120761 - Status of the hadith: “The most hated thing before Allah is divorce”

the question

What is the source of the phrase, “The most hated thing before Allah is divorce”? Is it a hadith (Prophetic narration) or what?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This hadith is narrated from the trustworthy narrator Mu’arrif ibn Wasil, from the trustworthy imam Muharib ibn Dathar (d.116 AH), who was one of the Tabi’een (Successors). But it came from Mu’arrif via two isnads (chains of transmission).

1 – A muttasil (connected) isnad from Mu’arrif ibn Wasil, from Muharib, from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

This was narrated by Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Wahabi, from Mu’arrif, like this with an isnad, as recorded by Abu Dawood (2178), and via al-Bayhaqi in al-Sunan al-Kubra (7/322), and Ibn ‘Adiy in al-Kamil (6/2453).

2 – A mursal isnad (stops at the Successor) from Mu’arrif ibn Wasil, from Muharib ibn Dathar, from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), without any mention of Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

It was narrated thus by Ahmad ibn Yoonus, Yahya ibn Bakeer and Wakee’ ibn al-Jarrah.

As recorded by Abu Dawood in al-Sunan (2177), al-Bayhaqi in al-Sunan al-Kubra (7/322), Ibn Abi Shaybah in al-Musannaf (5/253); it was also mentioned by al-Sakhawi in al-Maqasid al-Hasanah

(11), and al-Daraqutni in al-‘Ilal (13/225).

When the muhaddithoon (scholars of hadith) saw that those who narrated it via a mursal isnad were more trustworthy and more numerous than those who narrated via a muttasil (connected) isnad, they thought it more likely to be mursal, and mursal is one of the types of da’eef (weak) hadiths. They stated that those who narrated it with a muttasil isnad from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) were either mistaken or confused.

Ibn Abi Hatim said:

My father said: It is only Muharib, from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Mursal."(Al-‘Ilal 1/431).

Al-Daraqutni (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is more likely to be mursal."(Al-‘Ilal 13/225).

Al-Bayhaqi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is mursal. According to the report of Ibn Abi Shaybah from ‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) it is mawsool (connected)."(Al-Sunan al-Kubra 7/322).

Ibn ‘Abd al-Hadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said of it being mursal: it is more likely the case."(Al-Muharrir fi’l-Hadith (1/567).

In al-Maqasid al-Hasanah (p. 11), al-Sakhari thought is more likely to be mursal. End quote.

Al-Shaykh Ahmad Shakir (may Allah have mercy on him) said in ‘Umdat al-Tafseer (1/583): There is some doubt as to whether it is saheeh. End quote.

Al-Albani said in Irwa’ al-Ghaleel (2040): To sum up: the hadith was narrated from Mu’arrif ibn Wasil by four trustworthy narrators: Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Wahibi, Ahmad ibn Yoonus, Wakee’ ibn al-Jarrah and Yahya ibn Bakeer.

They differed concerning it. The first of them narrated it from Muharib ibn Dathar from Ibn ‘Umar

(may Allah be pleased with him) in a marfoo’ report (i.e., attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)).The others said it was narrated from him from Muharib in a mursal report.

The one who has knowledge of hadith will not doubt that the narration of these men is more valid, because they are more numerous and had better memories. They are all among those whose hadith the two Shaykhs (al-Bukhari and Muslim) narrated in al-Saheehayn. So it comes as no surprise that Ibn Abi Hatim narrated from his father that the hadith is most likely mursal, and that al-Daraqutni suggested the same in al-‘Ilal, and al-Bayhaqi did likewise, as al-Hafiz said in al-Talkhees (3/205). Al-Khattabi said something similar and al-Mundhiri followed him in Mukhtasar al-Sunan (3/92): The well known view is that it is mursal. End quote.

The hadith has a corroborating report from Mu’adh ibn Jabal (may Allah be pleased with him), which was narrated by al-Daraqutni in al-Sunan (4/35) and Ibn ‘Adiy in al-Kamil (2/694), with the wording: “Allah has not permitted anything more hated to Him than divorce.” And there are other versions, but its isnad is da’eef jiddan (very weak) and it is not valid to be quoted as evidence.

But although it is most likely that the hadith cannot be soundly attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), its meaning is sound.

Al-Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The most hated of permissible things to Allah is divorce.” This hadith is not saheeh, but its meaning is sound: Allah hates divorce, but He does not forbid it to His slaves, so as to make things easier for them. If there is a legitimate shar’ee (religiously legislated) or regular reason for divorce, then it is permissible and depends on the likely outcome of keeping this woman as one's wife. If keeping her will lead to something that is contrary to sharee’ah (Islamic law) which cannot be avoided except by divorcing her, such as if the woman is lacking in religious commitment or chastity, and the husband cannot set her straight, then in this case we say that it is better to divorce. But if there is no shar’ee reason or ordinary reason, then it is better not to divorce, rather in that case divorce is makrooh

(disliked)."(Liqa at al-bab il-Maftooh, no. 55, question no.3)

And Allah knows best.