

ḤADĪTH ON THE EXCELLENCE OF AL-FĀTIḤAH; THE EXAMINATION OF ITS CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION

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Abstract

Ḥadīth, as commonly defined by ḥadīth scholars (al-muḥaddithūn), is a record of the Prophet's sayings, deeds and tacit approval. Even it may include the description of the Prophet's features and physical appearance. Ḥadīth contains details of faith and doctrine, ritual issues, ethics and many others which are related with the contents of the Quran and on the Quranic verses as well. This article is aimed at assessing the validity of a ḥadīth on the excellence of al-Fatihah, the opening chapter of the Quran. In doing so, this article presents the chain of transmission of the ḥadīth by assessing the details of all persons involved in relating the ḥadīth. It is found the ḥadīth assessed is reliable and may be relevant for Muslims to use as a source for their religious activities.

Keywords

ḥadīth, excellence, al-Fātiḥah, opening chapter, the Quran

Abstrak;

Hadis, sebagaimana didefinisikan secara umum oleh ulama hadis, merupakan kumpulan berbagai pernyataan verbal Nabi (aqwāl), perilaku (af'āl) (dan persetujuan-persetujuan yang diisyaratkan oleh Nabi atas pernyataan dan tindakan para sahabatnya semasa Nabi hidup (taqrīr). Bahkan dalam pengertian yang mereka ajukan, hadis meliputi sifat dan karakter fisik Nabi. Dari aspek konten, hadis memuat rincian berbagai doktrin dan konsepsi keimanan, praktik ritual keagamaan, etika dan moral, serta berbagai isu yang terkait dengan Islam, ayat-ayat al-Qur'an serta kandungannya. Tulisan ini dimaksudkan untuk mengkaji dan menilai validitas hadis yang secara spesifik tentang keutamaan surah al-Fatihah, yang merupakan surah pertama dari al-Qur'an. Untuk tujuan tersebut, kajian ini melakukan uji kualitas sanad hadis, dengan mengikuti aturan atau kaidah kesahihan hadis yang telah disepakati dan ditetapkan oleh sebagian besar ulama hadis. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa hadis yang menjadi rujukan adalah berkualitas sahih dan dapat digunakan oleh umat Islam sebagai sumber dalam berbagai aktivitas keagamaan mereka.

Kata Kunci

hadis, keutamaan, al-Fatihah, surah, al-Qur'an

I. Introduction

Next to the Qur'an itself, the most important Islamic textual source is the *Ḥadīth*.¹ A *ḥadīth* may be a record of the Prophet's actual words or a report on his deeds and tacit approvals, transmitted by one of his trusted Companions, who in turn related it to someone of the next generation. The Companions, known as *ṣaḥābah*, played a key role in preserving the Prophetic traditions.² A *ḥadīth* may treat of ritual issues, discuss details of faith and doctrine, describe the Prophet's behavior or simply explain the excellent merit of the Qur'an's chapters (*sūrah*) or verses (*āyah*). To the chain of transmitters, or *isnād*, every generation added new members, until long lines of authorities developed, each link connected with the previous one in a well-documented relationship.³

Many western scholars do not consider the *ḥadīth* a reliable source. They have taken a critical approach to the study of *ḥadīth* and have questioned whether or not the Prophet and his Companions truly transmitted what is related on their authority. The literature on this subject is extensive and has its origin in the works of Ignaz Goldziher. In his *Muhammedanische Studien* or *Muslim Studies*, Goldziher maintained that the chains of transmission of *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet were easily completed by "simply adding without much scruple a few names at random."⁴ Joseph Schacht in fact later arrived at a similar conclusion in his *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, where he asserts that most traditions were originally the products of second-century scholarship. He was convinced that the chains of transmission had undergone a kind of "projecting backwards", "from the original creator of the tradition back to higher authorities."⁵

Uri Rubin, on the other hand, argues that this notion cannot be applied to an investigation of the chain of transmission or *isnād*.⁶ Although he does not say whether or not he believes the traditions to be authentic, he does not agree with Goldziher's and Schacht's thesis regarding the tradition. He stated:

'...there is no evidence that the name of the Prophet was merely added—to use Goldziher's terminology—to an already existing Companion *isnād*. The name of the Prophet seems rather to have been part of the hardcore of the *isnād* in which it occurs. Likewise, there is no evidence that the Companion's name was merely added to an already existing Successor *isnād*...Even if one could find an incomplete versions in which the Companion is missing, the equally logical possibility would always remain that his name was omitted from the "perfect" *isnād*, rather than added to the "imperfect" *isnād*'⁷

¹ John Alden Williams, *Islam* (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 57.

² Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 26.

³ Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, p. 26.

⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. C.R.Barber and S.M.Stern, vol. 2 (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971), p. 198.

⁵ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder, The life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1995), p. 235.

⁶ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder, The life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, p. 236-7.

⁷ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder, The life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, p. 236-7.

Rubin therefore argues against Schacht's proposal, insisting that there is no reason to discard "the possibility of traditions with Prophetic and Companion *isnāds* were put into circulation...during the first century A.H."⁸

Besides, Muslims of early times, such as the Companions and the Successors, did not pay more attention to the chain of *ḥadīth* transmission.⁹ Criticism of the transmitters of *ḥadīth* was not common at that time. This was because the Companions could not lie easily against the Prophet. However, in the period when political and theoretical factions like the *Shī'ah*, *Khawārij* and *Mu'tazilah* were founded, it seems, every faction tried to support and to maintain its views by using the sayings of the Prophet. This resulted in the emergence of spurious *ḥadīth* which then caught the attention of *ḥadīth* scholars who, in turn, had inherited a great authenticating remark in order to prove the authenticity of a *sanad*.¹⁰ Among those scholars were Shu'bah (d. 160 A.H.),¹¹ 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak (d. 181 A.H.),¹² 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī,¹³ Bahz b. Asad (d. 197 A.H.)¹⁴ and Shāfi'ī (d. 204 A.H.).¹⁵

Many *ḥadīths* refer to *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, which is fundamental to the Qur'ān and to which Muslims refer daily in both their religious and social life. It is basic to the performance of ritual prayer.¹⁶ Often mentioned for its merits, it is the greatest *sūrah* in the Qur'ān.¹⁷ It has

⁸ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder, The life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims*, p. 237.

⁹ Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar. *Criticism of Hadith among Muslim with Reference to Sunan Ibn Majah* (London: Ta Ha Publishers, 1986), p. 77.

¹⁰ Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 90-1.

¹¹ It was reported that he was asked by Waki' when a reporter (transmitter) should be abandoned. He replied: "When he happens to report from well known people what is not recognized even by them." See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 92.

¹² His opinion about a trustworthy person is recorded by Wafīd b. Muslim who said: "We [myself, Ibn al-Mubārak, and Marwān al-Fazārī] were sitting beside Sufyān al-Thawrī and Sa'īd b. Sālīm al-Qaddāh when Sufyān b. 'Uyaynah turned up. We discussed who is reliable [*'adl*] in Islam. We looked to Sufyān al-Thawrī, but 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mubārak hastened to say: "The one who is liked by the learned people to the extent that they record his *ḥadīth* is reliable and eligible to give witness." On hearing this, Sufyān al-Thawrī smiled and said: "By Allāh, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān has spoken truly." See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 92.

¹³ He classifies the reporters into three groups. According to Abu Mūsā he said: "Take it from me, people are of three kinds: A person who is *ḥāfiẓ* [good memorizer or preserver] and *Mutqin* [preserver with utmost care]. No one differs about such a person. The other who speculates [*wahima*] but most of his *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. His *ahādith* [plural of *ḥadīth*] should not be forsaken. If such a person is deserted, a great portion of *ḥadīth* will be wasted. The third one, who speculates and most of his *ḥadīth*, has nothing but speculation. Such a man should be deserted completely." See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 92.

¹⁴ Bahz b. Asad, comparing a reporter with the claimant of a debt, argues in this way: "If a man owes ten *dirhams* to another person who refuses to pay, the owner will not be able to take back his money until after producing two reliable witnesses. So the Dīn of Allāh deserves more to be taken from reliable persons. He used to say as well: Do not accept *ḥadīths* from someone who does not say ' *haddathanā*.'" See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 92.

¹⁵ He was a well-known jurisconsult and traditionist. About an unknown reporter who committed too many mistakes, he remarked: "The one who reports from a liar, is not free from lies himself. A well-known person should be accepted as a reporter. Allah does not oblige any person to take his *Din* from an unknown person. A traditionist known for many mistakes without having a true source to which he may refer back would not be accepted, like the witness whose testimony is rejected because of his many errors in the testimony itself." See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 93.

¹⁶ A case in point is: Abū Hurayrah reported the Apostle of Allāh (may peace be upon him) as saying: If anyone observe a prayer in which he does not recite *Umm al-Qur'ān* [*sūrat al-Fātiḥah*], it is incomplete, it is incomplete, it is incomplete and deficient...[*al-Ḥadīth*]. See Sulaymān b. Ash'ath Abū Dāwud al-Sijistānī al-Azadi, *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, trans. Aḥmad Ḥasan (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1988), vol. 1, p. 209.

attracted even as medicine,¹⁸ in places like Indonesia, where it is recited and memorized¹⁹ more than any other *sūrah*. In view of this, a question emerges whether or not a *sūrah* or more can be made as exception. However, this article will not be concerned with this question as a whole; it merely examines the validity of the chain of *ḥadīth* transmission regarding the excellence of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* used, in particular, to justify Muslims' special interest in this *sūrah*.

In his *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, al-Nasā'ī (d. 303 A.H.) includes at least five *ḥadīths* regarding the excellence of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*.²⁰ I will examine only one of them, i.e., the *ḥadīth* which contains the Prophet's statement that the *Fātiḥah* is the greatest *sūrah* in the Qur'ān.

II. Examination on *Ḥadīth* of the Excellence of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*.

Sanad: al-Nasā'ī, (*akhbarana*) Muḥammad b. Bashshar, (*ḥaddathana*) Yahyā b. Sa'īd and Muḥammad b. Ja'far, (*ḥaddathana*) Shu'bah, (*'an*) Khubayb b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, (*'an*) Hafṣ b. 'Āsim, (*'an*) Abū Sa'īd al-Mu'allā.

Matn (text): The Messenger of Allah passed by me when I was praying. He then called me but I did not come. I prayed and then I went to him. He asked: "What prevented you for coming to me?" I replied: "I was praying." He said: "Didn't Allah say 'O you who believe, respond to Allāh and His Messenger...'" He said: "I will teach you the greatest *sūrah* in the Qur'ān, before I leave the mosque." When he intended to leave (the mosque) I reminded him. He then said: "*al-Ḥamd li Allāh al-Rab al-'Ālamīn* (praise be to Allah, the lord of the worlds) which is *al-Sab' al-Mathānī* (i.e. seven repeatedly recited verses) and the Grand Qur'ān which has been given to me."²¹

A. J. Wensinck's *al-Mu'jam al-Mufaḥras li Alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, shows that this *ḥadīth* has been textually and contextually recorded by five out of nine *ḥadīth* scholars whose books are covered. Al-Bukhārī (d. 869 A.H.), whose *Ṣaḥīḥ* has long been highly appreciated by the Muslim community and even regarded as "second in importance only to the Qur'ān,"²² records four *ḥadīths* which are almost similar in form to that of al-Nasā'ī. Abū Dāwud (d. 275

¹⁷ One of its chains of transmission will be discussed in this article.

¹⁸ For example, Khārijah b. al-Ṣalt al-Tamīmī quoted his paternal uncle as saying that he came to the Apostle of Allāh (may peace be upon him) and embraced Islam. He then came back from him and passed some people who had a lunatic fettered in chains. His people said: We are told that your companion has brought some good. Have you something by which you can cure him? I then recited *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* and he was cured. ...[*al-Ḥadīth*]. See Abū Dāwud, *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, vol. 3, p. 1092.

¹⁹ Many scholars also admit and attempt to prove that *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* is the core of the entire *sūrah* of the Qur'ān. Muḥammad 'Abduh, for instance, maintains that there are at least five reasons of revealing the Qur'ān: *Tawhīd*, *Wa'd* and *Wa'īd*, *Ibādah*, *Sa'ādah* and Stories. Those purposes are concluded in *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. See Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Mushkilāt al-Qur'ān al-Karīm wa Tafṣīr Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1980), p. 27.

²⁰ Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, ed. Fārūq Hamāda (Morocco: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1980), p. 73.

²¹ The 'Arabic text of this *ḥadīth* may be found in Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī* (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, 1930), vol. 2, p. 139; See also Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqallānī, *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1980), vol. 8, p. 156-7, 307-8, 381 and vol. 9, p. 54; Sulaymān b. Ash'ath Abū Dāwud al-Sijistānī al-Azādī, *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Hamid (Bayrūt: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah, 1980), vol. 2, p. 71-2; 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Dārimī al-Samarqandī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, ed. Fawāz Aḥmad Zamarfī and Khālīd al-Sab' al-'Alammī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1987), vol. 2, p. 538; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1980), vol. 4, p. p. 211.

²² Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad is His Messenger*, p. 27.

A.H.), al-Dārimī (d. 255 A.H.) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 A.H.) also reported this *ḥadīth* in their canonical *ḥadīth* compilations.²³ All the *ḥadīths* reported by these scholars are under the authority of Abū Mūsā b. al-Mu‘allā through the way of Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āsim, Khubayb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān and Shu‘bah. After Shu‘bah, more than one *muḥaddith* then transmitted this *ḥadīth*.²⁴ This sort of *ḥadīth* is said to be *gharīb*²⁵ since it is reported by a single transmitter through a single line of transmission.

In this article, I will examine the above chain of transmission of al-Nasā’ī as follows:

1. al-Nasā’ī (d. 303 A.H.)

al-Nasā’ī was one of the six famous traditionists who compiled the traditions of the Prophet. His complete name was Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb b. ‘Alī b. Sinan Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nasā’ī. In *ḥadīth* studies, his *al-Sunan al-Sughrā* or *al-Mujtabā* is considered one of the *al-Kutub al-Sittah*,²⁶ which *al-Nasā’ī* himself admits contained only reliable traditions.²⁷

2. Muḥammad b. Bashshār (d. 252 A.H.)

His proper name was Muḥammad b. Bashshār b. ‘Uthmān b. Dāwūd b. Kaysān al-‘Abdī Abū Bakr al-Hāfiz al-Baṣrī. In *ḥadīth* literature, he was well known by his surname Bundār. He transmitted *ḥadīth* from ‘Abd Wahhāb al-Thaqafī, Muḥammad b. Ja‘far,²⁸ Yahyā b. Sa‘īd²⁹ and many others.

There has been no agreement among *ḥadīth* experts concerning his capacity to transmit *ḥadīth*. ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Siyār, for instance, stated that he had heard ‘Amr b. ‘Alī say under oath that Bundār lied as having transmitted under the authority of Yahyā. Such a notion was also addressed to him by ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī in transmitting *ḥadīth* under the authority of al-Mahdī. On the other hand, al-Azadī said that Bundār was acceptable. Regarding the above notion, he argued that it was not intended to deceive Bundār, since Bundār was always mentioned as doing good and being reliable. His reliability was also admitted by Abū Ḥātim,³⁰ al-Nasā’ī, and al-‘Ijī the Basran.³¹

²³ See note 18.

²⁴ See table 1.

²⁵ *Ḥadīth Gharīb* is ‘*mā rawā rāwin faqa’*’ a *ḥadīth* reported by a single transmitter through a single line of transmission. Such a *ḥadīth*, according to al-Tirmidhī, “is not necessarily *ḍa‘īf* but it might be *ṣaḥīḥ* [sound] or *ḥasan* [good] if it comes through a single line of transmission. In some cases it might be *ḍa‘īf* because a single reporter, alone reporting a particular *ḥadīth* or a part of it, is more liable to forget or make a mistake than a host of other reporters saying the same thing.” See Suhaib Hasan Abdul Ghaffar, *Criticism of Hadith*, p. 125.

²⁶ *Al-Kutub al-Sittah* literally means the six books. It refers to the six authoritative *ḥadīth* compendia, which are generally accepted and used among Muslims. They are *Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim*, *Sunan of Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan (al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ) of al-Tirmidhī*, *Mujtabā of al-Nasā’ī*, and *Sunan of Ibn Mājah*.

²⁷ Khātib al-Tibrizī, *Mishkāt al-Masābih*, trans. Al-Hāj Mawlānā Fazlul Karīm, M.A., B.L. (Pakistan: Rafique Press, 1960), p. 40.

²⁸ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Deccan: Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-Nizāmiyyah, 1326 A.H.), vol. 9, p. 70.

²⁹ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 11, 216.

³⁰ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1970), vol. 7, p. 214 says that his father (Abū Ḥātim) was asked about Bundār, he answered that Bundār was a reliable man.

³¹ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, vol. 9, p. 71-2.

Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallānī added that his reliability in the transmission of *ḥadīth* rests on the amount of his transmission included by al-Bukhārī (205 *ḥadīths*) and Muslim (460 *ḥadīths*) in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*.³²

3. Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Hudhālī (d. 193 A.H.)

Muḥammad b. Ja‘far was an erudite *ḥadīth* scholar in his time. He was popularly known as Ghundār. It was reported that Ghundār transmitted *ḥadīth* from many *muḥaddithīn* but he was specifically related to Shu‘bah, having been his master in *ḥadīth* transmission. Ibn al-Madīnī said that he liked Ghundār’s transmission from Shu‘bah more than ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s. Ibn Maḥdī cited that he had benefited the writings of Ghundār in elaborating the life of Shu‘bah. Even Ibn al-Mubārak claimed that for people who disputed about *ḥadīth* of Shu‘bah, Ghundār’s writing became the judge. Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Sa‘d also acknowledge his authority in *ḥadīth* transmission and described him as trustworthy.³³

4. Shu‘bah (d. 160 A.H.)

Shu‘bah’s complete name was Shu‘bah b. al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Ward al-‘Itkī al-Azadī. During his lifetime, he transmitted *ḥadīth* from more than three hundred scholars including Khubayb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.³⁴ He was described as having a special gift in preserving *ḥadīths* of legal import. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal even exaggerated by claiming that if Shu‘bah did not come, such *ḥadīths* would cease to exist.

Many *ḥadīth* critics admitted his trustworthiness in *ḥadīth* transmission. Among them were al-‘Ijlī and Ibn Ḥibbān. Although Ibn Sa‘d credited him with this authority, he also criticized him for some errors in reporting the name of *ḥadīth* transmitters. Such criticism was also addressed by al-Dāruqutnī in his *al-Ilal*.³⁵

5. Khubayb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (d. 132 A.H.)

His proper name was Khubayb b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khubayb b. Yasāf al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī Abū al-Ḥārith al-Madīnī. He died in 132 A.H. in the reign of the caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad. In *ḥadīth* transmission, he received *ḥadīth* from some scholars like Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āsim b. ‘Umar b. Khattāb and was considered and described trustworthy by Ibn Ma‘īn, Ibn Sa‘d and Ibn Ḥibbān.³⁶

6. Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āsim.

He was Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āsim b. ‘Umar b. Khattāb. In transmitting *ḥadīth*, he received from his father and other well-known Companions, such as Abū Hurayrah, Abu Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and Abū

³² Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, p. 73.

³³ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, p. 97-8.

³⁴ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 4, p. 339; vol. 3, p. 136.

³⁵ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 4, p. 338-46.

³⁶ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, vol. 3, p. 136.

Sa‘īd b. al-Mu‘allā. Al-Nasā‘ī, Hibat Allāh al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Zar‘ah and al-‘Ijī described him trustworthy. Even Muslim placed him among the eminent people of Madīnah.³⁷

7. Abū Sa‘īd b. al-Mu‘allā (d. 74 A.H.)

He is Abū Sa‘īd b. al-Mu‘allā al-Anṣārī. There are several views regarding his name. One is that it was al-Hārith b. al-Mu‘allā. Another claims that he was called Aws b. al-Mu‘allā and the other Abū Sa‘īd b. al-Mu‘allā. Even he was called Rāfi‘ b al-Mu‘allā but Abu ‘Umar said that whoever called him Rāfi‘ must be wrong because Rāfi‘ was killed in the war of Badr.³⁸ Instead, he offered Abu Sa‘īd’s complete name as al-Hārith b. Nufay‘ b. al-Mu‘allā b. Lawdhān b. Hārithah b. Zayd b. Tha‘labah of the son of Zurayq al-Anshārī al-Zuraqī. His mother was Umaymah b. Qarṭ b. Khansā’.³⁹

It is said that only two Successors received his only two-ḥadīth transmissions. The first one was Ḥafṣ b. ‘Āṣim who transmitted the ḥadīth which is under consideration in this article, and the other was ‘Ubayd b. Ḥunayn, who transmitted another ḥadīth starting with ‘*Kunnā Naghdū ilā al-Sūq.*’⁴⁰

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī disagreed with the historians who gave 74 A.H. for Abū Sa‘īd’s death date while he lived for just 64 years. He argued that if he had really met the prophet, he would have been too young. However, the *matn* or statement of ḥadīth discussed in this article contradicts that condition.⁴¹ Ibn Ḥajar added that the correct age of Abū Sa‘īd is 84 years.⁴²

III. Evaluation.

The accusation that Muḥammad b. Bashshār had lied about having transmitted ḥadīth from Yahyā by ‘Amr b. ‘Alī could not easily weaken the chain of transmission of this ḥadīth. Muḥammad b. Bashshār is also supported by the fact that most critics of ḥadīth admitted his reliability, among them Abū Ḥātim, al-Nasā‘ī and al-‘Ijī. Even al-Bukhārī and Muslim who were very strict in receiving a ḥadīth into their respective *Ṣaḥīḥ* included some ḥadīths under Muḥammad b. Bashshār’s authority. Another supporting point is that Muḥammad b. Bashshār transmitted this ḥadīth not only by way of Yahyā but also by way of Muḥammad b. Ja‘far, whose transmission was reported by al-Bukhārī.⁴³

³⁷ Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Al-Imām al-Kabīr Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs b. al-Mundhir al-Rāzī in his *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*, vol. 2, p. 402-3.

³⁸ Abū ‘Umar Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bujāwī (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba‘ah Nahḍah), vol. 4, p. 1669.

³⁹ Abū ‘Umar Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Barr, *al-Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-Aṣḥāb*, p. 1670; see also ‘Izz al-Dīn b. al-Athīr Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jazarī, *Usd al-Ghābah fī Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Bannā and Muḥammad Aḥmad ‘Ashūr (n.p.: Dār al-Sha‘b, 1970), vol. 6, p. 142; and Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf (Bayrūt: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1992), vol. 33, p. 348.

⁴⁰ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *al-Iṣabah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bujāwī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Jayl), vol. 7, p. 175.

⁴¹ Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *al-Iṣabah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol. 7, p. 175.

⁴² Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 12, p. 108.

⁴³ See Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqallānī, *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 8, p. 381.

IV. Conclusion.

The chain of transmission of this *ḥadīth* seems to be solid, judging from the continuity of its transmitters. The transmitters themselves seem reliable and even praised by the critics of *ḥadīth*. In sum, this *ḥadīth* may be taken to be good in *sanad*, which in turn may be referred for Muslims for their religious activities.

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