



338721 - Did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) swim in a well in Madinah when he was a child?

the question

I heard some reports from the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which say that he swam in a well on his maternal uncles' land in Madinah when he was a child. Is there any authentic report about that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Comments on what was narrated about the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) swimming when he was a child

The incident referred to was narrated by Ibn Sa`d in *At-Tabaqaat al-Kubra* (1/116). He said:

He said: Muhammad ibn `Umar ibn Waqid al-Aslami told me: Muhammad ibn `Abdillah told me, from az-Zuhri.

He said: And Muhammad ibn Salih told us, from `Asim ibn `Amr ibn Qatadah.

He said: And `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Abd al-`Aziz told us, from `Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn `Amr ibn Hazm.

He said: And Hashim ibn `Asim al-Aslami told us, from his father, from Ibn `Abbas. The words of



some are mixed with the words of others. They said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was with his mother, Aminah bint Wahb. When he reached the age of six years, she took him to his maternal uncles, Banu `Adiy ibn an-Najjar, to visit them in Madinah. Also with him was Umm Ayman, his nurse who took care of him, and they rode on two camels. She stayed with him in the house of an-Nabighah, and they stayed there for a month. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to speak of some events that happened during his stay there. When he saw the fort of Banu `Adiy ibn an-Najjar, he recognized it and said: "I used to play with Unaysah, a little girl of the Ansar, atop this fort, and when I was with the boys of my maternal uncles' family, we would make a bird fly that used to land on this fort." And he looked towards the house and said: "My mother brought me to stay here; my father `Abdullah ibn `Abd al-Muttalib was buried in this house, and I learned to swim in the well of Banu `Adiy ibn an-Najjaar..."

The main narrator of this hadith is Muhammad ibn `Umar ibn Waqid al-Aslami, who is better known as al-Waqidi. He is accused of fabricating hadiths.

An-Nasa'i said: The liars who fabricated hadiths about the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) are four... and he mentioned al-Waqidi as being one of them.

Abu Hatim ar-Razi said: He used to fabricate hadiths.

See also: *Ikmaal Tahdheeb al-Kamal*, 10/290.

Moreover, the first isnad is mursal, because az-Zuhri was one of the younger Tabi`in, so how could he have witnessed that event?

The second isnad includes Muhammad ibn Salih at-Tammar, concerning whom there is a difference of scholarly opinion.

Ahmad and Abu Dawud classed him as trustworthy (thiqah), but Abu Hatim said: He is not strong.

Al-Burqani said: I asked ad-Daraqutni about Muhammad ibn Salih, from whom Zayd ibn al-Habbab narrated. He said: He was a date-seller, and his reports are to be ignored. End quote.



Ibn Hajar said regarding him: He was sincere but he made mistakes.

See also: *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*, 9/225; *Taqreeb at-Tahdheeb*, 5961.

It is also *mursal*, because `Asim ibn `Umar ibn `Amr ibn Qinanah was one of the younger *Tabi`in*, so he did not witness that event.

As for the third *isnad*, it includes `Abd ar-Rahman ibn `Abd al-`Aziz al-Amami.

Abu Hatim said: He is an old man whose *hadith* is problematic.

`Uthman ad-Darimi, said narrating from Ibn Ma`in: He is an unknown old man.

Al-Azdi said: He is not strong in their view.

See also: *Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb*, 6/220.

The fourth *isnad* includes Hashim ibn `Asim al-Aslami; we could not find any biography for him.

Conclusion:

This story is not authentic, because its main narrator is al-Waqidi, who was accused of fabricating *hadith*. It also has other narrators who are weak or subject to some criticism.

That does not mean that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not swim during his childhood. This is something that could have happened, but there is no textual evidence to prove it.

Secondly:

What has been narrated about the virtue of swimming

It was soundly narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: "Everything that is not connected to remembrance of Allah is an idle pursuit except for four things: a man's playing with his wife, a man's training his horse, a man's walking between two targets



[i.e., practising archery], and a man's learning to swim." Narrated by an-Nasa'i in *As-Sunan al-Kubra*, 8889; classed as authentic by al-Albani in *As-Sahihah*, 315.

This hadith encourages people to learn how to swim, because of the benefits that result from learning that, such as strengthening the body, being able to save a drowning person, and so on.

For more information, please see question no. [225943](#)

And Allah knows best.