

Some Realities about Abu Hurayra

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The man who narrated the largest number of hadith—5,374 (446 of which are in Sahih al-Bukhari), although he says that he only spent three years with the Prophet [1]—was Abu Hurayra al-Dusi. He embraced Islam on the seventh year after the migration to Madina. Abu Hurayra himself says that only ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar narrated more traditions than he did, and that ‘Abdullah used to write them down whereas he did not.[2]

In fact, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar only narrated 2,630 hadith, of which Imam al-Bukhari mentions only seven and Imam Muslim narrated, twenty. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab himself narrated only 527 hadith; while ‘Uthman ibn Affan narrated 146; Abu Bakr, 142; ‘A’ishah, the wife of the Prophet, 1,210; Jabir ibn ‘Abdillah al-Ansari, 1,540; ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud, 848; Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, 281; Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet, 378; ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib, 537; and Anas ibn Malik, 2,286.

Furthermore, Imam Muslim also narrates that the second caliph, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab beat Abu Hurayra on one occasion.[3] Abu Hurayra admits, “I have narrated to you several traditions that had I narrated them during the time of ‘Umar, ‘Umar would have lashed me with a stick.”[4] It has been said that Abu Hurayra was the first narrator who was accused justly in Islam.[5]

‘Umar al-Khattab said to him, “You have taken the money of the Muslims for yourself....”[6] ‘Umar also told him once, “You have narrated too many hadiths, and most likely, you lie about the Prophet.”[7] Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani says that the ‘ulama unanimously agreed that lying about the Messenger of Allah is one of the cardinal sins (kaba’ir), and others went further to say, that whoever lies about the Prophet is an unbeliever (kafir). Al-Sam’ani states that narrations would not be accepted from someone who lied about the Prophet, even one time.[8]

Another example of the narrations of Abu Hurayra is found in the Sahih of Imam al-Bukhari. Abu Hurayra attributes the following advice to the Messenger of Allah, “When a fly falls into one of your goblets, immerse the entire fly inside the goblet and then take it out, and then consume the (contents of the) goblet, because on one wing of the fly is a disease, and on the other wing is the cure.”[9]

Sahih Muslim narrates from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet slept until sunrise and missed the morning prayers![10] This hadith is not compatible with the Noble Qur’an which says, “Stand to pray all night, except a little—half of it, or a little less than that, or a little more—and recite the Qur’an in a slow style.”[11]

How could the Prophet, who never missed the midnight prayers, miss the obligatory morning prayers? Along the same line, in Sahih Bukhari, it narrates from Abu Hurayra that the Muslims were standing in their prayer rows about to pray, and that the Prophet had just finished the

Iqamah when suddenly he remembered that he was junub (in a state of ritual impurity)!^[12] Al-Bukhari also narrates from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet said, "The Shaytan (Satan) confronted me and kept me busy!"^[13] This hadith also diverges from the Noble Qur'an, which says,

"When you want to recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from the Shaytan, the cursed. Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord. His power is only over those who obey and follow him and those who join partners with him."^[14]

Imam Muslim also narrates from Abu Hurayra that Lady 'A'ishah, the wife of the Prophet said: One day, the Messenger of Allah was lying in my house, revealing his thighs. Abu Bakr sought permission (to enter). He gave him permission, so he entered and spoke to the Prophet, and the Prophet remained in the same condition. Then 'Umar sought permission (to enter). He gave him permission, and he spoke to him while he was in the same condition. Then 'Uthman sought permission (to enter.) Once 'Uthman sought permission, he (the Prophet) sat down properly and covered himself. When he spoke to him and he left, I said, "You neither paid attention to Abu Bakr nor 'Umar, so why did you (when 'Uthman entered) cover your thighs?" The Prophet said, "Would I not be embarrassed in front of a man whom the angels are embarrassed in front of?"^[15]

Ibn 'Arafa explains that most of such narrations were constructed during the time of the Umayyad Dynasty.^[16] When Mu'awiyah reached power, he wrote to all his governors around the Islamic state, "For every virtue which is narrated by the Prophet on behalf of Imam 'Ali, I need a similar virtue to be said on behalf of the companions."^[17]

Since hadiths are the second source of Islamic legislation all the contents and chains of narrators must be carefully examined and compared to the Book of Allah before being accepted. The Shi'a school of thought has strict criteria for judging the narrators of hadith and determining the authenticity any of ahadith.

References

1. Ibn Sa'ad, Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra, Vol. 4, 327; Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 4, 239; Mahmud Abu Riyyah, Shaykh al-Mudhirah Abu Hurayra. He proves that his companionship lasted one year and nine months.
2. Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-'Ilm, Vol. 1, 86

3. Muhammad al-Ghazzali, *Fiqh al-Sirah*, 41
4. Ibid.
5. Mustafa al-Rafi'i, *The History of Arab Literature*, Vol. 1, 278
6. Ibn al-Athir, *al-Bidayah wal-Nihayah*, Vol. 8, 116
7. Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*, Vol. 1, 360
8. al-Nawawi, *al-Taqrīb*, 14
9. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 7, 22
10. *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 1, 310, 471
11. Noble Qur'an, 73:2-3
12. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 1, 77
13. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol. 4, 151
14. Noble Qur'an, 16:99
15. *Sahih Muslim*, Vol. 4, 1866, Hadith 2401
16. Ahmad Amin, *Fajr al-Islam*, 213
17. For further details, see: Ibn 'Abd al-Birr, *al-Isti'ab*, Vol. 1, 65; Ibn Hajar, *al-Isabah*, Vol. 1, 154; Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil fil-Tarikh*, Vol. 3, 162; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol. 6, 77; *Tarikh ibn Asakir*, Vol. 3, 222; *Wafa' al-Wafa'*, Vol. 1, 31; *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*, Vol. 1, 435; Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili, *Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah*, Vol. 1, 116