

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Series of Questions Addressed to Scholar Sheikh Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah,  
Ameer of Hizb ut Tahrir through his Facebook Page

**Answer to Question:**

## **Shawahid (Witnesses) and Mutabaat (Follow-ups) in the science of Hadith**

To: Osama Ay'yaat  
(Translated)

### **Question:**

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,

There is a question I would like to ask you which is related to the science of Hadith:

Scholars defined Hadith Sahih as that: "The Isnad [chain of transmission] of the hadith continues through the transmission of a trustworthy ('*adl*) and accurate (*dhabit*) narrator from someone similar to him from the beginning of the Sanad [chain of transmission] to its end. And the hadith should not be Shadh (irregular) nor *mu'allal* (defective)". These are the restricting conditions for a narration to be accepted as Sahih hadith. But I find a lot of scholars strengthen weak reports by Shawahid (Witnesses) and Mutabaat (Follow-ups); for example, a hadith may come via a certain chain, and the hadith was a *da'eef* (weak) hadith, then this hadith has Shawahid or Mutabaat, but these Shawahid and Mutabaat are weak. However, scholars would authenticate the hadith via these Shawahid and Mutabaat. What is the extent to which these Shawahid and Mutabaat can be considered? And when they have an impact in the tashih (authentication) of Ahadith?

Please answer the question, may Allah bless you....

### **Answer:**

Wa Alaikum Assalam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh,

Before answering the question, it is necessary to clarify some of the relevant terminology such as "*Shawahid* and *Mutabaat*, and *Matn* and *Sanad*", which are terms used in the science of Hadith, and we will explain them through citing examples:

- It came in Musnad Al-Shafei: Malik informed us from Abdullah ibn Dinar from Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: «الشَّهْرُ تِسْعَ وَعِشْرُونَ، فَلَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْا الْهَيْلَالَ، وَلَا «**The month of Ramadan may consist of twenty-nine days. So do not fast till you have sighted it (the new moon) and do not break fast, till you have sighted it (the new moon of Shawwal), and if the sky is cloudy for you, then complete thirty (days).**»

- *Matn* is the speech which comes at the end of the *Sanad*, which in this Hadith the words of the Prophet (saw): «الشَّهْرُ تِسْعَ وَعِشْرُونَ، فَلَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْا الْهَيْلَالَ، وَلَا تَفْطُرُوا حَتَّى تَرَوْهُ، فَإِنْ غَمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ ثَلَاثِينَ «**The month of Ramadan may consist of twenty-nine days. So do not fast till you have sighted it (the new moon) and do not break fast, till you have**

**sighted it (the new moon of Shawwal), and if the sky is cloudy for you, then complete thirty (days).”**

- Sanad is the chain of men who link the Matn of the hadith to the one who said it. Thus the Sanad in this hadith is: Shafei from Malik from Abdullah ibn Dinar from Abdullah ibn Umar from the Messenger of Allah (saw).

- This Hadith was not only narrated by al-Shafei from Malik, but was also narrated from Malik by Abdullah bin Maslama by the same Isnad from Abdullah ibn Umar. Bukhari reported in his Sahih: Abdullah bin Maslama told us that Malik narrated from Abdullah ibn Dinar from Abdullah ibn Umar that the Messenger of Allah (saw), said: «الشَّهْرُ تِسْعَ وَعِشْرُونَ لَيْلَةً، فَلَا تَصُومُوا حَتَّى «**The month (can be) 29 nights (i.e. days), and do not fast till you see the moon, and if the sky is overcast, then complete (the month of Sha'ban) thirty (days)**». Abdullah bin Maslama followed al-Shafi'i in the narration of this Hadith, that is he narrated the Hadith from the Sheikh (teacher) of al-Shafei who is Malik through the mentioned Sanad, and therefore the narration of Abdullah bin Maslama is given the term "follow-up" (Mutaba'h), which in this case is called "full follow-up" (Mutaba'ah tammah).

- As well as Muslim narrated this Hadith in his Saheeh from Abdullah bin Omar as following: Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah told us, Abu Osama told us, Obaidullah told us, from Nafi, from Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with both of them) that Allah's Messenger (saw) made a mention of Ramadan and he with the gesture of his hand said: «الشَّهْرُ هَكَذَا، وَهَكَذَا، وَهَكَذَا - ثُمَّ عَقَدَ «**The month is thus and thus. (He then withdrew his thumb at the third time). He then said: Fast when you see it, and break your fast when you see it, and if the weather is cloudy calculate it (the months of Sha'ban and Shawwal) as thirty days.**” In this narration of the Hadith, Nafi followed Abdullah ibn Dinar in narration from Abdullah bin Omar, and this is called *Mutaba'ah qasirah* (incomplete follow-up) because it was not a follow up from the starting of the Sanad.

- An-Nasai narrated in his Sunan this Hadith as following: Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Yazeed informed us, he said: Sufian told us, from Amr ibn Dinar, from Mohammed bin Hunain, from Ibn Abbas, who said: I am surprised at those who anticipate the month, when the Messenger of Allah said: «**إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الْهَيْلَانَ فَصُومُوا، وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمُوهُ فَأَفْطِرُوا، فَإِنْ غَمَّ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ ثَلَاثِينَ** «**When you see the new crescent then fast, and when you see it, then stop fasting, and if it is obscured from you (too cloudy), then complete thirty days**”.

It is clear that this narration of the Hadith is through another chain from another Sahabi, who is Ibn Abbas, and is not from Abdullah bin Omar. The Hadith narrated by An-Nasai is called the "witness" (Shahid) to the earlier mentioned Hadith narrated by Al-Shafi', as well as to the Ahadith narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim ... Also each of the above mentioned Ahadith of Al-Shafi'i, Bukhari and Muslim are called "Shawahid" for the Hadith of An-Nasai, ... And if the Matn of the Shahid Hadith has differences in wording but similarity in the meaning, then it is called "shahid bil ma'ana" witness by meaning, such as in the hadith of Al-Bukhari in his Sahih: Adam told us, Sho'aba told us, Muhammad ibn Ziyad said: I heard Abu Huraira may Allah be pleased with him, he said: The Prophet (saw) said, or he said: Abu al-Qasim (saw) said: «**صُومُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤُوسِهِ، فَإِنْ غَمِّي عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا عِدَّةَ سَعْبَانَ ثَلَاثِينَ** «**Fast on its sighting and break the fast on its sighting, if its covered to you then complete the period of Sha'ban with thirty days.**”

Thus the Matn in this Hadith is similar to the Matn in the Hadith of Al-Shafei in meaning, but not in wording, because here it mentions the month of Shaaban...

**And now we come to the answer to the question:**

- The Ahadith which their weakness is on account of the narrator being Fasiq (commits transgression) or being accused of lying or so, they are not strengthened by other Ahadith, instead they are rejected and not acted upon. The following was mentioned in the book, *The Islamic Personality* Vol.1:

*“... It is a mistake to say that when a da'eef hadith [weak hadith] comes via numerous lines of transmission then it rises to the level of hasan or Sahih. For when the hadith is weak this means the narrators have actually committed transgressions or have been accused of lying. When the hadith has come through other lines of transmission which are of this type, then it has increased in its weakness....”* End.

Ibn al-Salah said in his Muqaddimah:

*“Not every weakness in the Hadith is eliminated by the hadith coming from different lines of transmission. Rather the situation varies:*

*... there are also types of weakness which are not eliminated by something similar to that, on account of severity of the weakness and the failure of this Jaber (consoler) to console it and mend it. An example of this is the weakness which arises from the transmitter being accused of lying, or the fact that the hadith is Shadh (irregular).”* End.

- There are some narrations of Ahadith where one of its transmitters or more have deficiency in retention or is a narrator with a blameless record (Mastur) or so, but he is not accused of lying or fisq (transgression) ... That is, the reason for weakness (da'af) was due to deficiency in retention or so and not in truth or pious... These narrations of Ahadith if taken alone will be judged as da'eef (weak), due to the weakness of some of the men in the chain of transmission. ... But when following the narrations, it appears that these narrations have reliable Shawahid and Mutabaat, that is they are suitable to strengthen the related narration and mend the deficiency in retention and removes the matn of the hadith from being Shadh (irregular) or Munkar (rejected)... In this case, we do not judge the hadith as da'eef (weak), but rather the hadith becomes a Hasan Hadith, because it was narrated in another form that mends the impairment, due to which it will not be included as Shadh (irregular) or Munkar (rejected). The following came in the book, the Islamic Personality vol.1:

*“Hasan: It is a report that is known by the one who reported it and its transmitters became well known and consequently it is the core of most of the hadith. It is a hadith most scholars accept and it is used by the fuqaha generally i.e. that in the Isnad there are no narrators that have been charged with lying and it is not a Shadh (irregular) hadith. These are two types:*

*First: a hadith whose Isnad is not free from transmitters who are Mastur (of hidden condition) and whose capacity is not realized. However, they are not negligent and are not prone to make mistakes and nor are they charged with mendacity. The matn of the hadith may have been narrated by someone at a similar level to him due to which it will not be included as Shadh (irregular) or Munkar (rejected)....”* End.

Also the following came in Muqaddimah Ibn al-Salah:

*“It became abundantly clear that there are two subcategories of Hadith-Hassan:*

*One: the hadith, the isnad of which includes an outwardly acceptable individual (Mastur) whose suitability has not been confirmed, yet this individual is not careless, prone to make mistakes in what he transmits, nor is accused of lying in hadith; that is, he manifests neither the practice of deliberately lying in Hadith nor any other reason for vitiating his integrity. In addition, it has become known that a text like that of the hadith or one similar to it has been*

transmitted through one or more different lines of transmissions. In this way the hadith is reinforced by parallelism of someone else being in conformity with its transmitter with something like it or by another witness to it; that is the appearance of another hadith with a similar text. This way the possibility that it Shadh (irregular) or Munkar (rejected) is excluded. The remarks of Tirmidhi on this subcategory descends ...” **End.**

He also said:

*“... Not every weakness in the Hadith is eliminated by the hadith coming from different lines of transmission. Rather the situation varies: one weakness which the passage of the hadith through different lines of transmission eliminates the weakness which arises from some deficiency in the retention of its transmitter, when he is otherwise veracious and pious. When we saw the hadith he related also came from another line of transmission, we realize that it is one of the hadith that he had retained properly, and that his accuracy in it was not impaired ...” End.*

**Accordingly, one should not rush to judge weakness on Ahadith merely by the presence in the Sanad of a Mastur person or a man with deficiency in retention... but other narrations should be studied to find out Shawahid (Witnesses) and Mutabaat (Follow-ups)... However, it should be pointed out that the strengthening of the Ahadith via (Witnesses) and Mutabaat (Follow-ups) is a delicate matter that lack knowledge and comprehension of the science of Hadith and the details of narrations and of invalidation and attestation of reliability (al-Jarh wa Ta'dil). Because not all follow-ups or witnesses are sufficient to strengthen the Hadith, but it must exist in them conditions to be considerable and appropriate to mend the impairment and to judge on the Hadith as acceptable.**

I hope this subject has become clear Bi'ithnillah.

Your brother,

**Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah**

23<sup>rd</sup> Shawwal 1437 AH

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**The link to the answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/AmeerhtAtabinKhalil/photos/a.122855544578192.1073741828.122848424578904/503783096485433/?type=3&theater>

**The link to the answer from the Ameer's Google Plus page:**

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/100431756357007517653/100431756357007517653/posts/Dk4vVJst8gG>

**The link to the answer from the Ameer's Twitter page:**

<https://twitter.com/ataabualrashtah/status/760873744520843264?lang=ar>