

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The authenticity of the book “Kitab As-Sunnah” of Imam Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sa’eed Al-Qahtani relied on 6 manuscripts to publish this book “Kitab As-Sunnah” of ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

Nuskhah of Maktabah Az-Zahiriyyah in Damascus, and this was the Asl of the printed book as it was the oldest.
Nuskhah of Matabah Abdullah ibn Hasan Aal Shaykh
Nuskhah of Maltabah ‘Aamah of Riyad
Nuskhah of Darul Kutub Al-Misriyyah
Nuskhah of Maktabah At-Taymuriyyah
Nuskhah of Khuda Bakhsh in India

Shaykh Al-Qahtani said in his introduction to “Kitab As-Sunnah” that this book has also been called “Ar-Rad ‘alal Jahmiyyah” as quoted by Khateeb Al-Baghdadi in his “Tarikh Baghdad” (3/204) and Hafiz Az-Zahabi in his “Sayr A’lam An-Nubala” (8/101) and “Tarikh Al-Islam” as mentioned by Ahmad Shakir in his introduction of “Musnad”.

Some of the words of praise mentioned by Shaykh Al-Qahtani of Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

Hafiz Az-Zahabi wrote about Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in in “Sayr A’lam An-Nubala” (13/516): “Al-Imam Al-Hafiz An-Naqid the Muhaddith of Baghdad”

He wrote in “Tazkiratul Hufaz” (2/665): “Al-Imam Al-Hafiz Al-Hujjah the Muhaddith of Baghdad”

An-Nasa’i, Ad-Daraqutni and Khateeb Al-Baghdadi all declared him to be Thiqaah.

Some of the scholars who quoted from “Kitab As-Sunnah”:

The quotes below have been mentioned by Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sa’eed Al-Qahtani to prove the authenticity of the book “As-Sunnah”

Hafiz ibn Al-Jawzi wrote in his "Al-'Ilal Al-Mutanahiyah" (1:28):

"Abdullah ibn Ahmad narrated in his "Kitab As-Sunnah" from Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, he said: "The children of Israil said to Musa: Does our Lord sleep?"

And this narration is present in "Kitab As-Sunnah" in n 1028.

Hafiz Az-Zahabi wrote in "Al-'Uluw" p 102:

"Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated in his "Kitab As-Sunnah" from his father from Nuh ibn Maymun from Bakeer ibn Ma'ruf from Muqatil ibn Hayyan about His saying Ta'ala: "There is no discussion between three except He is the fourth", he said: He is upon His throne and His knowledge is with them"

And this narration is present in "Kitab As-Sunnah" in n 592.

The great Hanbali scholar Ibn Abi Ya'la wrote in his "Tabaqat Al-Hannabilah" (1:175):

"Abdullah ibn Ahmad said: I asked my father about people who say: "When Allah spoke to Musa, He did not speak with a voice" and my father said: "Allah (Tabaraka wa Ta'ala) spoke with a voice" ...to the rest of the narration.

And this narration is present in "Kitab As-Sunnah" in n 533 and 534.

Some of the scholars who narrated through Abdullah ibn Ahmad

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Sa'eed Al-Qahtani mentioned these quotes, and I quoted them both fully with Isnad from "Sharh Usul I'tiqad" and "Kitab As-Sunnah" for readers to fully understand.

Al-Lalika'i (d 418H) mentioned in his "Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahlis Sunnah:

"388: Ahmad ibn Abdillah ibnal Khidr Al-Ma'dal narrated to us, he said Ahmad ibn Sulayman narrated to us, he said 'ABDULLAH IBN AHMAD narrated to us, he said Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibnal Husayn narrated to us, he said 'Abbas ibn AbdilAzeem Al-'Anbari narrated to us, he said Ruwaym Al-Muqri narrated to us from 'Abdullah ibn 'Ayash Al-Washa - Muhammad ibn Al-Husayn said: I have seen 'Abdullah ibn 'Ayash and he was a neighbour to us and he was from integer Thiqat- from Yunus ibn Bakeer from Ja'far ibn Muhammad from his father from 'Ali ibn Al-Husayn that he said concerning the Quran: "It is not creator nor created, but it is the speech of Allah Azza wa Jalla.

'Abdullah ibn Ahmad said: it has reached me that this 'Abdullah ibn 'Ayash is Abu Yahya ibn 'Abdillah Al-Khazar, Abu Kurayb narrated many Ahadith from him."

This narration and speech of ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad is present in “Kitab As-Sunnah” n 135 as such:

“135: Abu Abdillah Muhammad ibnal Husayn Mawla An-Nadhr narrated to us, he said ‘Abbas ibn AbdilAzeem Al-‘Anbari narrated to us, he said Ruwaym Al-Muqri narrated to us from ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Ayash Al-Washa -Muhammad ibn Al-Husayn said: I have seen ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Ayash and he was a neighbour to us and he was from integer Thiqat- from Yunus ibn Bakeer from Ja’far ibn Muhammad from his father from ‘Ali ibn Al-Husayn that he said concerning the Quran: “It is not creator nor created, but it is the speech of Allah Azza wa Jalla.

Abu AbdirRahman said: it has reached me that this ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Ayash is Abu Yahya ibn ‘Abdillah Al-Khazar, Abu Kurayb narrated many Ahadith from him.”

So the narration is exactly the same showing the reliability of these manuscripts of “Kitab As-Sunnah”, the narrators of Al-Lalika’i only omitted the words “Mawla An-Nadhr (free slave of An-Nadhr)” which is a description of the first narrator and the rest is exactly the same and at the end it has ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad instead of Abu AbdirRahman, which is the Kuniya of Abdullah ibn Ahmad.

Al-Lalika’i (d 418H) mentioned in his “Sharh Usul I’tiqad Ahlis Sunnah”:

“457: Muhammad ibn Ubaydillah narrated to us, he said Ahmad ibn Al-Hasan narrated to us, he said ABDULLAH IBN AHMAD narrated to us, he said: I heard Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah (saying): and a man from our companion said: The Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created. Abu Bakr said: whoever does not say such, he is misguided and misguiding others, innovator.

458: ABDULLAH said: I heard ‘Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created.

459: I (ABDULLAH) heard ‘Uthman another time saying: whoever does not say that the Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created, he is worse than these Jahmiyah.”

And these narrations are present in “Kitab As-Sunnah” with words:

“162: I heard Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah (saying): and man from his companion said to him: The Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created. Abu Bakr said: whoever does not say such, he is misguided and misguiding others, innovator.

163: I heard 'Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created.

164: I heard 'Uthman another time saying: whoever does not say that the Quran is the speech of Allah and it is not created, he is worse than these, meaning the Jahmiyah”

So the narrations are identical, and the slight changes of words from narrators of Al-Lalika'i do not change meaning such as “than these Jahmiyah” instead of “than these, meaning the Jahmiyah”, and narrators do narrate with meaning, meaning with slight changes of words which do not alter meaning.

Al-Lalika'i (d 418H) mentioned in his “Sharh Usul I'tiqad Ahlis Sunnah”:

“460: Muhammad narrated to us, he said Ahmad narrated to us, he said 'ABDULLAH narrated to us, he said: I heard Muhammad ibn Sulayman Lawayn saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah not created, and I have not seen anyone saying that the Quran is created, may Allah protect us (from such).”

461: 'Abdullah said: I heard Abu Ma'mar, meaning Isma'eel ibn Ibraheem Al-Huzli, saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah not created, and whoever doubts that it is not created, he is a Jahmi, rather he is worse than the Jahmi.

462: And I heard Abu Ma'mar saying: I reached the people saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah, it is not created.”

The narration 460 is with exact same words in “Kitab As-Sunnah” n 168:

“168: I heard Muhammad ibn Sulayman Lawayn saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah not created, and I have not seen anyone saying that the Quran is created, may Allah protect us (from such).”

Narration 461 and 462 are present in Kitab As-Sunnah n 175 and n 176 with same words in texts:

“175: I heard Abu Ma'mar, saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah not created, and whoever doubts that it is not created, he is a Jahmi, rather he is worse than the Jahmi.

176: I heard Abu Ma'mar saying: I reached the people saying: The Quran is the speech of Allah, it is not created.”

There is no difference of wording in sayings of Abu Ma'mar, only narrator in narration 461 added about Abu Ma'mar: "meaning Isma'eel ibn Ibraheem Al-Huzli"

So we can see from these 7 narrations narrated from Al-Lalika'i (417H) through Abdullah ibn Ahmad that the manuscripts of "Kitab As-Sunnah" contain them, showing in a certain manner their reliability. How could these manuscripts of "Kitab As-Sunnah" be wrong and Al-Lalika'i narrates from two narrators exactly the same narrations?

And Al-Lalika'i is not alone is narrating through Abdullah ibn Ahmad, rather Al-Bayhaqi also narrated in his "Asma wa Sifat" p 246 through his Isnad containing Abdullah ibn Ahmad going up to Ja'far ibn Muhammad saying: "The Quran is the speech of Allah, it is neither creator nor created", and this saying of Ja'far ibn Muhammad is narrated with same text and isnad above by 'Abdullah ibn Ahmad in his "Kitab As-Sunnah" n 134.

Furthermore Hafiz ibn Al-Jawzi mentioned in his "Manaqib Ahmad" p 204 the letter of Imam Ahmad to 'Ubaydullah ibn Khaqan and he mentioned it through the Isnad of Abdullah ibn Ahmad. And this letter is present in "Kitab As-Sunnah" n 84.

So all these scholars quoting from "Kitab As-Sunnah" and narrating with their Isnad through Abdullah ibn Ahmad with same wordings as these manuscripts show the authenticity of the book "Kitab As-Sunnah" without any doubts

Al-Hamdulillah

May Allah send Salah and Salam on the Prophet (saw), his family and companions!