

# The Quran and its Message

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

## THE SAHIFAH OF HAMMAM IBN MUNABBIBH

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Hammam ibn Munabbih (d. 719 CE) was known to be a disciple of Abu Hurairah (d.677-78 CE). It is understood that Hammam wrote a 'sahifah' which comprised approximately 140 ahadith which he had heard from his tutor Abu Hurairah.

It is often asserted that manuscripts of the original 'sahifah' of Hammam are to be found at both Berlin and Damascus. This is often used as evidential proof that Hadith were being recorded in the first century of Islam and have been faithfully absorbed into later compilations. By cross referencing the Hadith found in the 'sahifah' with those in later compilations of Ahadith, the degree of faithfulness in the transmission process is established.

Dr. Hamidullah, a scholar from the Indian subcontinent published a document entitled 'Sahifa Hammam ibn Munabbih' in which he attempted to argue that the manuscripts he cited provided evidence of Abu Hurairah's accounts as recorded by Hammam.

Not only did he cite the Berlin, and Damascus manuscript, he also cited a manuscript at Cairo.

His document which included his analysis was made available in both Urdu and in an English translation (published from Hyderabad 1955 and 1961). There also exists a French version of Dr. Hamidullah's work which is translated by Hossein G. Tocheport and is the source used in this article.

Having cited Dr. Hamidullah's work, it is absolutely clear that the manuscripts he cites at these locations were not an original copy of the manuscripts but a reproduction. **The Berlin copy** further cites an individual by the name of Ibn Asaka who also had involvement with the manuscript at Damascus.

(Non-French speakers are advised to have the following excerpts in red translated)

## Certificats d'authentification

### Manuscrit de Berlin

§ 142 Le manuscrit de Berlin, comme nous l'avons déjà précisé, n'est pas une copie authentifiée, mais le scribe a reproduit tel quel le certificat qu'il a trouvé sur le manuscrit dont il a copié le texte. Il est intéressant de noter qu'il se réfère à Ibn 'Asâkir qui a eu aussi affaire au manuscrit de Damas, comme nous verrons plus loin. Nous reproduisons donc ce certificat tel quel (y ajoutant seulement les numéros devant les noms des auditeurs) [1]

The nature of the manuscript at Damascus is also elucidated in Dr. Hamidullah's work. The title of the manuscript does indeed cite it as the Sahifah of Hammam ibn Munabbih. However this manuscript is not the actual sahifah that left Hammam ibn Munabbih's hands. Rather, it is one which was transmitted through a host of intermediate transmitters. Names mentioned are: Ma'mar, Abd ar-Razzaq, Ahmad ibn Yusuf as Sulami, Abu Bakr al-Qattan, Imam Abu'Abdullah ibn Mindahi and others as listed below.

### Manuscrit de Damas

§ 144 Il présente de nombreux enregistrements, aussi bien sur la page de titre qu'à la fin de la copie. En voici les détails :

§ 145 a) sur la page du titre : Comme titre on lit : Sahifah de Hammam ibn Munabbih, Allah lui fasse miséricorde, que Ma'mar a transmise de lui, que 'Abd ar-Razzâq a transmise de lui, qu'Ahmad ibn Yûsuf as- Sulamî a transmise de lui, qu'Abû Bakr al-Qattân a transmise de lui, que l'Imam Abu 'Abdallâh ibn Mindah a transmise de lui, que son fils 'Abd al-Wahhâb a transmise de lui, que le cheikh Abu'l-Khair Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Muqaddar a transmise de lui, que le cheikh le majestueux et unique, l'imâm, le hâfiz Tâjuddîn Bahâ'ul Islam Badî' az-Zamâm Abu 'Abdallâh Muhammad ibn 'Abd ar Rahmân ibn Muhammad al-Mas'ûdî a transmise de lui. Allah redresse ce dernier et les agrée tous et accorde la sécurité jusqu'au Dernier jour. [2]

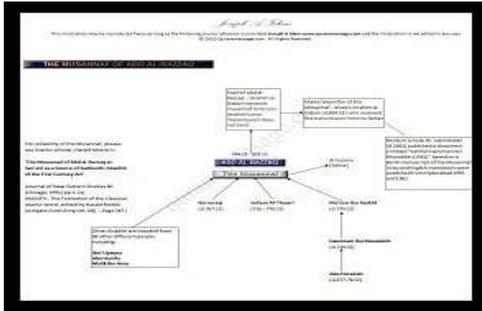
### Manuscrit du Caire

§ 143/a Malgré la détérioration du papier de ce manuscrit, le texte que nous avons reproduit comme colophon (§ 140/b) semble constituer un certificat d'authentification. Il est encadré dans un carré. A part cela, sur la page du titre, ce manuscrit porte d'autres notices intéressantes, bien que parfois difficiles à déchiffrer. Ainsi: «L'audition (simâ') de Yûsuf Ibn 'Abd aî-Hâdi, que Allah lui pardonne. . .» Nous n'avons que des photos, et nous ne savons pas s'il n'existe pas une page de certificats que le photographe aurait supprimée comme «inutile». [3]

Therefore, the manuscripts at both Berlin and Damascus **are not** the original manuscripts of Hammam ibn Munabbih from the 1<sup>st</sup> century of Islam that they are widely understood to be. Rather, they are later documents transmitted by an array of attestors purporting to represent an earlier document. The manuscripts at Berlin and Damascus represent nothing more than the Musannaf of Abdul Razzaq which not only includes transmissions from the chain 'Hammam ibn Munabbih -

Ma'mar - Abd al-Razzaq' (as cited in the Damascus manuscript) but also an array of other transmissions such as those from Sufyan Al-Thawi and Ibn Jurayj.

Please see the following illustration (Please click on the image)



Once again, it is the level of faith that one is prepared to place in these transmitters which determines the overall authenticity of the contents of the manuscript. One is advised to consult the work of Harald Motzki [4] who quite convincingly argues for part of the chain's authenticity within the Musannaf of Abdul Razzaq.

It is to be appreciated that the trustworthiness or the impeccable character of an individual is not indisputable testimony that what they transmit is true. One finds many examples within the ahadith literature in which pious forgeries were commonplace. It would not be implausible to expect well meaningful individuals being deceived by the information that they received and then innocently transmitted.

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## FINAL THOUGHTS

How many well meaning individuals have relied on the information provided by others who have cited the Sahifah at both Berlin and Damascus to be the true originals of Hammam's work on the authority of Dr. Hamidullah? How many have read Dr. Hamidullah's work to ascertain if the manuscripts were in fact original copies of Hammam's Sahifah or later transmissions?

## REFERENCES

- [1] HAMIDULLAH. M, Sahifah Hammam Ibn Munabbih, Translation by: Hossein G.Tocheport, Page 116
- [2] Ibid., Page 118
- [3] Ibid., Page 117-8
- [4] MOTZKI. H, The Musannaf of Abd al-Razzaq al-San'ani as a Source of Authentic Ahadith of the First Century AH, Journal of Near Eastern Studies 60 (Chicago, 1991) pp.1-21, HADITH - The Formation of the Classical Islamic Word, edited

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