A DISCOURSE ON SUFIS' APPROACH TO THE APPLICATION OF ḤADĪTH

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Abstract:

Ḥadīth, as the second primary source of Islam, is shrouded in many issues. Its application among the Sufis has attracted an array of attention. This is because they (Sufis) appear not to be in absolute compliance with the conventional methods of ḥadīth narration, authentication and application as put in place by Muḥaddithūn and widely used by scholars, especially the Salafiyyah. This study examines the Sufis' approach to the usage and application of ḥadīth, especially their adherence to the rules of ḥadīth authentication. The analytical method of research is adopted in this study. It avails the opportunity to analyze various texts and scholars' submissions on the science of ḥadīth as related to this study. It is discovered from this study that the Sufis, in most of their applications of ḥadīth, downplayed the rules as set by Muḥaddithūn due to their belief that the Prophet is still alive, even after his demise, and that direct link or connection with him is possible. So, they do not need stringent conditions to establish a report from the Prophet or act on it. It is also discovered that the bulk of narrations at the Sufis' disposal are considered to be of weak or fabricated status. However, ḥadīth of the weak category can still be applicable in the realm of meritorious acts (faḍā'il), according to majority of the scholars. It is also discovered that some Sufis hold that as long as a particular narration does not contradict the principles of Islam, ascribing such to the Prophet should be less controversial. This s, therefore, concluded that Sufis flouted the rules of ḥadīth authentication with good intentions and attached importance to their propositions to make them gain wider acceptance from the people..

Keywords: Ḥadith, Muḥaddithūn; Authentication; Stringent; Fabricated

INTRODUCTION

Scholars like Al-Azami (1977,3) defined *ḥadīth* as the record of sayings, actions and reactions of the Prophet of Islam to issues, all of which can serve as a major source in Islam, second only to the Qur'ān (Philips, n.d.,6). As the second primary source of Islam, *ḥadīth* occupies an undisputable position in the Islamic discourse and it is indispensable. Its sciences had evolved for a long time, precisely, after the *Salaf* as a result of various rumbles that characterized the period, which started among the Muslims immediately after the demise of the Prophet, over the issue of succession (As-Sibāʿī, 1982, 90). Efforts were made by different scholars of different ages to review, re-examine and update the field of science of *ḥadīth* due to the continuous presence of traditions that are of questionable status. It is, therefore, noticed that one of the circles where such spurious traditions are not only prominent but also in use with great relish is the *Ṣūfī's* circle. It has been alleged that many *Ṣūfī* scholars' works are replete with 'aḥādīth that are either classified as *ḍaʿīf* (weak) or *mawḍūʿ* (fabricated). It is based on

this allegation that many *Salafiyyah* scholars condemn Sufism and Sufis because it is believed that most of their (Sufis) doctrines and practices are based on faulty grounds occasioned by their over-reliance on traditions that are erroneously or falsely attributed to the Prophet. They also alleged that unauthentic *'aḥādīth* are the sources of controversies, *bidᶜah* (innovation), and unnecessary supererogatory acts that are capable of interpolating Islam and Islamic messages. It is on this basis that this study attempts to examine the Sufis' approach to the science of *ḥadīth* to determine their understanding and their consciousness of it (the science of *ḥadīth*) the in the application of *ḥadīth* in their works, doctrines and practices.

A Synopsis of Sufism

Sufism is otherwise referred to as Islamic mysticism. It is the English expression for *taṣawwuf* which simply connotes the process of purifying the soul (*tazkiyyah*) from vices while promoting good qualities that are requisites for human perfection (Shahida, 2014, 55). In other words, the subject matter of Sufism is soul purification and it aims to attain eternal felicity and blessedness. It is a name that is coined from the attitudes and dresses of its adherents (Sufis) who usually wore wollen materials to demonstrate their asceticism and austere lifestyle (Shahida).

Sufism is sometimes referred to as *ᶜIlmu 'l-Qulūb* (science of hearts), *ᶜIlmu 's-Sulūk* (science of spiritual journey), *ᶜIlmu 't-Tazkiyyati 'n-Nafs* (science of soul purification), *ᶜIlm 'l-Iḥsān* (science of virtue) among other sources. It should be pointed out that, each of these names has its significance to *taṣawwuf*. It is, therefore, regarded as the science of hearts as could be inferred from this *ḥadīth* which reads:

عَنْ عَامِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النُّعْمَانَ بْنَ بَشِيرٍ يَقُولُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ

عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ... وَإِنَّ فِي الْجَسَدِ مُضْغَةً إِذَا صَلَحَتْ صَلَحَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ

وَإِذَا فَسَدَتْ فَسَدَ الْجَسَدُ كُلُّهُ أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ.

> On the authority of ᶜĀmir who said he heard An-Nuᶜmān bin Bashīr saying that he heard the messenger of Allah, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him saying:...Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body, if that piece is good, the whole body becomes good and if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt. That is the heart (Al-*Bukhārī*, No. 52).

Therefore, the above *ḥadīth* establishes the heart as the seat of spirituality that must be watched over at all times.

As a science, Sufism is a branch of Islamic Studies that deals with the science of spirituality or the spiritual aspect of Islam. This is because it concerns itself with the status of the human soul and how it can journey from the basement of the animalistic level to the height of spirituality which makes man live an angelic life. This is in line

with the explanation of Hossein (1980,13) while expounding on Q.95:4-5. He submits that Allah created man perfectly (*aḥsān taqwīm*) but fell into a terrestrial condition of separation and subsequent withdrawal from the divine presence (*asfal sāfilīn*). He therefore needs to return to perfection and Sufism is the means through with he could attain his former status.

Therefore, Sufism is regarded as the science of spiritual journey. This is because there is a process that a *Sālik* must pass through before he can be said to have become a *Ṣūfī*. The journey from the basement of the soul to the peak of virtues entails both the stations (*Maqāmāt*) and states (*aḥwāl*), each of which must be traversed by a *Sālik* (wayfarer) with the sole objective of attaining perfection (Ansari, 1986, 201). This is said to be part of the teachings of the Prophet to his Companions. In the same light, Al-Bashir (2015) regards *taṣawwuf* as *Al-Fiqh 'l-Bāṭin* (esoteric jurisprudence). This is because it deals with soul purification as could be understood from Tahir ul-Qadir's exposition on Qur'ān 2:151 where Allah says:

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ

وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

> Similarly, We have sent among you a messenger of your own, to recite to you Our verses (Qur'ān) and to purify and teach you the book (the Qur'ān) and Wisdom and to teach you that which you do not know.

Glossing over the above verse, Tahir ul-Qadri (2015), submits that four key sciences are singled out. These are sciences of recitation (*Tilāwah*), purification of the soul (*Tazkiyyatu 'n-Nafs*) which is the root of *taṣawwuf,* exegesis (*Tafsīr*) and wisdom and jurisprudence (*ḥikmah wal fiqh*).

Equally, the science of virtues, as one of the names for which *tasawwuf* is known is based on the contents of a *ḥadīth* wherein Angel Jibril asked questions that led to the explanation of the three components of Islam. These are *Islam*, *Iman* (*faith*) and *Iḥsān* (virtue). The third, *Iḥsān,* according to the Sufis is the proper name for Islamic spirituality which is otherwise known as *taṣawwuf* (Yusuph, 2018, 97)*.* It is pertinent to point out that scholars like Hussein Nasir in recent time, due to different clamours over the appropriateness of the word Sufi as the name for Islamic mysticism suggests the adoption of either *ᶜIlm 't-Tazkiyyah* as contained in Al-Qur'ān or *ᶜIlm 'l-Ihsān* as pointed out in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (Yusuph). Regardless of the above polemics, vis-a-vis the nomenclature, Sufism remains a practice with a strong basis in Islam.

Science of *Ḥadīth:* A Brief History

After the demise of the Prophet and the emergence of Abūbakr, ᶜUmar, ᶜUthmān and Ali as *Khulafā'*, there set in a series of controversies led to the formation of the Umayyad dynasty. The era of the Umayyad was characterised by a series of irregularities and corruption (Gordon, 2004, 220). There was also large-scale fraud which culminated in the dire need to document, compile and scrutinise traditions of the Prophet frequently

cited to justify any action. Ibn ᶜAbbās and Ibn Sīrīn among others were noted by Imam Muslim in the introductory aspect of his *Ṣaḥīḥ* to have confirmed the high level of proliferation of spurious narrations in the early days of Islam and how conscious the companions were in accepting reports from the people. Imam Muslim quotes him (Ibn Sīrīn) saying:

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عَنْ ابْنِ سِيرِينَ قَالَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ الْإِسْنَادِ فَلَمَّا وَقَعَتْ الْفِتْنَةُ

قَالُوا سَمُّوا لَنَا رِجَالَكُمْ فَيُنْظَرَ إِلَى أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ فَيُؤْخَذُ حَدِيثُهُمْ وَيُنْظَرَ إِلَى

أَهْلِ الْبِدَعِ فَلَا يُؤْخَذُ حَدِيثُهُمْ

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> On the authority of Ibn Sīrīn who said (initially) there was no inquiry on the source of information. But when there occurred crises (in the Muslim Community), people started to demand sources of information by saying: Mention to us your men, i.e. informants. Then, the narrations from those who adhere to *Sunnah* were accepted, while those from the people of innovation (*bidᶜah*) were rejected. (Al-Muslim, n.d., vol.1, 34)

This shows that weak and fabricated narration constituted a major problem for the *Ummah* shortly after the demise of the Prophet. The report of Ibn ᶜAbbās indicates that they do not accept reports except from trustworthy individuals (Al-Muslim, n.d., vol. 1, 27).

As the chaos grew and got compounded, scholars moved to arrest the situation. It was initially a private affair, as in the case of Imam Az-Zuhrī who was noted to have initiated the process as recorded by Imam Malik (Binkirani, n.d., 10), but was later taken over by the government under the headship of ᵁᵐᵃʳ Ibn ᶜAbdul-Azīz as reported by Imam Al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The report holds that ᶜUmar Ibn ᶜAbdul-Azīz commissioned Abubakar Ibn Hazm to take charge of the department of *ḥadīth* authentication with a mandate to scrutinise every report from the Prophet and get them compiled (Al-Bukhārī, n.d., vol.1, 175). This was an effort to remove the chaff from the grain. In doing this, various mechanisms were put in place to collect and scrutinise *'aḥādīth* and several methods were developed therefrom. This exercise led to the conclusion that both the text and transmitter or reporter will be subjected to different kinds of tests to determine their genuineness and acceptability. They, therefore, came up with the science of authentication of *ḥadīth*. Kamali (n.d., 4) explains that this exercise is given many names, such as *Muṣṭalaḥu 'l-ḥadīth*, *ᶜUlūm 'l-ḥadīth*, *'Uṣūl 'l-ḥadīth* among others, as we have them today. This science, therefore, evolved as a means of distinguishing between authentic narrations and spurious or fabricated ones. The scholars of *ḥadīth* dealt with each *ḥadīth* as an independent case, subjecting both its *Isnād* and *Matn (ᶜIlmu 'd-Dirāya)* to scrutiny according to the fundamental principles of this science (Philips, n.d., 34).

Allegations against the Sufis on *Ḥadīth*

The allegation of infiltration of Islamic scholarship with spurious traditions has been levelled against the many Muslim groups, Sufi inclusive, since the early days of Islam. Imam Muslim (vol.1, 34) also in the preamble to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* reports how this came into being during the period of *Salaf*. He reports:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدِ الْقَطَّانِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ قَالَ لَمْ نَرَ الصَّالِحِينَ فِي شَيْءٍ أَكْذَبَ مِنْهُمْ فِي الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ ابْنُ أَبِي عَتَّابٍ فَلَقِيتُ أَنَا مُحَمَّدَ بْنَ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيدٍ الْقَطَّانِ فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ لَمْ تَرَ أَهْلَ الْخَيْرِ فِي شَيْءٍ أَكْذَبَ مِنْهُمْ فِي الْحَدِيثِ قَالَ مُسْلِم يَقُولُ يَجْرِي الْكَذِبُ عَلَى لِسَانِهِمْ وَلَا يَتَعَمَّدُونَ الْكَذِبِ

On the authority of Muhammad bin Yahya bin Saᶜīd Al-Qaṭṭāni who reported from his father who said that we have never seen the righteous people engrossed in falsehood in anything than they are in *ḥadīth*. Ibn Abī ᶜAttāb said when Itheymet Muhammad bin Yahya bin Saᶜīd Al-Qaṭṭānī, I asked him about the statement and he said he heard it from his father who said that you can never find the good people (righteous) guilty of anything than lying in *ḥadīth*. Muslim then said, lie flouts on their tongues, though they did not utter it deliberately.

Explaining the above narration, As-Sibāᶜī (1982, 231) among other scholars, submits that the word *Ṣāliḥūn* refers to devoted worshippers of Allah, which is one of the attributes of the Sufis. A similar explanation is equally given by Abdul (1986, 40) while outlining various factors that led to and aided the fabrication of *ḥadīth.* in the earlier period of Islam. It should be pointed out that as of when the incident reported in this narration was happening, Sufi has not become a household name. Sufis are therefore devoted worshipers with no recourse to the rules of *Sanad* and if they were, it was not as stringent as it became afterwards. One of the reasons is that unconsciousness seems to be the order of the day, as at that time, as could be inferred from the first quotation above from Imam Muslim. This may not be unconnected to the general assumption that everyone was pious, not until things started to fall apart, then people became conscious. Also, the standardization of works of *ḥadīth* which gave birth to various classifications and grading that form the basis for the declaration of many Sufis narrations as either weak or fabricated is retroactive. This is because the grading came after the Sufis have been using those reports that were later graded as such.

Yusuf (2013, 7) compiled names of different classical scholars that have underrated Sufism and Sufis for dignifying their works with traditions that are between weak and unfounded status. He mentions Ibn Ḥajar Al-ᶜAsqalānī, Adh-Dhahabī, and Ad-Dimashqī among others in this regard. To Ibn Ḥajar, Sufis have no regard for *Sanad,* while Adh-Dhahabī alleges that Abū Saᶜd Aṣ-Ṣūfī authored work on forty traditions without

containing a single authentic *ḥadīth*. The *'aḥādīth* are either weak or unfounded. Ibn Taymiyyah (n.d., vol.10, 551) also launched an attack on some works of the Sufis when he was asked about *Iḥyā* of Al-Ghazālī and *Qūtu 'l-Qulūb* of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī. He acknowledged the usefulness and benefits of the works vis-à-vis spirituality but submitted that they were loaded with traditions either weak or unfounded.

Ibn Al-Jawzī (1999, 148) was another major scholar who launched an unprecedented attack against the Sufis vis-à-vis the science of *ḥadīth* and how (the Sufis) excessively used fabricated and weak traditions in their works. In his *Talbīsu Iblīs*, Ibn Al-Jawzī argues that the Sufis are being deceived by the devil. This is reflected in their fabrication of *ḥadīth,* as could be discovered in their works and most times, they act upon those fabricated narrations. He was particular in his mentioning of the names of prominent Sufi writers like Al-Muḥāsibī, Al-Ghazālī and his *Iḥyā' ᶜUlūmi 'd-Dīn*, and Abu-Naᶜim who authored the famous *Ḥilyatul-Awliyā'*, a frequently cited and highly revered and referenced book across the Sufis' circle, and Abu Ṭālib Al-Makkī who wrote *Qūtu 'l-Qulūb* as responsible for the proliferation of Sufi circles with *'aḥādīth* that lie between weak and fabricated status.

In another dimension, prominent *Salafiyyah* scholars like Ibn Bāz, Abdul 'l-Khāliq, and Iḥsān Ilahī among others have equally accused the Sufis of the same allegation of parading weak and fabricated traditions in their various works with great relish (Ibn Bāz, n.d., vol., 191). The *Iḥyā'* of Imam Al-Ghazālī is particularly noted and got mentioned by most writers on Sufism and *ḥadīth*. The popular scholar of *ḥadīth*, Shaykh Muhammad Nasrudeen Al-Bānī was said to have been motivated to study *ḥadīth,* only after he read and digested *Al-Iḥyā'* of Al-Ghazālī (Ash-Shaybani, 1987, 46).

The view of some Western scholars is represented by Nicholson when he remarks in one of his works:

> The reader should be reminded that most, if not all, Mystical Traditions ascribed to Mohammed were forged and fathered upon him by the Sufis, who represent themselves as the true interpreters of his esoteric teaching (Nicholson, 1974, 53).

Affaf (1994, 44) equally quotes Ibn ᶜArabī who acknowledges the fact that Sufis are guilty of *ḥadīth* forgeries, though out of a good intention to add value and importance to whatever they might have received from Allah through illumination or from the Prophet to make it gain wider acceptance. Referring to the celebrated *ḥadīth* of the Prophet which forbade people from fabricating lies against the Prophet and that whoever does should choose an abode for himself in hellfire, Affaf quotes Ibn ᶜArabī as submitting that, this is limited to the one who does it deliberately to lead people astray. Whoever concocts a lie and puts the same into the mouth of the Prophet on what is in line to get people to do what is right, in the view of Ibn ᶜArabī should be exonerated from those who will take their abode from the hellfire (Affaf, 45).

Sufis and *Ḥadīth* Reportage

Generally, Sufis acknowledge the transmission and narration of traditions from one generation to the other as part of human existence and they believe the presence of such in the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet who was the flag bearer of Islam. They equally accept and work with the various collections of *'aḥādīth* of the Prophet which were compiled by different scholars. They however refuse to limit themselves to those narrations that are found in them and they pay little or no attention to their grading, either in their internal classifications as Sound, Fair and Weak or their external arrangement through which *Ṣaḥīḥ 'l-Bukhārī* is rated above others (Yusuf, 2013, 1).

The attitude of the Sufis to grading or classification of *ḥadīth* which is alleged to have engendered the prevalence of weak and fabricated narrations in their works may not be unconnected to the fact that early Sufis, as could be inferred from the first report of Imam Muslim above, were victims of the circumstance. As everybody was gripped with the *fitnah*, which led to the development of the science of authentication afterwards, their followers took little or no care about thorough investigation and scrutinization before accepting and establishing their tenets on those narrations. This was the intention of Algar (2014, n.p.) when he opines that "Sufism emerged as a distinct expression of Islamic religiosity during the same period that witnessed the compilation and sifting of *ḥadīth*". The second report of Imam Muslim above may not be too relevant in this regard. This is because the *fitnah* that the first report mentioned is largely related to political matters and not *ᶜIbādah* which the Sufis or the *Ṣāliḥūn* are largely noted for and based on which words were alleged to have been put into the mouth of the Prophet to prove their tenets and establish their practice.

According to Idri and Rohaizan (2017, 446), there are various means through which the Sufis source guidance from the Prophet. These methods or means are different from the conventional method as they transpired between the Prophet and his Companions. The identified means are *liqā' r-Rasūl* and *Tarīq 'l-Kashf*. The former presupposes that a Sufi, at the height of his spirituality, can meet with the Prophet after his death, while sleeping (dreaming) or awake. *Kashf*, on the other hand, connotes that a Sufi can receive a revelation from behind the veil. So, whatever is received via these two mediums is accepted as a source of instruction which one can act upon, especially for ritual purposes (Idri and Rohaizan, 2017, 450). Many Sufis have claimed to have received several supplications and *Ṣalāwāt,* which are held in high esteem through these means. Many *awrād* (litanies) and supplications like *Ṣalātul-Fātiḥ*, *Jawharatul-Kamāl*, *Dalā'ilu Khayrāt* and *Qasidatu Burdah*, among others, were alleged to have either come to them or sanctioned by the Prophet through these mediums (Yusuph, 2018, 144). Another one that can be added to these, as identified by Nicholson (1974, 23) is *Ilhām* (intuition). This is a manifestation that occurs to a Sufi with a high sense of piety. It is the instructions or information that the Sufis get via these means that are presented as a revelation from the Prophet. Affaf (245) submits that Ibn ᶜArabī thought that those narrations were of the status of *Al-Khabar al-Wahid* (solitary report). As these reports kept saturating society, many of them found their way into classical works of the Sufis and beyond. Some have even been incorporated into classical *ḥadīth* works while many are still floating around. It is equally pertinent to state that Sufis

hold tenaciously to these expressions and it is based on this that many Sufis are condemned.

Generally, the Sufis continuous link with the Prophet is premised on the claim that the Prophet is still spiritually alive and can interact with some individuals, especially the pious ones as he did when he was physically alive. The *ḥadīth* of Imam Bukhārī, among others, is relied upon by the Sufis to establish this belief. It reads:

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عَنْ الزُّهْرِيّ حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو سَلَمَةَ أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ مَنْ رَآنِي فِي الْمَنَامِ فَسَيَرَانِي فِي الْيَقَظَةِ وَلَا يَتَمَثَّلُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِي

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On the authority of Zuhri who said that Abū-Salamah informed him that, indeed Abū-Hurayrah said that he heard the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of Allah be with him saying: Whoever saw me in his dream will equally see me wakefully. Shaytān can never take my form...   (Al-Bukhārī, No.6993)

Dissecting the content of this report vis-à-vis the physical sighting or meeting of the Prophet, via dreaming or physically, especially after his demise or on the day of resurrection has generated polemics among the scholars (Yusuph, 2018, 217). The non-Sufi scholars, especially the *Salafiyyūn*, submitted that the meeting or sighting of the Prophet as contained in this *ḥadīth* should be understood in two ways. Firstly, it provides a glad tiding to Muslims who were alive but lived outside Madinah where the Prophet lived, to have the opportunity of meeting him as they dreamt about him. Secondly, it refers to a meeting or sighting of the Prophet on the day of resurrection (Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, Vol.12:385, An-Nawawi, Vol.15:26). These submissions are watered down by the Sufis who, as stated by Ibn Arabi, are resolute on the possibility of meeting the Prophet via a dream and wakefully after his demise (Affaf, 61).

Sufis' emphasis on the establishment of a communication link with the Prophet, especially through dreams, is further strengthened by another report from Imam Muslim (n.d, vol.1, 65). It reads:

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حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُسْهِرٍ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَنَا وَحَمْزَةُ الزَّيَّاتُ مِنْ أَبَانَ بْنِ أَبِي عَيَّاشٍ نَحْوًا مِنْ أَلْفِ حَدِيثٍ قَالَ عَلِيٌّ فَلَقِيتُ حَمْزَةَ فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّهُ رَأَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي الْمَنَامِ فَعَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ مَا سَمِعَ مِنْ أَبَانَ فَمَا عَرَفَ مِنْهَا إِلَّا شَيْئًا يَسِيرًا خَمْسَةً أَوْ سِتَّةً

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> Ali bin Mushir said Hamza Az-Zayyat and I heard from Aban bin Abi ᶜAyyāsh like a thousand *ḥadīth*. Ali said I met Hamza who informed me that he saw the Prophet, may the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him, in his dream and he presented those ḥadīth from Abān to him (the Prophet). He confirmed, but few, like five or six narrations (from those one thousand).

Various scholars, including Imam An-Nawawi (n.d., ١١٥) and Ash-Shātibī (١٩٩٢, 332), while explaining this *ḥadīth* acknowledge the possibility of sighting the Prophet in dream and acceptability or admissibility of whatever instruction that is received from the Prophet during such dream, provided that it does not contradict the provisions of the existing Islamic beliefs or negate any established *Shariᶜah* rule.

It is not unlikely to have seen instances where *Shariᶜah* legislations or instructions have established a base on dreams, especially during the lifetime of the Prophet. An instance is that of Abdullah ibn Zayd and call-to-prayer. In At-Tirmdhi, there is a report which reads:

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ زَيْدٍ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: لَمَّا أَصْبَحْنَا أَتَيْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ بِالرُّؤْيَا، فَقَالَ: «إِنَّ هَذِهِ لَرُؤْيَا حَقٍّ، فَقُمْ مَعَ بِلَالٍ فَإِنَّهُ أَنْدَى وَأَمَدُّ صَوْتًا مِنْكَ، فَأَلْقِ عَلَيْهِ مَا قِيلَ لَكَ، وَلْيُنَادِ بِذَلِكَ» ، قَالَ: فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الخَطَّابِ نِدَاءَ بِلَالٍ بِالصَّلَاةِ خَرَجَ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ، وَهُوَ يَجُرُّ إِزَارَهُ، وَهُوَ يَقُولُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، وَالَّذِي بَعَثَكَ بِالحَقِّ، لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ مِثْلَ الَّذِي قَالَ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «فَلِلَّهِ الحَمْدُ، فَذَلِكَ أَثْبَتُ»

> Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Zayd narrated that: When we woke up, we went to Allah's Messenger, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, to inform him of the dream. He said: Indeed, it is a true dream. So, get Bilal involved, because he has a better and louder voice than you. Inform him of what was said to you, so that he can call to prayer like that. He said that when Umar bin Al-Khatab heard Bilal calling to prayer, he went to Allah's Messenger, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, dragging his cloth and saying: By the One who sent you with the truth! I dreamt the same as what he called. So Allah's messenger, may the peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, said: To Allah is the praise, so that confirms it.(At-Tirmidhi, No.189).

What is established through the dream of two prominent companions of the Prophet is Call-to-Prayer. Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah in his *Kitabu 'r-Ruh* (136) also confirms the permissibility of establishing religious rules through the dream of pious and sane Muslims.

The Sufis, therefore, argue in the light of this report that, whenever a Muslim sees Prophet Muhammad, whether sleeping or wakefully, he should believe that it is real and whatever transpired between them should be treated with every sense of importance, especially when the Prophet directs him during this vision to act, he should act by it, as it is one of the basic principles in Islam to be obedient to the Prophet at all time (Affaf, 62). This has accounted for the several reports at the disposal of the Sufis which are not found in the classical works of *ḥadīth*.

However, Jaunpuri (2010, n.p.), a prominent Sufi scholar who acknowledges the unprecedented presence of weak, rejected and fabricated traditions in the various works of the Sufis, adduces the possible reasons for the non-challant attitudes of the Sufis to the science of *ḥadīth* in the application of *ḥadīth* in their practice. He identified intense spiritual devotion (*ᶜIbādah*), which is the primary interest of the Sufis and *husnu niyyah* (good motive) as what prevented them from investigating and scrutinizing various reports before accepting or acting on them (Jaunpuri, n.p.). This can be corroborated with earlier submissions from Ibn ᶜArabī and Idri who opine that to the Sufi, anything that does not contradict the Qur'ānic provisions and can lead to the attainment of the objective of *Sharīᶜah* can be attributed to the Prophet (Affaf, 45).

That notwithstanding, Algar (2016, n.p) submitted that many of the earliest Sufi authors were scholars of *ḥadīth*. He identified Ḥārith Al-Muḥāsibi, Abu'l-Qāsim Junayd, Abu 'Abdi 'r-Raḥmān As-Sulamī, and Abu'l-Qāsim Al-Qushayrī among others to that effect. Also, there are Sufis who have distinguished themselves in the science of *ḥadīth* and are renowned across the board. The likes of Imam Ismā'il Al-Ansarī Al-Harawī who authors *Kitāb 'l-Manāzil* and Abu Abdillahi Yunīnī were identified as prominent *ḥadīth* scholars who doubled as eminent Sufis. Others are Abdur-Rahman al-Dawudī (d.467AH), who was said by Al-Hāfiz As-Samᶜānī to be one of the scholars of Imam *Bukhārī* among others. They were prominent Sufis but also scholars of *ḥadīth* with repute (Jaunpuri, n.p.). In recent times, another eminent Sufi scholar, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawī (2010), has endeavoured to compile about three hundred (300) different authentic *'aḥādīth* from different collections and on different Sufi topics. The work is a move to sanitise the Sufi circles from the proliferation of weak and fabricated narrations and for the Sufis to re-examine their doctrines and practices, some of which were alleged to have been based on weak and fabricated narrations.

Sufis Reports and the Classification of *Ḥadīth*

As it could be inferred from the various explanations, analyses and submissions above, it is clear that many of the *'aḥādīth* relied upon by the Sufis which are used to justify many of their doctrines and practices are generally classified or categorized as weak and fabricated. A weak tradition, according to Al-Bayqūnī among other scholars of *ḥadīth*, as quoted by Al-Uthaymin (2003, 45), falls below the standards of *Ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) and *Hasan* (fair) category. He explains further that, a weak tradition meets neither the

conditions stipulated for *Ṣaḥīḥ* nor *Hasan* status. This is basically because there lies a lacuna with at least one of the reporters or its manner of reportage among others. *Mawdūᶜ* on the other hand, is a concocted lie which is put in the mouth of the Prophet (Al-Uthaymin, 2003, 120).

In the technical understanding of these definitions, it is shown that a weak tradition may be said by the Prophet but the personality that reported it failed character and intellectual examinations that can make his report acceptable. An analogical explanation of the relationship between the weak tradition and the superior others (*Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Ḥasan*) could be likened to the results of an examination conducted for three persons in which one of them scored the total marks, the second person scored average or a bit above it, while the third person's mark is below average. The one whose score is below average is technically said to be of weak intellectual capacity and the reliability of reports from such an individual will always be questionable. That, therefore, does not mean he was not part of the process. This is the general status of a weak tradition; hence, its usability always causes doubts and calls for caution among scholars.

Scholars have however come up with a series of explanations and adjudications over the acceptability and usability of a weak *ḥadīth* in the Islamic scheme of things. To scholars like Ibn Taymiyyah, a weak tradition should be rejected in its entirety and should not be used for anything, either in creedal matters (*ᶜAqā'id*) or for any Islamic rites or legislation. In *Majmūᶜu 'l-Fatāwā*, Ibn Taymiyyah writes:

وَلَا يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُعْتَمَدَ فِي الشَّرِيعَةِ عَلَى الْأَحَادِيثِ الضَّعِيفَةِ الَّتِي لَيْسَتْ

صَحِيحَةً وَلَا حَسَنَةً ... وَلَمْ يَقُلْ أَحَدٌ مِنْ الْأَئِمَّةِ إِنَّهُ يَجُوزُ أَنْ يُجْعَلَ الشَّيْءُ

وَاجِبًا أَوْ مُسْتَحَبًّا بِحَدِيثٍ ضَعِيفٍ وَمَنْ قَالَ هَذَا فَقَدْ خَالَفَ

الْإِجْمَاعَ

> It is not appropriate to establish an act in *Sharīᶜah* based on weak traditions that are not of sound or fair status…None of the scholars ever said that it is permissible to make something either compulsory or preferable based on a weak narration. Whoever said that has gone against the consensus of the scholars (Ibn Taymiyyah, vol.1, 250).

The above excerpt, which disallows the usability and acceptability of a weak tradition in legislative matters, seems to have portrayed the stand of many scholars. There is however a difference of opinions on meritorious acts (*fadā'il*), and encouragement (*targhib*) or deterrence (*tarhīb*). Imam An-Nawawī and Ahmad Ibn Hanbali's submissions reflect their acceptability of a weak *ḥadīth* in this regard, especially in the absence of a superior one (Zarabozo, 2010, 10). Imam Ahmad, Abū Hanifah, Malik and Shāfiᶜi, as quoted by Zarabozo (50), were of the view that a weak tradition is more beloved to them than a personal opinion (*Ijtihad*).

Precisely, in the introductory aspect of forty *ḥadīth* of An-Nawawī, the author, Imam An-Nawawī, demonstrates the permissibility of using a weak tradition in meritorious acts while justifying the basis for his decision to compile the work (An-Nawawī, 2003, 2). Espousing the submission of Imam An-Nawawī, Musa (2015, 50) argues that the issue of the quality of a particular report should attract serious attention when it comes to obligatory actions (*Farā'id*) or forbidden acts (*haram*) where action or inaction may attract reward or punishment as the case may be. In voluntary matters, however, they are not necessary, since those actions are primarily meant to earn additional rewards. The position of Musa is not different from the reactions of various scholars who hold that weak tradition is tenable and acceptable in meritorious actions. In the same light, Imam Nawawī pointed out different scholars of earlier times who have equally compiled works based on weak tradition. This is therefore to indicate that he was neither the only one nor the first to do so (An-Nawawī, 3).

Ibn Taymiyyah (vol.1, 250), among other scholars, appears rigid regarding the acceptability of a weak tradition on either legislative or kind exhortation matters. He opines that reliance on *Ijtihād* is far better than working with a weak narration. Reacting to Imam Ahmad's acceptability of a weak tradition along with others, Ibn Taymiyyah cautions and warns the *Hanābilah* against it, stating that, such should not be meant to establish the legality of any action that is based on a weak narration. Hence, it is tantamount to legislating in *Sharīᶜah* which Allah alone has such capacity.

The stand of both Ibn Bāz and Al-ᶜUthaymīn is in line with that of Imam An- Nawawī and Imam Ahmad, though the duo emphasize the necessity to reject weak tradition, especially in creedal and legislative matters. They however expressed a reservation for the application of weak tradition in meritorious deeds and the purpose of deterrence under the following conditions. Viz:

1. The *ḥadīth* must not be excessively weak;

2. It must be acknowledged as a weak *ḥadīth*;

3. It must not be on legislative matters;

4. Such a narration must have a strong root in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. For instance, a tradition that teaches kindness to parents or encourages the recitation of the Qur'ān;

5. One must believe that it was not said by the Prophet. (Al-Uthaymin, 46).

From the above items, it is clear that a weak tradition should not be rejected in absolute terms but can still be useful in some Islamic matters.

A proper understanding of these conditions will reveal a lacuna if the conditions are to be applied in the realm of the Sufis understanding, especially the third and the fifth conditions. This is because, as previously said, the Sufis are alleged to have used weak narrations, most especially for meritorious deeds. Many of the *'aḥādiṯh* that are credited to them come under the zeal to encourage people to do certain acts or to make certain practices gain wider acceptance. In light of these, Algar observes that the

contents of 'aḥādiṯẖ cited in Sufi works bear distinctive concerns of Sufis on ethical self-improvement, modes of invocation of God (ḏẖikr) and the behavioural norms (ādāb) that define their path (Algar, n.p.). Such is the case of many awrād of the Sufis as observed by Yusuph (2018, 144). If a weak tradition is acceptable to encourage meritorious deeds, rejection of some Sufis' practices that are based on alleged weak narrations becomes an absurdity.

Also, the fifth condition appears irrelevant because it contradicts the definition of the weak tradition as given by various scholars and as quoted earlier. In other words, it (the fifth condition) qualifies or describes a fabricated tradition instead of a weak one, it is meant to serve as a condition thereof. It seems to be the general phenomenon among scholars most times that some of them often mistake weak tradition for a fabricated one. They are of different status and nothing brings them together, as indicated above. Also, it should be pointed out that the Sufis appear to have been in tune with the implication of their excessive indulgence in the fabrication of ḥadīth as could be inferred from the statement of Ibn ᶜArabī above while interpreting the tradition that forbade fabrication of a lie against the Prophet (Affaf, 44).

Fabrication is another major point of attraction while discussing Sufi scholars and writers and ḥadīth. As pointed out earlier, many Sufi works are saturated with untraceable reports which were attributed to the Prophet. What makes this relevant to the Sufis is their allege linkage or continuous contact with the Prophet for different spiritual purposes. Many Sufis have made the claims to have met the Prophet not only through dreaming but wakefully and he had given them further instruction on religious assignment. A particular reference can be made to Shaykh Ahmad Tijānī (d.1815), the founder of the Tijāniyyah Sufi order, who claimed to have seen the Prophet wakefully and received some awrād from him.

CONCLUSION

This study has discussed the approach of the Sufi to the application of ḥadīth as the second primary source of Islam which is next to the glorious Qur'ān. The Sufis have been alleged to have flouted the rules for ḥadīth authentication; hence, their works are replete with traditions that have been rated as either weak or fabrications. This is largely because the Sufis did not consider the Prophet as dead spiritually. They hold tenaciously that, despite his departure from this world, he can still interact with the chosen ones among men and can give instructions that are of religious and spiritual importance. Another factor was that Sufis, out of good intention and excessive spiritual engagements, believe that once a statement does not contradict the principles of Sharīᶜah, and can enhance the objective of Islam, the question of where such a statement is coming from does not arise. Despite this popular view of the Sufis, some distinguished scholars of ḥadīth were equally Sufi scholars as identified in the body of the study. Also, a weak report can be used in meritorious acts alone according to the majority of the scholars as pointed out in this study. Since the vast majority of scholars accepted the usability of weak reports on meritorious acts, and since Sufis' activities largely stemmed from them, arguments and condemnation of Sufism on that basis should not subsist.

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