

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Answer to Question

The Hadiths of the Work of Magic (Sihr) on the Prophet (saw) is Rejected in terms of Meaning (diraya) because it Contradicts the Concept of Infallibility (I'sma) of Prophethood

To: Rabi' Al-Rabi'

(Translated)

Question:

Assalam Alaikum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh

My dear brother, my question is about the Hadith of Labid bin Al-A'sam and the magic (sihr) performed on the Prophet, does the Hadith undermine the infallibility (I'sma) of Prophethood?

Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ * إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ﴾ **“Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination * It is not but a revelation revealed”** [An-Najm: 3-4]. He (swt) says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾ **“O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people”** [Al-Ma'ida: 67]. And He (swt) says: ﴿إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا﴾ **“When the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic.”** [Al-Isra: 47]. So, is the Hadith narrated by Aisha that Labid bin Al-A'sam performed magic on the Prophet rejected in meaning (diraya) because it contradicts infallibility (I'sma)?

May Allah (swt) guide you to what is good and to establishing the Khilafah (Caliphate), and that you will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection with the Prophets, the truthful ones, the righteous and the martyrs, may Allah (swt) protect you, our Sheikh.

Answer:

Wa Alaikum Assalam Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh

First: Yes, the Hadith is rejected in meaning. To be rejected in meaning (diraya), means the following:

It is mentioned in *The Islamic Personality* Volume 1, p. 188:

(... Rather, the matter is that if a Hadith contradicts what came in the Qur'an, which is definite in meaning, then the Hadith will be rejected in meaning (diraya) i.e., the text, because its meaning contradicts the Qur'an...)

In *The Islamic Personality* Volume 3, page 93 under the heading “Conditions for Accepting Khabar Ahad”, mentions:

(Khabar Ahad is accepted if it fulfills its conditions; in narration (riwaya) and meaning (diraya) ... As for the conditions for accepting Khabar Ahad in terms of meaning (diraya), it means that it must not contradict what is stronger than it, like a verse or a mutawaatir Hadith or well-known Hadith...)

Second: To further clarify the issue, I will mention the following points:

1- The Messenger (saw) is infallible (ma'soom) from carrying out any forbidden (Haram) and disliked (Makrooh) actions, and the evidence for that is definitive. Everything that the Messenger (saw) does is a revelation from Allah (swt), whether it is obligatory (fardh), recommended (mandoub) or permitted (mubah). Allah (swt) says: ﴿إِن تَتَّبِعْ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ﴾ **"I only follow that which is revealed to me"** [Al-Ahqaf: 9]. And He (swt) says: ﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا﴾ **"Say, "I only follow what is revealed to me from my Lord"** [Al-A'raf: 203]. In addition, he (saw) is an example to Muslims, and He (swt) says: ﴿وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا﴾ **"And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty"** [Al-Hashr: 7]. And He (swt) says: ﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ﴾ **"Say, [O Muhammad], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you"** [Aal-i-Imran: 31]. Likewise, everything that the Messenger (saw) says, whether it is a command or a prohibition, it is a revelation from Allah (swt).

2- Yes, as you mentioned in your question, they accused the Messenger, of being subject to the work of magic, and the Qur'an replied to them with what indicates that the Messenger (saw) is neither bewitched nor becomes affected by magic (sihr). In Surat Al-Isra, Allah (swt) says: ﴿نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا﴾ **"We are most knowing of how they listen to it when they listen to you and [of] when they are in private conversation, when the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic."** [Al-Isra: 47]. Al-Qurtubi says in his interpretation of this noble verse: (... they listened to the Prophet recite the Qur'an. And they get repulsed away and say: He is a magician and is affected by magic (sihr), as Allah (swt) mentioned about them. Qatada and others narrated it. ﴿وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ﴾ "...when they are in private conversation" [Al-Isra: 47] that is, they discuss privately your affair. Qatada said: Their private conversation (najwa) was their saying that he (saw) is insane, that he (saw) is a sorcerer, and that he (saw) relates legends of the previous people, among other things. And it was said that it was revealed: when he (saw) invited the notables of Quraysh to the food that he (saw) made for them, and the Prophet entered to them, and he (saw) recited Qur'an to them and called them to Allah. They spoke privately and said that he (saw) is a magician and is insane.

It is said: The Prophet (saw) ordered Ali to prepare food and invite the notables of Quraysh from the polytheists. Ali did that, the Prophet (saw) came to them and recited Qur'an to them and called them to Tawheed, He (saw) said: ﴿قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لِنُطِيعَكُمُ الْعَرَبَ وَتَدِينُ لَكُمْ﴾ **"Say: There is no god but Allah, the Arabs will obey you and the non-Arabs will follow your Deen."** They refused. They used to listen (Qur'an) from the Prophet (saw), and say among themselves, he is a sorcerer, and he is bewitched. Thus, the verse was revealed. Al-Zajjaj said: An-Najwa (private talk) is a name for the source (masdar), that is, while they hold private (najwa) talks, meaning secrets ﴿إِذْ يَقُولُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾ **"When the wrongdoers say"** [Al-Isra: 47] that is, Abu Jahl and al-Walid ibn al-Mughirah and their likes. ﴿إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا﴾ **"You follow not but a man affected by magic."** [Al-Furqan: 8]. That is to say, a person who has been affected by magic, so he is confused about things. They said that in order to drive people away from him (saw).) End

The wording of the text (mantouq) of the noble verse is a response to what they used to say about the Messenger (saw), that He is affected by magic, and the meaning of the verse (mafhoum) is that the Messenger (saw), is not bewitched and does not get bewitched.

This is mentioned also in Surat Al-Furqan, in Allah's (swt) saying: ﴿وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِ مَلَكًا فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا * أَوْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن

﴿تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا * أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا﴾ **“And they say, "What is this messenger that eats food and walks in the markets? Why was there not sent down to him an angel so he would be with him a warner? * Or [why is not] a treasure presented to him [from heaven], or does he [not] have a garden from which he eats?" And the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic." * Look how they strike for you comparisons; but they have strayed, so they cannot [find] a way”** [Al-Furqan:7-9]. The wording of the text (mantouq) of the noble verse is also a response to what they used to say about the Messenger (saw), that he is bewitched, and the meaning of the verse is that the Messenger (saw) is not bewitched and does not get affected by magic.

3- The punishment for a sorcerer in Islam is death, and the evidences for this are numerous and are well-known.

- Al-Hakim narrated in Al-Mustadrak from the two Sahihs, and he said this is a Hadith with a sahih chain of narrators (sanad): On the authority of Jundub Al-Khair, he said: The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: «حَدَّثَ السَّاحِرِ ضَرْبَةً بِالسَّيْفِ» **“The punishment given to a magician is a stroke with the sword.”**

- It was stated in Musnad Al -Shafi'i: Sufian informed us, on the authority of Amr ibn Dinar, that he heard of his condition. He said: Omar (ra) wrote, “kill every magician, male or female.” He said: we killed three magicians”. He told us that Hafsa (ra), the Prophet's wife killed a slave-girl who performed black magic on her.

Thus, the punishment of the sorcerer in the well-known sense of magic, is this punishment of death.

Third: Now we answer your question about the Hadith which says that Labid bin Al-A'sam bewitched the Messenger (saw), the Hadith is:

Muslim narrated from Aisha (ra) that she said: Magic was placed on Allah's Messenger by a Jew from the Jews of Bani Zuraiq, he was called: Labid bin Al-A'sam. so that he began to imagine that he had done something although he had not. One day, or one night, while he was with me, he invoked Allah and invoked for a long period and then said, «يَا عَائِشَةَ أَشَعْرَتِ أَنْ اللَّهُ أَفْتَانِي فِيمَا اسْتَفْتَيْتُهُ فِيهِ؟ جَاءَنِي رَجُلَانِ فَقَعَدَ أَحَدُهُمَا عِنْدَ رَأْسِي وَالْآخَرُ عِنْدَ رِجْلِي، فَقَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَ رَأْسِي لِلَّذِي عِنْدَ رِجْلِي، أَوِ الَّذِي عِنْدَ رِجْلِي لِلَّذِي عِنْدَ رَأْسِي: مَا وَجَعَ الرَّجُلُ؟ قَالَ: مَطْبُوبٌ، قَالَ: مَنْ طَبَّهُ؟ قَالَ: لَبِيدُ بْنُ الْأَعْصَمِ، قَالَ: فِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ؟ قَالَ: فِي مُشْطٍ وَمُشَاطَةٍ، قَالَ: وَجَفَّ طَلْعَةٌ ذَكَرَ، قَالَ: فَأَيْنَ هُوَ؟ قَالَ: فِي بِنْرِ ذِي أَرْوَانَ» قَالَتْ: فَأَتَاهَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي أَنَاسٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: «يَا عَائِشَةُ وَاللَّهِ لَكَ أَنَّ مَاءَهَا نُفَاعَةُ الْحِنَاءِ، وَلَكِنَّ نَخْلَهَا رُغُوسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ» قَالَتْ فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا أَحْرَقْتَهُ؟ قَالَ: «لَا أَمَّا» **O `Aisha! Do you know that Allah has instructed me regarding the matter I asked Him about? “Two men came to me; one of them sat near my head and the other sat near my feet. The one by my head said to the one by my feet, or the opposite, 'What is the disease of this man?' The other replied, 'He is under the effect of magic.' The first one asked, 'Who has worked magic on him?' The other replied, 'Labid bin Al-A'sam, a Jew from the tribe of Bani Zuraiq.' The (first one asked), 'With what has it been done?' The other replied, 'With a comb and the hair stuck to it and a skin of the pollen of a male datepalm tree.' The first one asked, 'Where is it?' The other replied, 'In the well of Dharwan.' Then the Prophet went along with some of his companions. Then he returned to me and said, 'By Allah the water of that well was (red) like the infusion of Henna leaves and its date-palms were like the heads of devils" I said, O Allah's Messenger: Did you burn it?" He said, 'No! As for me Allah has cured me and I was afraid that (by Showing that to the people) I would spread evil among them when he ordered that the well be filled up with earth, and it was filled up with earth.”**

Looking at this Hadith, it becomes clear that it contradicts the following matters: 1- It contradicts the infallibility (I'sma) of the Messenger (saw). This Hadith shows that the Messenger (saw) was bewitched, and he imagined that he did something that he did not do, or that he performs a specific action, for example, if he prayed Zuhur prayer, for example,

but he did not pray it, or the like. Of course, this results in the Messenger performing certain actions that are not from revelation. And all of this contradicts the fact that the Messenger (saw), was infallible in his actions and sayings because of revelation.

2- This is in addition to the fact that the Messenger (saw), did not kill the magician, Labid bin Al-A'sam, and he was a hypocrite as it came in Al-Bukhari, meaning that the rules of Islam should be applied to him. The jurists, although they differed over the killing of a dhimmi magician, but there had no disagreement about killing a Muslim magician, on their terms. Labid was a Muslim in appearance, so the rules of Islam are applicable to him. However, he was not killed according to the narrations on that.

3- The contradiction with the meaning of the noble verses.

In Surat Al-Isra, Allah (swt) says: ﴿نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَسْتَمِعُونَ بِهِ إِذْ يَسْتَمِعُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِذْ هُمْ نَجْوَىٰ إِذْ يَقُولُ﴾
﴿الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا﴾ **"We are most knowing of how they listen to it when they listen to you and [of] when they are in private conversation, when the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic." [Al-Isra: 47]. And His (swt) saying in Surat Al-Furqan: ﴿وَقَالُوا مَالِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا * أَوْ يُنْفِثُ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزًا * أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا * انظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا﴾ **"And they say, "What is this messenger that eats food and walks in the markets? Why was there not sent down to him an angel so he would be with him a warner? * Or [why is not] a treasure presented to him [from heaven], or does he [not] have a garden from which he eats?" And the wrongdoers say, "You follow not but a man affected by magic." * Look how they strike for you comparisons; but they have strayed, so they cannot [find] a way" [Al-Furqan:7-9]. As we clarified above in the point "Second-2".****

Accordingly, this Hadith and every Hadith with a Sahih chain of narrators that states that the Messenger (saw), was affected by magic (sihr), is rejected in meaning (diraya) i.e. he was not bewitched... This is because if the Hadith has a valid chain of transmission, but it contradicts the definite verse, it will be rejected in meaning (diraya).

I hope that this is sufficient, and Allah is All-Knowing and Most Wise.

Your Brother,

Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah

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

<https://www.facebook.com/HT.AtaabuAlrashtah/posts/pfbid09kMfFeUqr3bqJBVjsDRGaK8HzrnSa4sp2q45hezo2uo1RWJxsGA5ERuT2JUtercpl>