

302121 - The number of books that Allah, may He be exalted, sent down

the question

I have received a number of messages on WhatsApp authenticated with a video by a shaykh whose name I do not know, and the sender does not mention his name. They say that the number of divinely revealed books was one hundred and four; Allah sent fifty pages to Sheeth (Seth); Allah sent thirty pages to Idrees; Allah sent ten pages to Ibraaheem; Allah sent ten pages to Moosaa before the Torah; and Allah sent down the Torah (Tawraat), the Gospel (Injeel), the Psalms (Zaboor) and the Furqaan (Qur'an). He quoted as evidence the hadith of Abu Dharr al-Ghifaari; is the hadith of Abu Dharr da'eef (weak) or is it a saheeh (sound) hadith?

Summary of answer

What is required of the Muslim is to believe in all the books that were sent down from Allah, may He be exalted. So we believe in general terms in the books of which we do not know the details, without specifying their number, for Allah knows best about that. And we believe in the books that we know, according to what we know of their details from the texts of Revelation. As for the hadith mentioned, it does not have any reliable chain of narration (isnaad).

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

What is required of the Muslim is to believe in all the books that were sent down from Allah, may He be exalted.

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Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

I believe in whatsoever Allâh has sent down of the Book [all the holy Books, - this Qur'ân and the Books of the old from the Taurât (Torah), or the Injeel (Gospel) or the Pages of Ibrâhîm (Abraham)] [ash-Shooraa 42:15].

They are books of which the number is not known, because Allah, may He be exalted, used to send down books to the Messengers and Prophets, many of whom we do not know.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed”

[al-Baqarah 2:213]

“We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice”

[al-Hadeed 57:25]

“Say, [O believers], We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him”

[al-Baqarah 2:136]

“Say, We have believed in Allah and in what was revealed to us and what was revealed to

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Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Descendants, and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [submitting] to Him”

[Aal ‘Imraan 3:84].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah, may He be exalted, taught His believing slaves to believe in what He sent down to them through His Messenger Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in detail, and in what He sent down to the previous Prophets in general terms. He mentioned some of the Messengers by name, and He mentioned the rest of the Prophets in general terms, and He instructed the Muslims not to differentiate between any of them; rather they are to believe in all of them.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (1/448).

Hence it is obligatory to believe in general terms in the books of which we do not know the details, without giving them a specific number, for Allah knows best about that. And we believe in the books that we know in accordance with what we know of details about them from the texts of Revelation.

Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Mirwazi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the words “and His books”, it means that you should believe in the books that Allah has mentioned by name in His Book, such as the Torah (Tawraat), the Gospel (Injeel) and the Psalms (Zaboor) in particular, and you should believe that Allah has books other than these that He sent down to His Prophets, of which the names and number are not known except to the One Who sent them down. And you should believe in the Furqaan (i.e., the Qur’an), and your belief in it should be different from your belief in the other books.

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Your belief in the other books means affirming them in your heart and on your lips, and your belief in the Furqaan (Qur'an) means that you affirm it and follow what it says.

End quote from Ta'zeem Qasr as-Salaah (1/393).

Secondly:

Ibn Hibbaan narrated the hadith of Ibraaheem ibn Hishaam ibn Yahya ibn Yahya al-Ghassaani, who said: My father told us, from my grandfather, from Abu Idrees al-Khawlaani, from Abu Dharr, who said:

I entered the mosque and saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sitting on his own...

I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many books did Allah send down?

He said: One hundred and four books; fifty pages were sent down to Sheeth (Seth), thirty pages were sent down to Akhnookh (Enoch), ten pages were sent down to Ibraaheem, ten pages were sent down to Moosaa before the Torah, and the Torah (Tawraat), Gospel (Injeel), Psalms (Zaboor) and Furqaan (Qur'an) were sent down...

Narrated by Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (al-Ihsaan fi Taqreeb Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan), (2/76-77).

Its isnaad includes Ibraaheem ibn Hishaam, of whom adh-Dhahabi said:

He is the narrator of the lengthy hadith of Abu Dharr, of which he was the only narrator from his father, from his grandfather.

At-Tabaraani said: No one narrated this from Yahya except his son, and they are thiqaat (trustworthy).

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Ibn Hibbaan mentioned him in ath-Thiqaat, and narrated his hadith in al-Anwaa'.

As for Ibn Abi Haatim, he said: I said to my father: Why do you not narrate from Ibraaheem ibn Hishaam al-Ghassaani? He said: I went to his town, and he brought out to me a book that he claimed he had heard from Sa'eed ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez. I looked at it, and saw that it contained the hadiths of Damurah from Ibn Shawdhab and others. I looked at a hadith and like it; it was a hadith of Layth ibn Sa'd from 'Aqeel, so I said to him: Read this to me.

He said: Sa'eed ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez told us, from Layth ibn Sa'd, from 'Iqeel (he misread the name).

And I saw in his book hadiths from Suwayd ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez, from Mugheerah. I said: These are the hadiths of Suwayd! He said: Sa'eed ibn 'Abd al-'Azeez told us, from Suwayd.

Abu Haatim said: I think that he never sought knowledge, and that he was a liar.

'Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Abi Haatim said: I mentioned some of this to 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn al-Junayd, and he said: Abu Haatim is right; no one should narrate from him.

Ibn al-Jawzi said: Abu Zar'ah said: (He is) a liar.

End quote from Mizaan al-I'tidaal (1/72-73).

Undoubtedly Abu Haatim is one of the elite scholars who were well-versed in knowledge of narrators' biographies and the methods of determining their soundness or otherwise (al-jarh wa't-ta'deel). He examined the man and realized that he was not trustworthy in narrating hadith.

For this reason, a number of well-versed scholars stated that this hadith is da'eef (weak). In fact, they thought that this particular hadith was one of the reasons for classing this narrator as da'eef.

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

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Undoubtedly more than one of the leading scholars of al-jarh wa't-ta'deel (evaluation of narrators and their chains of narration) spoke out against him because of this hadith.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (2/470).

At-Tabari narrated in at-Taareekh (1/152-153) from the hadith of al-Maadi ibn Muhammad, from Abu Sulaymaan – a number of scholars thought it most likely that this narrator was 'Ali ibn Sulaymaan – from al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad, from Abu Idrees al-Khawlaani, from Abu Dharr al-Ghifaari, who said:

I said: O Messenger of Allah, how many books did Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, send down?

He said: One hundred and four books; Allah sent down fifty pages to Sheeth (Seth)...

Al-Maadi ibn Muhammad was classed as da'eef by the scholars.

Ibn 'Adiyy said:

He is munkar al-hadith (i.e., his hadith is odd).

End quote from al-Kaamil (8/183).

'Ali ibn Sulaymaan is majhool (unknown), as was stated by al-Haafiz ibn Hajar in Taqreeb at-Tahdheeb (p. 401).

Regarding al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad, al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad was a shaykh of 'Ali ibn Sulaymaan, and is majhool (unknown).

End quote from Taqreeb at-Tahdheeb (p. 452).

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It was also narrated by al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (2/597) and Yahya ibn al-Husayn al-Shajari in al-Amaali (915), and others:

From the hadith of Yahya ibn Sa'eed as-Sa'di al-Basri: 'Abd al-Malik ibn Jurayj told us, from 'Ataa', from 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr al-Laythi, from Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him).

Al-Haakim did not say anything about him; adh-Dhahabi commented on him by saying: [Yahya ibn Sa'eed] as-Sa'di is not thiqah (trustworthy).

Ibn Hibbaan (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Yahya ibn Sa'eed ash-Shaheed is a shaykh who narrated maqloob (back-to-front) reports from Ibn Jurayj and mulzaq (patched-together) reports from others; it is not permissible to quote his reports as evidence if the report was narrated through him only.

He narrated from Ibn Jurayj, from 'Ataa', from 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr, from Abu Dharr who said: I entered the mosque and saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sitting there. He said to me: "O Abu Dharr, there is a greeting (tahiyyah) for the mosque, so get up and pray [two rak'ahs to greet the mosque – tahiyyat al-masjid]. Then he quoted the lengthy hadith which mentions the Prophet's advice to Abu Dharr.

But neither Ibn Jurayj, 'Ataa' nor 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr have anything to do with hadith; the closest hadith to it is that narrated by Abu Idrees al-Khawlaani.

End quote from al-Majrooheen (3/129-130).

Ibn 'Adiyy said:

This is a munkar (odd) hadith with this isnaad, from Ibn Jurayj, from 'Ataa', from 'Ubayd ibn 'Umayr, from Abu Dharr.

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This hadith has no other chains of narration, except from Abu Idrees al-Khalwaani and al-Qaasim ibn Muhammad from Abu Dharr.

The third is the hadith of Ibn Jurayj, which is the most munkar (oddest) of the reports. Yahya ibn Sa'eed is known to have narrated this hadith.

End quote from al-Kaamil (9/107).

Conclusion: this hadith has no sound, reliable chain of narration.

Ibn Rajab (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It was narrated from Abu Dharr via several chains of narration, all of which are not free of problems.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (3/274).

And Allah knows best.