

145797 - The story of Tha'labah who saw a woman doing ghusl, and died from fear of Allah

the question

I would like to find out whether a story I have heard is saheeh (sound, true). If it turns out to be da'eef (weak), is it still permissible to tell it? Because telling it has a good effect on people's hearts. When I tell it, do I have to do point out that it is da'eef? The story is as follows:

Tha'labah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmaan was an orphan boy of the Ansaar, who was no older than sixteen years. He often used to sit with the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who sent him on an errand one day to the markets of Madinah. He passed by one of the houses of the Ansaar, and looked at the door of the house, which was open. There was a curtain to the hamaam (bathroom) that was closed, but the wind came and lifted the curtain, behind which there was a woman who was doing ghusl. He glanced at her once or twice, then he realised what was happening and took the matter very seriously. He was afraid that verses would be revealed concerning him and that he would be described as one of the hypocrites because of this sin. He was afraid to go back to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), so he went out into the desert, and no one knew where he had gone. When three days had gone by, (the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) instructed some of the Sahaabah to go and look for him in Madinah, but they found no trace of him. He waited until forty days had passed, then he instructed them to look for him in the wilderness areas, because he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was worried about him. They went and looked for him, and they came to a group of Bedouin and described him to them. The Bedouin said: Perhaps you are looking for the weeping boy? They said: Where is he? They said: On the slopes of this mountain; he will come down at the end of the day. So they lay in wait for him then they caught him and carried him to his house, because he was exhausted from weeping so much. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) went to him, and Tha'labah asked him whether any verses had been revealed concerning him. He said: "No." Tha'labah became very sick, and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sat beside him until he died (may Allah be pleased with him).

Then they offered the funeral prayer for him and when they carried the bier to bury him, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was walking on tiptoe. ‘Umar asked him about that and he said: “Woe to you, O ‘Umar. By Allah, I cannot find any place to put my feet because so many of the angels are crowding around me.”

Detailed answer

The story mentioned in the question is a summary of a lengthy story that was narrated from Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

A young man of the Ansaar who was called Tha‘labah ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan became Muslim, and he used to serve the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He sent him on an errand, and he passed by the door of a man among the Ansaar, where he saw an Ansaari woman doing ghusl. He looked repeatedly at her, after which he became afraid that Revelation would come down to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), so he went out, fleeing, and came to a mountainous area between Makkah and Madinah, where he hid. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) missed him for forty days, and these were the days when they said his Lord had forsaken him and was displeased with him, then Jibreel (peace be upon him) came down to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Muhammad, your Lord conveys greetings of peace (salaam) to you, and says: The man from your ummah who has fled is in these mountains, seeking refuge with Me from My Fire. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “O ‘Umar! O Salmaan! Go and bring Tha‘labah ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan to me.” They set out through the streets of Madinah and were met by one of the shepherds of Madinah whose name was Dhufaafah. ‘Umar said to him: O Dhufaafah, do you know anything about a young man in these mountains? Dhufaafah said to him: Perhaps you are looking for the one who is fleeing from Hell? ‘Umar said to him: How do you know that he is fleeing from Hell? He said: Because in the middle of the night he came out to us from these mountains with his hand on his head, saying: Would that You took my soul as You took other souls and my body as You took other bodies, and not expose me on the Day of Judgement! ‘Umar said: He is the one we are looking for. So Dhufaafah set out with them, and in the middle of the night he came out to them from those

mountains, with his hand on his head, saying: Would that You took my soul as You took other souls and my body as You took other bodies, and not expose me on the Day of Judgement! ‘Umar went to him and embraced him and (Tha‘labah) said: I want to be safe from the Fire. ‘Umar said to him: I am ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab. He said: O ‘Umar, does the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) know of my sin? He said: All I know is that he remembered you yesterday, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) wept. Tha‘labah said: O ‘Umar, do not let me enter upon him except when he is praying, and Bilaal is saying Qad qaamat as-salaah (Prayer is about to begin – i.e., the iqaamah or call immediately preceding the prayer). ‘Umar said: I shall do that. Then they brought him to Madinah and arrived when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was praying Fajr. ‘Umar and Salmaan hastened to join the row (of worshippers), and no sooner did Tha‘labah hear the recitation of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), but he fell unconscious. When the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said the salaam (at the end of the prayer), he said: “O ‘Umar, O Salmaan, what happened to Tha‘labah ibn ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan?” They said: He is over there, O Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) stood up and said: “O Tha‘labah!” He said: Here I am, O Messenger of Allah. He looked at him and said: “What kept you away from me?” He said: My sin, O Messenger of Allah. He said: “Shall I not tell you about a verse that will expiate sins and errors?” He said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He said: “Say: Allaahumma aatina fi’d-dunya hasanah wa fi’l-aakhirati hasanah wa qinna ‘adhaab an-naar (O Allah! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire) (cf. al-Baqarah 2:201).” He said: My sin is too great, O Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Rather the word of Allah is greater.” Then the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) instructed him to go home. He fell sick for eight days, then Salmaan came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, do you want to visit Tha‘labah, because he is sick? The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Let us go to him.” When he entered upon him, the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) took hold of his head and placed it in his lap, but he pulled his head away from the lap of the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger of Allah (blessings

and peace of Allah be upon him) said to him: “Why did you pull your head away from my lap?” He said: Because it is full of sins. He said: “What do you feel?” He said: I feel something like the crawling of ants between my skin and my bones. He said: “What do you long for?” He said: The forgiveness of my Lord. Then Jibreel (peace be upon him) came down to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: Verily your Lord conveys greetings of salaam to you and says: If this slave of Mine were to meet Me with an earthful of sins, I would meet him with a similar measure of forgiveness. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Should I not tell him about that?” He said: Yes indeed. So the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told him about that, and he gave a shout then died. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave instructions that he should be washed and shrouded, and he offered the funeral prayer for him. Then the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) began walking on tiptoe and they said: O Messenger of Allah, why do we see you walking on tiptoe? He said: By the One Who sent me with the truth as a Prophet, I could not put my feet on the ground because of the many wings of the angels who came down to accompany his funeral procession.

Narrated by Abu Na’eem in Hilyat al-Awliya’, 9/329-331; and in Ma’rifat as-Sahaabah, 1/498, and via him by Ibn al-Jawzi in al-Mawdoo‘aat, 3/121

Al-Kharaa’iti narrated it in I’tilaal al-Quloob, 272; it was narrated via him by Ibn Qudaamah in at-Tawwaabeen, 105-108

It was narrated by Abu ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan as-Sulami in Tabqaat as-Soofiyyah, p. 51; and by Ibn Mandah in brief, as mentioned in al-Isaabah by Ibn Hajar, 1/405

All of them narrated it via Sulaym ibn Mansoor ibn ‘Ammar: my father told us, from al-Munkadir ibn Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir, from his father, from Jaabir ibn ‘Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him)... And he quoted the story.

But the report of al-Kharaa’iti does not refer to the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you” [ad-Duha 93:3].

This hadeeth is da'eef, and has a number of problems.

1.

None of the scholars stated in clear terms that Sulaym ibn Mansoor ibn 'Ammar was reliable.

Ibn Abi Haatim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: My father narrated from him, and I asked him about him. I said: The scholars of Baghdad criticise him. He said: Stop. I asked Ibn Abi'th-Thalj about him. I said to him: They are saying that he wrote down hadeeth from Ibn 'Aliyyah when he was young. He said: No; rather he was older than us. End quote.

Al-Jarh wa't-Ta'deel, 4/216

Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He was criticised but his hadeeth was not rejected. End quote.

Al-Mughni fi'd-Du'afa', 1/285

Some of the scholars stated that there was an investigation to see if there were any similar reports, but it was not thorough.

Ibn 'Iraq said:

There was an investigation to see if there were any other reports that were similar to that of Sulaym. That was narrated by 'Uthmaan ibn 'Umar ad-Darraaj in his book. He said: Abu Nasr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Hishaam at-Taaliqaani told us: my grandfather told me: Mansoor ibn 'Ammar told us. But I do not know who this at-Taaliqaani was. End quote.

Tanzeeh ash-Sharee'ah, 1/349

2.

The preacher Mansoor ibn 'Ammar.

He was extremely eloquent in preaching and was able to move people deeply. He preached in Baghdad, Syria and Egypt, and he became very famous.

Abu Haatim said: He is not qawiy (strong). Ibn ‘Adiyy said: His hadeeth is odd. Al-‘Uqayli said: He is influenced by Jahami views. Ad-Daraqutni said: He narrated from da‘eef narrators hadeeths that were not narrated by others.

See: Mizaan al-I‘tidaal, 4/187-188

3.

Al-Munkadir ibn Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir

Ibn ‘Uyaynah said: He was not a scholar of hadeeth. It was narrated from Yahya ibn Ma‘een: He is insignificant. On one occasion he said: There is nothing wrong with him. Abu Zar‘ah said: He is not qawiy (strong). Abu Haatim said: He was a man who did not understand hadeeth. He made many mistakes and did not memorise the hadeeth of his father. Al-Jawzjaani and an-Nasaa’i said: (He is) da‘eef . al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar summed up the ruling on him in at-Taqrīb, where he said: His hadeeth is not very strong.

See: Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb, 10/318

4.

There are also problems in the text of the hadeeth:

The verse referred to in the hadeeth – “your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you” [ad-Duha 93:3] – was revealed in Makkah before the Hijrah, but this hadeeth suggests that it was revealed in Madinah after the Hijrah. This is a serious contradiction.

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) was certain that it is fabricated, as he said:

This is a fabricated hadeeth that is very strange, and the fabricator exposed his fabrication when he said: that was when the verse “your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you” [ad-Duha 93:3] was revealed to him. But this verse was revealed to him in Makkah,

and there is no scholarly disagreement concerning that. Moreover there was no one among the Sahaabah who was called Dhufaafah. Its isnaad contains a number of da'eef narrators, including al-Munkadir, of whom Yahya said: He is insignificant, and Ibn Hibbaan said: He used to say things on the basis of his imagination. So his reports are not valid to be used as proof. Another (of these da'eef narrators) is Sulaym ibn Mansoor, who was criticized by some scholars of hadeeth. End quote.

Al-Mawdoo'aat, 3/123. As-Suyooti agreed with him in al-La'aali al-Masnoo'ah, 1/416

Ibn al-Atheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There are other issues in it apart from its isnaad. The verse "your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you" [ad-Duha 93:3] was revealed in the early days of Islam, in Makkah, and the hadeeth which proves that is saheeh. But this story supposedly took place after the Hijrah, and the two reports cannot be reconciled. End quote.

Asad al-Ghaabah, 1/385

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Ibn Mandah said – after narrating it in brief: Mansoor is the only one who narrated it. I [i.e., al-Haafiz ibn Hajar] say: There is some weakness in him, and his shaykh is weaker than him. The content of the hadeeth also indicates that it is weak, because the verse "your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased with you" [ad-Duha 93:3] was revealed before the Hijrah, and there is no difference of scholarly opinion concerning that. End quote.

Al-Isaabah, 1/405. It was narrated and confirmed by as-Sakhkhaawi in at-Tuhfah al-Lateefah fi Tareekh al-Madinah ash-Shareefah, 152.

To sum up: the isnaad of this story is a chain of weak narrators, and its text also shows that it is strange. So it is not permissible to narrate it or speak of it unless one explains that it is da'eef (weak) and that it has to do with heart-softening reports (raqaa'iq) which we cannot be less stringent about. That is because its isnaad is extremely weak, and those scholars who regarded

it as permissible to narrate da'eef hadeeths in the category of heart-softening reports stipulated that they should not be extremely weak and should not have any odd content.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [44877](#)

And Allah knows best.