

136537 - Commentary on the hadith which says that three men will fight for this treasure of yours, each of them the son of a caliph

the question

What is your understanding of and commentary on the following hadith about the Mahdi, which was narrated on the website ad-Durar as-Saniyyah – al-Mawsoo‘ah al-Hadeethiyyah: “Three men will fight for this treasure of yours, each of them the son of a caliph, but none of them will gain it. Then the black banners will come from the east, and they will kill you in an unprecedented manner.” – Then he mentioned something – “When you see him, then pledge your allegiance to him even if you have to crawl over the snow, for that is the caliph of Allah, the Mahdi.”

Narrator: Thawbaan the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah.

Muhaddith: al-Bazaar

Source: al-Bahr az-Zakhkhaar

Page or no.: 10/100

Status: Its isnaad is saheeh.

I hope that you can explain: what is this treasure? Who are the three men? Who is the caliph? Is the time when that will happen near at hand or far off? Who are the people of the black banners? Are they the Zoroastrian Persians in Iran (the Majoos)?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Belief in the emergence of the Mahdi is part of the belief (‘aqeedah) of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah. There are numerous mutawaatir hadiths that speak of that, hence al-‘Allaamah al-

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Kattaani (may Allah have mercy on him) listed it among the mutawaatir hadiths that he compiled, and he narrated the verdict that the hadiths that they had the switch speak of the Mahdi are mutawaatir from more than one scholar, such as Abu'l-Husayn al-Aabiri, the author of Manaaqib ash-Shaafa'i, al-Haafiz as-Sakhkhaawi, and others. See: Nazm al-Mutanaathir min al-Hadeeth at-Mutawaatir (236-240).

In Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah (3/141) it says:

The hadiths that speak of the emergence of the Mahdi are many; they were narrated via many isnaads, and were narrated by a number of leading scholars of hadith. A number of scholars said that they are mutawaatir in meaning, such as Abu'l-Husayn al-Aabiri, a 4th century (AH) scholar; al-'Allaamah as-Safaareeni in Lawaami' al-Anwaar al-Bahiyyah; al-'Allaamah ash-Shawkaani in an essay entitled at-Tawdeeh fi Tawaatur Ahaadeeth al-Mahdi wa'd-Dajjaal wa'l-Maseeh.

What is meant by this Mahdi is not the person who the Raafidis say is alive at present, and they are waiting for him to emerge from the tunnel of Saamura'. That is a kind of crazy myth, and an idea that was instilled by the Shaytaan, because there is no evidence for it in the Qur'an or Sunnah, or in sound reasoning.

Secondly:

This hadith was narrated by the great Sahaabi Thawbaan (may Allah be pleased with him), who narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said:

"Three will fight one another for your treasure, each one of them the son of a caliph, but none of them will gain it. Then the black banners will come from the east, and they will kill you in an unprecedented manner." Then he mentioned something that I do not remember, then he said: "When you see him, then pledge your allegiance to him even if you have to crawl over the snow, for that is the caliph of Allah, the Mahdi."

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Narrated by Ibn Maajah in as-Sunan (no. 4084); al-Bazzaar in al-Musnad (2/120); ar-Rooyaani (no. 619); al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (4/510) – and via him by al-Bayhaqi in Dalaa'il an-Nubuwwah (6/515).

They narrated it via Sufyaan ath-Thawri, from Khaalid al-Hadhdha', from Abu Qilaabah, from Abu Asma', from Thawbaan, in a marfoo' report.

It was also narrated by al-Haakim and al-Bayhaqi – after the version quoted above – via 'Abd al-Wahhaab ibn 'Ata', from Khaalid al-Hadhdha', from Abu Qilaabah, from Abu Asma', from Thawbaan, in a mawqoof report that stops at Thawbaan.

The scholars differed as to the verdict on this hadith; there are two views:

The first view is that the hadith is to be classed as saheeh (sound).

Al-Bazzaar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Something similar to this hadith was narrated with this wording via a different isnaad, and we only know this wording in this hadith, although most of the meaning of this hadith has been narrated (in other reports). We selected this hadith because it is saheeh and because Thawbaan is a man of dignity, and its isnaad is a saheeh isnaad. End quote.

Al-Haakim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This is a saheeh hadith according to the conditions of al-Bukhaari and Muslim. End quote. Adh-Dhahabi did not comment on it in his Talkhees.

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

This is a saheeh, qawiy isnaad. End quote.

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An-Nihaayah fi'l-Fitan wa'l-Malaahim (p. 17).

Ibn Katheer had a different view of the hadith; in al-Bidaayah wa'n-Nihaayah he thought it most likely to be mawqoof, as we shall see below.

It was classed as saheeh by al-Qurtubi in at-Tadhkirah (p. 1201), and by al-Boosayri in Misbaah az-Zujaajah (3/263).

It was classed as saheeh by Shaykh Hammood at-Tuwaijri (may Allah have mercy on him) in It-haaf al-Jamaa'ah bima jaa'a fi'l-Fitan wa'l-Malaahim wa Ashraat as-Saa'ah (2/187).

The second view is that the hadith is to be classed as da'eef (weak)

'Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal said:

My father told me: Ibn 'Aliyah was asked about this hadith, and said: Khaalid used to narrate it but no one paid any attention to it, because Ibn 'Aliyah regarded its narration as da'eef via this isnaad, i.e., the hadith of Khaalid, from Abu Qilaabah, from Abu Asma', from Thawbaan, from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), which refers to the banners. End quote.

Al-'Ilal (2/325).

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

Some of them narrated it from Thawbaan and regarded it as mawqoof, and that is more likely to be the case. And Allah knows best. End quote.

Al-Bidaayah wa'n-Nihaayah (10/55)

Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ahmad said in his Musnad: Wakee' told us, from Shurayk, from 'Ali ibn Zayd, from Abu Qilaabah,

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from Thawbaan: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When you see the black banners coming from Khurasan, then come to them, even if you have to crawl over snow, for among them will be the caliph al-Mahdi.”

I – namely adh-Dhahabi – say: I think it is munkar (odd). It was also narrated by ath-Thawri and ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn al-Mukhtaar, from Khaalid al-Hadhdha’, from Abu Qilaabah, who said: from Asma’, from Thawbaan. End quote.

Mizaan al-I’tidaal (3/128).

It was also regarded as problematic by Shaykh Muhammad Rasheed Rida (may Allah have mercy on him) in Tafseer al-Manaar (9/419-421).

Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

(It is) munkar (odd) ... Those who regarded it as saheeh failed to notice the problem in its isnaad, which is that Abu Qilaabah narrated it by saying “ ‘an” (from). He was one of those who resorted to tadlees [lit. deception – by saying “‘an (from)” giving the false impression that he had heard directly from someone when that was not the case], as quoted above from adh-Dhahabi and others. Perhaps this is why Ibn ‘Aliyah regarded the narration of this hadith with the isnaad of Khaalid as da’eef, as was narrated from him by Ahmad in al-‘Ilal (1/356), and Ahmad concurred with that. But the hadith is saheeh (sound) in its meaning, apart from the phrase “for among them will be the caliph al-Mahdi.” End quote.

As-Silsilah ad-Da’eefah (no. 85).

Thirdly:

There was also a difference of opinion concerning the meaning of the treasure mentioned in this hadith. Some said that it is the treasure of the Ka’bah, and some said that it is the treasure that

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will be uncovered when the water level of the Euphrates drops, as is mentioned in the saheeh hadiths.

Shaykh Hammood at-Tuwaijri (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn Katheer said in an-Nihaayah:

What appears to be the case is that what is meant by the treasure mentioned in this context is the treasure of the Ka'bah.

I – namely Shaykh at-Tuwaijri – say: There is some doubt about that, because of what was mentioned above in the chapter on the prohibition on provoking the Turks and the Ethiopians, that was narrated from 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: Leave the Ethiopians alone so long as they leave you alone, for no one will extract the treasure of the Ka'bah except Dhu's-Suwayqatayn from Ethiopia [Habashah, also known as Abyssinia]." Narrated by Abu Dawood and al-Haakim. He said: Its isnaad is saheeh; and adh-Dhahabi agreed with him in his Talkhees.

It was also narrated by Imam Ahmad from the hadith of Abu Umaamah ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf; its isnaad is jayyid.

It is more likely to be the case that the treasure mentioned in the hadith of Thawbaan (may Allah be pleased with him) is the treasure that will be uncovered when the water level of the Euphrates drops, or it may be something else. And Allah knows best. End quote.

It-haaf al-Jamaa'ah bima jaa'a fi'l-Fitan wa'l-Malaahim wa Ashraat as-Saa'ah, 2/187

This second view concerning what is meant by the treasure was mentioned by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) as a possibility, then he said:

That is if what is meant by the treasure is the treasure mentioned in the hadith about the receding

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waters of the Euphrates uncovering a mountain of gold, which indicates that this will only happen when the Mahdi emerges, which will definitely occur before the descent of 'Eesa and the emergence of the fire [which will drive the people to the place of gathering].

Fath al-Baari (13/81).

Fourthly:

We have not come across anyone who stated what is meant by the three men and the caliph in the hadith. Similarly, there is nothing in the saheeh hadiths to indicate that this will happen at the time of the emergence of the Mahdi. However the texts indicate that the Islamic caliphate will be restored before the onset of the Hour, as in the hadith in which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "O son of Hawaalah, if you see the caliphate appear in the holy land, then the time of earthquakes, calamities and momentous events has drawn nigh, and on that day the Hour will be closer to the people than these two hands of mine are to your head.

Narrated by Abu Dawood from the hadith of 'Abdullah ibn Hawaalah al-Azdi (may Allah be pleased with him) (no. 2535); Ahmad in al-Musnad (5/288); and by al-Haakim in al-Mustadrak (4/471) – he classed it as saheeh and adh-Dhahabi agreed with him. Also classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Sunan Abi Dawood (no. 2535)

Perhaps the Mahdi will appear at the time of one of these caliphs

See: al-Mahdi wa Fiqh Ashraat as-Saa'ah by Dr. Muhammad Ismaa'eel al-Muqaddim (p. 728 ff).

See also: Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah (3/140), fatwa no. 1615, and the answer to question no. [3259](#).

Fifthly:

The people with the black banners are not the Persian Zoroastrians in Iran (the Majoos). Rather

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what the apparent meaning of the hadith may indicate is that they are people from the east who will support the Mahdi, strengthen his authority and establish his dominion, and their banners will be black. All of this is assuming that the hadith which mentions them is proven to be sound and known.

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

These black banners are not those with which Abu Muslim al-Khurasani came and took away power from the Umayyads in 132 AH. Rather they are other black banners that will accompany the Mahdi, who will be Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah al-'Alawi al-Faatimi al-Hasani (may Allah be pleased with him). Allah will prepare him in one night; that is, He will forgive him, guide him, make him understand and grant him wisdom, after he was not like that, and He will support him with people from the east who will help him, strengthen his authority and establish his dominion, and their banners will also be black. End quote.

An-Nihaayah fi'l-Fitan wa'l-Malaahim (1/49); Kitaab al-Fitan by al-Mirwazi (1/310); It-haaf al-Jamaa'ah by Shaykh Hammood at-Tuwaijri (1/286 ff)

And Allah knows best.