

Regarding the *Ḥadīth*, “The nations are about to call one another and set upon you...”

By the Noble Scholar of *Ḥadīth*,
Imām Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d.1420H)

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By the Noble Scholar of *Ḥadīth*,
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A question was posed by one of the attorneys from Baghdād to the Scholar of *ḥadīth*, Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, in which the questioner hoped that the Shaykh would research the authenticity of the famous *ḥadīth*, “The nations are about to call one another to set upon you...” The questioner states, “Indeed, I am in doubt with regards to the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* due to two reasons:

Firstly: It informs about the Unseen (*ghayb*), but no one knows the Unseen besides Allāh.

Secondly: This *ḥadīth* aims to make the people content with the current state that we are in so that they will not do anything to change it.”

Then, he concludes the question by saying, “This *ḥadīth* is undoubtedly from the inventions of the enemies of Islām, fabricated for their own religion.”

So Imām al-Albānī answered, “Indeed, the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* without a doubt. And in it the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wa sallam*) has informed about an affair of the Unseen because Allāh the Glorified and Exalted informed him about it. And this is an affair that is allowed and permissible and there is nothing objectionable about it. Rather, it is from the prerequisites of Prophethood and Messengership. And the *ḥadīth* actually aims the opposite of what the questioner thinks. This is the concise answer, and before you is the detailed answer:

Authenticity of the *Ḥadīth*:

The *ḥadīthī* (one who is well-versed in the science and study of *ḥadīth*) does not doubt in the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* at all, since it has been mentioned through various separate paths and many *asānīd* (chains of narration) by two honourable Companions:

The First: Thawbān, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wa sallam*).

The Second: Abū Hurayrah (*raḍiyallāhu ta’ālā ’anhu*) who has preserved for us that which no other Companions (*riḍwānullāhi ’alayhim*) have preserved from the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ’alayhi wa sallam*). So may Allāh reward him with good from the Muslims.

As for Thawbān (*raḍiyallāhu ’anhu*), then the *ḥadīth* has three paths from him:

¹ The following is a response penned by al-Albānī, which was printed in the *al-Tamaddun al-Islāmī* magazine (24/421-426).

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[1]: From Abū 'Abd al-Salām, from Thawbān who said, ‘The Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) said, ‘The nations are about to call one another and set upon you just as the diners set upon their food.’ So a speaker said, “Will it be due to our few numbers on that day?” He replied, “Rather, you will be many on that day. However, you will be foam, like the foam on the river. And Allāh will surely remove the fear of you from the hearts of your enemies and He will throw *al-wahn* into your hearts.” So a speaker said, “O Messenger of Allāh, what is *al-wahn*?” He replied, ‘Love for the worldly life and hatred of death.’”

It has been related by Abū Dāwūd in his *Sunan* (2/210), al-Rūyānī in his *Musnad* (25/134/2) and Ibn 'Asākir in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (2/97/8) by way of 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Yazīd Ibn Jābir, from him. And all of its narrators are *thiqāt* (reliable), except for this Abū 'Abd al-Salām, since he is *majhūl* (unknown). However, this *ḥadīth* is not related through him alone. Rather, its *isnād* is connected, as will follow. So the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.

[2]: From Abū Asmā' al-Raḥbī, from Thawbān with a similar narration.

It has been related by Aḥmad (5/287) and Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Makhlad al-Bazzār in *Ḥadīth Ibn al-Sam'ān* (*qāf*/182-183), from al-Mubārak Ibn Fuḍālah (who said), Marzūq Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ḥamaṣī related to us, Abū Asmā' al-Raḥbī related it to us. And this *isnād* is *jayyid* (good, acceptable), all of its narrators are *thiqāt*. Only *tadlīs*² is feared for al-Mubārak, but here he was clear in his mode of transmission, so it is safe from his *tadlīs*.

[3]: From 'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd al-Tamīmī al-'Abbāsī, from Thawbān in summarized form.

It is related by al-Ṭiyālīsī in his *Musnad* (2/211), with the arrangement of Shaykh al-Bannā. And its *isnād* is *ḍa'īf* (weak). However, it is strengthened by that which we have mentioned before it. So the second path is a proof by itself due to the strength of its *isnād*, and by connecting to the other two paths the *ḥadīth* becomes *ṣaḥīḥ* without a doubt.

As for the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah, then it is related by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (2/259) also, from Shabīl Ibn 'Awf, from him. He (Abū Hurayrah) said, ‘I heard the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*) say to Thawbān, ‘How will you be – O Thawbān – when the nations call upon one another and set upon you...’”

The *ḥadīth* is the same and there is no problem in its *isnād*, since it has witnesses. And al-Haythamī (d.974H) said in *Majma' al-Zawā'id* (7/287), “It is related by Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī relates a similar narration in *al-Awsaṭ*. And the *isnād* of Aḥmad is *jayyid*.

² **Translator's Note:** Imām Aḥmad Shākir (d.1377H) said about *tadlīs*, “It is when a narrator narrates something he did not hear from someone he actually met, or he narrates from someone who lived during his lifetime, but the narrator did not actually meet him, thus giving the impression that he heard this from him.” Refer to *al-Bā'ith al-Ḥathīth* (p. 63) of Aḥmad Shākir.

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And the conclusive statement is that the *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* through its paths and its witnesses. So there is no room to reject it by way of its *isnād*. So it is obligatory to accept it and to attest to its truthfulness.³

The Prophet Informs About the Unseen:

From that which is utterly perplexing to us is that some people doubt in the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* by claiming that, “it informed about the Unseen (*ghayb*), but no one knows the Unseen besides Allāh.” And what is truly regretful is that these claims have become widespread amongst many of our Muslim youth. Indeed, we have heard this many times from some of them, but these claims are clearly and completely in opposition to Islām. That is because these claims are built upon the foundation that the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) was a human being just like the rest of the human beings who have no connection to the heavens and the revelation does not descend upon them from Allāh the Glorified and Exalted.

According to us, the majority of the Muslims have opposed that, since the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) is distinguished over the rest of mankind because he receives revelation. Due to that, Allāh the Blessed and Exalted commanded him to clarify this reality to the people. So Allāh said at the end of Sūrah al-Kahf,

“Say: I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God.” [Sūrah al-Kahf 18:110]

And due to this, his (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) speech was protected from error, because he was as his Lord the Mighty and Majestic described him,

“Nor does he speak from his own inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed.” [Sūrah al-Najm 53:3-4]

And the revelation is not restricted to the *aḥkām* (rules and regulations) of the *Sharī‘ah* only. Rather, it also encompasses other aspects of the *Sharī‘ah*, from that are the affairs of the Unseen. So even though the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) did not know the Unseen, as Allāh mentioned about him,

“And if I knew the unseen, I could have acquired much wealth, and no harm would have touched me. I am not except a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe.” [Sūrah al-A‘rāf 7:188]

However, Allāh the Exalted informed him about some of the affairs of the Unseen. And this is apparent from the statement of Allāh the Blessed and Exalted,

³ **Translator’s Note:** Refer to *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 958) of al-Albānī for a more detailed discussion of the *ḥadīth*.

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“He is Knower of the Unseen, and He does not disclose His knowledge of the unseen to anyone, except for a Messenger with whom He is pleased.”
[Sūrah al-Jinn 72:26-27]

And He said,

“And they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills.” [Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:255]

So that which is obligatory upon one to believe is that the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) does not know the Unseen by himself, but Allāh the Exalted informs him about some of the affairs of the Unseen. Then, he (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) makes those affairs apparent to us by way of the Book and the *Sunnah*. So whatever we know from the detailed affairs of the Hereafter, from the gathering up of the people, Paradise, Hell, the world of the Angels, the *Jinn* and the likes of that from whatever is beyond the material world and whatever has occurred in the past and whatever will occur in the future; all of this is nothing but the affairs of the Unseen that Allāh the Exalted made apparent to His Prophet so that he could explain them to us.

So how can it be correct after this for the Muslim to doubt in his *ḥadīth* simply because he informs about the Unseen?! And had this been permissible, it would necessitate rejecting very many *aḥādīth*, which would reach a hundred or more in number! All of these are from the signs of his (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) Prophethood and his Messengership is true. And rejecting the likes of these *aḥādīth* is manifest falsehood. And it is well known that whatever necessitates falsehood is false in and of itself.

Indeed, a thorough examination of these aforementioned *aḥādīth* was undertaken by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (d.774H) in his book of history, and he inserted a specific chapter for them. So he said, “Chapter: What he (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) has informed about from the forthcoming occurrences during his life and after it, then it has all occurred exactly as he said it would.” Then he mentions these *aḥādīth* in many sections, so let the respected questioner refer, if he wishes, to *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (6/182-256). Therein he will find guidance and light with the permission of Allāh the Exalted. And Allāh, the Magnificent, spoke the truth when He said,

“And when the Prophet confided to one of his wives a statement; and when she informed another of it and Allāh showed it to him, he made known part of it and ignored a part. And when he informed her about it, she said, “Who told you this?” He said: I was informed by the Knowing, the Acquainted.” [Sūrah al-Taḥrīm 66:3]

And He said,

“And it is not for any human being that Allāh should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a Messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and

Wise. And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command. You did not know what is the Book or what is faith, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, (O Muḥammad), you guide to a straight path. The path of Allāh, to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Unquestionably, to Allāh do all matters evolve.” [Sūrah al-Shūrā 42:51-53]

So let the Muslims read the Book of their Lord and let their hearts contemplate upon it so that it becomes a protection for them from deviation and misguidance, as the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, “Indeed, one end of this *Qur‘ān* is in the Hand of Allāh and the other end of it is in your hands. So hold onto it, since you will never become misguided and you will never be destroyed after it, ever.”⁴

Objective of the *Ḥadīth*:

We have come to know from what has preceded that the *ḥadīth* in question has an authentic *isnād* from the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and that whatever it contains from information about an affair of the Unseen is only revelation from Allāh the Exalted to him (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*). So once that has become clear, then it is impossible that the objective of it be what the noble questioner suspects from, “making the people content with the current state that we are in so that they will not do anything to change it.” Rather, its goal is the exact opposite, and that is to warn them against the cause, which is the primary factor for the assaults and attacks of the nations against us. Indeed, that cause is, “Love for the worldly life and hatred of death.” So this love and hatred is that which necessitates being pleased with humiliation, surrendering to it and being averse to *Jihād* in the path of Allāh in its various types, such as *Jihād* with ones own soul, wealth, tongue and other than that. With great regret, this is the condition of the majority of the Muslims today.

So the *ḥadīth* alludes to the fact that the escape from the condition that we are in will occur by eliminating this primary factor (i.e. love for the worldly life and hatred of death) and by adopting the causes for salvation and success in this life and in the Hereafter up until they return to being how their *Salaf* were; they loved death just as their enemies loved life.

And what this *ḥadīth* alludes to has been clarified by another *ḥadīth*. So the Prophet (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said, “When you partake in *‘inah* transactions⁵ and hold onto the tails of cattle and become pleased with agriculture and abandon *Jihād*, Allāh will

⁴ **Ṣaḥīḥ:** Related by Ibn Naṣr in *Qiyām al-Layl* (p. 74) and Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (1/122) with an authentic *isnād*. And al-Munziri said in *al-Targhib* (1/40), “It is related by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* with a *jayyid* (good, acceptable) *isnād*.”

⁵ It is when a man sells a commodity at a set price to be paid in instalments in a certain amount of time. Then a man buys it from him at a price lower than the full price at which he is selling it.

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bring a humiliation upon you, which He will not remove up until you return back to your Religion.”⁶

So reflect upon how his apparent statement in this *ḥadīth*, “which He will not remove up until you return back to your Religion,” agrees with what is implied by the first *ḥadīth* from this meaning, which is also proven by the Book of Allāh. It is the statement of Allāh,

“Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people, up until they change what is in themselves.” [Sūrah al-Ra’d 13:11]

So it is confirmed that the objective of this *ḥadīth* is merely to warn the Muslims against continuing to love the worldly life and hate death. And if the Muslims were to contemplate upon what it contains of a great objective and act upon its requirements, they would become the leaders of the world and the flag of the disbelievers would no longer wave upon their land. However, this current darkness must first be removed in order to actualize what the Messenger of Allāh (*ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) has informed us about in many *aḥādīth*; that Islām will encompass the entire world. So he (*‘alayhi al-ṣalātu wa al-salām*) said, “This affair will surely reach what is reached by the night and the day; and Allāh will not leave a dwelling of brick, nor fur, except that Allāh will cause this Religion to enter it - bringing honour or humiliation. Honour which Allāh gives to Islām and humiliation which Allāh will give to disbelief.”⁷

And this *ḥadīth* has been further corroborated by the Book of Allāh the Exalted when Allāh the Mighty and Majestic said,

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh refuses except to perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although they who associate others with Allāh dislike it.” [Sūrah al-Tawbah 9:32-33]

And Allāh, the Magnificent, spoke the truth when He said,

“And you will surely know the truth of its information after a time.”
[Sūrah Sād 38:88]

⁶ **Ṣaḥīḥ:** Related by Abū Dāwūd (2/100), Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (no. 2562, 4825, 5007), al-Dūlābī in *al-Kunā* (no. 52) and al-Bayhaqī (5/316), from various paths from Ibn ‘Umar (*raḍiyallāhu ‘anhumā*). One of them was declared *ṣaḥīḥ* by Ibn al-Qaṭṭān and another was declared *ḥasan* (acceptable) by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah in *al-Fatāwā* (3/23, 278). It was authenticated by al-Albānī in *Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 11).

⁷ **Ṣaḥīḥ:** Related by Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (4/103), al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr* (1/126/2), al-Ḥākim (4/430), Ibn Bishrān in *al-Amālī* (1/60), Ibn Mandah in *Kitāb al-Īmān* (1/102) and al-Hāfiẓ ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī in *Dhikr al-Islām* (2/126), by way of Aḥmad, from Tamīm al-Dārī in *marfū’* (raised) form. Its *isnād* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. It was also authenticated by al-Ḥākim and al-Dhahabī agreed. And al-Maqdisī said, “It is a *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth*.” And it has two witnesses: one of them is from al-Miqdād Ibn al-Aswad, which was related by Ibn Mandah and al-Ḥākim with a *ṣaḥīḥ isnād*; and the other is from Abī Tha’labah al-Khushanī and it was related by al-Ḥākim (1/488). It was authenticated by al-Albānī in *Tahdhīr al-Sājid* (p. 118).