112081 - The hadith “ ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) gave his ring in charity whilst he was bowing [in prayer]”

the question

I heard that the verse (interpretation of the meaning) “Verily, your Walee (Protector or Helper) is Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, - those who perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat, and they bow down (submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer)” [al-Maa’idah 5:55] was revealed concerning ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him), who gave his ring in charity when he was bowing [in prayer]. Is this hadith saheeh?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This hadith is fabricated; it was fabricated and propagated by some of the liars in order to prove thereby the virtue of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). But the virtues of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) are many and well known, and there is no need for lies such as this.

When reflecting upon this hadith, it becomes clear that it does not offer proof of the virtue of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him).

This was explained by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) who said:

Some of the liars fabricated a false hadith which says that this verse was revealed concerning ‘Ali when he gave his ring in charity whilst praying. This is false according to the consensus of the scholars of hadith, and its falseness is apparent from many angles:

· The verse says “those who”, which is plural, and ‘Ali was one person.

· The waw [translated as “and” in the phrase “, and they bow down (submit themselves with obedience to Allah in prayer)”] is not describing the state or situation of the people in question [so it does not mean “whilst”]. If that were the case, it would not be appropriate for any Muslim to

take as a protector or helper anyone except one who gives zakaah whilst bowing, and therefore he should not take as a protector or helper anyone else among the Sahaabah or relatives of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

· Words of praise usually only apply to obligatory or mustahabb actions. Giving zakaah whilst praying is neither obligatory nor mustahabb, according to the consensus of Muslim scholars, because the person who is praying is already preoccupied.

· If giving charity whilst praying were something good, there would be no difference between doing that whilst bowing and otherwise; rather it would be more convenient to give it whilst standing and sitting.

· ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) was not obligated to give zakaah at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) [because he did not enough wealth of his own to be obliged to pay zakaah].

· He did not have a ring either, because they did not wear rings, until the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) wrote a letter to Chosroes, and was told that they would not accept any letter unless it had a seal, so he acquired a ring of silver and had engraved on it the words “Muhammad the Messenger of Allah”.

· Giving something other than a ring in zakaah is better than giving a ring, because most of the fuqaha’ say: Giving a ring is not acceptable as zakaah.

· This hadith says that he gave it to someone who asked for charity. What is praiseworthy with regard to zakaah is to take the initiative in giving it and to give it as soon as it becomes due, not to wait for someone to ask for it.

· The words come in the context of forbidding taking disbelievers as protectors and helpers, and enjoining taking believers as protectors and helpers, as is indicated by the context.

End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah (2/30-32)

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about this hadith and he said:

This hadith is not saheeh. It was mentioned by al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer in his Tafseer, where he deemed it to be da‘eef (weak), because the men of its isnaad are da‘eef, and some of them are unknown. He stated that as far as he knew, not one of the scholars spoke of the virtue of giving charity whilst bowing. End quote.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Minhaaj as-Sunnah that this hadith is fabricated.

Thus it is known that what is meant by the words of Allah, may He be exalted, “and they bow down” is that they humble themselves before Allah, may He be exalted, because bowing and prostration represent the utmost humility before Allah. So the believer gives charity in a state of humility before Allah, not in a state of arrogance or showing pride in one’s actions, and not showing off or seeking to enhance one’s reputation. And Allah is the source of strength. End quote.

Majmoo‘ Fataawa Ibn Baaz (26/218)

And Allah knows best.