

34651 - Mutawaatir hadith

the question

What is the ruling on mutawaatir hadith in Islam?.

Detailed answer

Mutawaatir is an Arabic word that is derived from the word tawaatur, which means succession, one after the other. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Then We sent Our Messengers in succession”

[al-Mu’minooh 23:44]

What this means in sharee’ah terminology is a report which was narrated by a group who could not possibly have agreed upon a lie, from a similar group, and which is based on what they saw or heard.

The scholars have mentioned four conditions for a hadith to be regarded as mutawaatir:

1 - It should have been narrated by a large number

2 - The number should be so large that it is impossible that they could have agreed upon a lie.

3 - There should be a large number of narrators at every stage of the chain of narration (isnaad), so it should have been narrated by a large number from a large number, all the way back to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

4 - It should be based on what they saw or heard, so they should say, “We heard” or “We saw”, because if it is not like that it is possible for error to creep in, so it is not mutawaatir.

With regard to the types of mutawaatir, these are:

1 - Mutawaatir in the wording -

For example:

“Whoever tells a lie against me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 107; Muslim, 3; Abu Dawood, 3651; al-Tirmidhi, 2661; Ibn Maajah, 30, 37; and Ahmad, 2/159.

This hadith was narrated by more than seventy-two Sahaabah, and was narrated from them by a huge number of narrators whom it is impossible to list.

2 - Mutawaatir in the meaning - this is where the same meaning is narrated in mutawaatir hadith, but not necessarily in the same wording each time.

For example: the ahaadeeth about raising the hands when making du'aa'. Nearly one hundred ahaadeeth are narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in each of which it says that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) raised his hands when making du'aa'. Al-Suyooti compiled them in a chapter which he entitled Fadd al-Wi'aa' fi Ahaadeeth Raf' al-Yadayn fi'l-Du'aa'.

With regard to the ruling on mutawaatir reports: a mutawaatir report must be accepted, because it is definitive and certain, even if there is no other corroborating evidence. And there is no need to examine the biographies of its narrators. This is a matter concerning which no wise man will have any doubts.

References:

-Nuzhat al-Nazr by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar

-Al-hadith al-Mutawaatir by Dr, Khaleel Mulla Khaatir

-Al-hadith al-Da'eef wa Hukm al-Ihtijaa' bihi by Shaykh Dr 'Abd al-Kareem ibn 'Abd-Allaah al-Khudayr

Mu'jam Mustalahaat al-hadith wa Lataa'if al-Asaaneed by Dr. Muhammad Diya' al-Rahmaan al-A'zami.