# 120910 - Status of the Hadeeth “If you see a man frequently coming to the mosque, then bear witness that he is a believer”

**the question**

How sound is this hadeeth: “Whoever you see frequenting the mosques, then bear witness that he is a believer”?

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

It was narrated that Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If you see a man frequently coming to the mosque, then bear witness that he is a believer, for Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): ‘The mosques of Allah shall be maintained only by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day; perform as-Salah, and give Zakah …’ [al-Tawbah 9:18].”

Narrated by al-Tirmidhi (2617), Ahmad in al-Musnad (27325) and others, all via Darraj Abu’l-Samah, from Abu’l-Haytham, from Abu Sa’eed (may Allah be pleased with him).

This is a da’eef (weak) isnad (chain of transmission), because of Darraj ibn Sam’an Abu’l-Samah al-Qurashi. Al-Daraqutni said: he is da’eef. Al-Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawood regard him as da’eef only in the ahadeeth (narrations) that he narrated from Abu’l-Haytham, as in this case. See Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb (3/209).

Hence al-Tirmidhi commented, after narrating the hadeeth: it is ghareeb hasan (rare but sound). He said in the second place: it is hasan ghareeb.

Al-‘Allamah ‘Ala’ al-Deen Maghlatawi said: This hadeeth has a da’eef isnad. End quote.

Sharh Sunan Ibn Majah (1/1345)

When al-Hakim classed this hadeeth as saheeh in al-Mustadrak, al-Dhahabi commented by saying: Darraj narrated many munkar (disapproved) reports. End quote.

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

Its isnad is neither saheeh nor hasan, because it is narrated via Darraj Abu'l-Samah from Abu Haytham from Abu Sa'eed, and al-Hafiz said concerning this Darraj in al-Taqreeb: He is sadooq (truthful) but in his hadeeth from Abu'l-Haytham there is some weakness. Hence al-Dhahabi commented on al-Hakim by saying: I say: Darraj narrated many munkar reports. End quote.

Tamam al-Minnah (p.291)

It was also classed as da'eef in a fatwa of the Standing Committee (4/444), and by al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) in Sharh Riyadh al-Saliheen. This has been published previously on our website in the answer to question no. 34593.

Al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab suggested that the matn (text) of the hadeeth is also objectionable, because it is not possible to testify to anyone's being a believer, rather it is only possible to testify to his being a Muslim, because being a Muslim is an outward attribute whereas being a believer is an inward attribute,

As it says in the hadeeth of Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah have mercy on him), according to which the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distributed (some wealth) to some people, and Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) was sitting among them. Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) left out some of them and did not give them anything, although they were better in my view. I said: O Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? For by Allah, I think he is a believer. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Or a Muslim." I kept quiet for a while, then what I knew got the better of me and I said: O Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? For by Allah, I think that he is a believer. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Or a Muslim." I kept quiet for a while, then what I knew got the better of me and I said: O Messenger of Allah, what about so and so? For by Allah, I think that he is a believer.

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Or a Muslim. I may give to one man although someone else is more beloved to me, for fear lest he be thrown on his face into the Fire.” Narrated by al-Bukhari (27) and Muslim (150).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Rajab (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

It seems – and Allah knows best – that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rebuked Sa’d for testifying to people’s faith (or their being believers), because faith is something hidden in the heart, and no one can see it, so testifying to it is testimony that is based on conjecture, and it is improper to make definite statements about that, as he said: “If you must praise anyone then say: I think that so and so is such and such, but I do not praise anyone before Allah.”

He told him to testify that the person was a Muslim, because that is something that can be seen, as it is narrated in al-Musnad from Anas in a marfoo’ report (traced directly to the Prophet): “Islam is outward and faith is in the heart.” Al-Shaykh al-Albani said: it is munkar (al-Silsilah al-Da’eefah, 6906).

Hence, many of the salaf (pious predecessors) regarded it as makrooh (disliked) for a person to describe himself as a believer, and said: This is flattering and praising oneself on the basis of what is hidden in the heart; rather he should testify that he is a Muslim because this is something visible.

As for the hadeeth: “If you see a man frequently coming to the mosque, then bear witness that he is a believer”, it was narrated by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah from the hadeeth of Darraj, from Abu’l-Haytham, from Abu Sa’eed (may Allah be pleased with him) in a marfoo’ report. Ahmad said: It is a munkar hadeeth; Darraj narrated munkar reports. End quote.

Fath al-Bari (1/122)

And Allah knows best.