

Hadith of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf on Bond of Brotherhood

Muftiyah Mirah Malaika

Course: Hadith Chapter of Sales in Fathul Bari, HAD 501

International Open University

Assignment question:

Please discuss the Hadeeth of 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf about the bond of brotherhood and blessing of Allah in his trade in a Jewish market.

Author Note

Muftiyah Mirah Malaika, Department of Islamic Studies, International Open University.

Contact: info@mirahmalaika.com

Abstract

This research paper examines the hadith which was narrated by Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf about the bond of brotherhood that was established in Madinah between the Ansar (the Helpers) and the Muhajireen (the Migrants). Imam al-Bukhari mentioned different versions of this hadith at the beginning of the chapter of sales (kitaab al-buyoo') in his Saheeh al-Bukhari and several other places such as in the book of marriage (Kitaab an-Nikah) and the book of the virtues of the Ansar (Kitaab al-Manaaqib al-Ansaar).

Many rulings can be derived from the hadith of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf which is the reason why this hadith should be properly studied and understood.

Firstly, this research paper will introduce the translation of the different versions mentioned in Saheeh al-Bukhari. Secondly, the chains of narrators of this hadith will be elaborated.

Thirdly, the legal rulings which can be derived from this hadith will be discussed. This includes the rulings regarding trade, the virtue of working with one's own hands, trading in non-Muslim markets, trading with non-Muslims, the amount of the dowry (mahr) and holding a wedding feast (walimah).

Keywords: Fiqh, Islamic law, trading in non-Muslim markets, trading with non-Muslims

The Hadith of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Afw on the Bond of Brotherhood

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon our prophet Muhammad, his companions, his family and those who follow his path until the Last Day.

Imam al-Bukhari, the collector of the well-known Saheeh al-Bukhari, more accurately known as Al-Jaami' al-Musnad as-Saheeh al-Mukhtasar min Umoor Rasulillah wa Sunanihi wa Ayyaamihi ("An inclusive authentic abridged book of ahadeeth of Allah's Messenger and his commandments and military expeditions supported with a chain of narrators"), is known for the quality and expertise of istidlaal (deriving evidence from sources of Islamic law). Mostly, Imam al-Bukhari would mention a legal ruling in the title of a chapter (tarjumatul-baab) and then bring up some ahadith which may not seem to be on the same topic as the title of the chapter. However, upon a closer look, one can see how Imam al-Bukhari derived a certain ruling from a small part of a longer hadith.

This research paper aims to explain one of such ahadeeth, namely the hadith which was narrated by Abdur-Rahman bin 'Afw regarding the bond of brotherhood which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ established between the Ansar (the Helpers) and the Muhajireen (the Migrants) after the Hijrah (migration) from Makkah to Madinah Munawwarah. Therefore, this paper is divided into the following sections:

Section 1: The translation of the different versions of the hadith of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Afw regarding the bond of brotherhood mentioned in Saheeh al-Bukhari.

Section 2: The different chains of narrations by which this hadith was transmitted, mentioning the classification according to the hadith terminology (Mustalah al-Hadith).

Section 3: The legal rulings and other matters (masaa'il) that can be derived from this hadith will be mentioned from the different topics of Fiqh and virtues (fadheelah).

I will focus mainly on the hadith which was narrated by 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf himself. Only when necessary, I will shortly mention some points regarding the same hadith as it was narrated by Anas.

Translation of the Different Versions of the Hadith of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf

Narrated by 'Abdul-'Azeez (bin 'Abdullah), on the authority of Ibraheem bin Sa'ad from his father (Sa'ad ibn Ibraheem bin 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf) from his grandfather (Ibraheem bin 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf): Abdur Rahman bin `Auf said, "When we came to Medina as emigrants, Allah's Messenger ﷺ established a bond of brotherhood between me and Sa`ad bin Ar-Rabee`. Sa`ad bin Ar-Rabee` said (to me), 'I am the richest among the Ansar, so I will give you half of my wealth and you may look at my two wives and whichever of the two you may choose, I will divorce her, and when she has completed the prescribed period (before marriage) you may marry her.' `Abdur-Rahman replied, "I am not in need of all that. Is there any marketplace where trade is practiced?' He replied, "The market of Qaynuqaa'." `Abdur- Rahman went to that market the following day and brought some dried buttermilk (yogurt) and butter, and then he continued going there regularly. A few days later, `Abdur-Rahman came having traces of yellow (scent) on his body. Allah's Messenger ﷺ asked him whether he had gotten married. He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Whom have you married?' He replied, 'A woman from the Ansar. Then the Prophet ﷺ asked, 'How much did you pay her?' He replied, '(I gave her) a gold piece equal in weight to a date stone (or a date stone of gold)! The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Give a Walima (wedding banquet) even if with one sheep.' "

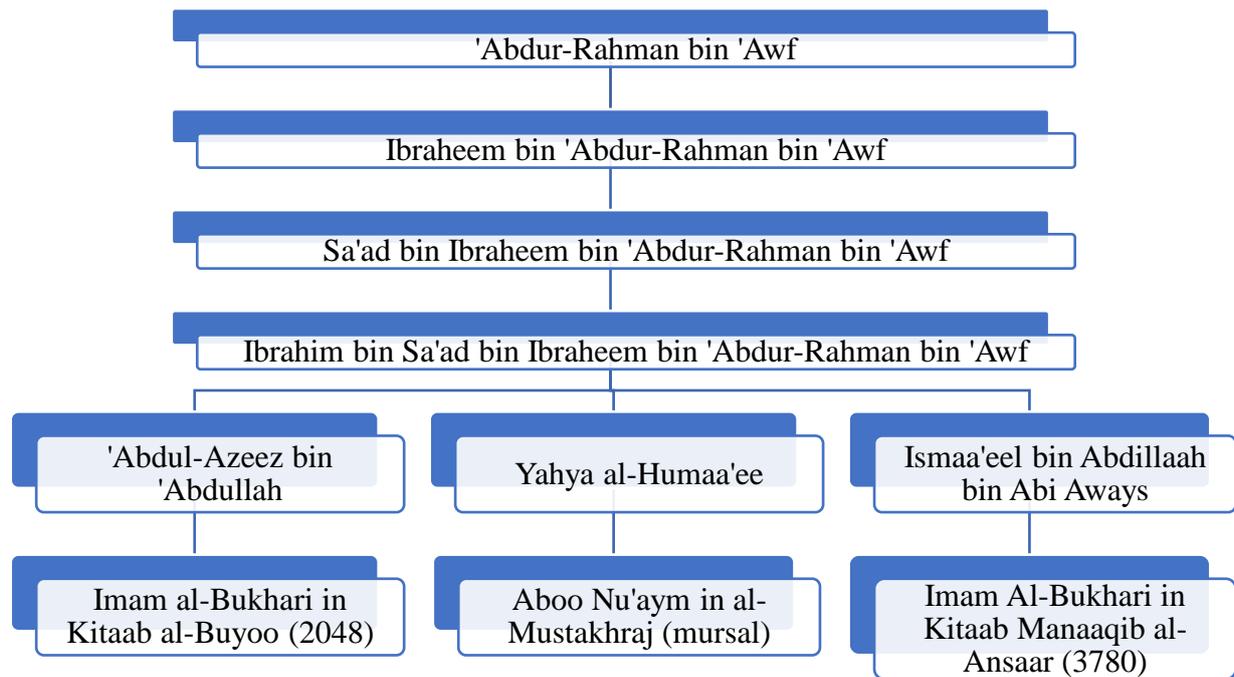
In a similar hadith which was narrated by Anas, it was mentioned: When `Abdur-Rahman bin `Auf came to Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ established a bond of brotherhood between him and Sa`ad bin Ar-Rabee' al-Ansaari. Sa`ad was a rich man, so he said to

`Abdur-Rahman, "I will give you half of my property and will help you marry." `Abdur-Rahman said (to him), "May Allah bless you in your family and property. Show me the market." So `Abdur-Rahman did not return from the market till he gained some dried buttermilk (yogurt) and butter (through trading). He brought that to his household. We stayed for some time (or as long as Allah wished), and then `Abdur-Rahman came, scented with yellowish perfume. The Prophet ﷺ said (to him) "What is this?" He replied, "I got married to an Ansari woman." The Prophet ﷺ asked, "What did you pay her?" He replied, "A gold stone or gold equal to the weight of a date stone." The Prophet ﷺ said (to him), "Give a wedding banquet even if with one sheep."

The hadith of Anas has reached us from seven different chains of narration (asnaad).

Discussion of the Chains of Narration

The chain of narration (sanad) of the hadith of `Abdur-Rahman bin `Awf mentioned by Aboo Nu'aym in al-Mustakhraj is mursal (not connected). However, due to the several supporting ahadith which are muttasil (connected without a break in the chain of narration), the text (matn) of this hadith is acceptable and saheeh (authentic).



The hadith of Anas has reached us from seven different chains of narration (asnaad).

Discussion of the Legal Rulings derived from the Hadeeth of 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf

The reason why Imam al-Bukhari brought these ahadeeth in his book of sales (kitaab al-Buyoo') was that he wanted to show the permissibility of trading in itself as well as the permissibility of trading in non-Muslim markets and with non-Muslims.

Based on this hadith, the scholars have mentioned the following regarding the permissibility of trade:

1. Trade is permissible.

There are many other supporting ahadeeth showing that the Sahabah and even Allah's Messenger himself ﷺ were active in trade.

2. Trade in non-Muslim markets is permissible.

The market mentioned in the hadeeth of 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf was

Qaynuqaa'. It was the market of one of the three Jewish tribes which were present

in Madinah at the time when Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Sahabah arrived in Madinah, namely Banu Qaynuqa'. The tribe of Banu Qaynuqa' later on helped the Quraysh during the battle of Badr. Even though the Muslims did not have good relations with Banu Qaynuqa', the Muslims were allowed to trade on their market. There are even some ahadeeth mentioning that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ went to the market Qaynuqa' himself.¹

Based on this, scholars have mentioned that being Muslim is not a condition for the acceptability of trade. (Uthmani, 2015)

3. Earning a living from trade and other forms of earnings is better than acquiring wealth through gifts and donations.

Abu Huraira reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: "It is better for any one of you to tie a bundle of firewood and carry it on his back and sell it than to beg a person, he may give or may refuse."²

Other points that the scholars have mentioned regarding the matters mentioned in the hadith include the following:

1. The dowry (mahr) can be little based on the situation of the groom. However, the scholars disagreed regarding the nature and minimum value of the dowry (mahr). According to the Ahnaaf, the dowry (mahr) should be at least 10 dirhams and it should be of tangible nature (meaning not only teaching Quran). (al-Quduri, 2010) According to the Malikiyyah, the dowry (mahr) should be at least 3 dirhams or a quarter (rubu') of a dinar. (al-Qayrawani, n.d.)

There are several ahadith that the dowry can be as little as an iron ring, teaching a

¹ Saheeh al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 2122

² Saheeh Muslim, Hadith No. 1042c

surah from the Quran, or – as it is the case in this hadith – a piece of gold similar in weight to a date stone.

2. It is recommended to hold a walimah.

The walimah should be kept simple, “even if it were with one sheep”.

3. The fact that Sa’ad bin ar-Rabee’ al-Ansaari offered any of his two wives to ‘Abdur-Rahman bin ‘Awf does not show the permissibility and recommendation of this act. It simply shows the level of commitment and sacrifice of Sa’ad bin ar-Rabee’ and probably his wives. This incident is not part of the Prophetic Sunnah as it does not become of the words, actions, attributes, or approvals of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Regarding the virtues which are shown in this hadith, the scholars have mentioned the following points:

1. The hadith shows the virtue (fadheelah) of ‘Abdur-Rahman bin ‘Awf because he preferred to work with his own hands instead of accepting gifts and donations from Sa’ad bin ar-Rabee’ al-Ansaari.
2. The hadith shows the virtue (fadheelah) of anyone who prefers trade over accepting gifts and donations to acquire wealth.
3. The hadith shows the high level of commitment and sacrifice of the Ansar (the Helpers) to help the Muhajireen (the Migrants) when they arrived in Madinah while they lost all their wealth as they had to leave behind their houses and families.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the reason why Imam al-Bukhari has brought this hadith was to show the permissibility and the virtue of engaging oneself in trade and work over other means of acquiring wealth.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that not only the permissibility of trade but also the permissibility of trading in non-Muslim markets and other rulings can be derived from the hadith of 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Awf regarding the bond of brotherhood.

And Allah knows best.

References

al-Qayrawani, 'i. (n.d.). *The Risala: A Treaty on Maliki Fiqh*. Beirut: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah.

al-Quduri, I. A.-H. (2010). *Mukhtasar al-Quduri*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd.

Uthmani, M. T. (2015). *Fiqh al-Buyoo' 'alaa al-Madhaahib al-Arba'ah*. Karachi: Quranic Studies Publishers.