An Examination of the Isnad and Content of the Hadith Regarding the Prophet's Gree and Anger: Perspectives from Both Sunni and Shia Schools of Thought

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Abstract

Sunni sources record a hadith from the Noble Prophet of Islam (pbuh), phrased as a supplication: " **Allāhumma innamā anā basharun yaghḍabu kamā yaghḍabu l-basharu wa arḍā kamā yarḍā l-bashar" (**O Allah, I am but a human being; I become angry just as humans do, and I become pleased just as humans do). This hadith has served as a foundation for certain Sunni theological doctrines and has shaped a key aspect of their understanding of the Prophet's nature. Sunni theologians have generally accepted the apparent meaning of the hadith; some have based rulings upon its literal sense, while others have equated the Prophet's states of anger and gree with those of ordinary individuals, consequently maintaining that the Prophet (pbuh) possesses infallibility only regarding the reception of divine revelation. However, many Shia theologians, hadith scholars, philosophers, and mystics reject this interpretation that restricts these two states to a merely literal or ordinary human sense. This article first elucidates and analyzes the hadith and its theological implications. It then critically examines the hadith's Isnad and its content, arguing that the tradition is weak in terms of its chain of transmission. Furthermore, when evaluated against Quranic verses and other hadiths—and considering its apparent meaning, content, and theological implications as interpreted by Sunni scholars—the hadith is deemed unacceptable and unsound.

Extended Abstract

Introduction

Sunni sources record a hadith from the Noble Prophet of Islam (pbuh), phrased as a supplication: " **Allāhumma innamā anā basharun yaghḍabu kamā yaghḍabu l-basharu wa arḍā kamā yarḍā l-basharu**" (O God, I am merely a human being; I become angry just as humans do, and I become pleased just as humans do). Sunni theologians have accepted the apparent meaning of this hadith, regarding the Prophet's states of anger and satisfaction as identical to those of ordinary human beings; consequently, they maintain that his infallibility is limited solely to the reception and conveyance of divine revelation. In contrast, many Shi'a theologians, hadith scholars, philosophers, and mystics reject this interpretation of the Prophet's anger and satisfaction as merely human traits. This article first elucidates and analyzes the hadith and its theological interpretations. It then examines the hadith's chain of transmission and critiques its content, arguing that the tradition is weak in terms of its chain of transmission and that—when evaluated against Quranic verses and other hadiths—relying on its apparent meaning is neither acceptable nor desirable.

Materials and Methods

Adhering to the principles of 'Ilm al-Hadith (science of hadith) and 'Ilm al-Dirayah (science of hadith criticism)—and recognizing the necessity of evaluating traditions against the Holy Quran—this article first examines the tradition's chain of transmission and subsequently analyzes its content.

Regarding the chain of transmission, the hadith in question appears in various Sunni narrative collections and is attributed to multiple narrators, including Aisha (the Prophet's wife) and Abu Hurayrah. However, an examination of the chain of transmission reveals the presence of narrators such as **ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Ḍaḥḥāk wa ʿUmar ibn Qays wa ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUthmān**. They lack the necessary credibility even in the view of Sunni scholars of rijal (biographical evaluation); indeed, a figure such as Abu Hurayrah is accused of lying and fabricating hadith. Beyond the weakness of the chain of transmission (sanad), the text of the hadith itself varies across different traditions. In traditions attributed to Aisha, terms such as cursing, imprecation, and reviling are added to the concepts of anger and gree. In a tradition by Abu Hurayrah—cited by Al-Bukhari—terms implying causing harm, verbal abuse, and physical striking by the Prophet are also employed. Furthermore, Muttaqi al-Hindi (d. 975 AH) cites the hadith from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim using various phrasings that include terms like cursing, striking, reviling, and causing harm in the context of the Prophet's anger.

Consequently, the "Hadith of Anger and Gree" lacks the requisite authenticity. Moreover, regarding its content and semantic interpretation, it is incompatible with numerous hadiths describing the Prophet, as well as with Quranic verses that characterize him; for the Quran describes the Seal of the Prophets as possessing sublime character and excellent morals (68: 4), as a "Mercy to the Worlds" (3: 159), as kind and merciful toward believers (9: 128), and as a humble human being (26: 215)—a Prophet who responded to all adversities and the offensive behavior of people in the Age of Ignorance with the best form of goodness (23: 96). Therefore, relying on the literal wording of the "Hadith of Anger and Gree" is unsound. Analysis and Conclusion

Based on the foregoing—and in light of the science of Hadith studies and the numerous Quranic verses describing the Prophet of Islam—it is incumbent upon exegetes, theologians, and thinkers to adopt a comprehensive, holistic approach to the texts of Revelation and Hadith. They must interpret these verses and traditions in relation to one another, synthesizing them to arrive at a coherent, consistent message and a rational epistemological framework. Consequently, certain verses and traditions concerning the Prophet—which, upon a superficial or initial reading, appear incompatible or prima facie contradictory to others—should be understood as harmonious and consistent through a deeper analysis of their meaning and content. One must also consider the underlying rationale for such statements; the authors believe that the emphasis placed on the Prophet's human attributes serves to prevent the pitfall of polytheism. Followers of some earlier Abrahamic faiths—such as the followers of Jesus (pbuh)—fell into the trap of polytheism by regarding him as the incarnation of God on earth and attributing divinity to him. Certain verses of the Holy Quran allude to this deviation among the followers of Christ, warning humanity against succumbing to polytheistic beliefs and exaggerated notions, while affirming the Prophet's human nature. "O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion; uphold moderation and truth, and speak nothing of God but the truth; and say nothing regarding Christ—Jesus, son of Mary—other than that he is the Messenger of God..." (4: 171); and "O People of the Scripture, do not go to extremes in your religion unjustly, and do not follow the people who went astray..." (5: 77).
Therefore, when reconciling religious texts and traditions regarding the Prophet of Islam, one must—first—consider their underlying philosophy;—second—interpret their content in a coherent manner; and—third—pay attention to the context of their revelation or the motives behind the fabrication of the hadith. Indeed, certain hadiths may have been fabricated by

the Prophet's enemies or by oppressive rulers with the aim of casting doubt on the Prophet's infallibility and diminishing the credibility and status of the Messenger of God. Enemies of Islam sometimes employed such tactics—seeking to defeat the divine mission in its struggle against polytheism and idolatry—in order to undermine the Prophet's social and political standing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, regarding the hadiths concerning the infallibility of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and his prophetic character—and when evaluating the Prophet's words in light of the Holy Quran (9: 128; 3: 159; 68: 4; 15: 88; 26: 215; 23: 96; 41: 34)—it is essential, firstly, to exercise due diligence regarding the authenticity of the chain of transmission (sanad). Secondly, when assessing these traditions against the Holy Quran, their interpretation, meaning, and implications must not contradict Quranic verses. Therefore, the notion of [the Prophet's] anger and gree—as commonly understood—is incompatible with the infallibility of the Prophet, a concept clearly supported by numerous Quranic verses and other hadiths; for anger and gree stemming from carnal desires and human impulses are beneath the Prophet's station. Rather, his anger and gree must align with Divine anger and gree.

Keywords: Human Attributes, Anger, Gree, the Prophet