

102508 - The hadeeth, “If you criticize people they will criticize you”

the question

Please tell us about the level of soundness of the hadeeth which is narrated from Abu'l-Darda' (may Allaah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “If you criticize people they will criticize you, and if you leave them alone they will leave you alone” and where we can find it. I was told that it is in Saheeh al-Bukhaari but I cannot find it.

Detailed answer

The hadeeth of Abu'l-Darda' mentioned here is not in Saheeh al-Bukhaari.

There are several versions of it, such as: “If you keep away from people they will keep away from you, and if you flee from them they will catch up with you, and if you leave them alone they will not leave you alone.” He said: What should I do? He said: “Give up your honour (i.e., do not retaliate if it is impugned), until the Day of your utmost need (the Day of Resurrection, when you can settle the score).” This is different from the version mentioned in the question.

This was narrated by Ibn 'Asaakir in Taareekh Dimashq (47/178, 179) via Faraj ibn Faddaalāh from Luqmaan ibn 'Aamir from Abu'l-Darda'.

Its isnaad is da'eef because Faraj ibn Faddaalāh is da'eef (weak) and the narration of Luqmaan ibn 'Aamir from Abu'l-Darda' is munqati' (interrupted).

See: Tahdheeb al-Tahdheeb (8/456) and al-Taqrīb (2/107).

Moreover there was some confusion about the isnaad because the same words with the same isnaad were narrated from Abu'l-Darda', stopping with him, and it was narrated as being from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

It was narrated by Ibn 'Asaakir in Tareekh Dimashq (47/178).

Then Ibn 'Asaakir narrated it (47/179) via Anas ibn 'Iyaad from Yahya ibn Sa'eed who said: Abu'l-Darda' said ... a mawqoof report (i.e., it stops with Abu'l-Darda' and does not go back to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)).

And its isnaad is munqati' (interrupted). Ibn al-Madeeni said of Yahya ibn Sa'eed al-Ansaari: I do not know whether he heard it from any Sahaabah other than Anas.

Al-Tahdheeb by Ibn Asaakir (11/223).

It was also narrated from the hadeeth of Abu Umaamah (may Allaah be pleased with him).

And it was narrated by al-Tabaraani in al-Mu'jam al-Kabeer (8/126) no. 7575 and by Abu 'Amr al-Daani in al-Sunan al-Waaridah fi'l-Fitan (219) and by Ibn 'Asaakir in Tareekh Dimashq (24/17).

Its isnaad is da'eef; it includes Baqiyah ibn al-Waleed who is mudallis, and Sadaqah ibn 'Abd-Allaah al-Sameen, who is da'eef.

See: Majma' al-Zawaa'id by al-Haythami (7/285).

It was also narrated by al-Daani and Ibn 'Asaakir with the wording: "If you speak to them they will speak to you." Ibn al-Atheer said: i.e., if you say something to them they will say something to you. And in another narration it says; "if you criticize them they will criticize you."

Al-Nihaayah (5/92).

But this report was proven to be the words of Abu Muslim al-Khawlaani, who said: The people were like leaves of a tree with no thorn among them, but today they are thorns with no leaves. If you revile them they will revile you and if you criticize them they will criticize you, and if you leave them alone they will leave you alone."

Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaybah in al-Musannaf (7/206); Ibn Abi 'Aasim in al-Zuhd (1/367); Abu Nu'aym in al-Hilyah (2/123) and Ibn 'Asaakir in Tareekh Dimashq (27/228).