadrak 'ala al-□ahihayn (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah; 1st edition, 1411 H) [annotator: Mustafa 'Abd al-Qadir 'Ata], vol. 3, p. 141, # 4650

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