

Salaatut-Tasbeeh [The Prayer of Glorification] - Part Two

Article taken and slightly adapted from: thealbaani.site

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

A Discussion About the Actual Textual Wording [Matn] of the Hadeeth

Questioner: We were going over and studying the hadeeth about the Salaatut-Tasbeeh and then some of the students of knowledge, it was as though they were saying that there is something wrong with this hadeeth, when we were going over its chain of narration [isnaad] they were saying there is something wrong with the actual text of the hadeeth [matn], saying that the wording has been criticised because this prayer has not come in a recognised or correct form, so my question is: has anyone [actually] criticised the wording?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): ... some of them have spoken about it ... they said that this prayer differs in form from the well-known, established prayer, this is what they said.

Questioner: From those well-known in this field?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Our Imaam, Ibn Taymeeyah said it.

Questioner: Yes.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): And Ibn al-Jawzee before him.

Questioner: Yes, in [his book] al-Mowduu'aat.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): Yes, but their statements are rebutted because this defect [that they mention] is an intellectual, logical one which has no value when it comes to looking at the criticism of the wordings of hadeeths. Maybe you recall the form of the Eclipse prayer?

Questioner: Yes.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ): That it is two rak'ahs, and that in each rak'ah you bow twice, this prayer stands out against the regular prayers—so how does that harm it after it has been established in a hadeeth from the Prophet ﷺ, even though the Hanafees oppose the way it is performed like this? This criticism doesn't harm it in the slightest.

The critique of every person working on hadeeth and who takes up critically commenting on hadeeth must be based on the chain of narration [isnaad] not the actual wording [matn] itself.

But if the hadeeth is not authentically established in its chain of narration, it is then that the scholar, if he has something logical to say, turns to critiquing the wording too. And in such a case the hadeeth would be weak [da'eef] in both its chain of narration and the textual wording itself.

And beware of being fooled, you or anyone else, with what is mentioned in Muqaddimah Ibn as-Salaah and other books of hadeeth terminology, which say that a hadeeth might have an authentic chain of narration but have wording which is not.

Beware [and I'll say it again], beware of that—because in fact this unrestricted statement is not correct, and it must be patched up by interpreting it so that it becomes sound. And it is made sound by saying that it refers to someone who says that a [certain] chain of narration is authentic but who never took into account some of the conditions [required] of an authentic isnaad, like the fact that it should not be irregular [shaad] or have any hidden defects [i.e., the scholar missed the fact that the isnaad had some defects in it, in such a case Ibn as-Salaah's statement that a hadeeth might have an authentic chain of narration but have wording which is not would be sound], [and if a scholar did do that concerning a hadeeth] then he is excused because maybe the hidden defect ['illah] was not clear to him. Hidden defects in hadeeths are of two types: apparent and unclear, this second type is the one which evades many scholars let alone those less than them, so when one of them makes the statement that the isnaad of a hadeeth might be authentic [but its textual wording is not] it is explained in this way.

As for there being an authentic chain of narration which is free of any hidden defect ['illah] but then [saying] the text in the hadeeth itself is weak and contradicts something more authentic [munkar]: such a thing does not exist in the dunyaa.

When you understand this reality, then the hadeeth criticiser should, as I just said, turn to critiquing the hadeeth's isnaad, such that if the isnaad is found to be sound then so is the wording itself. Because if not then we will have opened the door for those people who claim that Islaam is only [what is in] the Qur'aan and that is it, [just] because they came across a lot of weak hadeeths.

Especially when they open the door to critiquing the wording of hadeeths which some of those who blindly-imitate the orientalist call, 'Inner/internal-critique,' they call the critiquing of the actual wording of the hadeeths, 'Inner/internal-critique.'

So when they went on and extended this criticism [to include more and more texts of hadeeths] only a tiny amount of hadeeths were safe from it, such that they even turned away from those too and just stuck with the Qur'aan—and thus left Islaam in the name of the Qur'aan.

In summary, the hadeeth about the Prayer of Tasbeeh does not fall below the level of being hasan, and in my opinion, when all of its paths of narration are taken into account, it is authentic [Saheeh].

And it is enough for the student of knowledge to know that one of the Imaams of the Salaf, 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubaarak who was the Shaykh of the Imaam of the Sunnah, i.e., Imaam Ahmad, used to pray this prayer which these people who criticise its wording want to call a shaad or munkar hadeeth. [A shaad hadeeth is one which is reported by a reliable narrator in contradiction to someone more reliable. A munkar hadeeth is one which is reported by a weak narrator which goes against another authentic hadeeth.]

A hadeeth like this which has been reported through many paths of narration, some of which are only slightly weak and [fall into that category of hadeeth] which can be used to give strength to chains of narration in addition to the fact that that Imaam acted on it— [after all of this] don't be deceived by what is reported in some statements of some of the Imaams in Islaam that its chain of narration is weak or munkar.

This is my answer.

[Al-Hudaa wan-Noor, 224.]