

Narrations on Leper and Leprosy: A Critical Study

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Leprosy is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium leprae*. Its simplest form primarily affects the skin, causing swollen, reddish patches. If the body's immune system fights off the disease, these patches disappear. However, if the immune system fails to cope with, it may aggravate into three forms: the lepromatous type, or the tuberculosis type, or the borderline type, which is somewhere in between the other two types.¹

With the lepromatous type, the skin on the face and around the nose "thickens" making the face appear swollen. If it goes untreated, the cartilage of the nose can be destroyed, and the nose will look like it has caved in. It can also affect the nerves that control the sweat glands and the sebaceous glands. This can cause hair loss, especially loss of eyebrows, drying skin cracks, open sores that can become infected.²

With the tuberculoid leprosy, the skin, cutaneous and peripheral nerves and the regional lymph node are affected. The skin lesions are usually single, well defined, hypopigmented, erythematous dry, scaly and indurated, with complete or partial loss of hair in that area. The patient may have numbness and tingling, blisters or ulcers on the hand and feet, weakness and wasting of the muscles, contractures and wrist and foot drop.³

Borderline leprosy is the most unstable part of the spectrum and patients usually downgrade towards lepromatous leprosy or upgrade towards tuberculoid leprosy. There are numerous skin lesions which may be macules, papules, or plaques and vary in size, shape and distribution. Annular lesions with a broad, irregular edge and sharply defined punched-out centre are characteristic of borderline leprosy.⁴

Skin disease of this kind had been known to man since times immemorial. Archaeological evidence shows signs of leprosy in Egyptian mummies dating back to the second century BC. In the Indian and Chinese medical writings a disease like leprosy was described as early as the fifth century BC. The Indian word *Kushtha* found in the Indian writings, the Hebrew word *Tazara'ath* in the Old Testament and the Greek word *lepra* in the New Testament signify skin disease of this kind.⁵

The disease has been named in the *ahādīth* of the Holy Prophet

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(SAW). The chapter *al-judhām* is included in the book of *al-Ṭibb* in the *Ṣiḥāḥ*. In the first section of the paper, the *aḥādīth* regarding the Prophet's eating with a leper would be discussed. Later part of the paper deals with the *aḥādīth* on fleeing from a leper and those on avoiding a constant stare on him. In the end a conclusion will be made.

The *Aḥādīth* on Eating With a Leper:

This *ḥadīth* has been reported by Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh via this chain: Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, Muḥammad b. Munkadir, Ḥabīb b. Shahīd, Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah and Yūnus b. Muḥammad. After Yūnus, the chain goes along various channels. The narration further proceeds via Abū Bakr b. Abī Shaybah, 'Usmān b. Abī Shaybah, Mujāhid b. Mūsā, Muḥammad b. Khalaf, 'Abbās b. Muḥammad, Aḥmad b. Sa'īd, Ibrāhīm b. Ya'qūb, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl, Aḥmad b. Khalīl and others.

Muḥammad b. Munkadir b. 'Abd Allāh, al-Taymī, al-Madīnī (d. 130 AH):

Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Mu'īn, and Ibn Ḥibbān consider him reliable. Ibn Sa'd mentions him in the fourth order of those who belong to Madīnah.⁶ Ibn Ḥajar calls him a reliable and worthy narrator.⁷

Ḥabīb b. Shahīd, Al-Azdī, Abū Muḥammad, al-Baṣrī (d. 145 AH):

He is *tābi'ī* and has met Abū Ṭufayl. Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Mu'īn and Nasā'ī call him reliable. Aḥmad considers him reliable and trustworthy. Abū Usāmah says that he has narrated one hundred *aḥādīth*.⁸ Ibn Ḥajar calls him firm and reliable.⁹ Dhahbī remarks that he is firm in *ḥadīth*.¹⁰

Al-Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah, Abū Mālik, al-Baṣrī:

He is the brother of Mubārak b. Faḍālah. He is the freed slave of Zayd b. Khaṭṭāb. Abū Ḥātim says that his *ḥadīth* should be written only. Ibn Mu'īn says about him that he is nothing.¹¹ Abū Dā'ūd says that there is weakness in his *ḥadīth*. Nasā'ī says that he is not strong in *ḥadīth*.¹²

Yūnus b. Muḥammad, al-Baghdādī (d. 280 AH):

Ya'qūb b. Shaybah calls him reliable twice. Ibn Mu'īn says him reliable.¹³ Abū Ḥātim considers him truthful.¹⁴ Ibn Ḥajar remarks that he is firm and reliable.¹⁵

All *aḥādīth* which mention the incidence of eating with a leper contain Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah. They are not authentic because of him. Tirmidhī, Abū Dā'ūd and Ibn Mājah narrate only one *ḥadīth* from him and that is, in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) ate with a leper. Ibn 'Adī also mentions the same *ḥadīth* and comments: "I have not seen his *ḥadīth* more deniable than this one."¹⁶

Imām Tirmidhī narrates this *ḥadīth* as:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ الْأَشَقْرِيُّ ، وَإِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ ، قَالَا : حَدَّثَنَا يُونُسُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ، حَدَّثَنَا الْمُفَضَّلُ بْنُ فَصَّالَةَ ، عَنْ حَبِيبِ بْنِ الشَّهِيدِ ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْمُنْكَدِرِ ، عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَخَذَ بِيَدِ مَجْدُومٍ فَأَدْخَلَهُ مَعَهُ فِي الْقَصْعَةِ ، ثُمَّ قَالَ : كُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ثِقَةً بِاللَّهِ وَتَوَكُّلاً عَلَيْهِ

Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh narrated that the Messenger of Allāh held the hand of a leper and allowed him to enter his hand in his bowl with him, and said: “Eat with the name of Allāh, attesting (the protection) of Allāh (against the contagion) and trusting in Him.”¹⁷

Imām Tirmidhī comments that this *ḥadīth* is *ḥasan gharīb*. It is not known except via Yūnus b. Muḥammad from Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah. He further narrates that this *ḥadīth* has also been narrated by Shu‘bah via Ḥabīb b. Shahīd, from Ibn Buraydah which states that Ibn ‘Umar had held the hand of a leper. He remarks that the *ḥadīth* of Shu‘bah is more authentic in his view. The words of Imām Tirmidhī signify that this *ḥadīth* is *mawqūf* on Ibn ‘Umar. And the *mawqūf ḥadīth* is more authentic as it skips Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah.

Abū Dā’ūd narrates this *ḥadīth* from ‘Usmān b. Abī Shaybah who narrates from Yūnus b. Muḥammad, Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah, Ḥabīb b. Shahīd, and Muḥammad b. Munkadir.¹⁸ Ibn Mājah narrates it from Abū Bakr and Mujāhid b. Mūsā and Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-‘Asaqlānī who narrate from Yūnus b. Muḥammad, Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah, Ḥabīb b. Shahīd, and Muḥammad b. Munkadir.¹⁹ Most narrations have the words *fa waḍa‘ahu ma‘ahu* (he placed his hand with him) instead of *fa adkhalahā ma‘ahu* (he entered his hand with him). Ṭabarī’s *ḥadīth* has the words *fa aq‘adahū ma‘ahu* (he made him sit with him)²⁰ and Al-Rāfa‘ī’s *ḥadīth* has *fa ajlasahu ma‘ahu* (he made him sit with him).²¹ And most narrations have the words *kul bismi Allāh* (eat with the name of Allāh). Abū Dā’ūd, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabarī and Rāfa‘ī have the word *kul* (eat) only and Ṭahāwī’s *ḥadīth* has the words *bismi Allāh* (in the name of Allāh) only.²²

The above discussion makes it clear that although the *aḥadīth* regarding eating with a leper are narrated by Tirmidhī, Abū Dā’ūd and Ibn Mājah but they all contain Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah who is not a reliable narrator. Therefore, this *ḥadīth* should not be presented to argue that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not keep himself away from a leper suggesting that there is no contagion. There are other authentic *aḥadīth* which demonstrate that he explicitly ordered to flee from a leper and sent a leper back avoiding contact with him.

The *Aḥadīth* on Fleeing From a Leper:

The *aḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to flee from a leper have been narrated by Abū Hurayrah.

The *Ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah:

This *ḥadīth* has been narrated via the following chains:

- a) ‘Affān, Salīm b. Ḥayyān, Sa‘īd b. Mīnā’, Abū Hurayrah
- b) Wakī‘, Nahās, Shaykh of Makkah, Abū Hurayrah
- c) Abu Zinād, Al-A‘raj, Abū Hurayrah

a) The *Ḥadīth* of ‘Affān:

The *ḥadīth* of ‘Affān has been narrated by Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

وَقَالَ عَفَّانُ: حَدَّثَنَا سَلِيمُ بْنُ حَيَّانَ، حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ مِينَاءَ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةَ، وَلَا هَامَةَ وَلَا صَفَرَ، وَفِرَّ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ

Abū Hurayrah narrated that Allāh’s Messenger said:

“There is no *‘adwā* (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allāh’s permission), nor is there any bad omen (for birds), nor is there any *hāmmah*, nor is there (any bad omen in the month of) *ṣafar*, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion.”²³

Sa‘īd b. Mīnā’, Abū’l Walīd, al-Madanī:

He is a narrator of all except Nasā’ī. He is a brother of Sulaymān b. Mīnā’.²⁴ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Mu‘īn, Nasā’ī call him reliable.²⁵ Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt*.²⁶ Ibn Ḥajar and Dhahbī also consider him reliable.²⁷

Salīm b. Ḥayyān, al-Hudhalī:

He heard from Sa‘īd b. Mīnā’ and ‘Amr b. Dīnār.²⁸ Abū Ḥātim says that there is no harm in him. Aḥmad and Ibn Mu‘īn call him reliable.²⁹ Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt*.³⁰ Dhahbī considers him truthful.³¹

‘Affān b. Muslim b. ‘Abd al-Ṣaffār, Abū ‘Usmān, al-Baṣrī:

Abū Ḥātim calls him agreed upon, firm and trustworthy.³² Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal says: “I have not seen anyone better than ‘Āffān in the *ḥadīth* of Shu‘bah,” although Sulayman b. Ḥarb says: “You say that ‘Āffān is authentic in the *ḥadīth* of Shu‘bah, by Allāh, even if he worked hard he could not recall one *ḥadīth* from Shu‘bah because he was a slow learner and of poor memory.”³³ Once ‘Āffān was mentioned before Ibn Madīnī, he remarked that how can he mention a person who if doubted a word would put it in five lines. Ibn Mu‘īn says about him: “We deny him”. On the other hand, Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān praises him and says that if ‘Āffān agrees with him, he does not care who disagrees.³⁴ Dhahbī concludes that he is among the scholars of Islam and of notable *imāms*. He is more retentive than Sulaymān and the like. The words of the fellow men against him need to be reconsidered.³⁵

This *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. . It is significant as it contains the injunction of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the leper, which appears to antagonize the *lā ‘adwā* part of the *ḥadīth*. It is obvious from this *ḥadīth*

that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) informed about the non-existence of contagion he did not mean to rule out the possibility of transmissible diseases. He commanded to run away from a leper because he knew that this disease could transmit to others, hence, the healthy people should stay away from lepers.

Baghawī also quotes the same *ḥadīth* in *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*.³⁶ Bayhaqī also narrates it via ‘Amr b. Marzūq in *Sunan al-Kubrā*.³⁷

b) The *Ḥadīth* of Wakī‘:

The *ḥadīth* of Wakī‘ has been given by Ibn Abī Shaybah, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Ṭabarī.³⁸

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ ، قَالَ : حَدَّثَنَا وَكَيْعٌ ، عَنِ النَّهَّاسِ بْنِ قَهْمٍ ، عَنْ شَيْخٍ ، قَالَ : سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ ، يَقُولُ :
قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : فِرَّ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ فِرَارَكَ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been reported to have said:

“Run away from a leper like you're running away from a lion.”³⁹

This *ḥadīth* of Wakī‘ is not authentic because of the ignorance in the name of a narrator mentioned as “Shaykh of Makkah”. The narrator Al-Nahās b. Qahm is also not authentic.

Al Nahās b. Qahm, Al- Qaysī, Abū al-Khaṭṭāb:

Aḥmad says that he is just a story teller. Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd, Ibn Mu‘īn and Nasā’ī consider him weak.⁴⁰ Abū Ḥātim says that he is nothing.⁴¹ Abū Dā‘ūd remarks that he is not reliable. Dārquṭnī considers him turbulent in *ḥadīth*.⁴² Ibn Ḥibbān’s words are conclusive: “He used to narrate *munkar aḥadīth* from well-known narrators and used to antagonize the authentic narrators. Therefore, to argue with his *ḥadīth* is not allowed.”⁴³

c) The *Ḥadīth* of Abū Zinād:

The *ḥadīth* of Abū Zinād is given by Imām Bukhārī in his *Tārīkh al-Kabīr* via Al-A‘raj, Abī Zinād, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh, and ‘Abd ’l Azīz b. Muḥammad as follows:

وَقَالَ لِي عَلِيُّ : حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ، أَخْبَرَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ عُثْمَانَ ، عَنْ أَبِي
الرِّزْدَادِ ، عَنِ الْأَعْرَجِ ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ، قَالَ : لَا عَدْوَى ، وَلَا هَامَ ، وَلَا
صَفَرَ ، وَفِرَّ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ كَمَا تَفِرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ

“There is no contagious disease, nor is there any bad omen (for birds), nor is there any *hāmmah*, nor is there *ṣafar*, and run away from a leper as you run away from a lion.”⁴⁴

Al-A‘raj (d. 117 AH):

He is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Harmaz. Abū Dā‘ūd. Abū Zar‘ah calls him reliable.⁴⁵ Ibn Madīnī says that the disciples of Abū Hurayrah are six; then he mentions A‘raj among them. Ibn Sa‘d considers him reliable and

one who narrates many *aḥadīth*. ‘Ajalī calls him reliable.⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥajar considers him reliable and firm.⁴⁷

Abū Zinād:

His name is ‘Abd Allāh b. Dhakwān, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, al-Qurashī, al-Madanī. Ibn Mu‘īn and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal consider him reliable. Ibn Abī Maryam calls him a proof. Sufyān used to name him the ruler of the faithful in *ḥadīth*. Bukhārī considers the chain: Abū Zinād, A‘raj and Abū Hurayrah as one of the most *ṣaḥīḥ* chains. Abū Ḥātim remarks about him that he is a jurist, a reliable narrator and a man of *sunnah*. He is among those with whom an argument can be put up when *thiqah* narrators narrate from him.⁴⁸

Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. ‘Usmān (d. 145 AH):

He is a son of Fātimah bint Ḥusayn. He was known as “al-Dībāj.” Nasā’ī considers him reliable while at another instance, says that he is not strong in *ḥadīth*.⁴⁹ ‘Ajalī says him reliable.⁵⁰ Ibn Ḥajar considers him truthful.⁵¹ Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt* and comments that in his *aḥadīth* from Abū Zinād some are *munkar*.⁵² He was killed by Abū Ja‘far Maṣūm in 145 A.H.

‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Muḥammad, al-Darāwardī, Abū Muḥammad:

Abū Ḥātim calls him a scholar of *ḥadīth*. Ibn Mu‘īn says that there is no harm in him. Imām Mālik b. Anas considers him reliable.⁵³ Dhahbī declares him truthful and comments that he is more retentive than others.⁵⁴ Abū Zur‘ah says that he had a poor memory. When he used to narrate something from his memory, he committed mistakes. Because of his flawed memory Nasā’ī thinks that he is not strong in *ḥadīth*. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal concludes about him that what he used to narrate from his book that is *ṣaḥīḥ* and what he narrated from the books of people that contained errors. Sometimes he used to change the *ḥadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar and narrate it from ‘Ubayd al-Allāh b. ‘Umar by mistake.⁵⁵

The *ḥadīth* of Abū Zinād is *ṣaḥīḥ*. This *ḥadīth* is mentioned by Bayhaqī in his *Sunan*. It has the words *wattaqu’l majdhūma kamā yattaqī’l asada*.⁵⁶

These *aḥadīth* indicate that the contagiousness of diseases is an established phenomenon in the view of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). His negation of contagion excludes transmissible diseases like leprosy. If the Prophet (peace be upon him) had meant that no disease is transmissible then he should not have warned his companions against leprosy.

More light is cast on the need of avoiding mixing with a leper by the action of the Prophet (peace be upon him). He has been reported to have

sent a leper back and took his allegiance from a distance without touching him. The *ḥadīth* runs in *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim as:

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ يَحْيَى، أَخْبَرَنَا هُشَيْمٌ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا شَرِيكُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، وَهَشِيمُ بْنُ بَشِيرٍ، عَنْ يَعْلَى بْنِ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ الشَّرِيدِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ كَانَ فِي وَفْدِ ثَقِيفٍ رَجُلٌ مَجْدُومٌ فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّا قَدْ بَايَعْنَاكَ فَأَرْجِعْ

‘Amr b. Sharīd reported on the authority of his father that there was in the delegation of Thaqīf a leper. Allāh's Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a message to him: We have accepted your allegiance, so you may go.⁵⁷

This *ḥadīth* has been narrated via the chain: Abū bakr b. Abī Shaybah, Sharīk b. ‘Abd Allāh, Hushaym b. Bashīr, Ya‘lā b. ‘Atā’, ‘Amr b. Sharīd, and his father.

Abū Bakr b. Abī Shaybah (d. 235 AH):

His name is ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī.⁵⁸ Abū Ḥātim calls him reliable. Aḥmad says that he is truthful and dearer to him than ‘Uthmān.⁵⁹ Falās says that he has not seen anyone more retentive than him.⁶⁰ Dhahbī remarks that he is *ḥāfiẓ*, *al-kabīr*, *al-ḥujjah*. Ibn Ḥajar calls him reliable and *ḥāfiẓ*.⁶¹

Sharīk b. ‘Abd Allāh:

His full name is Sharīk b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Sharīk al-Nakh‘ī Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Kūfī al-Qāḍī. He has seen the regin of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz.⁶² Yaḥyā b. Mu‘īn says : Sharīk is reliable and he is dearer to me than Abū al-Aḥwaṣ and Jarīr. They were not equal to him. He used to narrate from narrators Sufyān did not narrate. He further adds that Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd did not consider Sharīk anything, whereas he is reliable except that he commits mistakes.⁶³ Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd did not narrate from him whereas ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī did.⁶⁴ Ibn Mubārak remarks that Sharīk is more knowledgeable of the *ḥadīth* of Kūfiyyīn than Sufyān al-Thawrī. ‘Alī b. Madīnī says that Sharīk is more learned than Isrā’īl but Isrā’īl has lesser mistakes than him.⁶⁵ Imām Nasā’ī says that there is no harm in him.⁶⁶

Hushaym b. Bashīr:

His full name is Hushaym b. Bashīr b. al-Qāsim b. Dinār al-Salamī Abū Mu‘āwiyah b. Abī Khāzim al-Wāṣṭī.⁶⁷ He used to narrate from Zuhri, al-A‘mash, Ḥamīd al-Ṭawīl, ‘Alī b. Zayd and Jābir al-Ja‘fī whereas Shu‘bah, Ibn Mubārak, Jarīr, Abū Nu‘aym, Ibn ‘Awn, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī used to narrate from him.⁶⁸ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī remarks that he has not seen anyone more retentive than Hushaym. His memory is more steadfast than the memory of Abū ‘Awanah. He is more learned of the *ḥadīth* of Sayyār, Manṣūr, Yūnus and

Husayn.⁶⁹ Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal says that no one is more authentic than Hushaym in hearing (*Sam'*) from Husayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. Abū Ḥātim considers him reliable and Abū Zur'ah holds him more retentive than Jarīr.⁷⁰

Ya'lā b. 'Atā':

Ya'lā b. 'Atā' al-'Amirī al-Qurashī al-Ṭā'ifī. He became settled in Wāsiṭ. It is said that he was a freed slave of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. Al-Āṣ.⁷¹ Khalīfah b. Khayyāt has mentioned him in the second order of the *tabi'in* of Ṭā'if in his *Ṭabaqāt*.⁷² Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal remarks that Ya'lā b. 'Atā' has been praised. Yaḥya b. Mu'in considers him reliable. Abū Ḥātim calls him *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*.⁷³ Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in his *al-Thiqāt*.⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥajar calls him reliable.⁷⁵

'Amr b. Sharīd:

He is a narrator of the authors of *Ṣiḥāḥ Sittah*. His father's name is Al-Sharīd b. Suwayd al-Thaqafī. He used to narrate from Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās, Miswar b. Makhramah, Abu Rāfi' and from his father.⁷⁶ Tirmidhī has narrated from him in *Al-Shamā'il*.⁷⁷ 'Ajalī calls him *hijāzī*, *tābi'ī* and *thiqah*. And he mentions that 'Amr's father was a companion of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).⁷⁸ Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in his *Al-Thiqāt*.⁷⁹ Ibn Ḥajar considers him reliable in *Taqrīb*.⁸⁰

As the father of 'Amr b. Sharīd is a companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him) he is also *thiqah*. There is no doubt in the authenticity of this *ḥadīth*.

These *aḥadīth* clearly indicate that the preferred action of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was to avoid contact with lepers. Now the question arises why the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to run away from a leper? This is because this disease is transmitted via airborne droplets. The contacts have a high risk of inhaling the organism and getting the disease. Untreated patients with leprosy discharge abundant organisms from their nasal mucosa into the environment. The organism is then inhaled; it multiplied on the inferior turbinate and has a brief bacteremic phase before binding to and entering Schwann cells and macrophages.⁸¹

The *Aḥadīth* on Avoiding a Constant Stare on Lepers:

There are *aḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade to extend a constant stare towards lepers. These *aḥadīth* have been narrated by Ibn 'Abbas, Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, and Mu'ādh b. Jabal.

1. The *Ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās:

This is given by Ibn Mājah via Ibn Abī Zinād and 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'īd.

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ نَافِعٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي الزِّنَادِ، ح وَحَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي
الْخَصِيبِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا وَكَيْعٌ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ بْنِ أَبِي هِنْدٍ، جَمِيعًا عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو
بْنِ عُثْمَانَ، عَنْ أُمِّهِ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ الْحُسَيْنِ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تُدِيمُوا
التَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمَجْدُومِينَ

Ibn ‘Abbās narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him):

“Don’t stare the lepers constantly.”⁸²

The narration of Ibn Abī Zinād is also given by Bukhārī in his *Tārīk al-Awṣaṭ*⁸³ and that of ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd is given by Ibn Abī Shaybah and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and al-Mizzī.⁸⁴

Ibn Abī Zinād (d. 174 AH):

His name is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Abū Muḥammad, Al-Madānī.⁸⁵ Aḥmad says him turbulent in *ḥadīth*. Ibn Mu‘īn remarks about him he is weak and he is nothing. Ibn Mu‘īn, Nasā’ī and Abū Ḥātim say that he is not among those whose *ḥadīth* is used for an argument.⁸⁶ However, Ya‘qūb b. Shaybah says that he is reliable and truthful, but there is a weakness in his *ḥadīth*. Ibn Madīnī gives conclusive remarks about him that what he has narrated in Madīnah is *ṣaḥīḥ* and what he has narrated in Baghdād, the people of Baghdād corrupted it.⁸⁷ Ibn Ḥajar also declares that he is truthful and his memory deteriorated when he came to Baghdād.⁸⁸ Hence, the weakness in his narration comes from this particular aspect, so he should not be rejected exclusively. Bukhārī has used his narration as *shāhid* in his *ṣaḥīḥ*. He has taken his narration in his treatise *raf‘ al-yadayn fī ‘l-ṣalāt* and in *Kitāb al-Adab*. Muslim takes his narration in the preface of his *ṣaḥīḥ*.⁸⁹

‘Abd Allāh b. Nāfi‘, al-Sā’igh, Abū Muḥammad, al-Makhzūmī (d. 206 AH):

Ibn Mu‘īn considers him reliable. Abū Zur‘ah and Nasā’ī say that there is no harm in him.⁹⁰ Ibn Ḥibbān says that his written *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ* but when he narrates from memory he errs.⁹¹ Bukhārī says that there is some shortcoming in his memory. His memory is known and denied, but his written *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*.⁹²

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm, Abū Sa‘īd, al-Damishqī:

Abū Sa‘īd b. Yūnus says that he is firm and reliable. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal praises him and tells him sane. Nasā’ī says that he is safe and there is no harm in him. Abū Dā’ūd calls him proof and in his time there was no one like him in Damishq. Ibn ‘Adī says that he is more authentic than Ḥarmalah b. Yaḥyā.⁹³

‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘īd, al-Farārī, Abī Bakr, al-Madanī (d. 144 AH):

Aḥmad and Ibn Mu‘īn consider him reliable. Abū Ḥātim says him weak in *ḥadīth*.⁹⁴ Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd says that he has been praised by some and denied by others. Nasā’ī remarks that there is no harm in him.⁹⁵ Ibn Ḥajar and Dhahbī declare him truthful.⁹⁶

‘Alī b. Abī al-Khaṣīb (d. 258):

He is ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Al-Khaṣīb. Abū Ḥātim says that he is truthful. Ibn Ḥibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt* and he says that sometimes he commits errors.⁹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar declares him truthful.⁹⁸

The *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās is *Ḥasan*.

2. The *Ḥadīth* of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī:

This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by al-Haythamī in *al-Maqsad al-‘Ulā*.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الرَّبِيعِ الزُّهْرَائِيُّ ، حَدَّثَنَا فَرْجُ بْنُ فَصَّالَةَ ، عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَامِرٍ ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ عُمَانَ ، عَنْ أُمِّهِ فَاطِمَةَ بِنْتِ الْحُسَيْنِ ، عَنْ أَبِيهَا الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " لَا تُدِيمُوا النَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمَجْدُومِينَ ، وَإِذَا كَلَّمْتُمُوهُمْ فَلْيَكُنْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ قَيْدٌ رَمَحٌ

Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him):

“Don’t stare the leper constantly and when you talk to them there should be a distance of a spear between you and them.”⁹⁹

Ṭabrānī also gives this *ḥadīth* via this chain.¹⁰⁰ The *ḥadīth* of Ṭabrānī does not have the latter part of it. The *ḥadīth* of Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī is not authentic because of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amir and Faraj b. Faḍālah.

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amir, Al-Aslamī, Abū ‘Amir:

Aḥmad, Abū Zur‘ah, Abū Ḥātim and Nasā’ī consider him weak.¹⁰¹ Ibn Madīnī says him weak twice.¹⁰² Dhahbī and Ibn Ḥajar call him weak.¹⁰³

Faraj b. Faḍālah, Abū Faḍālah, al-Tanūkhī (d. 176 AH):

Aḥmad says that when he narrates from Syrians, he is reliable, but he has also narrated *munkar aḥadīth* from *thiqah* narrators. Abū Ḥātim says that his *ḥadīth* should be written but not presented for argument.¹⁰⁴ Nasā’ī and Dārquṭnī consider him weak. Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd calls him the one whose *ḥadīth* has been denied.¹⁰⁵

Ibn Mu‘īn has both words about him. At one instance, he calls him weak in *ḥadīth* and at another he says that there is no harm in him.¹⁰⁶ Ibn Madīnī says that he stands in the middle of the terms “he is not strong” and “weak”. He did not use to narrate from him.¹⁰⁷ Ibn Ḥajar declares conclusively that he is weak.¹⁰⁸

Hence, the *ḥadīth* is not authentic.

3. The *Ḥadīth* of Mu‘ādh b. Jabal:

The *ḥadīth* of Mu‘ādh b. Jabal has been narrated by Ṭabrānī:

خَدَّتْنَا الْوَلِيدُ ، نَا سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ ، ثَنَا سَعْدَانُ بْنُ يَحْيَى ، عَنْ عَبْدِ الْحَمِيدِ بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ ، عَنْ صَالِحِ
 بْنِ أَبِي عَرِيبٍ ، عَنْ كَثِيرِ بْنِ مُرَّةَ ، عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ ، قَالَ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ : لَا
 تُدَيْمُوا النَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمَجْدُومِينَ

Mu‘adh b. Jabal narrated that the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “Don’t stare the lepers constantly.”¹⁰⁹

Kathīr b. Murrah, al-Haḍramī, Abū Shajarah:

Nasā’ī says about him that there is no harm in him. Ibn Kharāsh says him truthful. Ibn Sa‘d considers him reliable.¹¹⁰ Aḥmad calls him reliable.¹¹¹ Bukhārī narrates from him in his treatise “*Al-qirā’at khalf al-imām*”. Others also narrate from him except Muslim.¹¹² Dhahbī calls him reliable.¹¹³ Ibn Ḥajar also declares him reliable.¹¹⁴

Ṣāliḥ b. Abī ‘Arīb:

The name of Abī ‘Arīb is Qulayb. Ibn Ḥibbān has him in *al-Thiqāt*.¹¹⁵ Ibn Ḥajar calls him acceptable.¹¹⁶ Dhahbī calls him reliable.¹¹⁷ Abū Dā’ūd, Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah narrate from him.

‘Abd’l Ḥamīd b. Ja‘far:

Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd and Sufyān Thawrī consider him weak. Aḥmad and Ibn Mu‘īn think that there is no harm in him and declare him reliable. Nasā’ī says that there is no harm in him. Abū Ḥātim thinks that he is truthful.¹¹⁸

Sa‘dān b. Yaḥyā:

He is Sa‘īd b. Yaḥyā b. Ṣāliḥ, al-Lakhamī, Abū Yaḥyā al-Kūfī. Abū Ḥātim says that he is truthful. Ibn Ḥibbān calls him safe and reliable and remarks that his *ḥadīth* is upright. Bukhārī, Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah take his narration.¹¹⁹

Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Isā b. Maymūn, Al-Tamīmī, Abū Ayyūb, Al-Damishqī (d. 233 AH):

Ibn Mu‘īn says that there is no harm in him. Nasā’ī calls him truthful. Abū Dā’ūd says him reliable and remarks that he did err as others can err.¹²⁰ Ibn Ḥibbān says that his *ḥadīth* is known when he narrates from *al-Thiqāt*.¹²¹ Abū Ḥātim says him truthful and remarks that his *ḥadīth* is upright, but he did narrate from unknown and non-authentic narrators.¹²² Dhahbī concludes that he is reliable but he has narrations from weak narrators.¹²³

The *ḥadīth* of Mu‘adh is *ḥasan*.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. That the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was aware of the contagious nature of leprosy. He knew that the disease is contagious

and spreads via airborne droplets through close contacts. That's why, he commanded to run away from a leper as one runs from a lion. This command has been narrated by Abū Hurayrah from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) as mentioned by *Imām* Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

2. The *ḥadīth* of Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh which mentions that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) ate his meal with a leper is not authentic because all of its chains of narrators contain a weak narrator Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah. Abū Ḥātim, Abū Dā'ūd, Ibn Mu'īn and *Imām* Nasā'ī have reservations about him. *Shaykhayn* did not narrate his *ḥadīth*. *Imām* Tirmidhī, Abū Dā'ūd, and Ibn Mājah also tend to avoid his *ḥadīth* except this single narration. Although *Imām* Tirmidhī narrates this *ḥadīth* but he clarifies that this *ḥadīth* has also been narrated from Shu'bah via Ḥabīb b. Shahīd which skips Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah. This *ḥadīth* is more authentic than the *ḥadīth* of Yūnus b. Muḥammad and states that it was Ibn 'Umar who ate with the leper, not the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). So, the fact is that the *marfū'* *ḥadīth* is not reliable and the more reliable one is *mawqūf* on Ibn 'Umar. Based on the *ḥadīth*, *lā 'adwā* (there is no contagion), he thought that this is a generalized statement and leprosy is among those diseases which do not transmit to others. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mean this. He meant that the communicable diseases like leprosy were excluded from his saying *lā 'adwā*.
3. The *ḥadīth* of 'Amr b. Sharīd narrated by *Imām* Muslim clearly mentions that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) did not allow a leper to come and touch him. He accepted his oath of allegiance from a distance and sent him back. The Prophet's action of this kind supports the view of communicability of diseases. This *ḥadīth* proves that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) used to avoid contact with lepers.
4. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), in order to put more stress on the contagiousness of leprosy, commanded his followers to avoid staring the lepers continuously. If one is asked to avoid this, he is being taught subconsciously that there is some danger in gaining proximity with lepers heedlessly. The *aḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās narrated by Ibn Mājah and that of Mu'ādh b. Jabal narrated by Ṭabrānī which state this command are *ḥasan* and support the concept of communicability of diseases.

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