

Did Abu Hurairah *Mudalis*?: A Critique of Mahmud Abu Rayya's View of Thoughts

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Abstract

This article discusses Mahmud Abu Rayya's thoughts regarding his criticism of Abu Hurairah. He argues that Abu Hurairah is not a *Sahabah* (Companion of the Prophet) whose Hadiths can be accepted without question because, in his view, Companions could make mistakes in narrating Hadiths. Therefore, the authors analyze these thoughts using a critical approach to obtain valid data for evaluating his perspective. In conclusion, the authors found several enlightening findings that shed light on the accusations made by Abu Rayya against Abu Hurairah. He misunderstood the terminology used in scholarly discussions and confused the concepts of *tadlis* and *mursal sahabi*. It is important to distinguish between these two terms because *mursal* narrations from reliable *Sahabah* are considered valid and accepted in the field of Hadith scholarship. Therefore, the accusation against Abu Hurairah can not be justified for several reasons. Firstly, Abu Hurairah is a Companion, and all scholars unanimously agree on the trustworthiness of the Prophet's Companions. Secondly, he misunderstood the term '*tadlis*,' leading to an incorrect conclusion about Abu Hurairah's actions.

Keywords: Abu Hurairah; *mudalis*; Abu Rayya; thoughts

Introduction

The Companions (Sahabah) were the first to convey the message to us, and that is why the ummah (Muslim community) unanimously agreed on their righteousness.¹ They were the ones who heard the revelation from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), sat in his circles, and dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of inviting people to Allah, establishing the foundations of Islam, and preserving the noble Shariah (Islamic law).² The noble Companion Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of the prominent Companions who narrated Hadith from the trustworthy Messenger (peace be upon him),³ offering numerous reports that were transmitted by the followers (tabi'in) from him.⁴ He was the Companion with the most narrated traditions from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Due to this, enemies of Islam and some people of desire directed their arrows of criticism toward him. They declared a relentless war against him, attacked him, accused him of some issues that were narrated by him, and mocked some of his narrations, to the extent that some of them placed him among the liars and fabricators, and in the category of the inhabitants of Hellfire.⁵

Consequently, Mahmud Abu Rayya came to condemn Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) in his work '*Adwa' ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*' (Lights on the Muhammadan Sunnah). Abu Rayya chastised Abu Hurairah for the volume of his narrations. He found that strange because Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) had only been with the Prophet (peace be upon him) for three years.⁶ He also reported that the Companions disgraced Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) by accusing him of lying. Aisha, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman,

¹ Sulaiman Abdullah al-Asqar, *Al-Wadiah fi Usul al-Fiqh* (Amman: Dar al-Nafa'is, 2001), 131.

² Hamid Pongoliu, "The Existence of the Statement of the Companions (Fatwa Sahaba) and its Hujjah in Islamic Legal Thoughts," *Al-Ahkam* 2.29 (2019), 190.

³ Fuad Jabali, *The Companions of the Prophet: A Study of Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 13.

⁴ Zainuddin Abdurahman bin al-Husaen al-'Iraqi, *Al-Taqyid wa al-Idhah Sharh Muqadiman Ibn Salah* (Madinah al-Munawarah: Shahib al-Maktabah as-Salafiyah, 1969), 333.

⁵ Abu Ja'far bin Muhammad bin Salamah bin Abdulmalik, *Sharh al-Ma'ani al-Athar* (Madinah al-Munawarah: 'Alimul Kutb, 1994), 320.

⁶ G. H. A. Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 532.

and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) are said to have discredited him.⁷

Abu Rayya states in his book, “People did not differ in anyone’s name - whether in the pre-Islamic era or during Islam - as they differed in the name of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him). No one truly knows the name by which his family called him, for he was known among the people by another name.”⁸ He intends to diminish the significance of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) by suggesting that he was not well-known among his Companions to the extent that even his name was a subject of disagreement. Similarly, in his book ‘*Shaykh al-Madrasah Abu Hurairah*,’ he aims to conduct a comprehensive historical study of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) from all angles, in order to present the true nature of this renowned Companion’s personality to the public.⁹

Abu Rayya claimed in his book that Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) engaged in the practice of ‘*tadlis*’. He mentioned, “Scholars of Hadith have mentioned that Abu Hurairah used to engage in *tadlis*, and *tadlis*, as they defined it, is when a narrator attributes statements to someone they met or accompanied, even though they did not actually hear those statements from them. *Tadlis* take various forms, and their rulings are universally condemned. Many scholars have criticized *tadlis*, and *Shu’bah*, in particular, strongly rejected it, saying, “Committing adultery is more beloved to me than engaging in *tadlis*.” He also said, “*Tadlis* is a sibling of lying.”¹⁰

It should be noted that the claim made by him regarding Abu Hurairah’s involvement in *tadlis* is a matter of scholarly debate, and it is not universally accepted among scholars. Different opinions exist regarding the authenticity and reliability of the narrations attributed to Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with

⁷ Mustafa al-Sibay, *Al-Sunnah wa Makanatuha fi al-Tashri’i al-Islami* (Kaherah: Dar al-Salam, 2012), 318.

⁸ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah* (Kaherah: Dar al-Ma’rifah, 1994), 179; Mahmud Abu Raya, *Shaykh al-Madrasah Abu Hurairah* (Beirut: Muasasah al-‘Alami, 1993), 48.

⁹ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, 11.

¹⁰ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, 175.

him).¹¹ Therefore, this writing is important because a Companion became a central figure in confirming that this religion truly originated with the Messenger, and Abu Hurairah was the Companion who narrated the majority of the Hadith. Thus, it is necessary to confirm his authenticity as a narrator of the Prophet's Hadith.

Mahmud Abu Rayya

Mahmud Abu Rayya was born in Kafr El-Mandara, Aja Center, Dakahlia Governorate, on December 15, 1889.¹² He spent most of his life in the city of Mansoura until he moved to Giza in 1957 and resided there until his death.¹³ He pursued both secular and religious education, attending primary schools, secondary schools, and religious institutes. He passed away on December 11, 1971, in Giza.¹⁴ He devoted his entire life to producing articles and publishing themes relating to the science of the Quran, the science of Hadith, the science of literature, and for the magazine '*Al-Risalah*.'¹⁵ The development of his thought, which he expressed in his writings, caused debate and rejection from many scholars. According to Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Shaibah's book '*Difa' 'ala al-Sunnah*': During Ramadan 1364 AH (August 1945 AD), Mahmud Abu Rayya published an article titled *al-Hadith al-Muhammadi* in *al-Risalah* magazine, issue number 633. He shared his thoughts on many elements of Hadith and said that it was a

¹¹ Nurkholis Sofwan, "Kontroversi Pemikiran Hadits Mahmud Abu Rayyah: Sebuah Kajian Kritis-Komparatif," *Al Ashriyyah* 5.2 (2019), 32. <https://doi.org/10.53038/alashriyyah.v5i2.93..>

¹² Muhammad Sobirin, "Hermeneutika Hadis Mahmud Abu Rayyah dalam Kitab Adhwa 'ala al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyah (Kajian 'Adalah al-Sahabah)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 15.1 (2014), 115.

¹³ Al-Sayyid Murtada al-Radwi, *Ma'a Rijal al-Fikri fi al-Qahirah* (Beirut: al-Irsyad, 1998), 132.

¹⁴ Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadith*, 532.

¹⁵ The articles published by Mahmud Abu Rayya in *al-Risalah* magazine are as follows: *fi al-Hadith al-Muhammadi* (On Prophetic Hadiths), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 928, Date: 16/4/1951; *Abu Bakr as-Siddiq* (Abu Bakr as-Siddiq), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 518, Date: 7/6/1943; *Wahey al-Quran* (The Revelation of the Quran), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 538, Date: 25/10/1943; *Fi al-Hadith al-Muhammadi* (On Prophetic Hadiths), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 930, Date: 30/4/1951; *Walid ibn 'Uqbah fi Kitab 'Uthman* (Walid ibn 'Uqbah in the Book of 'Uthman), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 854, Date: 14/11/1949; *I'qaratu al-Imam* (The Genius of the Imam), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 543, Date: 29/11/1943; *Kayfa 'Araft al-Rafi'i* (How I Knew al-Rafi'i), *al-Risalah* Magazine, Issue 516, Date: 24/5/1943. These are some of the topics that Abu Rayya may have published in *al-Risalah* magazine.

synopsis of a forthcoming book. When I read it, I noticed certain deviations from the truth and correctness. So I picked up a pen and composed a response, which I forwarded to al-Risalah, and it was published in issue 632. “Since the piece is a summary of a forthcoming book, I urge the professor to reconsider some of the facts that have become apparent to him,” I stated at the end of my response. “He should thoroughly and methodically revise the book.¹⁶ The science of Hadith is not easy, and studying it necessitates patience, precision, scrutiny, and meticulousness.”¹⁷

Then, in al-Risalah journal, issue 654, Abu Rayya responded to Muhammad Abu Shaibha’s critique. He stated in the preface to his response that Abu Shaibha’s article “*draws towards the truth and seeks it, and it deserves attention and warrants a response.*” Subsequently, in 1958, he was hesitant to publish the chapters of his book, called *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah* (Lights on the Muhammadan Sunnah). This book received a positive response from an Egyptian intellectual, Taha Husein, who said: “Those who read this book with a contemplative approach will notice the author’s profound effort, which enabled him to endure years of reading a vast array of books that researchers can barely delve into due to the abundance of chains of narration, repetition, the multiplicity of narrations, confusion, and frequent repetition of the same information in different contexts.”¹⁸

Abu Rayya also wrote other book on the title *Shaykh al-Madira Abu Hurairah*, this book is a chapter from his book *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, which garnered widespread notice and had a considerable impact throughout the Islamic world, according to the introduction to the first edition. It was unparalleled for any other work in our era, with the exception of Taha Hussein’s book *Fi al-Shi’r al-Jahili* (On Pre-Islamic Poetry).¹⁹ It is in this book that Abu Rayya criticizes Abu Hurairah,

¹⁶ Jamal Ahmed Bashier Badi, Saadeldin Mansour Gasmelsid, and Alhafidh Nasution, “The Challenge to Mahmoud Abu Rayyah’s Thoughts on The Significance of Abu Hurairah and Ka’b Al-Ahbar in Hadith Narration,” *Journal of Hadith Studies* 9.2 (2024), 3.

¹⁷ Muhammad bin Muhammad Abu Syaibah, *Difa’ ‘an al-Sunnah wa Radi Shubhah al-Mustashriqin al-Kitab al-Mu’ashirin wa Bayanu al-Shubhah al-Waridah ‘ala al-Sunnah Qadiman wa Hadithan* (Kaherah: Maktab al-Sunnah, 1989), 34.

¹⁸ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Adwa’ ‘ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, 6.

¹⁹ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Shaykh al-Madira Abu Hurairah*, 10.

including his doubts about Abu Hurairah's narration of Hadith, accusations of insincerity in his conversion to Islam, and his closeness to Muawiyah, which seemed to support the Umayya political agenda.²⁰

This title *Shaykh al-Madirah Abu Hurairah* is based on his study, which *al-Madirah* was one of the greatest food provided back then, under the reign of Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan. When Abu Hurairah denounced it, people began to call him by that name. Since then, he has continued to use this nickname, which has sparked conversation among others. It was cited in historical texts by eminent academics and authors, including al-Zamakhshari in *Rabi' al-Abrar* and *Asas al-Balaghah*, as well as Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani in his *Maqamat*. In a special chapter titled *al-Maqamah al-Mudayriyah* (The Mudayriyah Maqamah), Muhammad Abduh clarified the issue and the stance of his shaykh and offered a scathing assessment of his support for Muawiyah.²¹

Understanding the *Tadlis* Concept in the Perspective of Hadith Science

Before delving into this discussion (debating whether or not Abu Hurairah was a *mudalis*, perhaps the reader should first understand what is meant by *tadlis* (fabrication of Hadith). Why was this issue important? Because what Abu Rayya understood as *tadlis* could be incorrect. What Abu Hurairah transmitted may not be considered *tadlis* but instead falls under the category of *Marasil al-Sahabah* (uninterrupted transmission from the Companions). As for the concept of *tadlis* according to Ibn Salah, it can be divided into two categories:

- i. *Tadlis al-Isnad*, which means narrating from someone whom you did not hear from, pretending that you heard it from them, or narrating from someone whom you contemporaneously lived with, pretending that you met them and heard it from them. There may be one or more intermediaries between the narrator and the original source. In such cases, the narrator should not say, "So-and-so informed us" or "So-and-so narrated to us," but

²⁰ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Shaykh al-Madirah Abu Hurairah*, 11.

²¹ Mahmud Abu Raya, *Shaykh al-Madirah Abu Hurairah*, 5.

rather say, “So-and-so said” or “From So-and-so.” An example of this is: “We did not narrate from Ali ibn Khushram, who said: “We were with Ibn Ayyinah,” and he said, “al-Zuhri.” It was said to him, “Did al-Zuhri narrate to you?” He remained silent, then he said, “al-Zuhri said.” It was said to him, “Did you hear it from al-Zuhri?” He said, “No, I did not hear it from al-Zuhri, nor from anyone who heard it from al-Zuhri. Abdul Razzaq narrated it to me from Ma’mar from al-Zuhri.”²²

- ii. *Tadlis al-Shuyukh* refers to narrating a Hadith from a shaykh (a senior scholar) as if one heard it directly from them, but in reality, they did not. The narrator may use the shaykh’s name, nickname, attribute the narration to them, or describe them in a way that misleads others into thinking that they had a direct encounter with the shaykh. An example of this would be: “It was narrated to us from Abu Bakr ibn Mujahid al-Imam al-Muqri.” He narrated from Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Abi Dawud al-Sajistani, who said: “Abdullah ibn Abi Abdullah narrated to us.” And he narrated from Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Naqash al-Mufassir al-Muqri’, who said: “Muhammad ibn Sanaad narrated to us.” In this example, the narrator attributed the narration to his grandfather, but only Allah knows the truth of the matter.²³

As for the first category, it is strongly disapproved and criticized by most scholars, and Shu’bah was among those who strongly condemned it. It is narrated from Imam al-Shafi’i that he said, “*Tadlis is the sibling of lying.*”²⁴ It is also narrated from him that he said, “Committing adultery is more beloved to me than engaging in *tadlis.*”²⁵ These statements reflect an extreme stance

²² Abu Abdullah Badr al-Din, *Al-Minhal al-Raqi fi Mukhtashar ‘Ulum al-Hadith al-Nabawi*, ed. Muhyiddin Abdurahman Ramadhan (Damaskus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1306), 1:169.

²³ Ibn Salah, *Ma`rifatu anwa` ‘Ulum al-Hadith* (Muqqadimah Ibn al-Salah), ed. Nur al-Adin Atr (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, n.d.), 74.

²⁴ Abu Na’im Ahmad bin Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Ishaq bin Musa, *Hulyah al-Awliyai wa Thabaqat al-Ashfiyai* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-‘Arabi, 1978), 107.

²⁵ Abu Said bin al-‘Arabi Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Ziyad bin Basyar, *Mu`jam Ibn al-Arabi* (Saudi: Dar ibn al-Jauzi, 1997), 986.

emphasizing the severity and prohibition of this practice. However, scholars differed in accepting narrations from those known for practicing *tadlis*. A group of Hadith scholars and jurists deemed them unreliable and their narrations weakened. They stated that such narrations should not be accepted unless the narrators clarify that they heard directly from the source or indicate otherwise.²⁶

The correct and detailed view is that if a person known for practicing *tadlis* narrates a Hadith using ambiguous wording that does not indicate direct hearing or contact, then the ruling on that narration is similar to that of a *mursal* Hadith (a Hadith with an interrupted chain of narrators) and its various categories. However, if the person narrates the Hadith using explicit wording indicating direct hearing or contact, such as “I heard (*sami`tu*),” “he informed us (*hadathsana*),” “he told us (*akhbarana*).” Their equivalents, then the narration is accepted and can be used as evidence.

In the authentic Hadith collections, including Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, and other reliable books of Hadith, there are numerous narrations from scholars who have been accused of *tadlis*, such as Qatadah, al-A'mash, the two Sufyans (Sufyan al-Thauri and Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah), Hisham ibn Bashir, and others. This is because *tadlis* is not considered lying but rather a form of creating an impression through ambiguous wording. The ruling is that the narrations of a person known for practicing *tadlis* are not accepted until they provide clear evidence of having heard directly from their sources. This is the view attributed to Imam al-Shafi'i, may Allah be pleased with him, regarding those individuals whom we know to have practiced *tadlis* at least once.²⁷ Now, we will attempt to examine whether Abu Hurairah was known for practicing *tadlis* or not.

And the opinion of al-Hakim in his book *Ma`rifat `Ulum al-Hadith* was quoted as follows: “According to us, there are six types of *tadlis*.” These are the six branches of *tadlis* mentioned by him: (1). *Tadlis* in the chain of narrators: It involves narrating a Hadith from someone without mentioning that the narrator heard it directly from them, creating an impression that the narration is

²⁶ Ibn Salah, *Ma`rifatu anwa` `Ulum al-Hadith*, 74–75.

²⁷ Ibn Salah, *Ma`rifatu anwa` `Ulum al-Hadith*, 75.

direct. (2). *Tadlis* in numbers: It involves changing the numbers in the narration to give the impression that the Hadith is widely transmitted and reported, even if it is not actually the case. (3). *Tadlis* in wording: It involves changing the wording in the narration to convey a different meaning from what the narrator heard. (4). *Tadlis* in time: It involves changing the time or period in which the Hadith is claimed to have occurred to give the impression that it happened at a specific time. (5). *Tadlis* in place: It involves changing the location where the Hadith is claimed to have occurred to give the impression that it originated from a specific place. (6). *Tadlis* in circumstance: It involves changing the circumstances or conditions surrounding the Hadith to give the impression that it happened in a particular situation. These are the six types of *tadlis* mentioned by al-Hakim in his book *Ma`rifat `Ulum al-Hadith*.²⁸

Whether Abu Rayya Considered Abu Hurairah to be a *Mudalis*?

Meanwhile, according to Abu Rayya, the definition of *tadlis* is that a narrator (al-rawi) narrates from someone he met something that he did not hear directly from him, or from someone he contemporaneously lived with without directly hearing it from him.²⁹ With this definition, he argued Abu Hurairah had committed *tadlis* because he is characterized by narrating from other Companions without mentioning the name of the person from whom he heard the narration. Then, he attributes it directly to the Prophet Muhammad. However, when the authenticity of the Hadith is scrutinized, he is forced to mention the person from whom they heard it.³⁰ When confronted or challenged, he often cites a deceased individual as his source, as he did in narrating the Hadith about waking up in a state of impurity: “Whoever wakes up in a state of impurity.”³¹

²⁸ Al-Hakim, *Ma`rifatu `Ulum al-Hadith*, ed. Ni`dzam Husaen (Beirut: Dar al-Qutub al-`Ilmi, 1971), 164.

²⁹ Mahmud, *Adwa' `ala al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah*, 175; Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madira Abu Hurairah*, 124-125.

³⁰ Engkus Kusnandar, “Studi Kritis atas Pemikiran Hadis Mahmud Abu Rayyah: Riwayat bi al-Ma`na, Kredibilitas Abu Hurayrah Tentang Kolektor Hadis Terbanyak,” *Diya Al-Afkar: Jurnal Studi al-Quran dan al-Hadis* 10.1 (2023), 97.

³¹ Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madira Abu Hurairah*, 125.

Abu Rayya said:

Abu Hurairah's method in narrating Hadiths was to attribute everything he narrated directly to the Prophet Muhammad, whether he had heard it from the Prophet or taught it to other Companions or followers, without distinguishing between the two during narration. He did not mention the names of those from whom he learned the narrations that were not from the Prophet. This practice is considered tampering (*tadlis*) according to the scholars of Hadith. Therefore, what he narrated from this category of narrations falls under the category of *mursal* (incomplete chain of narration), as scholars have established that Abu Hurairah sometimes narrated Hadiths without having heard them directly from the Prophet due to his late conversion to Islam. Instead, he learned them from other Companions or followers.³²

He quotes a number of scholars' opinions to back up his claim, including those of Qutaibah, al-Zahabi, and several others. Ibn Qutaibah stated in his book *Ta'wil Mukhtalif al-Hadith* that Abu Hurairah used to say, "The Messenger of Allah said such and such," even though he heard it from a trustworthy person who was present with the Prophet. Abu Hurairah would narrate it as if he heard it directly from the Prophet. Similarly, Ibn Abbas and other Companions would do the same.³³ Al-Zahabi mentioned in *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'* that Yazid ibn Ibrahim said, "I heard Shu'bah saying, Abu Hurairah used to engage in *tadlis*."³⁴ Al-Zahabi then said that there is no fault or bad reputation attached to the *tadlis* of

³² Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madirah Abu Hurairah*, 123.

³³ Ibn Qutaybah, *Ta'wil Mukhtalif fi Hadith*, ed. Muhammad Zuhri al-Najar (Beirut: Muasisah al-Risalah, 1975), 30.

³⁴ Al-Zahabi, *Sair A'lam al-Nubala'*, ed. Syuib al-Arnaud (Beirut: Muasisah al-Risalah, 1975), 2:607; Abdullah bin Yusuf al-Jadi', *Tahrir 'Ulum al-Hadith* (Beirut: Muasisah al-Risalah, 2003), 2:938.

the Companions.³⁵ The statement of Yazid ibn Harun, which Shu'ba heard in another narration, is also mentioned in its complete form as found in the book *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*. Yazid ibn Harun said: "I heard Shu'ba saying: Abu Hurairah used to do *tadlis*." This narration was reported by Ibn Asakir. Shu'bah was referring to his narration of the Hadith: "Whoever wakes up in a state of *janabah*, fasting is not obligatory for him." When it was scrutinized, he said: "Someone informed me about it, and I did not hear it directly from the Messenger of Allah."³⁶

It is necessary for us to briefly discuss the idea of *mursal hadith* and the differences between the scholars of Hadith and jurisprudence regarding its usage as evidence because it has been established that Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) was a *mudalis* and the Hadiths narrated by the *mudalis* are referred to as *mursal* by the scholars of Hadith. This is so that we can fully comprehend Abu Hurairah's (may Allah be pleased with him) history from all angles, as arguments about the *Mursal* Hadith are strongly tied to the question of fabrication.³⁷ Therefore, according to Abu Rayya opinion, all forms of *tadlis* are condemned without exception. He references an argument in order to substantiate his point that the quote attributed to Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, "*tadlis* is the sibling of lying," and his other quote, "To commit adultery is more beloved to me than to engage in falsehood," show how strongly he disapproved of lying. These assertions underline the seriousness of the problem and stress the value of being truthful and honest in storytelling and communication.³⁸

Some scholars have gone so far as to say that anyone known for practicing deception should be considered unreliable, and their narrations should be rejected entirely, even if they later admit to

³⁵ What Abu Rayya intended by this comment is unknown to us. In fact, this claim makes it clear that the Companions accepted one another's narrators. "The *tadlis* of the Companions are abundant, but there is no fault in it because their *tadlis* are from those who are greater than them, and all of the Companions are just," al-Zahabi said in response to this question. The companions once attributed Hadith to Abu Hurairah, according to Sharik, who got the information from Mughira, who got it from Ibrahim as a result of its preservation, grandeur, proficiency, and understanding not to mention the fact that someone like Ibn Abbas would sit politely next to him and command. Al-Zahabi, *Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, 608–609.

³⁶ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* (Kaherah: Dar al-Fikr, 1976), 8:109.

³⁷ Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madirah Abu Hurairah*, 124.

³⁸ Al-Khathib al-Baghdadi, *al-Kifayah fi al-Ilmi al-Riwayah* (al-Madinah al-Munawarah: al-Maktabah al-Ilmiyah, n.d.), 355.

hearing the information. The correct view, as emphasized by the scholars of Hadith, is that if a deceptive individual narrates a Hadith with a plausible wording and does not explicitly claim to have heard it, then the narration is not accepted and is considered disconnected (*munqati'*). However, if the deceptive narrator explicitly claims to have heard it, the narration is accepted, provided the narrator is trustworthy. Scholars of Hadith have reached this conclusion through the study and evaluation of narrations and narrators.³⁹

Abu Rayya emphasized that scholars have differed in accepting narrations from individuals known for deception. A group of scholars, including experts in Hadith and jurists, has held that narrations from deceptive individuals should not be accepted under any circumstances, whether or not they explicitly claim to have heard it, because deception implies criticism. Furthermore, a scholar who rejects the criticism of a narrator known for deception would completely reject their narrations, even if they use wording that suggests continuity in the chain of narration. This is in accordance with the opinion of Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him.⁴⁰

However, at the end of his conclusions, if we apply all or some of these criteria (the concept of *tadlis*) to Abu Hurairah, we can determine his position among the narrators in terms of accuracy and integrity, as well as the reliability and authenticity of his narrations.⁴¹ However, no one can apply any criteria to the Companions in general, because, according to the consensus of the majority, they are considered infallible and immune from error. Doubt or suspicion cannot extend to what they narrate.⁴²

³⁹ Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madiraḥ Abu Hurairah*, 127.

⁴⁰ Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madiraḥ Abu Hurairah*, 126.

⁴¹ Febriansyah Martono dan Dadah Saadah, "Geneologi Pemikiran Abu Rayyah," *Dirayah: Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 3.2 (2023), 156–157.

⁴² Mahmud, *Shaykh al-Madiraḥ Abu Hurairah*, 126–127.

The Critique of Abu Rayya's Perspective on Abu Hurairah

Abu Rayya's view of his criticism of Abu Hurairah as a *mudalis* is similar to G. H. A. Joynboll's, which assumes that the fabrication of Hadiths is a common link in the *isnad*, according to him, it is possible that Companions can also be a common link.⁴³ This pattern of criticism has persisted since the emergence of Western Orientalists who began studying Hadith, including Ignác Goldziher and his followers.⁴⁴ However, Abu Rayya went further, arguing that some of the Companions fabricated Hadiths through the practice of *tadlis*. Therefore, the authors will present the scholars' criticisms of his view below.

The response of scholars to criticism in this regard is that the term *ma'sum* (infallible) refers to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) only, but for the Companion the scholars known by *'adalah* because of their firm faith, dedication to piety, noble character, and elevation above trivial matters, as mentioned in the research on the justice of the Companions. Justice of a Companion does not suggest that they are exempt from transgressions, blunders, or inadvertent mistakes.⁴⁵ No qualified Islamic scholar has asserted such protection for them.⁴⁶

While Abu Rayya may claim that the ruling on deception (*tadlis*) is entirely condemnable according to his viewpoint, scholars of Hadith do not see it as universally blameworthy. This is evident in the statement of Ibn Juhayr al-Askalani in his book *Nazhat al-Nazr fi Tawdih Nukhbat al-Fikr fi Mustalah Ahl al-Athar*, where he states that the ruling on someone proven to be involved in deception (*tadlis*), if they are considered just, is that only what they explicitly mention regarding the Hadith should be accepted, based on the most valid opinion. It's important to note that different scholars may have varying views on this matter, and

⁴³ G. H. A. Joynboll, "Some Notes on Islam's First Fuqaha' Distilled from Early Hadith Literature," *Arabica* 39.3 (1992), 288-296.

⁴⁴ A. C. Jonathan Brown, "How We Know Early Hadith Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why It's so Hard to Find," *Islamic Law and Society* 15.2 (2008), 182.

⁴⁵ Serkan Başaran, "The Companions' Understanding of Sunnah: The Example of 'Abd Allah Ibn Mas'ud," *Ilahiyat Studies* 9.1 (2018), 74-75.

⁴⁶ Munandar, "Kritik Pandangan Mahmud Abu Rayyah terhadap Tadwin Hadis," *Shahih (Jurnal Ilmu Kewahyuan)* 2.2 (2020), 1-2.

the acceptance or rejection of narrations from individuals involved in deception depends on their overall credibility and reliability.⁴⁷

The crucial point, as mentioned earlier in the discussion, is that the opinion of Ibn al-Salah is that if the deceiver narrates a valid deception in detail and uses explicit wording to indicate the chain of transmission (such as *sami'tu*, *hadathana*, *akhbarana*, and similar phrases), then it is accepted and can be used as evidence. However, if the deceiver narrates using ambiguous wording without clearly indicating the hearing and transmission, then the ruling on such narration is similar to that of a *mursal* narration and its various categories. In the same context, Abu Abdullah Badr al-Din stated in his book *al-Manhal al-Rawi fi Mukhtasar 'Ulum al-Hadith al-Nabawi*: Deception is highly reprehensible, and its doer is condemned by most scholars. If someone is known for deception, their narration is not accepted, whether or not they explicitly indicate the hearing and transmission. The correct approach is to accept narrations that provide explicit details of the transmission using phrases like 'I heard,' 'he narrated to us,' and the like. This is applicable in the Sahihayn and other authentic collections. This is because this form of deception is not outright lying unless the transmission is not clearly indicated, but rather presented ambiguously. In that case, the ruling would be similar to that of a *mursal* narration, and the same applies to anyone proven to have engaged in deception.⁴⁸ It's important to note that these views represent the perspectives of certain scholars on the matter. There may be differing opinions among scholars regarding the acceptance of narrations from individuals involved in deception.

Regarding the statement of Shu'bah, "Abu Hurairah used to fabricate (*yudalis*) Hadiths," Abdul Rahman ibn Yahya said, "This is a statement attributed to Ibn Kathir in *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*. He presented a word in secret and connected it to this exceptional narrative. I do not know how it is attributed to Yazid.

⁴⁷ Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *Nazhar al-Nadzah fi Tawdihi Nakhbah al-Firk fi Mustalah Ahli al-Athar*, ed. Muhammad bin Dhaif Allah al-Rahili (Riyadh: Muthba'ah Safir, 1322), 221.

⁴⁸ Abdullah Badr al-Din, *Al-Minhal al-Raqi fi Mukhtashar 'Ulum al-Hadith al-Nabawi*, 73.

If the chain of narration is authentic, there might have been some distortion. The original statement could be from Abu Hurairah.⁴⁹

According to Abu Shaibah, Shu'bah's statement indicates that he did not refute the act of *tadlis* in its well-known meaning among scholars of Hadith. Rather, he intended something else that he considered as *tadlis* but not in its commonly understood sense. Ibn Kathir, in his work *al-Bidayah*, mentioned that Ibn Asakir defended Abu Hurairah and refuted what Ibrahim al-Nakha'i said, stating that it was only a view held by a group of people from Kufa, while the majority disagreed with them. Abu Rayya also quotes Ibn Kathir as saying that Shu'bah may be referring to the Hadith that states, "Whoever wakes up in a state of *janabah* (impurity from sexual activity), fasting is not valid for him." When Shu'bah investigated the Hadith, he said, "A transmitter informed me of it, but I did not hear it directly from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him)." In other words, Shu'bah would narrate from some Companions without mentioning their names. This is what is known among scholars of Hadith as *mursal sahabah* (the transmission of a Companion without mentioning his name).⁵⁰ Therefore, Abu Hurairah's act of narrating a tradition that he did not directly hear but that he got from another Companion without mentioning his name is called *mursal sahabi*. Scholars agree that *mursal sahabi* traditions are acceptable, as all Companions are considered fair (just) in terms of their honesty and integrity. Although Abu Hurairah did not directly hear the tradition from the Prophet Muhammad, his status as a trusted Companion lends authority to his narration. Hence, the traditions narrated by Abu Hurairah in the form of *mursal sahabi* are considered valid and acceptable by scholars.

As for his claim regarding the allegation of Abu Hurairah's fabrication (*tadlis*), he may have misunderstood the terminology used by the scholars and confused between 'fabrication' (*tadlis*) and *mursal sahabi*. When researcher read his book *Shaykh al-Madirah*, that found all the evidence he used there was regarding *mursal sahabi*. *Mursal* of a *Sahabi* refers to a narration in which a

⁴⁹ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Ta'rif Ahli al-Taqdis bi Maratibi al-Mawshufin bi al-Tadlis*, ed. Ashim bin Abdullah al-Qurawi (Aman: Maktabah al-Munar, 1973), 38.

⁵⁰ Muhammad bin Abu Syaibah, *Difa' 'an al-Sunnah wa Radi Shubhah al-Mustashriqin al-Kitab al-Mu'ashirin wa Bayanu al-Shubhah al-Waridah 'ala al-Sunnah Qadiman wa Hadithan*, 110.

Sahabah narrates directly from the Prophet Muhammad without hearing it directly from him due to factors such as their young age, late conversion to Islam, or absence during the event being witnessed. Therefore, it seems that he made an error in understanding the terminology used by the scholars and mixed up the concepts of *tadlis* and *mursal sahabi*. It is important to distinguish between these two terms, as *mursal* narrations from trustworthy *sahabah* are considered valid and acceptable in Hadith scholarship.⁵¹

In summary, the authors respond to Abu Rayya's concerns about the number of Hadiths attributed to him, noting that his time with the Prophet Muhammad was much shorter than that of other Companions. In this case, Abu Hurairah entered two periods in his journey as a Companion: firstly, a period in which he was delayed in joining the Prophet (peace be upon him), which occurred before the Battle of Khaybar, as mentioned earlier. Secondly, there was a period during which he was present with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and accompanied him, after the Battle of Khaybar.

After the Battle of Khaybar, Abu Hurairah's accounts of events and incidents are not based on his personal observation and hearing unless the narrator explicitly states that Abu Hurairah conveyed or reported them, using phrases such as '*yarfa`ahu*' or '*yablughu bihi*.' It is often the case in the Hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah. However, prior to that time, his narrations definitely fall into the category of *mursal sahabah*, meaning they are narrated by a Companion who embraced Islam earlier. As we explained before, this is not considered deliberate deception, as Abu Hurairah was well aware that he did not witness those events or experience those incidents. It is evident in many of the narrations attributed to him. There is another portion of narrations where it is unknown whether they occurred before or after his migration (to Medina). Therefore, it would be valid to refer to them as *mursal sahabi* if he did not hear them directly from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). It is because he might have mistakenly assumed that he heard them from him when, in fact, he did not. However, such narrations may fall under the category of *mursal sahabi*. Abu Hurairah, like others, cannot definitively claim that

⁵¹ Nur al-Din Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqdi fi `Ulum al-Hadith* (Damaskus: Dar Al-Fikr, 1997), 373.

the Hadith is attributed to the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) unless he is confident in the reliability of the one who informed him, with a high level of confidence.⁵²

Conclusion

Regarding Abu Rayya's assertion about the accusation of Abu Hurairah's fabrication (*tadlis*), it appears that he may have misconstrued the terminology employed by scholars and conflated 'fabrication' (*tadlis*) with '*mursal sahabi*.' Upon examining his work, *Shaykh al-Madira*, the authors discovered that all the evidence he presented pertained to *mursal sahabi*. The *mursal sahabi* refers to a narration in which a *Sahabi* reports directly from the Prophet Muhammad, without having personally heard it from him, possibly due to factors such as their youth, late conversion to Islam, or absence at the event being reported. Therefore, it seems that he erred in comprehending the scholarly terminology and mistakenly intermingled the concepts of *tadlis* and *mursal sahabi*. It is crucial to distinguish between these two terms, as *mursal* narrations from reliable *Sahabah* are considered valid and acceptable within the realm of Hadith scholarship. As a result, the accusation against Abu Hurairah cannot be justified for several reasons. Firstly, Abu Hurairah is a Companion, and scholars unanimously agree that all the Companions of the Prophet are trustworthy. Secondly, Abu Rayya misinterpreted the term '*tadlis*,' leading to an inaccurate assessment of Abu Hurairah's actions.

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⁵² Muhammad al-Samahi, *Abu Hurairah fi al-Mizan* (Kaherah: Mathba'ah al-Azhar, n.d.), 30.

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