

Qabd or Sadl

Right over Left or Hands at the Sides?

A Maliki Critique of the Reports that 18 of the Companions (Sahaba) and 2 of the Successors (Tabi'un) reported the Prophet ﷺ as having prayed with his right hand over his left hand

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In the name of Allah, All-Compassionate, All-Merciful

The debate endures in spite of more and more evidence being revealed about the permissibility of praying with the hands at the sides as did Imam Malik ibn Anas and the exponents of his school. Few still insist that Imam Malik only prayed that way due to being tortured at the behests of the Abbasid caliph; torture that led to his arms being pulled out of their sockets.¹ They still insist on such a notion in spite of the explicit statement of Malik that he disliked for a person to prayer any of the 5 compulsory prayers while folding one arm or hand over the other.²

Furthermore, it has also been revealed that Imam Malik was not alone in this position. Rather, the most knowledgeable and noteworthy of the Tabi'un also preferred this manner of prayer as has been shown by the reports of Ibn Abu Shayba.³

Why do the Malikis continue to resist the majority and risk being harassed for praying in this fashion? Don't Malikis know that it is well established that 18 of the Companions and 2 of the Successors have reported that the Prophet ﷺ prayed with the right hand/arm over the left? Even the most uneducated of Muslims knows such things. So why are they being so stubborn and arrogant?

¹ This lie has been circulated among Muslims, and many have accepted it in large numbers in spite of the fact that it cannot be substantiated in any of the books of Islamic history, jurisprudence, or any other works.

² *Al-Mudawwana Al-Kubra*. 1/111. Dar al-Fikr: 1998. Have a look at my treatise entitled "The Maliki Argument for not Clasp the Hands in Salat."

³ Ibn Abu Shayba reports hadiths that show that the following personages prayed while draping their hands at their sides: Sa'id ibn Al-Musayyib, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Al-Hasan Al-Basari, Ibrahim Al-Nakha'i, Muhammad ibn Sirin, and the Companion, 'Abd Allah ibn Al-Zubayr. [Ibn Abu Shayba, Abu Bakr. *Musannaf*] Imam Awza'i also expressed that to pray that way or not was a person's prerogative [*Al-Musannaf*. 2/276] And Imam Nawwawi relates this position as being ascribed to Imam Layth ibn S'ad.

Well, is it really true that 18 of the Companions and 2 of the Successors reported the Prophet ﷺ as praying the way that most people do? True or not, there exists sufficient doubt about every single report that exists to this effect that weakens the “popular” claim and understanding that it is well established that the Prophet prayed while placing one hand over the other.

This short essay is written not to condemn the majority, or even say that their manner of prayer is incorrect. It is written to reveal to all that the position of holding one hand over the other in Salat is not as strong as people have come to accept. To the contrary, the argument that the Prophet ﷺ prayed in this fashion is no stronger than the argument that he prayed while draping his arms at his sides.

Below is a critique of each individual report and an exposition of their weaknesses in either the chain or meaning. These critiques have been summarized from the work of Shaykh Mukhtar Al-Dawdi⁴, *Mashru'iyat al-Sadl fi Al-Salat* [The Legitimacy of Draping the Arms in Salat].

A more detailed work is being prepared for release that gives more detail about the hadiths of Ibn Abu Shayba and establishes their authenticity, God-willing. Upon completion of that, we plan to present to our readers a complete reference work for the topic of the proper positioning of hands in prayer.

Hadith #1: The hadith of Sahl

Reported in *Al-Muwatta* and *Sahih al-Bukhari*

“Abdullah ibn Maslama⁵ related to us from Malik from Abu Hazim⁶ from Sahl ibn Sa’d. He said:

كان الناس يؤمرون أن يضع الرجل اليد اليمنى على ذراعه اليسرى في الصلاة
قال أبو حازم : لا أعلمه إلا ينمي ذلك إلى النبي ﷺ قال إسماعيل : ينمي ذلك و لم يقل ينمي

⁴ He is Shaykh Mukhtar ibn Muhaymidat Al-Dawdi, one of the great contemporary Mauritanian scholars of the Shinqit.

⁵ He is Abu ‘Abd Al-Rahman ‘Abdullah ibn Maslama ibn Qa’nab Al-Harithi Al-Madani Al-Basari, a reliable narrator (thiqa) and a devout worshipper (‘abid). Ibn Ma’in and Ibn Al-Madini placed no one over him with regard to the *Muwatta*. He passed away in Mecca in the year 220 A.H. or 221 A.H. [*Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*: 6/31] and [*Siyar ‘alam An-Nubala*: 1/257].

⁶ Abu Hazim is Salama ibn Dinar, the shaykh of Medinah, and patron of Banu Makhzum. He was a cripple date-merchant, and an ascetic magistrate. He died in the year 140 A.H. [*Siyar ‘alam al-Nubala*: 6/96] [*Tahdhib al-Tahdhib*: 4/143].

“The people were ordered that a person is to place the right hand over his left forearm during Salat.” Abu Hazim said: “I know only that he attributes that (yanmi dhalika) to the Prophet ﷺ.” Isma’il⁷ said: “(I know only that) That is *attributed* (yunma dhalika).” And he didn’t say: “He attributes” (yanmi).

The Weaknesses of the Hadith

This hadith – in spite of being in both the *Muwatta* and the *Sahih* of Bukhari, isn’t definitive proof that the Prophet’s sunnah was to pray while holding his left hand with his right hand. What weakens such an assumption made from this hadith are the following:

Weakness #1:

This is not an explicit report of a statement or action of the Prophet ﷺ.

Weakness #2:

The saying that, “The people were ordered that a person is to place the right hand over his left forearm during Salat” is the statement of the Companion, Sahl. And he doesn’t say that the Prophet ﷺ gave this order. So there is the possibility that another could have given this order.

Weakness #3:

The saying, “I know only that he attributes that (yanmi dhalika) to the Prophet ﷺ” is not the statement of Sahl. Rather it is the statement of the Tabi’i, Abu Hazim. So there is no certainty that Sahl actually attributed this to the Prophet ﷺ, since Abu Hazim is merely conjecturing about what he remembers.

Weakness #4:

The statement of Isma’il that, “(I know only that) That is attributed (yunma dhalika).” And he didn’t say: “He attributes” (yanmi)” further emphasizes the belief that Abu Hazim didn’t actually hear Sahl attribute the order to the Prophet ﷺ.

⁷ Isma’il is ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Uways ibn Malik. He was a veracious Imam and hadith master, and one of the scholars of Medinah. He was the leading hadith specialist of his time. He died in the year 226 A.H. or 227 A.H. [*Siyar ‘alam al-Nubala*: 10/392].

Hadith #2: The Hadith of Wa'il Reported in *Sahih Muslim*

Muslim said as is in *Sahih Muslim* [4/114]:

حدثنا زهير بن حرب حدثنا عفان حدثنا حماد حدثنا محمد بن جحادة حدثني عبد الجبار بن وائل عن علقمة بن وائل و مولى لهم : أنهما حدثاه عن أبيه وائل بن حجر: أنه رأى النبي ﷺ رفع يديه حين دخل في الصلاة كبر ثم التحف بثوبه ثم وضع يده اليمنى على اليسرى

“Zuhayr ibn Harb related to us, ‘Affan related to us, Hamam related to us, Muhammad ibn Juhada related to us, ‘Abd Al-Jabbar ibn Wa’il related to me, from ‘Alqama ibn Wa’il and a client of theirs that they both related to him from his father, Wa’il ibn Hujr that he saw the Prophet ﷺ - raise his hands when he entered Salat. He said the *takbir*, he wrapped himself in his garment, and then placed his right hand on the left...[to the end of the hadith].”

The Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

The narrator, Muhammad ibn Juhada, is weak. Nawwawi alluded to it by his saying,

“In it is Muhammad ibn Juhada.”

And Ibn Hajar said in the introduction to *Al-Fath* [p. 361]:

“Muhammad ibn Juhada Al-Kufi was accused of being a Shiite [biased toward ‘Ali and against Mu’awiya].”

Then Ibn Hajar said after declaring Ibn Juhada as being one of the weak narrators,

“Verily one of the conditions of (a hadith being) Sahih is that the transmitter be sound in creed.”

And in *Mizan al-‘Itidal* of Imam Dhahabi [4/418] he said that Abu ‘Awana Al-Waddah said about him:

“He was extreme in his Shiism (kana yaghlu fi tashayyu’ihi).”⁸

⁸ Dhahabi says in his *Mizan* [4/418, #7305],

Weakness #2:

There is a second break in the chain, since 'Alqama ibn Wa'il never met his father, Wa'il, on whose authority he is supposedly speaking.

Dhahabi in *Al-Mizan* [4/28] and Ibn Hajar in *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* [2/31] limited themselves to mentioning that

“‘Alqama is *Saduq* (veracious), except that he never heard any reports from his father, Wa'il.”

And the reviser (muhaqqiq) of *Al-Mizan* placed a number next to him and said:

“[1] In the *Thiqat* of Ibn Hibban: (He said) His father died while he was in his mother's womb.”

And in *Siyar 'Alam Al-Nubala* of Dhahabi he mentions that Tirmidhi said in *Al-'Ilal Al-Kubra*:

“I asked Bukhari: “Did 'Alqama hear anything from his father, Wa'il?” He said: “Verily 'Alqama was born after the death of his father by 6 months.””

And Nawwawi said in *Tahdhib al-Asma* [1/343]:

“Verily the reports of 'Alqama from his father, Wa'il, are through an undisclosed intermediary (mursala).”

Weakness #3:

The client mentioned alongside 'Alqama is unknown and unidentified. So this counts as another break in the chain according to hadith scholars.⁹

“Muhammad ibn Juhada is one of the reliable and trustworthy Tabi'in, He met Anas ؓ. The only thing is that Abu 'Awana Al-Waddah said, “He was extreme in his shiism.” But, I [Dhahabi] say (that) not a single revilement (of the Companions) has been recorded about the man. So where is the extremism?!”

⁹Shaykh Mukhtar Al-Dawdi said,

“If it is said: “Tirmidhi said along with (the commentary of) *Al-'Arida* [6/237] as well as Bukhari in *Al-Tarikh Al-Kabir* [4/14]:

Weakness #4:

Wa'il was from the city of Hadramaut (Yemen). He came to the Prophet ﷺ when he was in Madinah, accepted Islam, and returned shortly after to his city. And due to him not taking up residence in Medinah, Ibrahim Al-Nakha'i rejected his hadiths related to the description of the Prophet's prayer ﷺ, as is found in Shafi'i's *Umm* [1/105] under: "Those who oppose the raising of the hands."¹⁰

"Verily 'Alqama heard from his father", the response is that it has already been mentioned from the two of them that he was born 6 months after his father's death. And this is more definitive than them saying:

"He heard from his father, Wa'il."

For this reason, hadith masters (huffaz) didn't consider this to be a confirmed hearing (sama') as has already been stated, and because Yahya ibn Ma'in is one of those who said that

"...the reports of 'Alqama from his father, Wa'il are through an undisclosed intermediary (mursala)."

This is because Ibn Ma'in was the most knowledgeable of all the Imams of his era with relation to hadith transmitters. In *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* of Imam Dhahabi [2/430] he states:

"Ibn Ma'in said: "The knowledge of all people stopped at Yahya ibn Ma'in." And Ahmad ibn Hanbal said: "Yahya ibn Ma'in is the most knowledgeable of us of hadith transmitters.""

¹⁰ Shaykh Al-Dawdi says,

"And in the introduction to Nawwawi's *Sharh Muslim* [1/27] he said:

"And a group (of scholars) criticized them – i.e. Bukhari and Muslim – about certain hadiths wherein they violated the conditions they stipulated for acceptance, and have descended below the grade of those (hadiths) they obliged themselves to (report)."

That is, they have descended below the grade of sahih (sound). And on page 16, (he says):

"So Muslim's book contains hadiths whose chains or texts they have differed with regard to whether or not they are sahih in his view. And in that is a careless departure from this stipulation."

And it is known (to scholars) that the stipulation of Bukhari and Muslim is (for the report to have) "...a chain that is connected by way of a trustworthy transmitter from another trustworthy transmitter to the Prophet ﷺ with no subtle weakness ('illa) or irregularity (shudhudh)' despite of this being the definition of 'sahih' in the view of the overwhelming majority of the Imams. And you know that this condition is lacking in the aforementioned hadiths of Sahl and Wa'il. So on that basis, presenting them as proof is invalid."

What this means is that Wa'il wasn't the greatest authority on the Prophet's prayer, since he spent almost no time in his presence after accepting Islam at his hands.

Weakness #5:

The hadith never states how Wa'il's son or their client obtained information about what their father supposedly saw. For instance, the chain reads,

“...‘Abd Al-Jabbar ibn Wa'il related to me, from 'Alqama ibn Wa'il and a client of theirs that they both related to him from his father, Wa'il ibn Hujr that he saw the Prophet ﷺ - raise his hands when he entered Salat...”

'Alqama could have said, “I heard my father say...”, “My father told me...” or “My father related to me that...” But no such expression is used in this hadith that would indicate that there was definitely a meeting between 'Alqama and his father, Wa'il.

Hadith #3: The Hadith of Ibn Mas'ud Reported in the *Sunan* of Abu Dawud and the *Sunan* of Nasa'i

It is related that 'Abd Allah Ibn Mas'ud ﷺ said:

رَأَى النَّبِيَّ (S) وَ قَدْ وَضَعَتْ شِمَالِي عَلَى يَمِينِي فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَأَخَذَ بِيَمِينِي فَوَضَعَهَا عَلَى شِمَالِي

“The Prophet ﷺ saw me placing my left hand on my right hand in Salat. So he took my right hand, and then placed it over my left hand.”

Abu Dawud's chain is:

Muhammad ibn Bakkar – from – Hushaym ibn Bashir – from – Al-Hajjaj ibn Abu Zaynab – from – Abu Abi 'Uthman – from – Ibn Mas'ud.

Nasa'i's chain is:

Hushaym ibn Bashir – from – Al-Hajjaj ibn Abu Zaynab – from – Abu Abi 'Uthman – from – Ibn Mas'ud.

The Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

Muhammad ibn Bakkar is unknown. Dhahabi stated it in *Al-Mizan* [4/412].

Weakness #2:

Weakness has been ascribed to Hushaym ibn Bashir. Dhahabi states in *Al-Mizan* [5/431], and Ibn Hajar states in *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* [2/269] that he:

“Often used trickery in his reports to convince others to accept unacceptable chains of narration in addition to being guilty of conveying subtly distinguishable incomplete chains of narration (kathir at-tadlis wa al-irsal al-khafi).”

Weakness #3:

Al-Hajjaj ibn Abu Zaynab has been declared to be weak by ‘Ali ibn Al-Madini, Nasa’i, Ahmad, and Daraqutni as stated by Dhahabi in *Al-Mizan* [1/462].

Hadith #4: The Hadith of Hulb Al-Ta’i Reported by Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and Daraqutni

It has been related that Hulb Al-Ta’i said:

كان النبي (s) يؤمنا فيأخذ شماله بيمينه

“The Prophet ﷺ used to lead us. And he would take his left hand with his right.”

This hadith is reported by way of Sammak ibn Harb – from – Qabisa ibn Hulb – from – his father, Hulb.

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

Qabisa ibn Hulb has been classified as weak and unknown.

Shawkani said in *Nayl al-Awtar* [2/200]:

“In the chain of this hadith is Qabisa ibn Hulb. Sammak is the only one to narrate from him. Al-Tjli considered him to be reliable. And Ibn Al-Madini and Nasa’i said: “(He is) Unknown.””

Weakness #2:

Sammak ibn Harb has been classified as weak. Dhahabi said about him in *Al-Mizan* [2/422 & 423]:

“Sufyan, Shu’ba, and others declared him to be weak. And Ahmad said: “(He is) Unstable (mudtarib) in hadith.” And Nasa’i said: “He used to be dictated to. And he would learn (from those dictated notes).””

So there is a weak transmitter on the authority of one who is unknown in the chain. So no attention is to be shown to it.

Hadith #5: The Hadith of ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib Reported by Abu Dawud

It has been related that ‘Ali ibn Abu Talib said:

من السنة وضع اليمنى على اليسرى في الصلاة تحت السرة

“It is from the Sunnah to place the right hand on the left hand during Salat under the navel.”

This has been related by way of ‘Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ishaq Al-Wasiti.

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

‘Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ishaq has been classified as weak. Dhahabi said of him in *Al-Mizan* [3/262]:

“Ahmad said: “He is insignificant. (He is) Rejected in hadith.””

Nawwawi said in *Sharh Muslim* [4/115]:

“(He is) Weak by the agreement (of hadith scholars).”

Hadith #6: The Hadith of Abu Hurayra Reported by Abu Dawud

It has been related that Abu Hurayra ﷺ said:

أخذ الأُكفَّ على الأُكفِّ تحت السرة

“The taking of the palms over the palms is under the navel.”

This has been related by way of ‘Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ishaq also.

Weakness of the Hadith

Abu Dawud related it by way of ‘Abd Al-Rahman ibn Ishaq upon whom there is agreement about him being declared weak, rejected, and insignificant, as has been stated.

Hadith #7: The Hadith of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abbas Reported by Daraqutni

In *Awjaz al-Masalik ‘ala Muwatta Malik* [3/169] (it states):

“And Daraqutni reported from the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas ﷺ raised to the Prophet ﷺ [marfu’an] (that he said):

إنا معشر الأنبياء أمرنا بأن نمسك أيماننا على شمائلنا

“Verily we – assembly of Prophets – have been ordered to hold our right hands over our left hands.””

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

One of the transmitters, Talha ibn ‘Amr, has been classified as being an unreliable narrator. The author of *Awjaz al-Masalik* says,

“And in its chain is Talha ibn ‘Amr who is relinquished (matruk). Likewise it is mentioned in Al-‘Ayni (Sharh of) Al-Bukhari.”

Dhahabi said in *Al-Mizan* [3/54]:

“Ahmad and Nasa’i said (about Talha): “(He is) relinquished in hadith. And Bukhari and Ibn Al-Madini said: “He is insignificant” (Laysa bi shayin).”

Hadith #8: The Hadith of Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah Reported by Ahmad and Daraqutni

It has also been related that Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah ascribed the act of placing the right hand over the left in Salat to the Prophet ﷺ too. It states that Jabir said,

مرَّ رسول الله (S) برجل و هو يصلي و قد وضع يده اليسرى على اليمنى فانترزها
و وضع اليمنى على اليسرى

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed by a man who was praying while placing his left hand on the right hand. So he snatched it and placed the right on the left.”

But, this is reported by way of Al-Hajjaj ibn Abu Zaynab – from – Abu Sufyan – from – Jabir ibn ‘Abd Allah.

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

Al-Hajjaj ibn Abu Zaynab has already been discussed. And it has already been revealed that Al-Hajjaj is weak.

Weakness #2:

Abu Sufyan Talha ibn ‘Amr is also classified as weak. Dhahabi said of him in *Al-Mizan* [3/56]:

“Shu’ba and Ibn ‘Uyayna said: “His hadiths from Jabir are no more than a written collection (sahifa) [i.e. so, he didn’t actually hear from Jabir].” And Ibn Ma’in was asked about him and he said: “[He is] Nothing.”

Hadith #9: The Hadith of 'Aisha bint Abu Bakr
Reported by Daraqutni and Bayhaqi

It has been related that 'Aisha رضي الله عنها said:

ثلاث من النبوة: تعجيل الإفطار و تأخير السحور و وضع اليمنى على اليسرى في الصلاة

“Three things are from prophecy: Making haste to break fast, delaying the predawn meal, and placing the right over the left during Salat.”

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

This report is not ascribable to the Prophet ﷺ. Rather, it is only ascribable to his wife, 'Aisha.

Ibn Hazm related it in *Al-Muhalla* [4/113] as a statement of 'Aisha but without a chain.

Weakness #2:

There is a break in the chain. So it even cannot be ascribed to 'Aisha.

Hafiz ibn Hajar said in *Talkhis al-Habir* [1/223]:

“Daraqutni and Bayhaqi related it as a statement of 'Aisha رضي الله عنها. And it has a break in its chain.”

Hadith #10: The Hadith of ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar
Reported by Al-‘Aqili¹¹

It has been related also that Ibn ‘Umar ﷺ reported that the Prophet ﷺ used to pray while holding his left hand with his right hand.

Weakness of the Hadith

This reported in spite of being related by Al-‘Aqili was declared to be weak. Imam Shawkani made mention of this in *Nayl al-Awtar* [2/200].

Hadith #11: The Hadith of Ya‘la ibn Murra
Related by Imam Al-Tabari

It has been related that one of the Companions by the name of Ya‘la ibn Murra¹² ﷺ related that the Prophet ﷺ was seen praying while holding one hand with the other.

Weakness of the Hadith

One of the transmitters in the chain by the name, ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Ya‘la, has been classified as weak. Shawkani states in *Nayl al-Awtar* [2/200],

“It also contains ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn Ya‘la. And he is weak.”

And Dhahabi said in *Al-Mizan* [4/131] about the aforementioned ‘Umar:

“(He is) Relinquished (matruk). He used to drink wine (khamr).”

¹¹ Al-‘Aqili’s name is Abu Ja‘far Muhammad ibn ‘Amr ibn Musa ibn Hammad Al-‘Aqili. He was one of the hadith masters of Mecca. Shaykh Al-Dawdi says of him, “He has dangerous writings. One of them is *Al-Du‘afa*.” He died in Mecca. [*Tadhkira al-Huffaz*: 3/50] and [*Shadharat al-Dhahab*: 2/295].

¹² Shawkani states in *Nayl al-Awtar* under the aforementioned reference: “...[He is] Ya‘la ibn Murra according to Tabari.”

Hadith #12: The Hadith of Gudayf ibn Al-Harith or Harith ibn Ghudayf
Reported by Baghawi

Number 12 is the hadith of Ghudayf ibn Al-Harith or Harith ibn Ghudayf. Hafiz Ibn Hajar said in *Al-Isaba ma'a al-Isti'ab* [3/184]:

“Verily Bukhari said in his biography: “Ma’n – meaning, Ibn ‘Isa – said on the authority of Mu’awiya – i.e. Ibn Salih – from Yunus ibn Sayf from Ghudayf ibn Al-Harith Al-Sakuti or Al-Harith ibn Ghudayf who said:

ما نسيت من الأشياء لم أنس رسول الله ﷺ واضعا يده اليمنى على
يده اليسرى في الصلاة

“I didn’t forget about things. I didn’t forget Allah’s Messenger ﷺ placing his right hand over his left hand during Salat.”

Baghawi reported it by way of Zayd ibn Al-Habbab *with this wording.*”

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

It is unclear if the transmitter’s name is Ghudayf or Al-Harith.

Weakness #2:

It is unclear if he was a Sahabi or a Tabi’i. Hafiz Ibn Hajar said about the aforementioned Ghudayf:

“Ibn Sa’d, Al-‘Ijli, Daraqutni, and others mentioned him among the Tabi’in (Companion successors).”

And there is confusion about whether or not he ever saw the Prophet ﷺ when he was a child, which would make him a Tabi’i if he in fact never saw the Prophet ﷺ. Ahmad related it in *Al-Musnad*. It is also stated in *Al-Mughni* along with *Al-Sharh al-Kabir* [1/549].

So the conflict (idtirab) found in the chain becomes clear about if the transmitter is either Ghudayf or Al-Harith, and about whether or not he was a Sahabi or a Tabi’i. And that demands that it be discarded as proof.

Hadith #13: The Hadith of Shaddad ibn Shurahbil Reported by Al-Bazzar

Hadith number 13 is mentioned in *Nayl al-Awtar* under the aforementioned reference [2/200]. Shawkani says:

“And (there is another hadith) on the authority of Shaddad ibn Shurahbil (as found) with Al-Bazzar.”

Weakness of the Hadith

This report contains a weak narrator by the name, ‘Abbas ibn Yunus. Shawkani says in declaring the hadith of Shaddad to be weak,

“...But in it is ‘Abbas ibn Yunus.”

Shaykh Al-Dawdi says,

“And when a hadith scholar (muhaddith) says: ‘In it is So-and-So’, it is an allusion to the weakness of ‘So-and-So.’ Furthermore, I’ve searched in both *Taqrib al-Tahdhib* and *Al-Mizan*, and I didn’t find any biography for the aforementioned ‘Abbas. So perhaps he is unknown.”

Hadith #14: The Hadith of Abu Al-Darda Reported by Daraqutni and Ibn Abu Shayba

Hadith number 14 is the hadith of Abu Al-Darda ؓ. Shawkani says in *Nayl al-Awtar* under the aforementioned reference [2/200]:

“And (there is another hadith) on the authority of Abu Al-Darda (as found) with Daraqutni reaching back to the Prophet ﷺ [marfu’an], as well as one reaching Abu Al-Darda only [mawqufan] in Ibn Abu Shayba.”

Weakness of the Hadith

The report ascribed the Prophet has not been authenticated.

Shaykh Al-Dawdi said,

“The only thing is that I searched in the *Sunan* of Daraqutni in the chapter of ‘Taking the Left with the Right during Salat,’ but I didn’t find Abu Al-Darda in it. Nevertheless, Muhammad Shakir said in his short commentary (ta’liq) on *Al-Muhalla* [4/13]:

“Hafiz al-Haytami mentioned it in *Majma’ al-Zawa’id* and said: “Tabarani related it in *Al-Kabir*, going back to the Prophet and to the Companion, Abu Al-Darda ؓ. The one designated to the companion is sound (sahih). As for the one assigned to the Prophet (marfu’), there are among its transmitters one who I haven’t found anyone who has provided a biography for him.”

Hadith #15: The Hadith of ‘Uqba ibn Abu ‘Aisha Reported by Haitimi in *Majma’ al-Zawa’id*

Hadith Number 15 is the hadith of ‘Uqba ibn Abu ‘Aisha that is designated only to the Companion (mawquf), not to the Prophet (marfu’). Shawkani stated it under the aforementioned reference of *Nayl al-Awtar*. And even if it happened to be authentic, it would only be ascribable to the Companion, not to the Prophet ؓ.

Hadith #16: The Hadith of Hudhayfa Ascribed to Daraqutni’s *Sunan*

Hadith Number 16 is the hadith of Hudhayfa ؓ. Shaykh Al-Dawdi said,

“He (i.e. Shawkani) stated it under the aforementioned reference. However, I couldn’t find it in his (i.e. Daraqutni’s) *Sunan* under the ‘Chapter of Taking the Left with the Right.’ And perhaps he related what has been attributed to him (i.e. the Prophet) from Hudhayfa and Abu Al-Darda ؓ in (a work) other than his *Sunan*.”

Hadith #17: The Hadith of Mu’adh ibn Jabal Reported by Tabarani

The next hadith is the hadith of Mu’adh ؓ. Shawkani stated it in *Nayl al-Awtar* under the aforementioned reference.

The Weakness of the Hadith

One of its narrators by the name, Al-Khasib ibn Jahdar, has been classified as weak. Shawkani says,

“And (there is another hadith) on the authority of Mu’adh in *Tabarani*. But in it is Al-Khasib ibn Jahdar.”

Dhahabi said in *Al-Mizan* [2/176] under the biography of the aforementioned Al-Khasib:

“Bukhari said (of him): “A liar!” Shu’ba, Al-Qattan, and Ibn Ma’in also declared him to be a liar.”

Hadith #18: The Hadith of ‘Abd Allah ibn Al-Zubayr Reported by Abu Dawud

Number 18 is the hadith of ‘Abd Allah ibn Al-Zubayr رضي الله عنه. He said:

صَفُّ الْقَدَمَيْنِ وَوَضْعُ الْيَدِ عَلَى الْيَدِ مِنَ السَّنَةِ

“Putting the feet together and placing one hand on the other is from the Sunnah.”

Abu Dawud reported it.

Weaknesses of the Hadith

Weakness #1:

It is common knowledge that putting the feet together is disliked.

Weakness #2:

This report contradicts what is commonly accepted about the fact that Ibn Al-Zubayr preferred to pray while draping his hands at the side, as Imam Malik is known for doing. Shaykh Al-Dawdi said,

“And one of the clearest indications of the falseness of this report (athar) is the agreement of the Salaf that Ibn Al-Zubayr’s view رضي الله عنه was to drape the hands (sadl) during Salat. So it would not be correct for him to intentionally contradict the Sunnah.”

And he is the last of the eighteen (18) Companions (Sahaba).

The *Tabi'i* Reports

Report #1: The Report of Al-Hasan Al-Basri
Reported by Abu Dawud

Report #2: The Report of Tawus
Also Reported in Abu Dawud

It is reported that Tawus said,

كان رسول الله (s) يضع يده اليمنى على يده اليسرى ثم يشدُّ بهما على صدره
و هو في الصلاة

“The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to place his right hand over his left hand, and then hold them tight on his chest while he was in Salat.”

The Weaknesses of both Reports

Weakness #1:

Both of these reports are incompletely transmitted, since there are undisclosed Companion and/or even non-Companion intermediaries between these *Tabi'in*.
Shawkani said:

“And (there is a report) on the authority of Al-Hasan – incompletely transmitted to the Prophet (murslan) in Abu Dawud, and (there is a report) on the authority of Tawus – also incompletely transmitted to the Prophet with him (i.e. Abu Dawud).”

Weakness #2:

It is commonly acknowledged that Al-Hasan Al-Basri prayed while draping his hands at his sides. So this report contradicts this well-established fact.

Shaykh Al-Dawdi said,

“However, I could only find in Abu Dawud (the report of) Tawus. As for Al-Hasan, I didn't find it in it in spite of knowing that the position of Al-Hasan was to drape the hands (at the sides). And there is nothing sound (sahih) about Tawus.”

Conclusion

Based on these findings, it can no longer be said that there is abundant evidence that the Prophet ﷺ prayed while holding one hand/arm on the other. And it can also not be said that the position of Malikis of draping the hands at the sides during Salat is the weaker of the two.

In spite of the fact that there are all of these explicit and implicit reports of him praying while holding his left hand and there being almost no explicit reports of him praying while draping his hands at his sides, the living – although undocumented sunnah of the Medinite scholars among the Tabi'un still remains to be sunnah as defined by Imam Malik ؒ. It should be enough that Sa'id ibn Al-Musayyib, Sa'id ibn Jubayr, Al-Hasan Al-Basari, Ibrahim Al-Nakha'i, Muhammad ibn Sirin, Layth ibn S'ad, Ja'far Al-Sadiq, Awza'i (perhaps), and the Companion 'Abd Allah ibn Zubayr ؓ all prayed this way.

So to condemn Malik and his followers today, would be to condemn the most distinguished scholars of the Salaf, when they knew the Sunnah better than we did. And any other claim would be nothing more than arrogance and stupidity.

Again, the ultimate aim is to spread more inner-religious tolerance, not to condemn or make a definitive claim that we are upon truth.

Was Salam

Abdullah bin Hamid Ali