

IBN TAYMIYYA on

USE OF LESSER GRADES OF HADITH FOR ENCOURAGING GOOD VIRTUES

Ibn Taymiyya said in his book "*al-qaida al-jaleela fit-tawwasali wal-waseela*", with commentary of Dr. Rabi'a bin Hadi 'Umayr al-Mudkhali, professor in the Islamic University of Madinah al-Munawwara, Page 162, para 478:

"But Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other scholars permitted the narration [of hadith] regarding the virtues of good what is not sure as long as it is not known that it is a lie." [*laakinna Ahmad ibn Hanbal wa ghayruh min al-'ulama jawwazu an yurwa fee fada'il al-'aamal maa lam yu'lam annahu thaabit idha lam yu'lam annahu kadhib.*]

Ibn Taymiyya goes into a full chapter of discussion of this subject from here, Chapter 8 of "*al-qaida al-jaleela fit-tawwasuli wal-waseela*", where he presents the views of the majority of the '*ulama* of Islam and he presents his own views of the subject. And here we will examine this in detail.

To continue, Ibn Taymiyya says, in para 478:

"and that is the action which is known to be lawful with a shari'ah evidence, and there has been narrated in its virtue hadith that is not known to be a lie, it is possible that the reward will be true and none of the Imams have said that it is permissible to consider something required [*waajib*] or recommended [*mustahabb*] by way of a weak hadith, and whoever said so differed from the consensus [*ijma'a*]."

So here we see that Ibn Taymiyya is explaining that if there is a hadith, even though it has not been judged to be authentic, if it encourages what is known as a good deed in Islamic shari'ah, something of virtue, a praiseworthy action, or idea, then it is fully acceptable to refer to such a hadith as an encouragement for that deed.

And here also, Ibn Taymiyya refers to the *ijma'a*, the consensus, which is a clear reference to the concept of *ijma'a* of scholars of Islam as being a fully accepted concept and one which *he* accepts. And this is a clear proof that Ibn Taymiyya, though he considered himself a *mujtahid mutlaq*, capable of independent reasoning, nevertheless depended on the consensus [*ijma'a*] of scholars as a proof for the opinions he considered acceptable. And this is the position of *Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'at*.

Then Ibn Taymiyya continues in para 479:

"And just like it is not permissible to forbid something without a shari'ah evidence, [*daleel shar'ee*] but if it something is known to be forbidden and a hadith has been narrated in warning the one who commits such an action, and it is not known that it is a lie, it is permissible to narrate it. And it is permissible to narrate it in the manner of encouraging and discouraging [*at-tarheeb wat-targheeb*] what is not known that it is a lie. but in what is known that Allah has encouraged or discouraged with another evidence besides this [weak] hadith whose authenticity is unknown [*majhoul haaluh*]."

So from this we see that Ibn Taymiyya is using the weak hadith [*ahadith da'eef*], to discourage people from doing an evil deed, as long as this deed is known to be forbidden in the shari'ah. If the deed is forbidden in the shari'ah, it is acceptable to use a hadith whose authenticity is unknown, as long as the hadith is known not to have been an actual lie. This principle is acceptable, in anything that it is known that Allah expressed its forbiddance. Ibn Taymiyya continues to explain this concept in para 480:

"This is like the [situation] of the *Isra'iliyyaat* [stories related by the Jews]. It is permissible to be narrated as long as we know that it is not a lie, for encouraging or discouraging in what we know that Allah has ordered in our law [*shar'*] or forbade in our law [*shar'*]."

Here we see that Ibn Taymiyya is not only accepting that the weak are acceptable in the case of encouraging good deeds and discouraging evil ones, but he is showing clearly that he accepted the use of *Isra'iliyyaat*, stories related from the Jews, which many Salafis reject today as unacceptable. And this is verified in the hadith of the Prophet (saws), "narrate from the hadith of Bani Isra'il and there is no harm in doing it."

Ibn Taymiyya continues in para 481:

"As for what has been authenticated as lawful to us, by way of the *Isra'iliyyaat* that has not been proven and no scholar believes in that. And Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the like of the Imams never depend on hadith like this in shari'ah."

para 482:

"So he who transmitted from Ahmad that he used to use weak hadith to support his opinion, that is: neither authentic in grade nor good, he made a mistake about Ahmad." [*wa man naqala 'an Ahmad annahu kaana yahtaju bil-hadith ad-da'eef alladhee laysa bi sahih wa laa hasan faqad ghalata 'alayh*].

para 486:

"And this hadith and the like Ahmad calls it weak, and he accepted it as a

support of his view." [*fa hadha al-hadith wa amthaalahu yusammeehi Ahmad da'eefan wa YAHTAJU BIHI*].

Ibn Taymiyya' Confusion

So we see here that Ibn Taymiyya on one hand is saying, that Ahmad did not use weak Hadith for encouraging what is ordered by a shari'ah ruling and that whoever said he did was wrong; whereas four paragraphs later he completely reverses himself and says that Ahmad called a hadith weak and he accepted it to encourage someone to keep what is ordered by a shari'ah ruling! This is a disturbing method which we will see Ibn Taymiyya employ in numerous other places. We question here: was it intentional or was he just confused???

Here we quote from the *muhaqqiq* of Ibn Taymiyya's book, Dr. Rabi'a bin Hadi 'Umayr al-Mudkhali, professor in the Islamic University of Madinah al-Munawwara, in his footnote on paragraph 423, where says,

"I didn't find this hadith and I am afraid that Shaykh ul-Islam's mind has gone to the other hadith of Abu Hurayra (ra), that says "Allah has angels wandering on earth, in addition to what is in the record of deeds of the people; and when they find a group remembering Allah, they call each other 'come unto what you desired' and they come. And they surround them until the lowest sky. Allahs says, 'what were My servants doing when you left them?' They say, 'we left them thanking You, praising You and remembering You.'..." Imam Ahmad, 2/251, Tirmidhi 5/579, 130 Chapter of what has been narrated regarding what Allah has wandering angels on earth. Tirmidhi said the hadith is *hasanan sahih*, #3600, and Ad-Darimi 2/225, hadith #2777"

So we see here, that even today's scholars of Islam, who follow his own school, the Salafi/Wahabi school, admitted to Ibn Taymiyya's confusion and weakness in hadith knowledge. And this is surprising in one who so adamantly accuses countless people of being liars and lying in almost every page of his book.