

261224 - A specious argument about the death of the Messenger of Allah caused by poison and the severing of his aorta, and the verse {then We would surely have severed his aorta}

the question

Did the Messenger of Allah Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) die or was he martyred by the poison of the Jewish woman? If he was martyred by the poison of the Jewish woman, then how can we refute the specious argument about the way to reconcile between his hadith when he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told the Mother of the Believers ‘Aa’ishah about his feeling that his aorta had been severed, and the passage in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{If he [Muhammad] had falsely attributed something to Us,

We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta} [al-Haqqah 69:44-46]?

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Firstly:

The impact of the poison on the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)

A number of scholars have stated clearly that Allah, may He be exalted, honoured His Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with martyrdom; thus He granted him the combined

honours of prophethood, messengership and martyrdom, because his death resulted from the poison that he ate on the day of Khaybar.

It was narrated from Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that a Jewish woman brought some poisoned mutton to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he ate some of it. She was brought to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he asked her about that. She said: I wanted to kill you. He said: "Allah could never have enabled you to do that." Narrated by al-Bukhari (2474) and Muslim (2190).

It was narrated from 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to say, during the illness of which he died: "O 'Aa'ishah, I still feel the pain of the food that I ate in Khaybar, and now I feel that my aorta is being severed from that poison." Narrated by al-Bukhari (4165).

Ibn al-Qayyim said in *Zad al-Ma'ad* (4/111): He survived for three years after that, until his final sickness, when he said: "I still feel the pain of the mutton that I ate on the day of Khaybar, but now is the time for my aorta to be severed." Thus the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) died as a martyr. End quote.

It says in *Sharh az-Zarqani 'ala al-Mawahib al-Laduniyyah bi'l-Minah al-Muhammadiyyah* (12/94): It was a miracle that the poison did not affect him immediately, because they said: If he is a prophet, it will not harm him, and if he is just a king, we will be rid of him. When it did not affect him, they became certain that he was a prophet, and it was even said that the Jewish woman became Muslim. Then its effect came back three years later, so that he would be honoured with martyrdom. End quote.

Secondly:

What is meant by the verses in which Allah, may He be exalted, says:

{We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta}

With regard to the verses in Surat al-Haqqah, Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Verily, I swear by all that you can see

and by all that you cannot see

that verily it [the Quran] is a word conveyed by a noble Messenger,

Nor is it the words of a soothsayer. Little is it that you pay heed!

It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

If he [Muhammad] had falsely attributed something to Us,

We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta,

and not one of you could have protected him.

Verily, it [the Quran] is a reminder for the righteous.

Indeed, We know full well that among you are some who reject it,

and indeed it will be a cause of regret for the disbelievers [in the hereafter, because of their rejection of it].

Indeed, it is certain truth.

So glorify the name of your Lord, the Most Great} [al-Haqqah 69:38-52].

In this passage, Allah, may He be exalted, tells us that the Quran is a revelation from Him which His noble Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) conveyed to the people; and that it is not poetry or soothsaying, for Muhammad is neither a poet nor a soothsayer, and he does not falsely attribute anything to Allah, for if he were to attribute anything falsely to Allah – and he is far above doing such a thing, then Allah would hasten to punish him and wreak

vengeance upon him with force, then He would cause him to die, and no one would be able to ward that off from him.

Then Allah tells us that the Quran is true, and that it would be a cause of regret for the disbelievers who reject it.

These verses contain praise of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and proof of his honesty. So how could the ignorant and misguided regard it as a criticism of him?

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) spent twenty-three years conveying the word of Allah to the people. If he had fabricated it or falsely attributed it to Allah, Allah would have destroyed him, but that never happened and could never have happened.

This means that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) conveyed the surahs of the Quran to the people with all sincerity and truthfulness; he attributed dozens of hadiths qudsi to Allah and spoke thousands of hadiths, which he told the people were revelation from Allah. And Allah honoured him, gave him strength, helped him, supported him, increased the number of his companions, enabled him to conquer many lands, softened the people's hearts towards him and supported him with clear miracles. He did not cause him to die until after He had perfected His religion for him and completed His blessing upon him.

Would any rational person believe that Allah would not have hastened to punish him and wreak vengeance upon him, when He had issued a warning that He would do that if he were to attribute anything falsely to Him?

Can this mean anything except one thing: that he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was faithful and sincere in conveying the words of his Lord throughout those twenty-three years, and he did not attribute even one word falsely to Allah during this lengthy period? Hence Allah did not cause him to be doomed as He had warned if he were to attribute anything falsely to Him. So does it make sense to suggest that after he had conveyed the religion in its entirety, and had conveyed the Quran in its entirety, faithfully and with honesty and sincerity, that he would then attribute something falsely to Allah?

This is nothing but the words of crazy and foolish people!

Ibn ‘Ashur (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on this passage: What we may conclude from this passage is another proof that the Quran was sent down from Allah, as the scholars of ‘ilm al-kalam would say, after the first proof, which is based on the oath and affirmation, on the basis of what the religious texts indicate. This is an indication based on what is established in people’s minds, that Allah is immense in power and that He is all-knowing. Therefore He could not allow anyone to attribute to Him words that He did not say. In other words, if the Quran was not sent down from Us, and Muhammad claimed that it was sent down from Us, We would not have let him continue like that, and We would have hastened his doom.

The fact that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was not doomed indicates that he did not attribute the Quran falsely to Allah. The word {If [law]} implies that the matter mentioned in the conditional sentence did not happen ...

What is meant by {We would surely have seized him by the right hand} is: We would have seized him forcefully, that is, without delay.

In other words: We would have seized him immediately and severed his aorta. The mentioning of this detail indicates that this seizing would be very frightening; this is why Allah did not merely state something like “We would have destroyed him.”

The aorta is the blood vessel to which the heart is attached. It is the major artery that supplies the body with blood; hence it is called the “river of the body.” If it is severed, the individual will die.

Severing the aorta is one of the ways of slaughtering animals; thus the punishment of the one who falsely attributes anything to Allah is likened to the slaughter of a camel.

This verse indicates that Allah, may He be exalted, will not leave alone anyone who claims that Allah is revealing to him words to be conveyed to the people, and that He will hasten to destroy him.

As for the one who claims to be a prophet without claiming to receive revelation, Allah may destroy him after a while, as happened to al-Aswad al-'Ansi and Musaylimah al-Hanafi, the false prophets who appeared in Yemen and al-Yamamah respectively. They did not produce words that they attributed to Allah, may He be exalted, so their destruction came after a while. Similar to them are others who made false claims of prophethood after Islam came, such as Babak and Mazyar."(*At-Tahrir wa't-Tanwir* 29/144-148).

The brief response to this flimsy specious argument is as follows:

This verse is a warning of immediate punishment and doom, if the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) were to falsely attribute some words to Allah. But what is well-known and well-established is that Allah protected the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and encompassed him with His care throughout his mission and prophethood when he was conveying the message to the people from his Lord and saying: "My Lord said; my Lord instructed me; my Lord forbade me..." And Allah never once proved him to be lying; He never let him down and He never broke a promise to him, let alone sending down a punishment upon him or bringing about his death.

This is definitive proof that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never falsely attributed anything to Allah or lied about Him, for he was far above doing such a thing.

Moreover, if he had wanted to falsely attribute something to Allah or lie about Him –and he was far above doing such a thing –, the easiest, and most likely, thing for him to do would be to omit this verse, or conceal it and not convey it, if it was from Allah.

Or at least he would not have said anything that would prove him guilty or show him to be a liar. What need would there be for one who falsely claims to be a prophet, brings such a scripture and claims that it is from Allah to come up with such a verse, in which he threatens himself and proves himself to be guilty? Then how are they deluded?

Glory be to the One Who turns the lies of the liars and the disbelief of the disbelievers into proof of the truthfulness of the final Prophet and the leader of the Messengers.

If he had been fabricating lies, he would not have said when he was dying: “Now is the time for my aorta to be severed”; he would not have referred to that at all.

Furthermore, regarding this flimsy specious argument, we say: it is a grievous criticism of Allah, may He be exalted, to suggest that a man came and claimed to be a prophet, and he falsely attributed words and lies to Him, then for twenty-three years he spread that message, and his Lord supported him, helped him, protected him, strengthened him and granted him victory during that time by means of clear miracles that no human could ever do. This is impossible, and it is the most grievous criticism of Allah.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah’s way of dealing with His sincere prophets and the believers who follow them, and His way of dealing with those who lie about Allah is:

He supports the former and grants them an honourable renown among the later nations [26:84]; and He wreaks vengeance upon the latter, and subjects them to His curse.

From this we know that Allah would not support a liar with miracles that no one could challenge, because that would lead to a great deal of mischief and harm to people, which His mercy cannot allow, and it would lead to grave consequences, which His wisdom cannot allow and are contrary to the consistent way in which He deals with such matters, which reflects His will. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{If he [Muhammad] had falsely attributed something to Us,

We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta,

and not one of you could have protected him }[al-Haqqah 69:44-47].

And He says:

{Had We not kept you steadfast, you would nearly have inclined towards them a little.

In that case, We would have made you taste a double punishment in this life, and a double punishment after death. Then you would have found none to help you against Us} [al-Isra' 17:74-75].

End quote from *Sharh al-Isfahaniyyah* (214-216).

He also said:

The Quran indicates that Allah, may He be glorified, does not support anyone who tells lies about Him; rather He will inevitably expose his lies and wreak vengeance upon him. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{If he [Muhammad] had falsely attributed something to Us,

We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta,

and not one of you could have protected him} [al-Haqqah 69:44-47].

He says this after saying:

{Verily, I swear by all that you can see

and by all that you cannot see

that verily it [the Quran] is a word conveyed by a noble Messenger,

Nor is it the words of a soothsayer. Little is it that you pay heed!

It is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds} [al-Haqqah 69:38-42].

Then He says:

{If he [Muhammad] had falsely attributed something to Us,

We would surely have seized him by the right hand,

then We would surely have severed his aorta,

and not one of you could have protected him} [al-Haqqah 69:44-47].

This verse refers to one who falsely attributes a few things to Allah, so how about one who falsely attributes the entire message to Him?!

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Or do they say: He has fabricated lies against Allah?} Then He says: {Allah eliminates falsehood and establishes the truth by His words} [ash-Shura 42:24].

The words {And Allah eliminates falsehood} are a continuation of the sentence, and are not connected to the conditional phrase {But if Allah so willed, He could seal up your heart } [which appears between these two phrases], because He then says: {and establishes the truth}. The grammatical structure of this phrase indicates that it is connected to and follows on from the phrase {And Allah eliminates falsehood}.

Thus His elimination of falsehood and establishing of truth is a statement informing us that He will inevitably do that. He tells us that He will inevitably eliminate falsehood and establish the truth by His words. As He sent down His words, this indicates that Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is a true prophet, because these words are a sign to support him, by means of which Allah made truth distinct from falsehood...

Moreover, Allah vindicates the truth by His words, even though the evildoers hate it.

Furthermore, Allah shows the truth to be true and shows falsehood to be false by His words, by means of which He creates things. Thus He makes truth manifest by virtue of signs and by virtue of the support He gives to the people of truth, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Our word has already been given to Our slaves, the Messengers,

that it is surely they who will be helped [against their enemies]

And it is surely Our troops who will be the victors} [as-Saffat 37:171-173]

{The word of your Lord is perfect in truth and justice} [al-An'am 6:115]...

By His justice, Allah honours the one who says true things about Him and conveys His message, as He honours him and supports him, and He dishonours the one who attributes things falsely to Him, by humiliating him in a manner that is appropriate. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{As for those who took the calf for worship, wrath from their Lord and disgrace will indeed overtake them in this world; thus do We requite those who invent falsehood} [al-A'raf 7:152].

Abu Qilabah said: This applies to everyone who fabricates lies until the Day of Judgement...

In order to use divine wisdom as evidence, we must first know what divine wisdom is.

Then we may learn that part of His wisdom is that Allah does not regard as equal the truthful one, whom He supports with signs to confirm his truthfulness, and by granting him victory, raising him in status and causing him to prevail, and granting him an honourable renown among the later nations,

and the one who tells lies against Him, whose lies He exposes, causing him to fail and humiliating him, and causing his end to be a bad end, and making him infamous and causing him to have a bad reputation, as indeed happened.

This is how things are in reality, but our aim here is to explain that what Allah caused to happen was bound to happen, according to His wisdom, for it is not possible that He would cause the opposite of that to happen. Hence this is proof that is based on the idea that what Allah causes to happen was bound to happen, and the opposite of that could not have happened. This is based on the fact that He is most wise and that His wisdom dictates that He should show signs to prove the truthfulness of His prophets and support them, and He should show signs of the liars and humiliate them.

See: *an-Nubuwwat* by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (2/897 ff).

The conclusion of all that is:

There is no one who claims to be a prophet and tells lies against Allah, then Allah gives him respite for such a long time and supports him and causes him to prevail over people to such a great extent, then causes him to die happy and content.

Moreover, the miracle of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is still extant... Where are the liars and fabricators?

If this Quran was the words of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), the eloquent Arabs would not fail to produce something like it, either in the past or in modern times, so let these stubborn people rise to the challenge once more and produce a surah like the surahs of the Quran!

The one who has the slightest knowledge of the Arabic language will notice great differences between the thousands of hadiths uttered by the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and this miraculous Quran, the like of which neither Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) nor anyone else could have produced.

If Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was lying or making false claims, he would have claimed this Quran for himself, and thus would have attained high status among the Arabs that no one else would attain, for they all acknowledged that its words were superior to anything that humans could produce. But he is the noble and truthful Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and he would not refrain from lying to the people, then tell lies about Allah.

So we repeat: the ignorant failed to notice the miracle in the story of the sheep. Who told the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that it was poisoned? Who protected him from dying immediately, as his companion al-Bara' ibn Ma'rur (may Allah be pleased with him) died [after eating some of that meat]?

We may conclude with the following useful debate in the context of affirming the prophethood of our Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), which is relevant to what we have mentioned above.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book *Hidayat al-Hayara fi Ajwibah al-Yahud wa'n-Nasara* (p. 201):

I had a debate with one whom the Jews refer to as the greatest scholar and leader. During the course of our conversation, I said to him: By rejecting Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), you are effectively speaking ill of Allah in the worst manner!

He was surprised by that, and said: Would someone like you say such a thing?

I said to him: Listen, and let me explain: If you say that Muhammad was an unjust ruler who subjugated people by the sword, and he was not a messenger from Allah – at the time when he spent twenty-three years claiming that he was the Messenger of Allah Who had sent him to all people, and he said: Allah commanded me to do such and such, and He forbade me to do such and such, and He revealed to me such and such, and none of that is true [according to your claim];

and he said: Allah has permitted me to take the women and children of those who oppose me [when captured in war], and to take their wealth as war booty, and to kill their men, but none of that is true [according to your claim];

and he kept changing the religion of the prophets, opposing their followers and abrogating their systems of law [according to your claim] –

then your answer can only be either that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, was watching that, and He witnessed it and knew about it, or that it was hidden from Him and He did not know about it.

If you say that He did not know about it, then you are attributing the worst type of ignorance to Him, and one who was aware of that knows more than Him.

If you say that He knew all of that, and He witnessed it and was watching it, then either He was able to change it and stop him and prevent him from doing that, or He was not.

If He was not able to stop it, then you have attributed to Him the worst type of weakness, which is contrary to His being the Lord (*ar-Rabb*).

If you say that He was able to stop it, yet He kept increasing him in honour, supporting him, helping him, raising his status, causing his message to prevail, answering his supplications, supporting him against his enemies, causing all kinds of miracles – more than a thousand – to happen at his hands; and that no one intended ill towards him but he prevailed against him, and he never offered supplication but Allah answered it, then this is a matter of the gravest injustice and foolishness that is not appropriate to be attributed to any man of reason, let alone the Lord of earth and heaven. So how about when Allah testified to his truthfulness by approving of his call and supporting him with His word? For you, this is a false testimony and a lie.

When [the Jewish leader] heard that, he said: Allah forbid that He would treat a liar and a fabricator in such a manner; rather he is a true prophet and whoever follows him will succeed and prosper.

I said: Then why do you not enter his religion?

He said: He was only sent to the unlettered Gentiles who have no book; as for us: we have a book which we follow.

I said to him: Your argument is utterly flawed, for all people – scholars and ordinary people alike – know that he said that he was the Messenger of Allah to all people, and that whoever does not follow him is a disbeliever who is doomed to hell. The Jews and the Christians fought him even though they were people of the Book. If he is truly a messenger of Allah, then he must be believed in everything that he said.

The man fell silent, and could not answer. End quote.

Praise be to Allah for the blessing of Islam.

And Allah knows best.