187689 - Doubting the character and sincerity of the Sahaabah will lead to doubting the religion completely

the question

What is it that makes us trust the soundness of the hadiths that speak of the virtues of the Sahaabah, when there are so many such reports?

Some of these reports are narrated by the Sahaabi himself, that is, the Sahaabi narrates his own virtues. Is it not possible – and I ask Allah's forgiveness for saying this – that he may be telling lies in order to add more virtues to himself that he does not possess? In that case there is no proof to support the argument that the Sahaabah are of good character and do not tell lies, because the same doubt may also be applicable to hadiths that speak of that (the good character of the Sahaabah). Moreover, the hadith that one Sahaabi may narrate concerning the virtues of another could come under the heading of trying to flatter the other, or fear of authority, or seeking wealth or power, and that is with regard to cases in which the hadiths are speaking of one of the caliphs.

Moreover, the same doubts may be raised concerning the Qur'anic verses that speak of the virtues of the Sahaabah. Why could it not be the case that all the Sahaabah conspired and agreed to fabricate and insert these verses in order to prove the virtue of their generation in general?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them all) are people whom Allah chose especially to be the companions of His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Their virtues that are referred to in the Qur'an and saheeh Sunnah, and to which history testifies and those who loved them and those who opposed them also testified, are too many to count. According to the questioner's way of thinking and reasoning, everything that is trusted and definitive may be

subjected to these baseless doubts and illusions, and these far-fetched notions, that no man with sound reasoning could accept.

Whoever develops doubts about the sound character of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) will also develop doubts about the religion of Allah, about the Book of Allah, about the laws of Allah, and about the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

Who is it that taught people the Qur'an and taught them their religious obligations, their duties according to sharee'ah, the rulings of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger?

How did the people learn how to pray, fast and perform the rituals of Hajj? How did they learn the rulings on business interactions, marriage, divorce and how to judge between people? Where did they learn the description of Paradise and its bliss, and the description of Hell and its punishment?

Who was it that taught them about the Oneness of Allah, and taught them sound belief?

How did they learn about the names and attributes of Allah, and follow the right path with regard to these matters, unlike the followers of innovation? Who is it that taught the people good manners and virtuous deeds?

Do you think that Allah, may He be exalted, could choose for the leader of the sons of Adam companions who are liars, who fabricate lies against Allah and His Messenger?

If it was possible that they could fabricate verses of the Qur'an and fabricate hadiths that speak of their own virtues, then how could we trust anything that they narrated about the religion of Allah?

Could anyone who has such characteristics be entrusted with the laws of Allah, the rulings of His religion and the Sunnah of His Messenger? In that case the entire religion would be lost, and there would be no Islam, no faith and no ihsaan; there would be nothing but lies, fabrication and selfishness.

"Glory be to You (O Allah) this is a great lie" [an-Noor 24:16].

If we listen to these destructive insinuating thoughts that destroy faith and put one beyond the pale of Islam, then nothing that has to do with religion could be sound, as there would be the possibility that the Sahaabah fabricated it and spread it among the people!

According to your way of thinking, how could lineages be confirmed? How could we be certain that So and so – whoever he may be – is indeed the son of So and so? How could we know who among the people is of legitimate birth and who is illegitimate?

Is it not possible – according to your way of thinking – that people could agree on a lie, so the adulterer could claim that his child is legitimate and was born as a result of a proper marriage, not an illicit relationship?

If we do not affirm the sound character, sincerity and honesty of the Sahaabah, then the entire religion would collapse, and we would not be sure of any of its laws, beliefs, fundamental teachings, general principles, and rulings on what is lawful and what is prohibited, because there would be the possibility that it may be based on lies and fabrications in all issues, since those who transmitted this knowledge would be the type of people who could agree together to fabricate lies against Allah and His Messenger!

“Glory be to You (O Allah) this is a great lie” [an-Noor 24:16].

We disavow your ideas before our Lord; we reject them and do not accept them. We seek refuge with Allah lest they cross our minds or lest we regard them as sound thoughts, and we testify that we respect the Sahaabah of our Prophet, and that they were the truest of people in speech, the most trustworthy, the best in manners and attitude, the best in character, the best in deeds, the closest to Allah and the greatest in faith and belief.

Therefore one of the fundamentals of belief for Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah is to love the Sahaabah and take them as allies, testifying that they were people of faith, virtue, honesty, integrity, dignity and truthfulness; criticising them or any one of them is a cause of doom and deviation from the straight path of Allah.

Imam Ahmad (3589) narrated with a jayyid isnaad from ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood that he said: Verily Allah looked at people’s hearts, and He found that the heart of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was the best of all people’s hearts, so He chose him for Himself and sent him with His message. Then he looked at the hearts of people after the heart of Muhammad, and He found that the hearts of his companions were the best of people’s hearts, so he made them the helpers of His Prophet, who fought alongside him to support his religion.

Al-Maymooni said:

Ahmad ibn Hanbal said to me: O Abu’l-Hasan, if you see a man speaking ill of any of the Sahaabah, then have doubts about his Islam.

End quote from al-Bidaayah wa’n-Nihaayah (8/148)

Abu Zar‘ah az-Raazi said:

If you see a man criticising any of the companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), then know that he is a heretic, because the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), in our view, is true and the Qur’an is true. The only ones who conveyed this Qur’an, and the Sunnah, to us are the companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). All they [i.e., those who cast aspersions upon the Sahaabah] are trying to do is undermine our witnesses [i.e., the Sahaabah], so as to invalidate the Qur’an and Sunnah. Those people are more deserving of having their character doubted, and they are heretics.

End quote from al-Kifaayah fi ‘Ilm ar-Riwaayah by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi (p. 49)

Abu Nu‘aym al-Haafiz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Do you not see that Allah, may He be exalted, instructed His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) [in the Qur’an] to pardon his companions, pray for forgiveness for them, and show kindness towards them. Therefore whoever reviles them, hates them and tries to find wrong motives for their views and their engaging in war in a way that is not good, is the one who is drifting away from the command of Allah, may He be exalted, and His instructions concerning them. Such a person only speaks ill of

them because he harbours resentment towards the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and his companions, and towards Islam and the Muslims.

End quote from Tathbeet al-Imaamiyyah (p. 375)

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, knows best with whom to place His message, initially and subsequently. He knows best who is fit to carry His message and convey it to His slaves honestly and sincerely, respecting the sender, carrying out their duties towards Allah, showing patience in complying with His commands, giving thanks for His blessings and seeking to draw closer to Him, and He knows who is not fit for that. Similarly, He, may He be glorified, knows best who among the nations is fit to inherit knowledge from His Messengers, be their successors and carry the message that they conveyed from their Lord.

End quote from Tareeq al-Hijratayn (p. 97)

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

“Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah, and those who are with him are severe against disbelievers, and merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and falling down prostrate (in prayer), seeking Bounty from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. The mark of them (i.e. of their Faith) is on their faces (foreheads) from the traces of (their) prostration (during prayers). This is their description in the Taurat (Torah). But their description in the Injeel (Gospel) is like a (sown) seed which sends forth its shoot, then makes it strong, it then becomes thick, and it stands straight on its stem, delighting the sowers that He may enrage the disbelievers with them”

[al-Fath 48:29].

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

Based on this verse, Imam Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him), according to some reports from

him, concluded that the Raafidis are kuffaar who hate the Sahaabah. He said: That is because the Sahaabah enrage them, and whomever the Sahaabah enrage is a kaafir because of this verse. A number of scholars agreed with him concerning that. The hadiths that speak of the virtue of the Sahaabah and forbid us to offend them in any way are numerous. It is sufficient that Allah praises them and is pleased with them.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (7/362)

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

Whoever criticises any one of them or casts aspersions on him with regard to what he narrates is rejecting what Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, said concerning them and is shedding doubt on all the teachings of Islam.

End quote from Tafseer al-Qurtubi (16/297)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

That is because the first generation of this ummah are the ones who established this religion and adhered to it, believing in it, learning it, acting upon it and conveying it. So casting aspersions on them is casting aspersions on the religion, which would lead one to turn away from the message with which Allah sent the Prophets.

That was the aim of the first ones who propagated the innovation of Shi ‘ism: the aim was only to turn people away from the path of Allah, and to try to prove false that which the Messengers brought from Allah, may He be exalted. Therefore they used to be active whenever the Muslims were in a weak position, thus these misleading innovations first emerged among the heretics.

End quote from Minhaaj as-Sunnah (1/18).

What we want to confirm is that having doubts about the good character and sincerity of the Sahaabah is casting aspersions upon the entire religion, and this is kufr (disbelief) – Allah forbid.

So seek refuge with Allah from these insinuating thoughts, for they are no more than whispers in

your heart from the Shaytaan, which are aimed at making you doubt your religion. Remember Allah much, recite Qur'an, read books of the Prophet's hadiths and books written about the virtues of the Sahaabah, such as Fadaa'il as-Sahaabah by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may Allah be pleased with him), and books about their biographies and lives.

We also advise you to read a brief and very useful book, namely Soorataan Mutadaaditaan li Juhood an-Nabi al-A'zam by al-'Allaamah Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan an-Nadwi (may Allah have mercy on him), which was recently published as a supplement in Majallat al-Azhar; you can find a copy of it on the Internet.

And Allah knows best.