

Question:

Some liberalists say it is a lie that the martyr will be awarded 72 ḥūrs in Jannah. Are they correct in their claim, or is there a legitimate basis to the above-mentioned reward?

Answer:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It is relatively unusual how the so-called liberalists are not so loyal in their liberalism that they are intolerant of the transmitted virtues of the martyr, as articulated by the holy Prophet of Allāh ﷺ. The ḥadīth in question is, without doubt, an authentic narration recorded in numerous books of Ḥadīth literature, transmitted through various chains. Before the scrutiny of the ḥadīth, it ought to be clarified why such people are rejecting these ḥadīths.

The sole reason these self-designated spokesmen feel the need to reject such texts is due to their lack of academic integrity: whenever they are cornered by a difficult question which they cannot answer, it is not a crime to admit one does not know. In fact, it is a remarkably honourable trait of a human.

The primary reasoning of their rejection is due to this virtue not being mentioned by Allāh ﷻ in the Glorious Qur'ān; little do they realise that although the Qur'ān holds the highest authority in the final religion of Allāh ﷻ, it is not the only authoritative fountain wherefrom Islāmic knowledge gushes forth. This is neither a valid nor sound argument in terms of logic: the absence of an idea from one source does not necessitate its absence from other sources.

Secondly, they are incapable of locating the authentic source to verify the virtue. This, again, is no argument; rather, it displays their incompetence in Islāmic academia. It is a clear demonstration of their lack of credentials, which fails to explain why such self-designated spokesmen consider themselves a paragon of scholarship worthy to appear on the television and reject parts of the Dīn. “*Little knowledge is a dangerous thing*” is a phrase these pseudo-intellectuals ought to consider.

To continue, the full ḥadīth entailing the above-mentioned virtue of the martyr reads:

«للشهيد عند الله ست خصال : يغفر له في أول دفعة ، ويرى مقعده من الجنة ، ويجار من عذاب القبر ، ويأمن من الفرع الأكبر ، ويوضع على رأسه تاج الوقار ، الياقوتة منها خير من الدنيا وما فيها ، ويزوج اثنتين وسبعين زوجة من الحور العين ، ويشفع في سبعين من أقاربه»

“There are six traits of a martyr in the sight of Allāh: he shall be forgiven in the first flow (of his blood), and be shown his place in Jannah and be protected from the punishment of the grave; he shall be safe from the great panic; a crown of honour shall be placed on his head, the diamond of which is better than the world and what it contains; he shall be given seventy-two of al-Ḥūr al-ʿĪn to marry as wives; and his intercession on behalf of seventy of his relatives shall be accepted.”⁽¹⁾

As evident from the text, the fifth trait of the martyr is being granted wives from al-Ḥūr al-ʿĪn. The above is the wording of Imām al-Tirmidhī رحمته - who has authenticated the narration – and the number of wives has been explicitly mentioned as seventy-two (72). However, in a variant of this very *ḥadīth*, as narrated by Imām Ibn Mājah رحمته, does not specify a number. This requires further investigation.

This *ḥadīth*, in its essence, has been recorded by the following Imāms in their respective works:

- 1) Aḥmad in his *Musnad* (17182) and (17183).
- 2) Al-Tirmidhī in his *Jāmiʿ* (1663).
- 3) Ibn Mājah in his *Sunan* (2799).
- 4) Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim in his *Jihād* (204), (205), (206) and (207).
- 5) Al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* (2696).
- 6) Al-Ṭabarānī in his *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* (67) and (14651).
- 7) Al-Ṭabarānī in his *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn* (204) and (1163).
- 8) Ibn Shāhīn in his *Targhīb* (439).
- 9) Ibn Abī Shaybah in his *Musnad* (19383) and (19467).

More Imāms of *Ḥadīth* have recorded this narration; however, the above will, InShāʿAllāh, suffice.

Of the above narrations, the number seventy-two (72) is in the wordings of Aḥmad, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Abī ʿĀṣim, Al-Ṭabarānī (in one of his narrations) and Ibn Shāhīn. It is not mentioned in the wordings of Ibn Mājah, al-Bazzār and Ibn Abī Shaybah رحمته. Depending on the authenticity of the chains, the number will either be accepted or rejected: should the chains of those affirming the number be weak and those negating strong, the number will not be accepted as sound; however, should the narrations affirming the number be strong – irrespective of whether it is stronger than the negating ones or not – the number must be affirmed. This is based on the principle:

الزيادة من الثقة مقبولة

“The extra wording of a trustworthy-narrator is accepted.”⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ Al-Tirmidhī (1663) and Ibn Mājah (2799).

⁽²⁾ *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, Nūr al-Dīn ʿItr ed. [Dār al-Fikr, Syria [1406 AH / 1986 CE]] vol. 1 p. 72.

All of the narrations - except those of al-Bazzār, Ibn Abī Shaybah and most of al-Ṭabarānī - pivot around Baḥīr Ibn Sa‘d, who narrates from Khālīd Ibn Ma‘dān. Since all narrations entail these two narrators, let us discuss them before those who appear prior to them in the chains.

Baḥīr is a trustworthy narrator⁽³⁾ as is Khālīd, although the latter often skips citing the authority of the companion from whom he narrates (*irsāl*).⁽⁴⁾ In most narrations, he narrates directly from the companion Miqdām Ibn Ma‘dī Karīb ؓ; hence, this half of the chain is sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*). However, in other narrations, Khālīd narrates from Kathīr Ibn Murrah, a trustworthy narrator,⁽⁵⁾ from the companion ‘Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit ؓ. This, too is a sound chain. The companions ؓ need not be scrutinised: the Ḥadīth experts unanimously agree on all companions being sound.⁽⁶⁾ Since both chains are sound, there is nothing to fear from Khālīd’s narrating from two different people, as it is not contradictory: he must have heard the account from both routes.

Therefore, the second half of the chain can be comfortably declared sound; only the first half, now, remains. Baḥīr Ibn Sa‘d transmitted this account to two students: Baqiyyah Ibn al-Walīd and Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Ayyāsh.

The narration of Baqiyyah Ibn al-Walīd explicitly mentions the number seventy-two (72). However, although Baqiyyah is graded overall a good (*ḥasan*) narrator, his habit of deliberately skipping the names of narrators (*tadlīs*) is outrageous.⁽⁷⁾ Therefore, unless he explicitly states he heard the account directly from his teacher, his words are not to be accepted without a supporting narrator. Abū Mushir has warned against Baqiyyah’s narrations via a catchy rhyme; he said:

أحاديث بقية ليست نقية ، فكنّ منها على تقية

“Baqiyyah’s ḥadīths are not clean, so be wary of them.”⁽⁸⁾

The narration of al-Tirmidhī is among such narrations; hence, the other chains must be scrutinised before securing a grading.

The second student, Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Ayyāsh, is a trustworthy narrator when transmitting from the scholars of al-Shām;⁽⁹⁾ Baḥīr Ibn Sa‘d is one of them.⁽¹⁰⁾ Therefore, this narration is sound given that his students are sound. Although Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Ayyāsh has

⁽³⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 640.

⁽⁴⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 1678.

⁽⁵⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 5631.

⁽⁶⁾ *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itr ed. [Dār al-Fikr, Syria [1406 AH / 1986 CE]] vol. 1 p. 72, at the end of the ninth (9th) Naw‘.

⁽⁷⁾ *Mizan al-Itidal* under the entry 1250.

⁽⁸⁾ *Ibid*.

⁽⁹⁾ For details, see *Al-Minhāj* (commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*): under [80] pp. 179-180. [Dār Al-Fayḥā’ edition (1431 AH / 2010 CE)].

⁽¹⁰⁾ *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 777.

fallen prey to inconsistency (*idtirāb*) in narrating this, the narration of Baqiyyah removes all doubt. The remaining chain of al-Tirmidhī's narration is sound because Nu'aym Ibn Ḥammād is an accredited narrator, albeit erroneous;⁽¹¹⁾ and 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, author of Sunan al-Dārimī, is sound.⁽¹²⁾

Continuing with the students of Ismā'īl Ibn 'Ayyāsh, his students include:

- 1) Abū 'l-Yamān al-Ḥakam Ibn Nāfi'
- 2) Hishām Ibn 'Ammār
- 3) Al-Ḥawṭī
- 4) Ya'qūb Ibn 'Abbād al-Makkī
- 5) Abū 'l-Mughīrah

As for the wording of Hishām Ibn 'Ammār, he excludes the number seventy-two (72) from his narration. His narration is irrelevant, as he has only excluded the figure and not denied it. As for his grading, he is a truthful narrator who later became erroneous.⁽¹³⁾

With regard to Abū 'l-Yamān al-Ḥakam Ibn Nāfi', he is a trustworthy narrator.⁽¹⁴⁾ This much is enough to authenticate the second narration of Aḥmad (17183). However, this version does not display the text of (17182), which has the identical chain, but between Aḥmad and al-Ḥakam Ibn Nāfi' is another narrator, Ishāq Ibn 'Īsā. This does not mean Aḥmad has committed *idtirāb*; it means he later heard the narration directly from his teacher's teacher. Ishāq Ibn 'Īsā is a trustworthy narrator who sometimes erred.⁽¹⁵⁾ Therefore, Aḥmad's narration explicitly mentioning the number seventy-two (72) is authentic – each of the two chains is *ḥasan*; hence, together, they are *ṣaḥīḥ lighayrih*. This grading is only for the chains under scrutiny; the other chains have not been taken into consideration while doing *taḥsīn* of this *ḥadīth*.

Since the narrations of Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī are authentic and support one another, there is no need to further investigate all other variants to answer your question. Bear in mind there are other chains in the *Ḥadīth* literature which contain a totally different set of narrators. Even if, hypothetically, they are discovered to be weak, they will yet aid the authenticity of what has already been substantiated in this brief scrutiny.

The conclusion to which we have reached has also been the grading of the *Ḥadīth* experts of the past.

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī⁽¹⁶⁾ has written:

⁽¹¹⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 7166.

⁽¹²⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 3434.

⁽¹³⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 7303.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 1464.

⁽¹⁵⁾ *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb* under the entry 377.

⁽¹⁶⁾ *Fathī al-Bārī* vol. 6 p. 16 under (2795).

ولأحمد والطبراني من حديث عبادة بن الصامت مرفوعا : أن للشهيد عند الله سبع خصال ، فذكر الحديث ، وفيه «ويزوج اثنتين وسبعين زوجة من الحور العين» إسناده حسن ، وأخرجه الترمذي من حديث المقدم بن معد يكرب وصححه .

Al-Haythamī⁽¹⁷⁾ has written:

رواه أحمد هكذا ، قال مثل ذلك ، والبزار والطبراني إلا أنه قال : «سبع خصال» وهي كذلك ، ورجال أحمد والطبراني ثقات

Also, Ibn al-Mundhir⁽¹⁸⁾ has written:

رواه أحمد والطبراني ، وإسناده أحمد حسن

As a final note, we advise you to continue your praiseworthy trait of verifying everything about which you are unsure. It is never a good idea to accept the words of self-designated spokesmen who have not been traditionally trained to understand the complexity of the profound sciences of Islām.

Sincerely, we attest that Allāh ﷻ knows best.

Answered by Shahin-ur Rahman, Northampton.

Sunday 30th Shawwāl 1436 AH / 16th August 2015.

Checked and approved by Shaykh Dr. Abul Hasan Hussain Ahmed, London.

⁽¹⁷⁾ *Majma' al-Zawā'id* vol. 5 p. 293 (9516).

⁽¹⁸⁾ *Al-Targhīb wa 'l-Tarhīb* vol. 2 p. 210 (2133).