21364 - Weakness of a hadith about the virtues of Ramadan

the question

How sound is the hadith narrated from Salmaan al-Faarisi (may Allah be pleased with him) in which he is reported to have said: “The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) addressed us on the last day of Sha’baan and said: ‘O People, there has come to you a great and blessed month, a month in which there is a night that is better than a thousand months. Allah has made fasting (this month) an obligation and spending its nights in prayer an act of voluntary worship. Whoever draws near to Allah during this month by doing some good deeds is like one who does an obligatory action at any other time, and the one who does an obligatory action during this month is like one who does seventy obligatory actions at any other times. It is a month whose beginning is mercy, its middle is forgiveness and its end is ransom from the Fire…’”??

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This hadith was narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah in his Saheeh, 3/191, no. 1887. He said, “If the report is saheeh …” but the word ‘if’ was omitted in some references such as al-Targheeb wa’l-Tarheeb by al-Mundhiri (2/95), so they thought that Ibn Khuzaymah said, “The report is saheeh,” although he did not state that.

It was also narrated by al-Mahaamili in al-Amaali (293); by al-Bayhaqi in Shu’ab al-Eemaan (7/216); Fadaa’il al-Awqaat, p. 146, no. 37; by Abu’l-Shaykh Ibn Hibbaan in Kitaab al-Thawaab; it was attributed to him by al-Saa’aati in al-Fath al-Rabbaani (9/233); it was mentioned by al-Suyooti in al-Durr al-Manthoor, and he said, it was narrated by al-‘Aqeeli and he classed it as da’eef (weak); it was mentioned by al-Isbahaani in al-Targheeb, and by al-Munaqqi in Kanz al-‘Ummaal (8/477). All of them narrated it via Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib from Salmaan al-Faarisi. The isnaad of the hadith is da’eef (weak) for two reasons, which are:

1 – There is a break in the chain of narrators, because Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib did not hear it from Salmaan al-Faarisi (may Allah be pleased with him).

2 – Its isnaad includes ‘Ali ibn Zayd ibn Jad’aan, of whom Ibn Sa’d said: “There is some weakness in him and he cannot be quoted as evidence. He was classed as da’eef (weak) by Ahmad, Ibn Ma’een, al-Nasaa’i, Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Jawzjaani and others, as it says in Siyar A’laam al-Nubala’, 5/207.

Abu Haatim al-Raazi judged the hadith to be munkar (a kind of weak hadith). Al-‘Ayni said likewise in ‘Umdat al-Qaari’, 9/20, as did Shaykh al-Albaani in Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth al-Da’eefah wa’l-Mawdoo’ah, vol. 2/262. no. 871. So it becomes clear that the isnaad of this hadith and similar reports are all da’eef (weak), and that the muhadditheen (scholars of hadith) judged it to be munkar, in addition to the fact that it contains some phrases whose authenticity is subject to further examination, such as its dividing the month into three parts, saying that the first ten days are mercy, then forgiveness, then ransom from the Fire. There is no evidence for this, rather the bounty of Allah is immense, all of Ramadan is mercy and forgiveness, and there are those whom Allah ransoms from the Fire every night and at the time of breaking the fast, as is proven by the ahaadeeth.

Moreover, in this hadith it says, “Whoever draws near to Allah during this month by doing some good deeds is like one who does an obligatory action.” There is no evidence for this, rather naafil actions are naafil and obligatory actions are obligatory in Ramadan and at other times. This hadith also says, “and the one who does an obligatory action during this month is like one who does seventy obligatory actions at any other times.” This number is subject to further examination, because a good deed earns a reward between ten and seven hundred times in Ramadan and at other times, and nothing is exempted from that apart from fasting, for its reward is immense and unlimited, because of the hadith qudsi: “Every deed of the son of Adam is for him, except for fasting, which is for Me and I shall reward for it.” (Agreed upon; narrated from Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him).

We must beware of da’eef (weak) hadith and make sure of their status before we speak of them.

We must strive to find out the saheeh ahaadeeth about the virtues of Ramadan. May Allah grant us all strength and accept our fasting, night prayers and all our good deeds.

And Allah knows best.