

Is the Scientific Miracle in the Hadith 'Beneath the sea there is fire' Valid?

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Abstract

The research aims to study one of the Hadiths which has been claimed to contain scientific miracles in the Prophetic Sunnah, namely the Hadith "There is fire under the sea." The research employs the inductive method: to investigate the authenticity of the Hadith, trace its sources, and compile discussions about it and its narrators from specialist scholars. Additionally, it uses the critical method: to critically analyze the Hadith to form a correct understanding of its authenticity and validity. Lastly, it utilizes the analytical method: to examine the knowledge contained within the Hadith, considering whether it represents a scientific discovery or was human knowledge accessible during the Prophet's era, peace be upon him. The research has reached the following conclusions: 1. The Hadith "There is fire under the sea" is not authenticated by any Hadith scholars as a statement of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. Instead, it is validly attributed to Abdullah ibn Amr ibn al-As from his own opinion and words, which is not authoritative as stated by Imam Al-Shawkani, may God have mercy on him. 2. The knowledge that "the sea contains fire" was accessible to human knowledge during the Prophethood era; most islands in the seas and oceans are volcanic, and sailors have observed fires emanating from them from ancient times to the present in all the seas and oceans of the world, including those surrounding the Arabian Peninsula. 3. Further confirming that the Hadith does not contain a scientific miracle, a Jew mentioned in the presence of Ali, may God be pleased with him, that there is fire in the sea. Ali confirmed this, citing the verse from the beginning of Surah At-Tur: "And by the sea filled with fire," indicating that this knowledge could also be deduced from the Holy Quran.

Keywords: *Scientific, Miracle, Beneath the Sea there is fire' Valid*

INTRODUCTION

This research investigates the validity of the legal and scientific conception related to the Hadith "There is fire under the sea," a significant contribution to the correction of certain perceptions in the field of scientific miracles (I'jaz 'Ilmi) in prophetic traditions.

The importance of the research lies in its study of a model among those claimed to represent scientific miracles within the Sunnah. Indeed, texts in the Quran and Sunnah are of two types: The first includes texts under the category of scientific miracles, provided certain established conditions are met. The second type includes those texts not considered under scientific miracles due to the non-fulfillment of these conditions. These conditions, specifically regarding miracles in the prophetic Hadith, can be summarized as follows:

The authenticity of the text according to specialists in prophetic Hadith, or at least a strong probability of its authenticity.

Clear alignment of the text with modern scientific discovery, which requires examining the meaning of the Hadith and the implications of its words and phrases, and establishing the scientific fact beyond doubt.

The impossibility of knowing this scientific discovery before 1400 years ago, i.e., during the era of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

The problem of the research: While some deny scientific miracles outright, another group of researchers demonstrates a strong emotional impulse and unscientific enthusiasm in affirming scientific miracles in many prophetic Hadiths.

This research on the Hadith "There is fire under the sea" seeks a detached investigation to achieve a scientific outcome that contributes to clarifying the correct methodology for this complex subject.

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Research Objectives

To contribute to verifying the authenticity of Hadiths related to scientific miracles in the Quran and Sunnah.

To draw researchers' attention to the importance of rigorously applying the established conditions for proving scientific miracles, particularly the impossibility of knowing the scientific discovery during the Prophet's era.

Scope of the research: The research focuses on verifying the presence of scientific miracles in the Hadith "There is fire under the sea."

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research follows these methodologies:

Inductive method: for deducing the Hadith and tracing its sources, gathering what has been said about the Hadith and its narrators from specialists.

Critical method: for critically studying the Hadith to ascertain its authenticity.

Analytical method: examining the knowledge contained in the Hadith, regarding whether it represents a scientific discovery or was merely human knowledge available during the prophetic era.

Previous Studies

Upon reviewing available resources in comprehensive encyclopedias and scientific search engines online, I found no comprehensive study addressing this Hadith, integrating both critical judgment and investigation of its scientific miracles. However, studies on one aspect are available in various books, research papers, or websites focused on scientific miracles or those quoting them.

Research Plan

The research structure includes an introduction, two main sections, a conclusion, and a reference index.

Introduction: Discusses the importance, problem, objectives, scope, methodology, and research plan.

The first section covers the text of the Hadith, scholars' opinions on its authenticity, and the second section explores whether the knowledge that "there is fire under the sea" was accessible to humans during the prophetic era.

Conclusion: Presents recommendations and findings, followed by an index of sources and references.

Section One

The Text of the Hadith and Scholarly Opinions on Its Authenticity

Issue One: Text of the Hadith: Some scholars of scientific miracles reference a Hadith which is considered weak by scholars of Hadith, specifically the Hadith "fire is under the sea." This Hadith is narrated with its chain in Sunan Abi Dawud (2/314) no. (2491), reported by Sa'id ibn Mansur, from Ismail ibn Zakariya, from Mutarrafa, from Bishr Abi Abdullah, from Bishir ibn Muslim, from Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-'As - may Allah be pleased with them - who said: The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, said: "No one should sail the sea except a pilgrim or one performing Umrah...; for under the sea there is fire, and beneath that fire is a sea." Al-Bayhaqi also narrated this in Al-Sunan Al-Kubra (4/334), and Al-Hakim mentioned it without a chain when he narrated the Hadith "Indeed, the sea is Hell" (4/638). This Hadith is weak; it has two flaws in its chain: the first is that Muhammad ibn Hayy is unknown, and the second is that Abdullah ibn Umayyah was only narrated from by Abu Asim, as stated by Shu'ayb Al-Arnaut in his commentary on Al-Musnad (4/322) no. 17989.

Issue Two

Scholarly Opinions on Its Authenticity (Scholars' Weakening of the Hadith):

Abu Dawud (2/314) no. (2491) commented after the Hadith: "This is a very weak Hadith; Abu Abdullah and Bishir are unknown."

Al-Allama Ibn Al-Mulaqqin in Al-Badr Al-Munir said: "The fifth Hadith: (narrated) that he, peace be upon him, said: 'No one should ride the sea except for Umrah or Hajj.' This Hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud, then Al-Bayhaqi, from the tradition of Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-As, marfu' (attributed to the Prophet), with an addition: 'for under the sea is fire, and beneath the fire is a sea.'"

Al-Bukhari said: "This Hadith is not authentic."

Ahmad said: "This is a strange Hadith."

Abu Dawud said: "Its narrators are unknown."

Al-Khattabi weakened its chain.

The author of "Al-Ilmam" said: "There is disagreement in its chain. It is narrated from the tradition of Bishir ibn Muslim Al-Kindi, from Abdullah ibn Amr, as brought out by Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi. And from the tradition of Bishir, from a man, from Abdullah ibn Amr. Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi also narrated it, stopping at Abdullah ibn Amr: The water of the sea does not suffice for ablution or from major impurity, if under the sea is fire then water then fire. He counted up to seven seas and seven fires". (*Al-Badr Al-Munir*, 6/30-31)

Ibn Hajar in Al-Talkhis Al-Habir said: "It is narrated that he, peace be upon him, said: 'No one should sail the sea except... for Umrah or Hajj.' Narrated by Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi, from the tradition of Abdullah ibn Amr, marfu' with an addition (that under the sea is fire, and under the fire is a sea). Abu Dawud said: Its narrators are unknown, and Al-Khattabi weakened its chain, and Al-Bukhari said this Hadith is not authentic". (*Al-Talkhis Al-Habir*, 2/485)

The Hadith is contradicted by the Hadith of Abu Hurairah mentioned at the beginning of this book regarding the question of fishermen: 'We sail the sea and carry with us little water,' and he did not deny them". (*Al-Talkhis Al-Habir*, 2/485)

Al-Shawkani also said: "It is also narrated from Ibn Amr ibn Al-As that it does not suffice for purification (using sea water) and there is no proof in the sayings of the Companions, especially when contradicted by the marfu' tradition and consensus, and the marfu' Hadith of Ibn Amr, Abu Dawud said: Its narrators are unknown.

And Al-Khattabi weakened its chain. And Al-Bukhari said this Hadith is not authentic. And it has another path at Al-Bazzar and in it is Layth ibn Abi Sulaim, and he is weak". (*Nayl Al-Antar*, 1/30)

Section Two: Was the Knowledge that "There is Fire Under the Sea" Accessible to Humans in the Prophetic Era?

Question: Was it plausible that the knowledge that there is fire under the sea could have been known or deduced by humans during the era of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him?

Answer: Yes, for the following reasons:

Observations of Volcanic Islands: The phenomenon of fires emerging from the sea, due to volcanic islands, has been known since ancient times. Humans have observed such phenomena from the earliest times, including around the Arabian Peninsula, which is surrounded by seas containing volcanic islands. This indicates that such knowledge was accessible to humans during the era of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

Quranic Reference: Allah Almighty has mentioned in the Holy Quran a sea that contains fire, in the verses: "By the Mount. And a Book inscribed. In parchment spread open. And the frequented house. And the raised canopy. And the sea filled with fire." (Surah At-Tur: 1-7). Despite the differences among scholars regarding the interpretation of "the sea filled with fire," what is crucial is whether any interpretations suggest the presence of fire in the sea. If so, then the knowledge that there is fire under the sea was accessible to human inquiry during the time this hadith was reported, purportedly said by the Prophet.

Furthermore, the discussion emphasizes that the knowledge of "fire in or under the sea" was potentially accessible during the time of the hadith's narration, that is, in the Prophetic era and the time of his companions, and was subject to human reasoning and deduction:

Firstly, from a Linguistic Perspective: The term 'sajr' in Arabic, which means 'to ignite', supports the notion. As described in "Muqayis al-Lughah" and "Lisan al-Arab", 'sajr' involves concepts of filling, mixing, and igniting. This is exemplified by the act of igniting a furnace, where the material used for burning is referred to as 'sajoor', showing the linguistic linkage to the concept of fire.

Secondly, from the Textual Tradition: The narration, though technically attributed to Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-'As and not directly to the Prophet Muhammad, suggests an understanding of sea water not being sufficient for ritual purification due to a fire underneath. This indicates a level of human deduction possible at the time, supported by Quranic references such as "the sea filled with fire," suggesting a possible conceptualization of fire under the sea during the prophetic era.

Thus, this narration, despite its weak chain of transmission and the scholarly consensus on its unreliability as a prophetic saying, underscores a conceivable human insight at the time—suggesting that such knowledge could have been derived from observable natural phenomena and Quranic imagery, even if not scientifically accurate by modern standards. This exemplifies the interplay between observed natural phenomena and religious textual interpretations in early Islamic thought.

RESULTS

Validity of the Hadith: The hadith stating "Under the sea there is fire" is not authenticated by any of the critical scholars of hadith as originating from the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is instead attributed to Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-'As based on his own opinion and statement, and his opinion is not considered a valid proof, as stated by Imam Al-Shawkani, may God have mercy on him.

Knowledge Availability: The knowledge that "the sea contains fire" was accessible to human understanding during the prophetic era. The islands in seas and oceans, most of which are volcanic, have been observed by mariners from ancient times to the present in all the seas and oceans of the world, including those surrounding the Arabian Peninsula.

Lack of Scientific Miracle in the Hadith: The fact that a Jew in the presence of Ali, may God be pleased with him, mentioned the fire in the sea, which Ali confirmed from him, citing the verse from the beginning of Surah At-Tur, "And the sea filled with fire," indicates that this knowledge could also be deduced from the Holy Quran.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Compilation of Hadiths: Collect hadiths used by those interested in scientific miracles comprehensively, then verify their authenticity according to the methodology of hadith critics and senior scholars.

Caution in Proving Scientific Miracles: Avoid rushing to prove scientific miracles except with clear evidence and established criteria, not based on possibilities and assumptions.

CONCLUSION

First: Findings

According to the researcher's investigation, the phrase "a cure for every disease" is found only in Al-Fatiha and the last verses of Surah Al-Hashr in the Quran.

The Quran is described as a "healing" in the Holy Book, and this description includes both Al-Fatiha and the last verses of Surah Al-Hashr. Al-Fatiha is considered the greatest chapter in the Quran, and it is mentioned in a hadith by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri in both Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim as a cure for a type of sting.

All attributed hadiths stating that Al-Fatiha is "a cure for every disease" are not authentic.

The hadith claiming that the last verses of Surah Al-Hashr are "a cure for every disease" is fabricated.

As is typical with experiential and medical hadiths, some of them are based on actual or valid medical experiences of their narrators, after which chains of narration were constructed and attributed to the Prophet

Muhammad (PBUH). Others, however, are neither correct in meaning nor in attribution to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Second: Recommendations

To complete a critical study of all attributed hadiths mentioned in the verses and chapters of the Quran, to ensure comprehensive and thorough research in terms of the authenticity of their attribution to the speaker.

To study the weak and fabricated hadiths concerning the Quran and its verses and chapters, focusing on the accuracy of their meanings and their corruption, and to analyze these hadiths in this detailed manner, not for their attribution to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

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