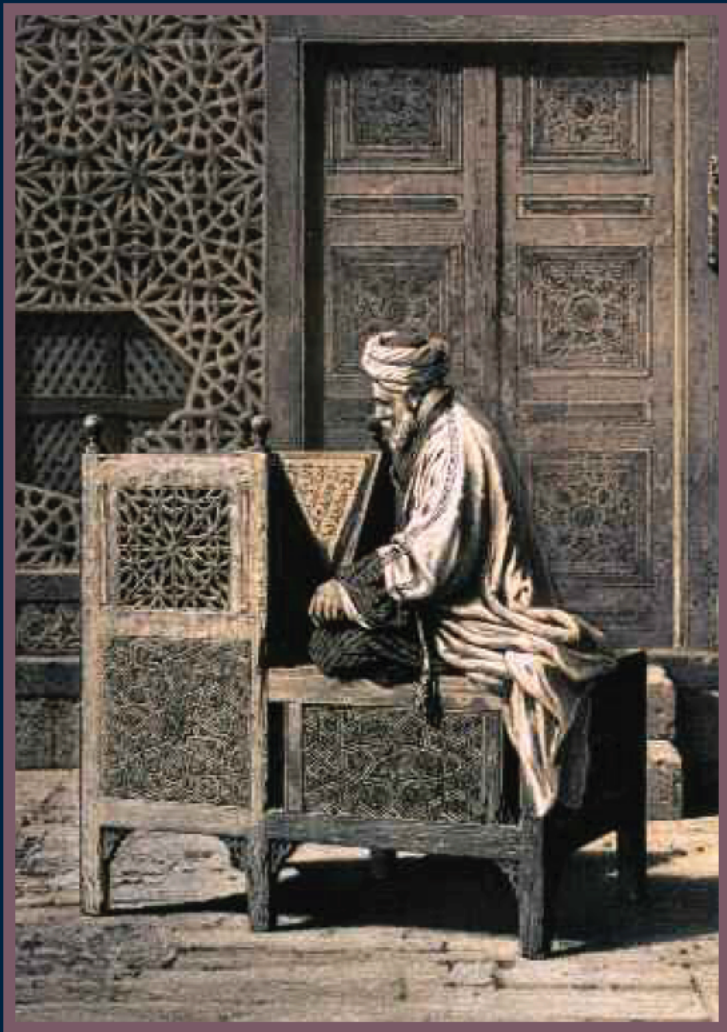


AUTHENTICATION
of Hadith · REDEFINING
THE CRITERIA



ISRAR AHMAD KHAN

AUTHENTICATION OF HADITH

Redefining the Criteria

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ISRAR AHMAD KHAN



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Umm Ḥabībah, one of the Prophet's wives prayed: "O Allah! Enable me to enjoy company with my husband, the Prophet, my father, Abū Sufyān, and my brother, Mu'āwiyah." The Prophet said to her: "You are asking Allah something related to a fixed life-span, a limited number of days, and an already distributed amount of sustenance. Nothing will occur before its appointed time, and also nothing will take place after its scheduled plan..."²⁵

According to this tradition nothing will ever occur but in accordance with a pre-ordained plan; therefore there is no way to increase the amount of one's sustenance and the number of days of one's life. This is why the Prophet is reported to have advised not to pray for longevity of life and increase in income. This report however, is in contrast with another hadith on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik which states:

My mother committed me to the Prophet as a servant and requested him to pray for me. The Prophet prayed: "O Allah! Increase the amount of his wealth and the number of his children, and also bless him with an increase in what You have granted him [that is, age]."²⁶

A compromise between these two traditions seems to be impossible. The tradition related to Umm Ḥabībah may be categorized as doubtful on two grounds. First, it is a mere statement (hadith) attributed to the Prophet, whereas the tradition narrated by Anas ibn Mālik is the Prophet's own practice (sunnah). It may be concluded here that in case of a conflict between a hadith and a sunnah, the latter is to be preferred. Second, there exist traditions which relate the Prophet's invocations, one of which includes "safety from the evil impact of too much wealth and too much poverty."²⁷

2—The Prophet's Advice to Drink Camel-Urine for Cure

Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik a hadith: "Some people from the tribe of 'Uraynah came to Madinah and due to non-suitability of the climate they fell ill. The Prophet advised them to drink milk and urine of the camels of charity. They did so and were cured."²⁸

This tradition suggests that there is cure for certain diseases in the milk as well as the urine of camel. The question here is not whether the camel-urine is efficacious or not. The issue is whether it was advised by the Prophet to the people concerned to drink it. The urine is forbidden. Psychologically, it is disdainful to even imagine and mention of drinking urine. As al-Bukhārī and Muslim have both, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah and Anas ibn Mālik respectively, reported, once a man urinated in the mosque, the Prophet asked people to wash it away with water.²⁹ According to another hadith, on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbas, the Prophet said that a man was subjected to suffering in the other world because he did not keep himself clean of urine.³⁰ Another hadith on the authority of Abū Hurayrah advises believers not to urinate in the source of stagnant water and then take a bath in it.³¹

From these *aḥādīth* it becomes clear that urine is impurity; anything affected by it is to be washed and cleaned by water. Is it therefore conceivable that the Prophet advised some Muslims to drink the urine of camels, even though for a medical purpose? Followers of Mālik ibn Anas and those of Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal, on the basis of Prophet's alleged advice to drink urine, consider the urine and excrement of *ḥalāl* animals as pure and *ḥalāl*.³² This is a blind approach. Urine is not from *ṭayyibāt* (good and pure) but from the category of *khabā'ith* (bad and impure). The Prophet made lawful only what is good and pure, and made unlawful what is bad and impure.³³ Merely the existence of a hadith does not suffice for it to be deemed as an original statement of the Prophet. There is a possibility that someone advertently or inadvertently inserted the word "urine" (*Abwālihā*) beside the word "milk" (*Albānihā*). The report comprising the Prophet's advice to drink urine in addition to milk seems to be disgusting.

It may be suggested here that the Prophet advised ʿUraynans to drink camel-urine due to its highly therapeutic efficacy. Some might even refer to some modern researches on camel-urine which proves its medical benefits in some skin problems such as sores, boils, and some kind of cancers. The authenticity of such researches are yet to be proved scientifically. It is well known that the urine contains chemical constituents that are toxic. Toxic elements are rather more harmful. If the disadvantages of urine outstrip its advantages, it can in no way be declared beneficial.

The Qur'an declares in no uncertain terms: "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who they find mentioned in their own Scriptures – in the Torah and the Gospel – for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil; he allows them as lawful the things pure (*ṭayyibāt*) and prohibits them from the things impure (*khabā'ith*): he releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light, which is sent down with him; it is they who will prosper" (7:157). *Sūrah al-A'raf* (7) is a Makkan revelation in which the position of the Prophet has been made crystal clear. And the above quoted tradition belongs to the Madinan period of the Prophet. According to the above quoted *āyah* (7:157), the Prophet had to prohibit the people from all that were impure and bad. He had to make them aware of what was pure and good. It is to be determined whether urine of camel is pure and good. It has been seen above that urine is from the category of bad and impure items. Hence it was not imaginable that the Prophet advised some people to drink what was bad and impure. Muslim scholars who consider the camel-urine pure and good have actually developed this idea on the basis of this tradition as quoted above. Scholars should also take into consideration the position of urine in general and also the duty of the Prophet as mentioned in the Qur'an.

It could well be that the 'Uraynans were advised by the Prophet to drink camel-milk only, but the patients chose also to drink camel-urine along with the milk. On their being cured, news about the efficacy of the camel-urine could then have circulated, which is why the narration would include the element of urine in the advice of the Prophet. Strangely enough, throughout the history of the Companions, there is no reference to the use of camel-urine for therapeutic purposes. If camel-urine really had formed a part of the Prophet's advice, surely it would have been utilised in some form or other in the medical system developed and practiced by Muslims. Total reticence on the part of medical practitioners in the Muslim world concerning the therapeutic significance of camel-urine speaks volumes of its insignificance.

3–No Indictment for Slandering the Slave for Adultery

Al-Bukhārī, Muslim and others have recorded on the authority of

62. Al-‘Aynī, *‘Umdat al-Qārī: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 21, p. 406.
63. Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, pp. 75–78.
64. Al-Zarkashī, Badr al-Dīn, *Al-Ijābah*, Sa‘īd al-Afghani, ed. (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), pp. 103–104.
65. Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 6, p. 76.
21. Ibid., pp. 110–111.
22. Ibid., p. 101.
23. Muslim, vol. 6, “*Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah*,” hadith no. 4447.
24. Ibid, hadith no. 354; al-Bukhārī, vol. 2, “*Kitāb al-Rahn*,” hadith nos. 2515–2516.
25. Muslim, vol. 8, “*Kitāb al-Qadar*,” hadith no. 6712–6715.
26. Muslim, vol. 8, “*Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*,” hadith nos. 6322–6326; al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, “*Kitāb al-Da‘wāt*,” hadith no. 6344.
27. For example see, Al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, “*Kitāb al-Da‘wāt*,” hadith nos. 6375–6377.
28. Al-Bukhārī, vol. 1, “*Kitāb al-Wuḍū’*,” hadith no. 233; Muslim, vol. 6, “*Kitāb al-Qasāmah*,” hadith nos. 4329–4335.
29. Al-Bukhārī, vol. 1, “*Kitāb al-Wuḍū’*,” hadith no. 220; Muslim, vol. 2, “*Kitāb al-Ṭahārah*,” hadith nos. 657–659.
30. Al-Bukhārī, vol. 1, “*Kitāb al-Wuḍū’*,” hadith no. 216.
31. Muslim, vol. 2, “*Kitāb al-Ṭahārah*,” hadith no. 654.
32. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 6, pp. 155–156.
33. The Qur’an, 7:157.
34. Al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, “*Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*,” hadith no. 6858; Muslim, vol. 6, “*Kitāb al-Aymān*,” hadith no. 4287.
35. Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, vol. 12, “*Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*,” p. 229.
36. Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

1. The Qur’an, 4:59.
2. Al-Bukhārī, vol. 4, “*Kitāb al-Itisām bi al-Sunnah*,” Bāb no. 20.
3. Muslim, vol. 2, “*Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*,” hadith nos. 1137–1139.
4. Ibid., hadith nos. 1142–1144.
5. Ibid., “*Kitāb al-Ṭahārah*,” hadith no. 783.
6. Ibid., hadith no. 776; al-Bukhārī, vol. 1, “*Kitāb al-Wuḍū’*,” hadith no. 180.
7. Al-Nawawī, *Al-Minhāj: Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, pp. 261–262.
8. Muslim, vol. 3, “*Kitāb al-Janā’iz*,” hadith nos. 2146–2150.
9. Ibid., hadith no. 2151.
10. Al-Zarkashī, *Al-Ijābah*, p. 72.
11. Ibid., pp. 76–77.
12. Ibid., p. 77.
13. Ibid., pp. 81–83.
14. Ibid., p. 93.
15. Ibid., p. 94.
16. Ibid., p. 97.
17. Ibid., p. 97.
18. Ibid., p. 98.
19. Ibid., p. 100.
20. Ibid., pp. 109–110.

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In today's complex and volatile world the consequences of relying on fraudulent and counterfeit Hadith to legitimise extremist behaviour, issue violent fatwas, and justify blatant abuse, particularly of women, is not only far too easy but in fact dangerous. Israr Khan addresses the sensitive topic of Hadith authentication, focusing on the criteria adopted by classical scholars to maintain that concentration on the continuity and accuracy of the chain of narrators, rather than the textual content of Hadith, has led to particular Hadith being included which either contradict other Hadith directly, project the Prophet (SAAS) in an uncharacteristic light, or do not reflect and/or conflict with the teachings of the Qur'an. The study traces in careful detail the historical development of the oral and written traditions, as well as the many targeted attempts at fabrication that took place, critiquing in methodical detail certain Hadith which have come to be widely accepted as "authentic." The prominent collections we have today, were made possible by the development of the science of Hadith criticism, and Muslim scholars deserve deep appreciation for their painstaking work, as well as their invaluable contribution towards preserving the Hadith literature to the best of their ability. However, insists the author, the process is ongoing, and the closed door policy which currently surrounds Hadith authentication needs to be carefully reexamined.

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