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17) Hadith Al-Siyadah, Proving Its Authenticity

‘Allamah al-Albani (d. 1420 H) records this *hadith* in his *al-Dha’ifah*:

> يا علي! أنت سيد في الدنيا، سيد في الآخرة، حبيبك حبيبي، وحبيبي حبيب الله، وعدوك عدوي، وعدوي عدو الله، والويل لمن أبغضك بعدي

O ‘Ali! You are a *sayyid* in this world and a *sayyid* in the Hereafter. Your lover is my lover, and my lover is the lover of Allah. Your enemy is my enemy, and my enemy is the enemy of Allah. Woe unto anyone who hates you after my death.[1]

In his *takhrij* of the report, our ‘Allamah states:

> أخرجه ابن عدي (308/ 2) ، والحاكم (3/ 127-128) ، والخطيب (4/ 41-42) ، وابن عساكر (12/ 134/ 135-2/ 1) من طرق عن أبي الأزهر أحمد بن الأزهر: أخبرنا عبد الرزاق: أنبأ معمر عن الزهري عن عبيد الله بن عبد الله عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: نظر النبي - صلى الله عليه وسلم - إلى علي فقال ... فذكره.
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> وقال الحاكم: "صحيح على شرط الشيخين، وأبو الأزهر - بإجماعهم - ثقة، وإذا انفرد الثقة بحديث؛ فهو على أصلهم صحيح"!!
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> وتعقبه الذهبي بقوله: "قلت: هذا وإن كان رواته ثقات؛ فهو منكر، ليس ببعيد من الوضع؛ وإلا لأي شيء حدث به عبد الرزاق سراً، ولم يجسر أن يتفوه به لأحمد وابن معين والخلق الذين رحلوا إليه، وأبو الأزهر ثقة".

Ibn ‘Adi (2/308), al-Hakim (3/127-128), al-Khatib (4/41-42) and Ibn Asakir (12/134/135-2/1) through many routes from Abu al-Azhar Ahmad b. al-Azhar – ‘Abd al-Razzaq – Ma’mar – al-Zuhri – ‘Ubayd Allah b. ‘Abd Allah – Ibn ‘Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both:

The Prophet, peace be upon him, looked at ‘Ali and said, “...” Then he mentioned it (i.e. the *hadith* as

quoted above).

Al-Hakim says: "**It is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs**, and Abu al-Azhar – based upon their (i.e. the scholars') consensus – is *thiqah* (trustworthy). When a trustworthy narrator narrates a *hadith* without corroboration, it is (nonetheless) *sahih* based upon their (i.e. the scholars') principle"!!

Al-Dhahabi responded to him by saying: "I say: **Although its narrators are trustworthy**, this (*hadith*) is *munkar* (repugnant). (In fact), it is not far from being a fabrication. Otherwise, why did 'Abd al-Razzaq narrate it secretly, and did not have the courage to transmit it to Ahmad, Ibn Ma'in and the other people who travelled to him. And Abu al-Azhar was trustworthy."[2]

Both Imam al-Hakim (d. 403 H) and Imam al-Dhahabi (d. 748 H) agree that all its narrators are trustworthy. However, while the former grades the *hadith* as *sahih*, al-Dhahabi nonetheless rejects it, questioning why Imam 'Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211 H) had narrated it only secretly. As such, his sole reason for throwing out the noble *hadith* is nothing but the secrecy of its transmission. Of course, that is not a valid ground in the Sunni *hadith* sciences.

What is 'Allamah al-Albani's own verdict on the *hadith*? This is it, in one simple word:

> موضوع

Mawdu' (fabricated)[3]

But, on what basis is this? Our 'Allamah has no objection to al-Dhahabi's claim that all its narrators are trustworthy. So, what is the problem? He outlines his reasons:

> "قلت: فانحصرت العلة في عبد الرزاق نفسه، أو في معمر، وكلاهما ثقة محتج بهما في الصحيحين"

I (al-Albani) say: **So, the fault (in the *hadith*) is LIMITED to 'Abd al-Razzaq himself, or to Ma'mar**, and both of them are relied upon as *hujjah* in the two *Sahihs*.[4]

In other words, all the narrators are *truly* trustworthy, as declared by Imam al-Dhahabi. Moreover, the alleged defect in the *hadith* is traceable *only* to its narrators, specifically to either 'Abd al-Razzaq or Ma'mar. Yet, both are "trustworthy" narrators of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*! There is absolutely no other issue with the *sanad* or *matn* (content) of the *riwayah*. Here, the plot thickens significantly.

So, what exactly is al-Albani's point against Ma'mar? Let us hear him out:

> أما بالنسبة لمعمر؛ فقد بين وجه العلة فيه: أبو حامد الشرقي؛ فقد روى الخطيب بسند صحيح عنه: أنه سئل عن حديث أبي الأزهر هذا؟ فقال: "هذا حديث باطل، والسبب فيه: أن معمراً كان له ابن أخ رافضي، وكان معمر يمكنه

من كتبه، فأدخل عليه هذا الحديث، وكان معمر رجلاً مهيباً لا يقدر عليه أحد في السؤال والمراجعة، فسمعه عبد الرزاق في كتاب ابن أخي معمر!! ".

قلت: فهذا ـ إن صح ـ علة واضحة في أحاديث معمر في فضائل أهل البيت، ولكني في شك من صحة ذلك؛ لأنني لم أر من ذكره في ترجمة معمر؛ كالذهبي والعسقلاني وغيرهما. والله أعلم.

With regards to Ma'mar, Abu Hamid al-Sharqi has explained the reason for the fault with him. Al-Khatib has narrated with a *sahih* chain from him that he was asked about this *hadith* of Abu al-Azhar. So, he said, "This *hadith* is nonsense, and the reason is this: Ma'mar had a nephew who was a Rafidhi, and Ma'mar gave him control of his books. So, he (the Rafidhi nephew) included this *hadith*, attributing it to him (i.e. Ma'mar). Meanwhile, Ma'mar was an awe-inspiring man. None could criticize him. So, 'Abd al-Razzaq heard from the book of Ma'mar's nephew!"

I (al-Albani) say: This – if authentic – is a clear defect in the *ahadith* of Ma'mar concerning the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt. However, **I am in doubt concerning the authenticity of that**, because I saw no one – like al-Dhahabi, al-'Asqalani or others – who mentioned it in the biography of Ma'mar. And Allah knows best.[5]

Everything here revolves around whether al-Sharqi was telling the truth or not. 'Allamah al-Albani himself doubts the reliability of al-Sharqi's story. Yet, this same 'Allamah has rejected *Hadith al-Siyadah* on the strength of this suspicious tale! 'Allamah al-Maghribi – a well-known contemporary Sunni *muhadith* – was understandably very angry while responding to this blameworthy action of 'Allamah al-Albani on the *hadith*:

قلت : هذا كلام باطل جدا ، وبيان ذلك : أن ابن أخي معمر، شخص وهمي لا وجود له ، ولا يعرف أخ لمعمر . وكيف يوجد ابن بدون أب غير عيسى عليه السلام ؟

I say: This is complete nonsense! The reason for this is: **That nephew of Ma'mar was only an imaginary figure. He never existed!** Ma'mar was not known to have any brother. How could a son exist without a father, apart from 'Isa, peace be upon him?[6]

Why has 'Allamah al-Albani stooped so low as to rely upon such kind of evidence in undermining an authentically transmitted *hadith*? Well, he also mentions 'Abd al-Razzaq as a possible defect. Therefore, what has he got against him? Our 'Allamah launches his further attack:

وأما بالنسبة لعبد الرزاق؛ فإعلاله أقرب؛ لأنه وإن كان ثقة؛ فقد تكلموا في تحديثه من حفظه دون كتابه؛ فقال البخاري: "ما حدث به من كتابه فهو أصح". وقال الدارقطني: "ثقة، لكنه يخطىء على معمر في أحاديث". وقال ابن حبان: "كان ممن يخطىء إذا حدث من حفظه؛ على تشيع فيه". وقال ابن عدي في آخر ترجمته: "ولم يروا بحديثه

بأساً؛ إلا أنهم نسبوه إلى التشيع، وقد روى أحاديث في الفضائل مما لا يوافقه عليه أحد من الثقات، فهذا أعظم ما رموه به، وأما في باب الصدق؛ فإني أرجو أنه لا بأس به؛ إلا أنه قد سبق منه أحاديث في فضائل أهل البيت ومثالب آخرين؛ مناكير".

As for ‘Abd al-Razzaq, his own fault is more likely. This is because even though he was trustworthy, he has been criticized in his *ahadith* from his memory, other than from his book. Al-Bukhari said, “**Whatever he narrated from his book is MORE *sahih***.” Al-Daraqutni said, “*Thiqah* (trustworthy), but he made mistakes in *ahadith* from Ma’mar.” Ibn Hibban said, “He used to make mistakes when he narrated from his memory, plus (there was) Shi’ism in him.” Ibn ‘Adi said at the end of his biography of him, “**I do not see any problem with his *hadith*, except that they have linked him with Shi’ism**. He narrated *ahadith* about the merits (of the Ahl al-Bayt) which were not narrated by any other trustworthy narrator. This is the worst of the accusations against him. As for the issue of truthfulness, I hope there is no problem with him, except that he had narrated *munkar* (repugnant) *ahadith* on the merits of the Ahl al-Bayt and in criticism of others.”[7]

There are two allegations above:

1. ‘Abd al-Razzaq used to make mistakes when he narrated from memory.

2. Specifically, he also used to make mistakes in *ahadith* from Ma’mar.

It is noteworthy that *ahadith* of ‘Abd al-Razzaq from his memory are *sahih*, according to Imam al-Bukhari (d. 256 H). However, his reports from his books are “more *sahih*”. If his *ahadith* from memory had been *dha’if*, al-Bukhari would never have added “more” to his declaration. The worst that one could deduce from this is that ‘Abd al-Razzaq made slight mistakes, which were neither serious nor many, and which did not change the original meanings of his narrations.

Al-Bukhari, of course, has not accused him of making “serious” or “a lot of” mistakes – terms which are normally employed to indicate worrisome memory degeneration. Imam Ibn ‘Adi (d. 365 H) even disputes al-Bukhari’s claim entirely. In the former’s view, ‘Abd al-Razzaq *never* made any mistakes, in any of his *ahadith*, whether from memory or otherwise. However, some of his *ahadith* – in terms of their messages – did not sit well with mainstream Sunni beliefs. As such, Sunni *‘ulama* graded them as *manakir* (repugnant narrations).

As for the submission that he made mistakes in his reports from Ma’mar, the *muhadithun* of the Ahl al-Sunnah do not give any independent weight to it. As such, even if the opinion of Imam Ibn ‘Adi were disregarded, other conditions must still be fulfilled before that point could become valid. For instance, Imam Muslim (d. 261 H) has relied upon reports of ‘Abd al-Razzaq from Ma’mar from al-Zuhri in his *Sahih*[8]. Imam Ahmad (d. 241 H) has equally narrated through a similar chain:

حدثنا عبد الله حدثني أبى ثنا عبد الرزاق ثنا معمر عن الزهري عن عروة بن الزبير عن المسور بن مخرمة

‘Abd Allah (b. Ahmad) – my father (Ahmad b. Hanbal) – **‘Abd al-Razzaq** – **Ma’mar** – **al-Zuhri** – ‘Urwah b. al-Zubayr – al-Musawwar b. Mukhramah[9]

Shaykh al-Arnaut has a clear verdict on the chain:

> إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain is *sahih* upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.[10]

Even more interesting is that ‘Allamah al-Albani himself has the same opinion. This is what he writes in his *Sahih Abi Dawud*:

> إسناده: حدثنا الحسن بن علي: ثنا عبد الرزاق: ثنا معمر عن الزهري عن ابن المسيب وأبي سلمة عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص.

> قلت: وهذا إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين

Its chain: al-Hasan b. ‘Ali – **‘Abd al-Razzaq** – **Ma’mar** – **al-Zuhri** – Ibn al-Musayyab and Abu Salamah – ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Amr b. al-‘As:

I (al-Albani) say: **This chain is *sahih*** upon the standard of the two Shaykhs.[11]

Meanwhile, there is an extremely crucial point which *must* be taken into notice concerning ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s alleged mistakes in *ahadith* generally. Imam al-Dhahabi records:

> أبو زرعة الدمشقي، أخبرنا أحمد، قال: أتينا عبد الرزاق قبل المئتين، وهو صحيح البصر، ومن سمع منه بعدما ذهب بصره، فهو ضعيف السماع

Abu Zur’ah al-Dimashqi – Ahmad: “We went to ‘Abd al-Razzaq before the year 200 H, and his eye-sight was still good. **Whoever heard from him *after* he lost his eye-sight, then what he heard is *dha’if*.**”[12]

Al-Hafiz (d. 852 H) also states:

> عبد الرزاق بن همام بن نافع الحميري مولاهم أبو بكر الصنعاني ثقة حافظ مصنف شهير عمي في آخر عمره فتغير وكان يتشيع

‘Abd al-Razzaq b. Hammam b. Nafi’ al-Humayri, their freed slave, Abu Bakr al-San’ani: ***Thiqah*** (**trustworthy**), ***hafiz*** (**a *hadith* scientist**), a well-known author. **He became blind at the end of his lifetime, and thereby his memory deteriorated**. He was a Shi’i.[13]

In simple terms, ‘Abd al-Razzaq had a sound memory *before* his blindness. This puts everything into its proper context. All the alleged mistakes of ‘Abd al-Razzaq – whether from Ma’mar or others – occurred only during the last part of his lifetime, *after* he had gone blind. Therefore, whatever *ahadith* he transmitted *before* that period is *sahih*, with no defects at all.

There seems to be irreconciliable contradictions among the Sunni *muhadithun* on the gravity of ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s alleged mistakes *after* his blindness and subsequent memory issues. Imam Ibn ‘Adi does not agree anyway that his memory problem affected his narrations at all. By contrast, al-Bukhari alleges that it affected his *ahadith*, even though his resultant mistakes were only very slight and inconsequential. Imam Ahmad, at the other end, argues that ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s mistakes *after* his blindness were actually serious. Yet, even if we took Ahmad’s view as the most correct, *Hadith al-Siyadah* still scales through!

The question to ask is: did Abu al-Azhar hear *Hadith al-Siyadah* from him before his blindness or not? Imam al-Dhahabi copies this game-changing report, which is specifically about the *hadith*:

> قال مكي بن عبدان: حدثنا أبو الأزهر، قال: خرج عبد الرزاق إلى قريته، فبكرت إليه يوما، حتى خشيت على نفسي من البكور، فوصلت إليه قبل أن يخرج لصلاة الصبح، فلما خرج، رآني، فأعجبه، فلما فرغ من الصلاة، دعاني، وقرأ علي هذا الحديث، وخصني به دون أصحابي.

Makki b. ‘Abdan said: Abu al-Azhar narrated to us:

‘Abd al-Razzaq went to his town. So, I went early to him one day, until I feared for myself due to the earliness. I therefore reached him before he went out for *Salat al-Subh*. When he came out, **he SAW me**, and he was surprised. After finishing the *Salat*, he called him, **and READ this *hadith* to me**, and transmitted it to me only without my companions.[14]

Concerning Makki – the sub-narrator, al-Dhahabi states:

> مكي بن عبدان ابن محمد بن بكر بن مسلم، المحدث الثقة، المتقن، أبو حاتم التميمي النيسابوري.

Makki b. ‘Abdan b. Muhammad b. Bakr b. Muslim: the *muhadith* (*hadith* scientist), **the *thiqah*** (**trustworthy**) ***hadith* scientist**, the extremely precise narrator, Abu Hatim al-Tamimi al-Naysaburi.[15]

This basically seals everything! First, Abu al-Azhar got the *hadith* from ‘Abd al-Razzaq *before* the latter’s blindness, when his memory was still sharp and sound. Therefore, he was blessed with it at a time when ‘Abd al-Razzaq was not making mistakes in his reports, either from Ma’mar or anyone else.

Second, ‘Abd al-Razzaq did NOT narrate to Abu al-Azhar from memory. He actually “read” the *hadith* to the latter, obviously from a script! It might be argued that he must have “read” it from memory, since no book or any other written source was mentioned. Even then, this was *before* ‘Abd al-Razzaq’s blindness and memory problems. As such, all criticisms of the *hadith* – on account of his memory – fall and fail completely.

1. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 522, # 4894
2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Ibid, vol. 10, p. 523, # 4894
5. Ibid, vol. 10, p. 524, # 4894
6. Abu al-Fadhl ‘Abd Allah b. al-Siddiq al-Maghribi, al-Qawl al-Muqni’ fi Radd ‘ala al-Albani al-Mubtadi’, p. 8
7. Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh al-Albani, Silsilah al-Ahadith al-Dha’ifah wa al-Mawdhu’ah wa Atharihah al-Sayyiah fi al-Ummah (Riyadh: Dar al-Ma’arif; 1st edition, 1412 H), vol. 10, p. 524, # 4894
8. See, for instance, Abu al-Husayn Muslim b. al-Hajjaj al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi, Sahih Muslim (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-‘Arabi) [annotator: Muhammad Fuad ‘Abd al-Baqi], vol. 3, p. 1648, # 2078 (31)
9. Abu ‘Abd Allah Ahmad b. Hanbal al-Shaybani, Musnad (Cairo: Muasassat Qurtubah) [annotator: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut], vol. 4, p. 327, # 18936
10. Ibid
11. Abu ‘Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Nasir al-Din b. al-Hajj Nuh b. Tajati b. Adam al-Ashqudri al-Albani, Sahih Abi Dawud (Kuwait: Muasassat al-Gharas li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi’; 1st edition, 1423 H), vol. 7, p. 188, # 2098
12. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the ninth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and Kamil al-Khurat], vol. 9, p. 565, # 220
13. 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. 599, # 4078
14. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the ninth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and Kamil al-Khurat], vol. 9, p. 576, # 220
15. Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad b. ‘Uthman al-Dhahabi, Siyar A’lam al-Nubala (Beirut: Muasassat al-Risalah; 9th edition, 1413 H) [annotators of the fifteenth volume: Shu’ayb al-Arnaut and Ibraaheem al-Zaybaq], vol. 15, p. 70, # 38

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