

The Concept of Contagiousness in the *Ahādīth*

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Abstract

A thorough study of the *hadīth* literature reveals that there are two broad categories of *ahādīth* regarding the concept of contagiousness. One set of *ahādīth* negates this conception while the other alludes to its occurrence. The phrase *lā 'adwā* appears in the *ahādīth* which means that there is no contagion. The Holy Prophet (may peace and greetings be upon him) has also been reported to have eaten meal with a leper ignoring the danger of contagiousness of leprosy. Contrary to it, the Holy Prophet (may peace and greetings be upon him) has also commanded, "*firra min al-majdhūmi kamā tafirru min al-asadi*", that is, run away from a leper as you run away from a lion. He has also given clear instruction regarding plague. He forbade entering a plague-stricken land and commanded to stay in the land where this disease had broken out. This instruction should be taken as a preventive measure against plague which is a contagious disease. Both categories of *ahādīth* seem contrary to each other and demand a detailed insight into this matter in order to remove the apparent contradiction between them.

Keywords: Adwā, Majdhūm, Reliable, Al-Thiqāt, Weak

Introduction:

On the subject of '*adwā*', there exists difference of opinions among the scholars of *hadīth*. The majority of scholars of *hadīth* tend to deny the occurrence of '*adwā*' as the *hadīth* "*lā 'adwā*" states. Some of them have agreed on its occurrence due to other *ahādīth*. A study of the collections of *ahādīth* reveal that both parties of scholars, who believe in '*adwā*' and who deny it, had *ahādīth* in hand to support their view. They used to argue with the favourable *ahādīth* and assign a suitable explanation to the *ahādīth* put forward by the opponents. If such is the case, then how a researcher can reach a conclusion? How can he combine all arguments? Or how can he prefer on set of arguments to the other? This is the subject of this research paper.

Before proceeding to the views of the scholars it seems plausible to present the *ahādīth* which go against the concept of contagiousness of diseases. Such *ahādīth* are of two kinds. One kind of *ahādīth* declares that there is no '*adwā*'. The second kind of *ahādīth* tells that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) ate with a leper.

The *ahādīth* which negate the concept of contagiousness:

The *ahādīth* declaring *lā 'adwā* (There is no contagion) have been narrated by a number of *Sahābah*. They include Abū Hurayrah, Anas b. Mālik, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh, Sā'ib b. Yazīd, Ibn Mas'ūd, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās, Walīd b. 'Abd Allāh, Abī Umāmah, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr, Ibn 'Atiyyah, 'Umayr b. Sa'd, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudri, Abū Qatādah, 'Ā'ishah and 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. One of these *ahādīth* is given below:

"أَنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا صَفَرٌ وَلَا هَامَةٌ فَقَالَ أَغْرَابِي: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَمَا بَالُ إِبِلِي، تَكُونُ فِي الرَّمْلِ كَأَنَّهَا الظَّبَاءُ، فَيَأْتِي الْبَعِيرُ الْأَجْرُبُ فَيَدْخُلُ بَيْنَهَا فَيُجْرِيهَا؟ فَقَالَ: فَمَنْ أَغْدَى الْأَوَّلُ"

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“Abū Hurayrah narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: There is no ‘*adwā*’ (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allāh’s permission), nor is there *saḥar* (no bad omen in the month of *saḥar*), nor is there any *hāmmah* (no bad omen due to owl).” A *bedouin* asked, “O Allāh’s Messenger! What about my camels? They are like deer on the sand, but when a mangy camel comes and mixes with them, they all get infected with the mange?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “Then who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first one?”¹

The *hadīth* which mentions the act of eating of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) with a leper has been reported by Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh via this chain: Muhammad b. Munkadir, Habīb b. Shahīd, Al-Mufaddal b. Fadālah and Yūnus b. Muhammad. After Yūnus, the chain goes along various channels.

Imām Tirmidhī narrates this *hadīth* as:

“عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَخَذَ يَدَ مَجْدُومٍ فَأَدْخَلَهُ مَعَهُ فِي الْقَصْعَةِ ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: كُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ثِقَةً بِاللَّهِ وَتَوَكُّلاً عَلَيْهِ”

“Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh narrated that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) held the hand of a leper and allowed him to enter his bowl with him, and said: Eat with the name of Allāh, attesting (the protection) of Allāh (against the contagion) and trusting on Him.”²

Similarly, Abū Dā’ūd and Ibn Mājah also narrate this *hadīth* with slight variation of words.³

The *ahādīth* which support the concept of contagiousness:

The *ahādīth* which support the concept of contagiousness are also of two kinds. One kind of *ahādīth* is on fleeing from a leper including those which forbid a constant stare towards the leper and the second kind of *ahādīth* is on the instruction about the response to plague-stricken land.

The *ahādīth* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to flee from a leper have been narrated by Abū Hurayrah, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, Husayn b. ‘Alī, Mu’ādh b. Jabal and others. The *hadīth* of Abū Hurayrah is narrated via the chain Sa’d b. Mīnā’, Salīm b. Hayyān and ‘Affān. *Imām* Bukhārī brings it as follows:

“قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ، يَقُولُ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرٌ، وَلَا هَامَةٌ وَلَا صَفَرٌ، وَوَيْزٌ مِنَ الْمَجْدُومِ كَمَا تَقَرُّ مِنَ الْأَسَدِ”

“Abū Hurayrah narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: There is no ‘*adwā*’ (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allāh’s permission), nor is there any bad omen (for birds), nor is there any *hāmmah* nor is there (any bad

¹Al-Bukhārī, Muhammad b. Ismā’il, *Al-Sahīh* (Bayrūt: Dār Tawq al-Najah, 1422/2001) Book: Medicine, Chapter: There is no *saḥar* disease that afflicts the abdomen, *Hadīth*:5717

² Al-Tirmidhī, Muhammad b. ‘Isā, *Al-Jāmi’ Al-Sunan* (Egypt: Maktabah wa Matba’h Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halbī, 1395 / 1975) Book: The Book on Food, Chapter: What has been related about eating with a leper, *Hadīth*:1817

³ Abū Dā’ūd, Sulaymān b. al-Ash’ath, *Al-Sunan* (Bayrut: Maktabah al-‘Asariyyah, n.d.) Book: Divination and Omens, Chapter: Omens, *Hadīth*:3925 & Ibn Mājah, Muhammad b. Yazīd, *Al-Sunan* (Egypt: Dār Ihyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyyah, Faysal ‘Isā al-Babī al-Halbī, n.d.) Book: Medicine, Chapter: Leprosy, *Hadīth*:3542

omen in the month of) *safar*, and one should run away from the leper as one runs away from a lion.”⁴

Stress has also been laid on that one should not even stare towards a leper. Although a disease cannot communicate merely by looking at sick, this was ordered to instill in the mind of the listener how communicable the disease can be and it is essential to avoid mixing in such cases. The *hadīth* carrying this command has been given by Ibn Mājah as:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَا تُدِيمُوا النَّظَرَ إِلَى الْمَجْدُومِ " "

“Ibn ‘Abbās narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him): Do not stare the lepers constantly.”⁵

A strong argument of the votaries of communicability of diseases comes from the sayings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding *tā‘ūn* (plague). His words regarding plague have been narrated by his companions Usāmah b. Zayd, Sa’d b. Abī Waqqās, Khūzaymah b. Thābit, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Awf and Zayd b. Thābit. The *hadīth* of Usāmah b. Zayd has been narrated by sons of Sa’d b. Abī Waqqās – ‘Āmir b. Sa’d and Ibrāhīm b. Sa’d who take it from their father, and he heard this from Usāmah. *Imām* Bukhārī mentions this *hadīth* as follows:

"قَالَ: أُسَامَةُ ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الطَّاعُونُ رِخْسٌ أُرْسِلَ عَلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَوْ عَلَى مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ فَإِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ بِهِ بِأَرْضٍ فَلَا تَقْدَمُوا عَلَيْهِ وَإِذَا وَقَعَ بِأَرْضٍ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا فَلَا تَخْرُجُوا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ ، قَالَ أَبُو النَّضْرِ: لَا يُخْرِجُكُمْ إِلَّا فِرَارًا مِنْهُ"

“Usāmah said that Allāh's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: Plague is a calamity which was sent to a group of *Banū Isrā‘īl*, or upon those who were before you. So when you hear that it has broken out in a land, don't go to it, and when it has broken out in the land where you are, don't go out running out of it. In the narration of Abū Nadr the words are: “It will not get you out but running out of it.”⁶

On the basis of these two apparently different kinds of *ahādīth* the early scholars of *hadīth* are divided in their view regarding the contagion. Most of them negate the concept of communicability of diseases, while some believe in it and try to assign a suitable explanation to the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The scholars of *hadīth* have two broad principles to remove the apparent contradiction between the *ahādīth*.

1. The combination of two *ahādīth* (*Al-Jam‘* or *Al-Tatbīq*)
2. The preference of one *hadīth* over the other. (*Al-Tarjīh*)

Imām Nawawī (d. 676/1277) throws light on both principles in the following way:

“When two *ahādīth* apparently antagonize each other, then the combination of the two or the preference of one over the other becomes essential. The antagonizing *ahādīth* (in case of apparent contradiction) are of two kinds:

One in which both *ahādīth* can possibly be combined together and their meaning is ascertained. Both these *ahādīth* are worth following. In this case, the words of the

4 Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Sahīh*, Book: Medicine, Chapter: Leprosy, *Hadīth*:5707

5 Ibn Mājah, *Al-Sunan*, Book: Medicine, Chapter: Leprosy, *Hadīth*:3543

6 Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Sahīh*, Book: The Prophets, Chapter: The tale of the Cave, *Hadīth*:3239

Prophet (peace be upon him) are attributed a general sense for utility. Turning to this way has been established (by the scholars) and the abrogation is not sought in the presence of the possibility of combining the *ahādīth* together. This is because in abrogation there is exclusion of one of the two *ahādīth* from being practiced.

The second kind is the one in which the combination of both *ahādīth* is not possible in any way. In this case, if we know that one *hadīth* has abrogated the other, then we will give the abrogation priority. And if we do not know about the abrogation, then we will prefer one *hadīth* over the other. The preference can be made by considering the number of narrators, their qualities and all other causes of preference.”⁷

The Way of Preference (*al-Tarjīh*):

Some scholars follow the way of preference. The opponents of the concept of contagiousness of diseases prefer the *ahādīth* which negate the ‘*adwā*. On the other hand, the proponents of the contagiousness prefer the *ahādīth* which support the ‘*adwā*.

i) Preference of *ahādīth* which negate ‘*adwā*:

The scholars who negate ‘*adwā* either do not consider the *ahādīth* on fleeing from a leper authentic or they give a meaning to them which render them ineffective and make them harmless to the *hadīth* “*lā ‘adwā*”. Their arguments are given below:

The Prophet (peace be upon him) has been reported to have eaten with a leper as mentioned earlier. He touched the hand of the leper and put it in his bowl of meal. This has been narrated from Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh by Tirmidhī, Abū Dā’ūd and Ibn Mājah. Had there been any fear of contagiousness of leprosy the Prophet (peace be upon him) would not have eaten with him. Al-Ardabīlī says that the leper whose hand the Prophet (peace be upon him) placed in his bowl and ate with him was Mu‘ayqīb b. Abū Fātimah al-Dawsī.⁸

Imām Nawawī says that ‘Umar and some other companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to eat with lepers and were of the view that his command to flee from a leper has been abrogated.⁹ Ibn Battāl (d. 449/1057) quotes al-Tabarī (d.310/923) who says that Salmān and Ibn ‘Umar used to arrange meal for lepers and used to eat with them. When ‘Ikrahah departed himself from a leper, Ibn ‘Abbās said: “He may be better than you and me.” Once a group of people from Thaqīf came to Abū Bakr al-Sadīq when meal was presented to them a leper remained aloof. Abū Bakr joined him and ate with him.¹⁰

It has been reported that ‘Ā’ishah denied the *hadīth* of leper when she was asked about it. This has been narrated by al-Tabarī as:

“Narrated Nāfi‘ b. al-Qāsim from his grandmother Futaymah. She said: “I came to ‘Ā’ishah and asked her: Had the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allāh said about the lepers: “Run away from them as you run away from a lion?” The Mother of the Believers replied: “No, but he had said: “There is no contagion and who caused the disease in the

7 Al Nawawī, Yahyā b. Sharaf, *Sharh Nawawī ‘Ala Muslim* (Bayrūt: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1392/1972) 1:35

8 Sharaf al-Haq, Al-Azīmābādī, Muhammad Ashraf b. ‘Amīr, *‘Awn al-Ma’būd* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1415/1994) 10:300

9 Al Nawawī, *Sharh Sahīh Muslim*, 14:228

10 Ibn Battāl, ‘Alī b. Khalf, *Sharh Sahīh Bukhārī* (Riyād: Maktabah al-Rushd, 1423/2003) 9:410

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first one (first camel)?' I had a slave who used to eat in my bowl and used to drink in my vessel, and used to sleep on my cot. He had this disease. If he had remained with me, I would have lived with him, but he asked permission to go for *jihād*. I made arrangements for him and he went to *jihād*.”¹¹

Abū Hurayrah was in doubt about the status of ‘*adwā* and he forgot it after having narrated it before. Therefore, his *hadīth* should not be relied upon. Of all the narrators of *lā ‘adwā* only he mentions the *firra min al-majdhūmi* part. As his *hadīth* has doubt, so now one should rely on the *ahādīth* of other narrators which are more in number than the *ahādīth* of fleeing from a leper. Moreover, Ibn Hazm (d.456/1064) says that this *hadīth* of Abū Hurayrah narrated via ‘Affān is not continuous.¹² Therefore, the *ahādīth* which are continuous and do not contain the *firra min al-majdhūmi* part should be preferred.

The *ahādīth* in which avoiding the lepers is mentioned are not authentic. The *hadīth* “Do not stare the lepers constantly” narrated by Ibn Mājah is *da‘īf* because of Ibn Abī Zinād about whom Ahmad says that he is turbulent in *hadīth*. Ibn Mu‘īn remarks he is weak and he is nothing. Ibn Mu‘īn, Nasā’ī and Abū Hātim say that he is not among those whose *hadīth* is used for an argument.¹³

The *hadīth* of ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Awfā “Talk to the lepers from a distance of two spears between you and him” narrated by Abū Nu‘aym has unreliable chain. This has Hasan b. ‘Umārah who is very unreliable narrator. Ahmad b. Hanbal calls him *matrūk al-hadīth* and *munkar al-hadīth*. Yahyā b. Mu‘īn says him *da‘īf*. Abū Hātim, *Imām* Muslim, *Imām* Nasā’ī and al-Dārquṭnī call him *matrūk al-hadīth*.¹⁴

The words of ‘Umar to Mu‘ayyib narrated by al-Tabarī via Ma‘mar from Zuhri, and via Khārjah b. Zayd are non-continuous. He said to him: “Sit at a distance of a spear from me.”¹⁵

The *hadīth* of Sharīd narrated by *Imām* Muslim is *sāhīh* in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a leper back and did not allow him to come and take oath of allegiance. But this *hadīth* does not state why was he sent back? This was done because of the fear of contagiousness or for some other reason like to prevent disgrace of him?

Due to these reasons, the *hadīth* *lā ‘adwā* which has been mentioned by a number of *sahābah* via authentic chains mentioned by *Imām* Bukhārī, *Imām* Muslim and others should be preferred. The action of the Companions such as ‘Umar, Abū Bakr, Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbās also tell they did not consider any harm in eating with lepers.

ii) Preference of *ahādīth* which support the ‘*adwā*:

The scholars who advocate the concept of ‘*adwā* rely on the *ahādīth* which mention the saying of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to run away from a leper and on the *ahādīth* which contain the Prophetic instructions regarding the plague.

11 Al-Tabarī, Muhammad b. Jarīr, *Tahdhīb al-Athār*, Book: What has not been mentioned from the reports of Tha‘labah, *Hadīth*:1344

12 Sharaf al-Haq, *‘Awn al-Ma‘būd*, 10:301

13 Al-Mizzī, Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl* (Bayrūt: Mū‘asasah al-Rasālah, 1400/1980), 17:95

14 Ibn Hajar, al-‘Asqalānī, Ahmad b. ‘Alī, *Fath al-Bārī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-a‘rifah, 1379/1959), 10:161

15 Ibid.

The *hadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayrah via ‘Affān which contains the *firra min al-majdhūmi* part is *ṣaḥīḥ*. This *hadīth* has been narrated from Abū Hurayrah via Sa‘īd b. Mīnā’, Salīm b. Hayyān and ‘Affān.

Sa‘īd b. Mīnā’ is brother of Sulaymān b. Mīnā’. Ahmad b. Hanbal, Ibn Mu‘īn, Nasā’ī call him reliable.¹⁶ Ibn Hibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt*.¹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar and al-Dhahbī also consider him reliable.¹⁸ About Salīm b. Hayyān, Abū Hātim says that there is no harm in him. Ahmad and Ibn Mu‘īn call him reliable. Ibn Hibbān mentions him in *al-Thiqāt*. Al-Dhahbī considers him truthful.¹⁹ ‘Affān b. Muslim has been called agreed upon, firm and trustworthy by Abū Hātim.²⁰ Ahmad b. Hanbal says: I have not seen anyone better than ‘Affān in the *hadīth* of Shu‘bah. Yahyā al-Qattān praises him and says that if ‘Affān agrees with him, he does not care who disagrees. Al-Dhahbī concludes that he is among the scholars of Islam and of notable *imāms*.²¹

The allegation on this *hadīth* of being non-continuous is worthless. The words of *Imām* Bukhārī “*Qāla ‘Affān*” (‘Affān said) carry with them the verdict of being continuous as the scholars of nomenclature of *hadīth* mention. Moreover, even if we suppose that this is “*ta’līq*”, then the scholars of *hadīth* have mentioned that *ta’līq* on which *Imām* Bukhārī resolves is in the sense of *ṣaḥīḥ*, and here he resolves by saying “*Qāla ‘Affān*.”²²

Regarding the *hadīth lā ‘adwā* Abū Hurayrah was not in any doubt and his narration which contains the addition of *firra min al-majdhūmi* cannot be ignored in preference for other narrations of the kind. The *hadīth* contains clear signs that he did not want the *hadīth* to be narrated and he preferred the *hadīth lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* (The sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one) to *lā ‘adwā* as is evident from the *hadīth* narrated by *Imām* Muslim:

“Abū Salmah b. ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Awf reported that Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: “There is no transitive disease”, and he also said: “A sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one.” Abū Salmah said that Abū Hurayrah used to narrate these two (different *ahadīth*) from Allāh’s Messenger (peace be upon him), but afterwards Abū Hurayrah became silent after his saying: “There is no ‘*adwā*”, and he stuck to this: “A sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one.” Hārith b. Abū Dhubāb (a cousin of Abū Hurayrah) asked Abū Hurayrah, “I used to hear from you that you narrated to us along with this *hadīth* the other one also (there is no transitive disease), but now you are silent about it. You used to say that Allāh’s Messenger said: There is no transitive disease. Abū Hurayrah denied having any knowledge of that, but he said that

¹⁶ Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, 11:84; Ibn Abī Hātim ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Hātim, *Al-Rāzī*, *Al-Jarh wa’l Ta’dīl* (Haydarābād Dakkan: Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1271/1952) 4:61

¹⁷ Ibn Hibbān, Muhammad b. Hibbān, *Al-Thiqāt* (Haydarābād Dakkan: Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1393/1973) 8:263

¹⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Taqrib al-Tahdhīb* ((Surayā: Dār al-Rashīd, 1406/1986) p.241; *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (Al Hind: Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif al-Nazāmiyyah, 1326/1908) 4:91; Al-Dhahbī, Muhammad b. Ahmad, *Al-Kāshif* (Jaddah: Dār al-Qiblah lil Thaqāfat al-Islāmiyyah, 1413/1992) 1:445

¹⁹ Al-Kalābādhi, Abū al-Nasr, Ahmad b. Muhammad, *Rijāl Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 1407/1986) 1:344; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, 11:349; Ibn Hibbān, *Al-Thiqāt*, 8:303; Al-Dhahbī, *Al-Kāshif*, 1:456

²⁰ Ibn Abī Hātim, *Al-Jarh wa’l Ta’dīl*, 7:30

²¹ Al-Dhahbī, *Mizān al-I’tidāl*, 3:81-82

²² Sharaf al-Haq, *‘Awn al-Ma’būd*, 10:30

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the sick camel should not be taken to the healthy one. Hārith, however, did not agree with him, which irritated Abū Hurayrah and he said to him some words in the Abyssinian language. He said to Hārith: Do you know what I said to you? He said: No. Abū Hurayrah said: I simply denied it. Abū Salmah said, “By my life, Abū Hurayrah in fact used to report that Allāh’s Messenger said: There is no infection, I do not know whether Abū Hurayrah has forgotten it or he deemed it an abrogated statement in the light of the other one.”²³

This shows that he did not forget the *hadīth*. He was not denying the knowledge of this *hadīth* but denying of it being a permanent command. Another possibility is abrogation as Abū Salmah was hinting to that in Abū Hurayrah’s view *lā ‘adwā* has been abrogated by *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh*. Even if he had forgotten the *hadīth* the other narrators were narrating it, but he did not take the words from them and kept to his narration. This indicates that he became silent to the first *hadīth* deliberately. Actually, he did not want to narrate two *ahādīth* that were antagonizing each other which might perplex naïve minds about the teachings of his beloved Prophet (peace be upon him). He might have heard earlier *lā ‘adwā* and later *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* from the Prophet (peace be upon him). Both *ahādīth* were antagonizing each other. As he could not think of any way of combining them together, he stopped himself from narrating the first *hadīth*.

The *hadīth* of ‘Ā’ishah is contrary to the *hadīth* of Abū Hurayrah. Here, ‘Ā’ishah is denying the knowledge of the *hadīth firra min al-majdhūmi* which does not signify that the *hadīth* does not exist. Her denial only tells that she did not know about it. She had not heard these words from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or these words did not reach her ears. On the other hand, Abū Hurayrah is claiming knowledge which he had. So, his *hadīth* should be preferred to hers.

The *hadīth* of Jābir is not authentic because of Mufaddal b. Fadālah about whom Nasā’ī says that he is not strong in *hadīth*. Ibn Mu‘īn says that he is nothing. Abū Dā’ūd says that there is weakness in his *hadīth* and Abū Hātim says that his *hadīth* should be written only. Ibn ‘Adī mentions him in his treatise *Al-Kāmil fī ‘l du‘afā’*.²⁴ On the other hand, the *hadīth firra min al-majdhūmi* is authentic and it has been narrated by more scholars and its chains are greater in number, so this should be preferred. And if the *ahādīth* “Do not stare the lepers” and “Talk with a leper at a distance of a spear” fail to reach the level of acceptance, then the *hadīth* “Run away from a leper” is authentic. Its narrators are *thiqah* and it indicates the occurrence of *‘adwā*. It should be preferred to other *ahādīth*.

Moreover, the *hadīth* of Jābir has been narrated by *Imām* Tirmidhī. He comments that Shu‘bah also narrates it and the *hadīth* of Shu‘bah is more authentic than Jābir’s *hadīth*. Shu‘bah’s *hadīth* shows that actually it was Ibn ‘Umar who held the hand of the leper and ate with him.²⁵ This shows that the more authentic *hadīth* is *mawqūf*,

23 Muslim b. al-Hajjāj, *Al-Sahīh* (Bayrūt: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d.) Book: Manners, Chapter: There is no contagion and no bad omen, *Hadīth*:2220

24 Ibn Abī Hātim, *Al-Jarh wa ‘l Ta ‘dīl*, 8:317; Al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb Al-Kamāl*, 28:413; Al-Dhahbī, *Mizān al-‘itidāl*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1382/1963), 1:590

25 Al-Tirmidhī, Muhammad b. ‘Isā, *Al-Sunan* (Egypt: Maktabah wa Matba‘h Mustafā al-Bābī at Hilbī, 1395/1975) Book: Food, Chapter: What has been related about eating with a leper, *Hadīth*:1817

while the *marfu' hadith* is weaker one. Nevertheless, the possibility of the existence of these two separate incidences cannot be ignored. At one incidence the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) had eaten with a leper and at other instance Ibn 'Umar had done the same. If such is the case, then the *hadith lā yūridū mumrid 'alā musihh* should be preferred.

The *hadith* of Sharīd b. Suwayd is a strong argument in favour. The leper was sent back by the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) to avoid the spread of disease to others. He said to him, "Go back, we have taken your oath." This shows that the leper was not asked to come at some other moment when no one is around. Had he been sent back for some other reason, he could have been allowed to come later.

As far as the way of *tarjih* is concerned, it can be concluded that the *ahādīth* on fleeing from lepers have preference to the *ahādīth* of eating with lepers. However, this way of preference involves leaving a set of *ahādīth* unpracticed and unfollowed. Better is the way of combining the two kinds of *ahādīth*.

The Way of Combination of *Ahādīth* (*al-Jam' or al-Tatbīq*):

The scholars who follow this way are divided into two parties:

1. Those who negate '*adwā* rely on the *hadith lā 'adwā* and *lā yu'dī shay'un shay'an* (A thing does not infect another thing) and assign a suitable meaning to the *ahādīth* concerning the lepers, the plague and to the words *lā yūridū mumrid 'alā musihh*.
2. Those who support '*adwā* rely on the *hadith lā yūridū mumrid 'alā musihh*, *firra min al-majdhūmi* and *al-Tā'ūn rijs* and assign an arguable explanation to the words *lā 'adwā*.

i) *Tatbīq* by those who negate '*adwā*:

The scholars who negate '*adwā* use the ways of combining the concerned *ahādīth* as follows:

- (a) About the first way of *tatbīq* Ibn Ḥajar (d.852/1449) says:
"One way of *tatbīq* is to negate the '*adwā* wholly and specify the command on fleeing from a leper to caring the heart of the leper because when he will see a healthy person with a body intact from any calamity his distress will mount and his grief will increase. Likewise, the *hadith* "Do not stare lepers constantly" has been assigned this meaning."²⁶

This view has been referred to *Imām* Mālik. When he was asked about the *hadith* "Do not stare lepers constantly", he replied: "I do not know that this command means anything except the fear that something might come in the heart of a Muslim."²⁷

'*Allāmah* Zurqānī (d.1122/1710) comments on *lā 'adwā*: "The disease does not transgress from the diseased to the healthy. It is said: *A'dā fulānun fulānan min 'llatin bihi* (One person transmitted the disease to another). This is the view of the doctors on leprosy, scab, small pox, measles, halitosis, conjunctivitis and epidemic diseases. Most of the scholars of *hadith* say that the negation of '*adwā* means its refusal or denial as the apparent of the *hadith* indicates. And while commenting on *firra min al-majdhūmi* he

²⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:161

²⁷ Ibid., 10:162

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adds: We believe that leprosy does not transmit but we find in our hearts estrangement and disliking for the leper.”²⁸

(b) The second way of *tatbīq* has been described by Ibn Ḥajar as:

“The practice is on denying the ‘*adwā* originally and firmly. The command of avoiding the leper is due to obturation of the source (of evil), so that such disease should not inflict on the mixer because if he becomes sick he might think that this has happened because of mixing. In this way, he will approve ‘*adwā* which has been denied by the Prophet (peace be upon him).”²⁹

This is a very common way of combining these *ahādīth*. It has been used by a number of scholars. Abū ‘Ubayd (d.224/838) is one such scholar. He opines:

“The Prophet’s saying *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* does not approve ‘*adwā*. This has been commanded because if the healthy camels become diseased by the destiny of Allāh, then sometimes this might come in the heart of the owner of diseased camels that this is because of ‘*adwā*. In this way, he falls in temptation and doubt, therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered to abstain from this.”³⁰

‘*Allāmah* al-Khattābī (d.388/998) also does not agree with the concept of communicability of diseases rather he refers the disease occurred due to mixing of the healthy camels with the sick ones to the Divine Decree. His viewpoint is given below:

“The saying *lā ‘adwā* signifies that a thing never transmits to another thing. This is only the Divine Decree of Allāh. For this reason he (peace e upon him) said: Who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first one? i.e., the first camel had no scabby camel before him; even then the scab appeared on the first camel by the Command and Decree of Allāh. Due to His Divine Will the scab appeared in all camels afterwards.”³¹

The *hadīth lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* goes against his view, so he proceeds to answer it in the following way:

“The prohibition of this act does not mean that the diseased camels transmitted the disease to the healthy ones. This has been forbidden because if the healthy camels become sick by the Will of Allāh and His Divine Decree, it might come in the heart of the owner of camels that this is due to ‘*adwā*. Then, he will be tempted by this and will be put in doubt in this matter, hence, the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded to avoid and stay away from them.”³²

Abū Walīd al-Bājī (d.474/1081) quotes Isā b. Dīnār (d.121/827) who denies contagiousness of disease and attributes the ‘catching’ of a disease from a sick to the Act of Allāh Almighty. He expresses his standpoint as:

“It signifies that nothing is transmitted to another i.e., No disease can transfer to another. He said that he heard this from Ibn Wahb. In my view, this means that the Arab used to believe that when a healthy person gains closeness to a patient his disease

28 Al Zurqānī, Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Bāqī, *Sharh Zurqānī ‘ala al-Muwattā*, (Bayrūt: Dār ‘l al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d), 4:527-528

29 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:162

30 Ibid.

31 Al-Khattābī, Hamd b. Muhammad, *Ma‘ālam al-Sunan* (Al-Halb: Al-Maktaba‘h al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1351/1932), 4:233

32 Ibid., 4:234

“attacks” to him or “jumps” to him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) denied this and cleared that all this is from Allāh.”³³

He explains the question of the Prophet (peace be upon him): “who conveyed the (mange) disease to the first one?” by mentioning that the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant that if the scab of other camels was due to ‘*adwā*’ then the first one should not have scab as there was no scabby camel from whom he caught the disease. If the first one could have the disease without ‘*adwā*’ then the others could also have the disease without it. Therefore, one should believe that all this is from Allāh. He can create this disease in some individuals without any agency while in others by close proximity to the diseased.³⁴

According to Abū Walīd the *hadīth lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* has two significations:

1. “The prohibition is due to the suffering present in it. This is the view of Yahyā b. Yahyā.
2. Allāh has made the custom as such although He is the Creator of disease and health. *lā ‘adwā* denies the belief of those who say that this does not happen by the Act of Allāh and it originates from the association of the diseased with the healthy. The apparent words of the *hadīth firra min al-majdhūmi* demand that one can receive harm from him. This instruction is not for disliking his proximity because if one can withstand his proximity then there is no need of this prohibition. The Prophet (peace be upon him) meant with these words that if the smell of the leper harms you or you dislike his closeness (due to other reasons) then it is allowed for you to run away.”³⁵

Ibn Khuzaymah, Muhammad b. Ishāq (d.311/924), the author of *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*, a great scholar of *hadīth*, gives an explanation of the commandments of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) which support contagiousness. He says:

“The Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded them to escape from the leper as he forbade them to carry diseased camels in close proximity of the healthy ones. He said this to shower mercy on them and because of the fear that some of those who mix with the leper might catch leprosy and the healthy camels might catch the scab. In such case, some Muslims might think that this is due to ‘*adwā*’ and they approve ‘*adwā*’ which the Prophet (peace be upon him) denied.”³⁶

Ibn Jawzī Abū ‘l Farj ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Alī (d.597/1201), a great scholar of *hadīth* and history, says that *lā ‘adwā* was intended to link the disease to the destiny without any reliance on the cause of disease. He expounds his view as:

“The Arabs were superstitious and used to relate the effects to the causes like they believed that the rain occurs due to the effect of stars. The Prophet (peace be upon him) refused such superstitions by saying *lā ‘adwā*. With this he intended to link such things to the destiny. For this reason, he said *faman a’ dā al-awwal* (“who caused the

33 Al-Bājī, Sulayman b. Khalf, *Al-Muntaqā Sharh al-Muwattā’* (Egypt: Matba’ah al-Sa’adah, 1332/1913), 7:263

34 Ibid., 7:264

35 Ibid., 7:265

36 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:162

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(mange) disease to the first one?) and forbade entering a plague stricken land, so that man may not rely on the causes and forget The Causer.”³⁷

Al-Tabarī, Abū Ja‘far Muhammad b. Jarīr (d.310/923), a renowned scholar and historian, opines that the prohibition of proximity of a sick is because of the fear that the diseased person might fall in speculation that he caught the disease due to ‘*adwā*, otherwise the *hadīth lā ‘adwā* is appropriate. He expresses his views in the following words:

“In our view, the word with which the *hadīth lā ‘adwā* becomes true is appropriate because never reaches a soul but what has been written for it. While the proximity of a sick with a healthy does not necessitate the transfer of disease to the healthy, the closeness of the healthy with a sick having a disease which people dislike should be avoided not because of its prohibition, but because of the fear that the healthy might speculate that he has received this disease due to this proximity with the sick, thus, the thing which has been denied by the Prophet (peace be upon him) comes in his heart i.e., ‘*adwā*.”³⁸

In the view of Al-Tahāwī, Ahmad b. Muhammad (d.321/933), a great *faqīh*, the *hadīth lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* can be explained in the following words:

“Sometimes the healthy camels get this disease and the person who had brought his healthy camels close to the diseased one says: “If I had not brought my camels close to them then they would not have got anything of this disease.” In reality, even if he had not brought his camels there, they would have got this disease because Allāh has predestined it. The proximity of the healthy camels with the diseased ones is disallowed for this reason whose occurrence is common in the heart of a man.”³⁹

Al-Qurtubī, Muhammad b. Ahmad (d.671/1273), a famous *faqīh* of *Mālikī fiqh*, believes that getting disease in this way is not due to ‘*adwā* but it is a Writ of the Divine from which there is no escape. He set forth his viewpoint as follows:

“The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade to bring the healthy camels in proximity of the diseased ones for the fear of falling into the belief of ‘*adwā* in which the people of ignorance were involved, or for the fear of perturbation of the hearts and the effect of illusions. This is like his saying *firra min al-majdhūmi*. Although we believe that the leprosy does not transgress to others but we find estrangement and disliking in our hearts for his closeness and if a person forces himself to sit in his vicinity, then he will be discomfoting himself. So it is better for a Muslim that he should not involve in something which needs strenuous effort. He should avoid the ways of illusions and keep himself away from the sources of pains, despite his belief that the escape from destiny is not possible.”⁴⁰

Ibn Battāl, Abū ‘I Hasan ‘Alī b. Khalaf (d.449/1057), *shāriḥ* of *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, combines both these *ahādīth* in the following way:

“The saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) *lā ‘adwā* is an information from him to his *ummah* that ‘*adwā* has no reality. And by his saying *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh*, he

37 Ibn Jawzī, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Alī, *Kashf al-Mushkal min Hadīth al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* (Riyād: Dār al-Watn, n.d), 2:471

38 Ibn Battāl, *Sharḥ Saḥīḥ Bukhārī*, 9:411

39 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:162

40 Ibid.

prohibited the owner of sick camels to join the healthy camels of his Muslim brother, so that the owner of healthy camels should not speculate that his camels had got the disease because of the coming of sick camels. In this way, he enters in the belief of 'adwā which has been denied by the Prophet (peace be upon him)."⁴¹

'Allāmah Al-Munāwī, Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'ūf (d.1031/1622), a great scholar who had penned about eighty books, says that the prohibition is like avoiding a sloping wall, not for the cause of 'adwā. He comments as follows:

"Lā 'adwā signifies that there is no transmission of a disease from the sick to the healthy as the doctors believe that the communicable diseases are effective. This view has been rendered wrong. But this is related to the Will of Allāh Almighty. And the prohibition to go close to a leper is like avoiding a sloping wall and defective ship."⁴²

(c) A third way of *tatbīq* has been also used by the scholars of *hadīth*. Ibn Hajar mentions this way as:

"The address of negation and approbation is directed towards two different states. When he says *lā 'adwā*, the addressee is the person whose faith is strong and his trust in Allāh Almighty is right. And when he says *firra min al-majdhūmi* the addressee is the person whose faith is weak and he cannot have complete trust in Allāh Almighty, and he does not have the strength of removing the belief of 'adwā."⁴³

This becomes close to the Prophet's permission for moxibustion in spite of disliking it. He did both so that each group can follow his example. This way of application of *ahādīth* is very effective as it removes the contention between both parties. This provides much room for each party to follow the Prophet's example without denying the other.

ii) *Tatbīq* by those who support 'adwā:

Another group of scholars believes in the occurrence of 'adwā. They interpret the words *lā 'adwā* and provide a suitable explanation of it. Their ways of *tatbīq* are given below:

(a) The first way of *tatbīq* as given by Ibn Hajar is:

"The proof of 'adwā in leprosy and others is explained as this is an exception from the generalized negation of 'adwā. Hence, the meaning of the *hadīth lā 'adwā* is *lā 'adwā illā min al-Judhām wa 'l-Bars wa ghayrihā* i.e., There is no contagion except in leprosy and others."⁴⁴

This has been said by Qādī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d.403/1013). This signifies that *lā 'adwā* is a generalized command but it belongs to the kind '*Āmm Makhsus al-Ba'd* i.e., A generalized command from which few exceptions have been made on which the command does not apply. Therefore, the *hadīth lā 'adwā* is revealing a fact about most diseases which are non-communicable. And the *hadīth firra min al-majdhūmi* is included in the exception because leprosy is a communicable disease."⁴⁵

41 Ibn Battāl, *Sharh Sahīh Bukhārī*, 9:450

42 Al-Munāwī, 'Abd al-Ra'ūf b. Tāj al-'Ārifīn, *Al-Taysīr Sharh Jami'al Saghīr* (Riyād: Maktabah al-Imām al-Shāfi, 1408 / 1988), 2:501; Al-Munāwī, *Fayd al-Qadīr* (Egypt: Al-Maktabah al-Tujāriyyah al-Kubrā, 1356/1937), 6:433

43 Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:161

44 Ibid., 10:163

45 Ibn Battāl, *Sharh Sahīh Bukhārī*, 9:410

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Al-Karmānī, Shams al-Dīn, Muhammad b. Yūsuf (d.786/1384), the author of *Al-Kawākib al-Darārī fī Sharh al-Bukhārī*, also gives the same explanation that this command is a generalized one from which exceptions can be made.⁴⁶

(b) The second way of *tatbīq* is very common among the scholars. Ibn Ḥajar describes it as:

“The denial of ‘*adwā* signifies that nothing transgresses by nature. It negates the belief of the people of ignorance that the diseases communicate to others by their own nature without attributing their occurrence to Allāh. The Prophet (peace be upon him) refuted their belief. He ate with a leper demonstrating them that it is Allāh who ails and heals. And he forbade them to associate with a leper to show them that this association is a cause of transmission from the causes on which Allāh has made the custom that it is conducive for the causatives.”⁴⁷

Admitting this view, *Imām* Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d.911/1505) says that ‘*adwā* in the sentence *lā ‘adwā is khabar* and it means *lā taqa‘u ‘adwā bitab‘ihā* i.e, The ‘*adwā* does not occur by its own nature.’⁴⁸

Al-Turbushṭī, Shahāb al-Dīn Fadl Allāh b. Hasan (d.661/1263), a *Hanafī* jurist, after describing both views regarding ‘*adwā* proceeds to give his comment: “In my view, the opinion of the second group is better of the two interpretations as it allows agreement between the *ahādīth* which have come on this subject. Also because the word of the first party takes us to suspending the principles of medicine while *Shar‘* has not come to suspend it, but it has come with the approval of its principles.

Reply to the arguments which have come on ‘*adwā* is that we find that the Prophet (peace be upon him) sometimes used to combine the prohibition meant for *harām* with that which meant for *makrūh*. The *hadīth* which shows that the view we mentioned is right is the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the leper who was coming to take oath of allegiance: “Go back! We have taken your oath” in the *hadīth* of Shahrīd b. Suwayd al-Thaqafī. And the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to the one whose hand he held and placed it in the bowl: “Eat with the name of Allāh, attesting (the protection) of Allāh (against the contagion) and trusting on Him”. There is no way of combining both these *ahādīth* except this. The first *hadīth* signifies prevention from reasons of harm and the second signifies *tawakkul* on Allāh in his leaving the reasons of diseases and such is the state of his Holy Being.”⁴⁹

Mullā ‘Alī Qārī (d.1014/1606), approved this explanation of Turbushṭī. He remarks that such saying is the nicest interpretation.⁵⁰ ‘Abd al-Rahmān Mubārakpūrī (d.1353/1934) also narrates this saying of al-Turbushṭī.⁵¹

46 Al-Karmānī, *Sharh Karmānī ‘alā Sahīh Bukhārī* (Bayrūt: Dār Ihyā al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1405/1958), 21:3

47 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:163

48 Al-Suyūṭī, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr, *Sharh Suyūṭī ‘alā Muslim* (Al-Sa‘ūdiyyah: Dār Ibn ‘Affān, 1416/1996), 5:231

49 Mulla ‘Alī Qārī, ‘Alī b. Sultān, *Mirqāt al-Mafāṭīh* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr, 1422/2002), 7:2894

50 Ibid.

51 Al-Mubārakpūrī, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. ‘Abdal Rahīm, *Tuhfah al-Ahwadhī: Sharh Jami‘ al-Tirmidhī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d), 5:198-199

Imām al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn (d.458/1066), expounds that *lā ‘adwā* does not negate ‘*adwā* but the belief of ignorant who attributes ‘*adwā* to other than Allāh. He states his view as:

“What has been proved from the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that *lā ‘adwā* is the negation of the belief of the people of ignorance who attribute ‘*adwā* to other than Allāh. And Allāh by His Will had made the association of the healthy with the one who has something from these ailments a cause for the origin of ‘*adwā*. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said ‘*firra min al-majdhūmi*’ and ‘*lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh*’, and he said about the plague ‘*man sami‘a bihi biardinn falā taqdamu ‘alayhi*’. Each of these is with the destiny of Allāh.”⁵²

Al-Tībī, Sharf al-Dīn, al-Husayn b. Muhammad (d.743/1342) describes the views of both groups concerning ‘*adwā* and comments that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mean the refusal of ‘*adwā* but of the wrong belief attached to it:

“The other party says that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not mean its refusal as the *hadīth firra min al-majdhūmi* indicates. He meant to refute their belief that the repulsive diseases are effective inevitably. He informed that this is not so, but it is dependent on the Will of Allāh. If He Wills this happens and if He does not Will this does not happen. The words ‘who caused mange in the first camel?’ indicate this meaning. He showed with his saying *firra min al-majdhūmi* that the closeness with the leper is one of the reasons of getting this disease. Hence, wariness from it is like avoiding a sloping wall.”⁵³

Badr al-Dīn al-‘Aynī, Mahmud b. Ahmad (d.855/1451), the author of ‘*Umdah al-Qārī*’ also opines that the negation of *adwa* means the negation of communicability without any agent otherwise the transmission via an agent is not denied:

“They used to speculate that the diseases transmit of their own. The Prophet (peace be upon him) made them to know that the fact is not like this. It is Allāh who gives ailments and sends diseases. Therefore, he said who caused the scab in the first camel?”⁵⁴

Ibn Qayyīm, Shams al-Dīn, Muhammad b. Abī Bakr (d.751/1350), removes the contradiction between the two kinds of *ahādīth* on ‘*adwā* in the following way:

“What the Prophet (peace be upon him) denied in *lā ‘adwā* is the belief of the polytheists of the occurrence of ‘*adwā* based on the speculation of their polytheism and foundation of their disbelief. And what he prohibited by saying *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* has two interpretations:

1. Fear of entanglement of the hearts in attributing to ‘*adwā* a thing which Allāh can decree because of this proximity. This implies disturbance for the person on whom this calamity may incur and his exposure to the belief of ‘*adwā*. Therefore, the *ahādīth* are not contrary in anyway.
2. This indicates that the exposure of the diseased camels to the healthy ones can become the reason for the diseases which Allāh creates whereas Allāh can put out its effect with the reasons antagonizing it or He can prevent the force of causation. This is merely the Oneness of Allāh in contrast to the belief of polytheism.”⁵⁵

52 Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:161

53 Al Munāwī, *Fayd al-Qadīr*, 6:434; Mulla ‘Alī Qārī, *Mirqāt al-Mafātīh* 7:2898; Al-Mujadādī, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Ghanī, *Injāh al-Hājah: Sharh ibn Mājah* (Karāchī: Qadīmī Kutub Khānah, n.d), 1:253.

54 Al ‘Aynī, Badr al-Dīn, ‘*Umdah al-Qārī*’ (Bayrūt: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, n.d), 21:247

55 Sharf al-Haq, ‘*Awn al-Ma‘būd*, 10:292

The Concept of Contagiousness in the *Ahādīth*

(3) The third way of *tatbīq* is very significant. Ibn Hajar mentions it as:

“The command of fleeing from a leper is not from the subject of ‘*adwā* but it is because of a natural fact, that is, the transfer of a disease from a body to another via touch, close association and breathing of bad air. For this reason, in many diseases the transfer of a disease occurs from the patient to the healthy due to close association with him. And the *hadīth lā ‘adwā* has another signification. That is a disease like plague inflicts a place and the healthy person flees from it fearing that it will reach him. This is not allowed as it is a kind of escape from the destiny of Allāh.”⁵⁶

The view has been attributed to Ibn Qutaybah (d.276/889). This is very significant interpretation of both kinds of *ahādīth*. Here an attempt has been made to get together the medical knowledge and the traditional literature of the *hadīth*. He explains it as:

“The odour of a leper is intensified and it sickens the one whose sitting, talking and lying with a leper prolongs. It mostly affects the wife from the husband and vice versa and their child has tendency towards it. Due to this reason, the doctors advise to prevent association with a leper not because of ‘*adwā* but because of the effect of this odour as it sickens the person who breaths it for a long time. For this reasons, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* because sometimes one of the camels has wet scab and when he mixes with other camels or rubs with them or harbors their sitting place the water that comes out from his lesions reaches them and infects them”⁵⁷

Ibn Qutaybah uses the terms *wāsītah al-mulāmasah* which signifies the transmission by touch, *al-mukhālatah* which signifies direct transmission via droplet nuclei; and *shamm al-rā’ihah* which signifies the air borne transmission.⁵⁸

Ibn Qayyīm also mentions the words of Ibn Qutaybah and considers them of utmost importance. He is a strong votary of the contagiousness of diseases. He comments on leprosy as:

“In the view of medical practitioners this disease is contagious and hereditary, and who lives with a leper or tuberculoid leper, he gets this disease by the effect of his breath. Owing to his perfect love and unusual passion of well wishing, he (peace be upon him) forbade every person of his *ummah* to adopt ways which involve him in any bodily or healthy badness or defect. Sometimes the odour of the sick’s breath when reaches a healthy person sickens him. We have seen that some diseases can make healthy people sick via the breath of patient. And this breath is a cause among the causes of communicability of diseases.”⁵⁹

While commenting on plague, he elucidates the medical reason behind the instruction of staying in a plague-stricken area as follows:

“During an epidemic, leaving that area and travelling to a far off land involves much movement of the body which can be harmful and there is also fear of transmission of the disease to that area. Therefore, to avoid leaving that place is better and travelling to an inflicted area is harmful.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:161

⁵⁷ Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Dīnawarī*, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muslim, *Tā’wīl Mukhtalafah al-Hadīth*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Arabī, n.d), 69-71

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibn Qayyim, *Al-Jawziyyah*, Muḥammad b. Abū Bakr, *Al-Tibb al-Nabawī*, (Bayrūt: Dār al-Hilāl, n.d), p.110

⁶⁰ Ibid, 35.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion following conclusion can be drawn:

The early scholars used to rely on the apparent words of the *hadīth* “*Lā’adwā*” and denied the existence of ‘*adwā*. They declared its substantiation against the *hadīth*. Among them only a few believe in the concept of contagiousness and tried to assign “*Lā’adwā*” a suitable meaning. Therefore, the view of denying the ‘*adwā* became popular and the sayings of those who held this view could not grab attention of the public.

With the discovery of microscope, a monumental change occurred. Now the microbes were identified. This helped a lot in understanding the concept of ‘*adwā*. The ways of transmission of the microbes were known and the causes of communicability of diseases became clear. The concept of non-contagiousness of diseases which was correct in the eyes of the scholars of that age now seems to be far from the observations, experiments and realities of this age. The votaries of contagiousness of diseases who were few in number now seem to be on the right side.

The way of the modern scholars is that they do not negate ‘*adwā* exclusively because some diseases are undoubtedly communicable. Observations, experiments, modern medical sciences and doctors all agree on this. This transmission of diseases does not happen by virtue of their own nature, or against the Will of Allāh, or against the *tawakkul* on Him, or against the command of the *hadīth*. This transmission is a cause of the spread of diseases among other causes. This occurs with the Will of Allāh, its course follows the Divine Decree, and it is a revelation of the magnanimity of the creative attributes of Allāh. He Who has made the microbes, He has also made their modes of transmission, and internal mechanism to fight against them. On one hand, the pathogenicity, infectivity and virulence of the microbes follow the Divine Will, and on the other hand, the immunity and resistance of the body is also dictated by His command. Nothing goes beyond His Supremacy; nothing is out of His reach; whatever happens, it happens by His Will and with His knowledge. This belief is not against the Oneness of Allāh, but it is purely a declaration of the Oneness of His Holy Being.

The *hadīth* “*Lā’adwā*” does not deny contagiousness of diseases altogether. This is a generalized command from which few exceptions have been made. The words *lā’adwā illā min al-Judhām wa’l-Bars wa ghayrihā* is like *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. The *lā ilāha* part says that there is not God, but *illā Allāh* part makes an exception that there is no God except Allāh. Similarly, *lā’adwā* signifies that there is no contagion, and *min al-Judhām wa’l-Bars wa ghayrihā* indicate an exception of those diseases in which the communicability has been established. With this, the possibility of undermining the *hadīth* *lā’adwā* ends and the doubt of leaving the *hadīth* dies of its own.

The *ahādīth* of eating with a leper contain Mufaddal b. Fadālah who is a weak narrator, hence, the *ṣaḥīḥ hadīth* ‘*firra min al-majdhūmi*’ (Run away from leper) should be preferred. The *hadīth* *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* (Do not bring a diseased camel to a healthy one) should be preferred to *lā’adwā* because the narrator Abū Hurayrah had stopped narrating it. His latter narration was *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* only it should be preferred to his previous narration. Both *ṣaḥīḥ ahādīth* ‘*firra min al-majdhūmi*’ and *lā yūridū mumrid ‘alā musihh* alongwith the *ṣaḥīḥ ahādīth* regarding plague strongly indicate that the concept of contagiousness of diseases is present in the *ahādīth* of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).