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## The Authenticity of Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh's Judgment: A Response to Contemporary Critics

Fajri Matahati Muhammadin\* , Muhammad Jasir Nashrullah\*\*.

**ABSTRACT:** Many may wonder why it is necessary to write about the authenticity of such a famous incident recorded in perhaps all books of *sīrah* and *tārīkh*. It has been well over a thousand years since Sa'd ibn Mu'adh passed his judgement on Banū Qurayzah following the Battle of Khandaq; all fighting men should be executed, the women and children should be enslaved. It is perhaps hard to imagine that someone would even question whether such an incident did in fact occur. However, the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a challenge posed by some contemporary scholars suggesting that Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's judgement had never happened. If this claim bears any amount of truth, it may be considered as a new revolutionary opinion that has eluded numerous generations of Muslim scholars. This article examines the claim of these contemporary scholars and limits itself to what can be analysed by the means of *'ulūm al-ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth* criticism). While the critics have discussed various aspects about the entire Banū Qurayzah campaign, this article focuses entirely on the judgment of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh. Two aspects are examined: *sanad* (chain of narration) and *matn* (text). The study has discovered that the narration concerning Sa'd ibn Mu'adh's judgement is indeed authentic and the critics may have missed significant points in passing their judgments.

**Keywords & Phrases:** *Ḥadīth* studies; Banū Qurayzah; *sanad* criticism; *matn* criticism; Battle of Khandaq.

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## Introduction

It may be seen strange that one would even write about the authenticity of such a famous and widely accepted story of what befell the Banū Qurayzah after the battle of Khandaq. After all, it is very difficult to find a book of *sīrah* without this story, whether it belongs to the classic or contemporary works (al-Mubarakfuri, 1996, pp. 321–324; al-Ṭabarī, 1378a, pp. 576–581; Ibn Ishāq, 1998, pp. 456–469). It is true that the authenticity of some parts of the *sīrah* are debated, such as when al-Ṭabarī narrates that the Muslims gave bread and milk to the captives of Badr (al-Ṭabarī, n.d., p. 146) but Ibn Ḥajar mentions that the chain has a missing narrator (al-ʿAsqalānī, n.d., p. 130). However, this story of the fate of Banū Qurayzah does not seem to be among those debated, and all seems well for over a thousand years of Islamic tradition.

However, to the surprise of many, a challenge had emerged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1970s, one journal article and one book was published by W. N. Arafat and Barakat Ahmad respectively which challenged this story (Ahmad, 1979; Arafat, 1976). They argued that the entire ordeal of the Banū Qurayzah throughout the Battle of Khandaq, focusing on the *sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq, is full of inaccuracies and fabrications.

In Barakat's book, the famous orientalist Professor Bernard Lewis has actually provided feedback as well as a prologue (Ahmad, 1979, pp. ix–x, 1). Some reviews did give general critiques towards this book, but nothing particularly critical about Barakat's argument pertaining to Banū Qurayzah (Donner, 1980; Nemoj, 1982). Additionally, the work of Arafat appeared in a reputable journal published by Cambridge University. The last page of Arafat's article also mentions that it was previously published in *The Times* and *The Guardian*, two famous international newspapers, in 1973 (Arafat, 1976, p. 107). Then, in 2011, Muhammad Munir published an article which revives the arguments of Barakat Ahmad and Arafat (Munir, 2011a). Finally, very recently in 2019, Sadik Kirazli also published an article echoing the same stance (Kirazli, 2019).

The discourse regarding the fate of Banū Qurayzah is deemed important due to the debate over the conduct of warfare which has been discussed extensively by various scholars *inter alia* (al-Dawoody, 2015; al-Zayd, 2004; Islam & Hamzah, 2016; Maḥmūd, 2000; Mohd Kamal, 2019; Munir, 2011b) and international organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (Maurer, 2016). As implied by Muhammad Munir (Munir, 2011a, p. 16), the judgment of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh towards Banū Qurayzah has become one of the points of contention. In fact, the challenge towards this story was raised by an invited speaker at the Islam and International Humanitarian Law Course organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Aceh, Indonesia, in 2016.

While the earliest critics i.e., Barakat Ahmad and W. N. Arafat seem to incline towards historical criticism, later critics such as Kirazli and especially Munir seem to give emphasis on how the story affects legal rulings. In 2010, Abdulhadi Alajmi and Muhammed El-Sharawy who refuted Joseph Schacht's critique of the sciences of *ḥadīth*, had also referred to the judgement of Sa'd ibn Mu'adh towards Banū Qurayzah as a case study (Alajmi & El-Sharawy, 2010). Unfortunately, Alajmi and El-Sharawy did not touch on the

works of Barakat Ahmad and W. N. Arafat who specifically criticised the narration in question.

The present study will not go deep into identifying legal rulings that can be extracted from Saʿd ibn Muʿādh's judgment. However, the question whether the content of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh's judgment contradicts the *sharīʿah* or not will be discussed under the subtopic of *matn* criticism. It will include some brief discussion related to legal rulings that were derived from the *matn*.

Additionally, the critics of the Banū Qurayzah incident have elaborated various aspects of the story from the start of the Battle of Khandaq until the very end of it, i.e., after the execution and enslavement were carried out and their property distributed. In fact, Barakat Ahmad's book examines stories of all Jewish tribes throughout the entire *sīrah*. To critically examine the entire criticism by these scholars may require a much more extensive work. Therefore, this article limits itself to discussing the crux of the whole story of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh's judgment.

### 1. The Story of Banū Qurayzah

Banū Qurayzah is one of the three Jewish tribes who settled in the city of Yathrib, the others being Banū Qaynuqā' and Banū al-Naḍīr (Ibn Kathīr, 1408, p. 419). After the *hijrah* of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH and his companions from Makkah, the city was then known as Madinah and a treaty was agreed upon between the tribes in Madinah. Among the contents of this treaty were that nobody would be forced to accept Islam (or any other religion), Jewish law would apply to Jews, and that every party in Madinah would protect each other in the event of an invasion and not support the enemy (Ibn Kathīr, 1408, p. 275).

Banū Qaynuqā' was expelled not long after the battle of Badr in 2 AH, and Banū al-Naḍīr was expelled after the Battle of Uhud in 3 AH (al-Ṭabarī, 1378a, p. 481 and 550). Banū Qurayzah was never expelled, but instead the *sīrah* tells of a much grimmer fate.

In 5 AH, a coalition army led by Banū Quraysh and included Banū Ghaṭafān and other tribes (funded by Banū al-Naḍīr) left for Madinah. The Muslims dug a trench to defend Madinah from one side, while Banū Qurayzah and their fort was supposed to defend the city from the other side. This was when the Chieftain of Banū al-Naḍīr, Huyay ibn Akhtāb, managed to convince the Chieftain of Banū Qurayzah, Ka'b ibn Asad, to betray the Muslims (Ibn Ishāq, 1998, p. 453).

The *sīrah* then tells of Nuʿaym ibn Masʿūd, a high-ranking Banū Ghaṭafān tribesman, who managed to apply *divide et impera* between the Quraysh and Banū Qurayzah. Abū Sufyān, leader of the Quraysh, was afraid that Banū Qurayzah would betray them and also due to harsh weather, decided to lift the siege and leave (Ibn Ishāq, 1998, pp. 458–460). Banū Qurayzah, then, was left at the mercy of the Muslims.

After the Muslims besieged the fort of Banū Qurayzah for twenty five nights (Ibn Ishāq, 1998, p. 461), the latter eventually surrendered to Prophet Muḥammad PBUH. Banū Qurayzah agreed to be judged by Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, who was the Chieftain of the Banū Aws

tribe of Madinah (who had strong relations with Banū Qurayzah) and Prophet Muḥammad PBUH agreed to this appointment (Ibn Ishāq, 1998, p. 463).

When Saʿd ibn Muʿādh was summoned, he casted a judgment that would echo throughout all books of *sīrah*: all fighting men were to be killed, the women and children were to be enslaved. Upon this judgement, Prophet Muḥammad PBUH remarked “You have given the judgement of Allah who is above the seven heavens” (Ibn Ishāq, 1998, p. 464). The rest is history. The *sīrah* books mention that the judgment was meted out, and the property left by Banū Qurayzah was divided among the Muslims as war booty.

## 2. Arguments of the Critics: *Sanad* Criticism

The arguments of the critics of the Banū Qurayzah story can be classified into three groups. The first is related to the *sanad*, where they suggest that the transmitters who narrated the account were not credible. The second is related to the *matn*, where they propose that the contents of the story contradict stronger *dalīl* or each other. The third is related to the plausibility of certain aspects of the story.

### 2.1 Criticism Levelled Against the Muslim Historians

The criticism towards historians who narrate this case is mostly addressed at Muḥammad ibn Ishāq. Arafat successfully observed that the details regarding the fate of Banū Qurayzah found in most *sīrah* books were originally taken from Ibn Ishāq (Arafat, 1976, p. 101). Other scholars of *sīrah* such as Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Wāqid al-Aslamī (known as al-Wāqidī) and Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī were also criticised for narrating the account but discussions seem to have focused on Ibn Ishāq.

Arafat, echoed by Munir, cited a number of harsh critics (*jarḥ*) towards Ibn Ishāq by the scholars of *ḥadīth*. For example, they cited Imām Mālik who said that Ibn Ishāq was a liar, “the *Dajjāl* amongst the *Dajjāls*,” and “narrates from Jewish people” (Arafat, 1976, p. 103; Munir, 2011a, pp. 16–18). Arafat also cited that Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī rejected the stories of Banū Qurayzah and Banū al-Naḍīr from Ibn Ishāq, calling them “odd tales” (Arafat, 1976, p. 103).

The case of Ibn Ishāq is a difficult one, but the problem with his critics is that they appear to be selective. There are other great scholars of *ḥadīth* who view Ibn Ishāq with a different perspective. In fact, one must question Arafat’s citation of Ibn Ḥajar in the previous paragraph. Arafat claimed that the statement was taken from Ibn Ḥajar’s *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*. However, upon examination, it contains no such statement (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 45). Instead, Ibn Ḥajar actually referenced Ibn Ishāq’s narration concerning Banū Qurayzah in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1379a, pp. 330–334). Ibn Ḥajar’s conclusion about Ibn Ishāq reads: has weakness, but is good and honest (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1379b, p. 163).

This opinion is also shared by other great scholars of *ḥadīth*. Some even noted how Ibn Ishāq is remarkably credible in relating the campaigns of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, which is our subject at hand. They are al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī and al-Imām al-Dhahabī (al-Baghādādī, 2001, p. 15; al-Dhahabī, 1419, p. 130; al-Jarjānī, 1988, p. 112). Therefore, on the

whole, it seems that Ibn Ishāq cannot be given blanket rejection or acceptance. Further examination of his narrations must be made on a case per case basis.

Barakat Ahmad gives more justice to Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq as he also cites scholars who praise the latter (Ahmad, 1979, p. 11). However, he mentions and criticised another source of the Banū Qurayzah story, namely, al-Wāqidī, as reiterated further by Munir who in turn criticised al-Ṭabarī (Ahmad, 1979, p. 18; Munir, 2011a, pp. 22–23).

The criticisms directed towards al-Wāqidī may not be unwarranted. As correctly observed by Barakat Ahmad and Munir, some *ʿulamāʾ* labelled him as a liar. Ibn Ḥajar concludes that he is *matrūk* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406, p. 498). al-Ṭabarī, as Munir observed, has been criticised as having Rāfiḍī inclinations. However, these were unfounded and incorrect accusations made by some Ḥanbalites during his time due to a rift between them (Ibn Athīr, 1417, p. 677). As an individual, al-Ṭabarī was heavily praised by the great scholars of *ḥadīth* (al-Dhahabī, 1382a, pp. 498–499). Although, when narrating events, al-Ṭabarī himself mentions that he narrates everything he finds with citable *sanad* without distinguishing the authentic and the non-authentic narrations (al-Ṭabarī, 1378b, pp. 7–8). Hence, his works would need further examination.

However, even if these historians are to be rejected altogether, there are some parts of the story of Banū Qurayzah which is narrated through other chains of narrations which do not involve Ibn Ishāq. This is true especially regarding the judgment of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh. al-Imām al-Bukhārī narrates the following from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (al-Bukhārī, 1997b, *ḥadīth* no.6262, 1997c, *ḥadīth* no. 3043):

أَنَّ أَهْلَ قُرَيْظَةَ نَزَلُوا عَلَى حُكْمِ سَعْدٍ، فَأَرْسَلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِلَيْهِ فَجَاءَ فَقَالَ: ((فُؤِمُوا إِلَى سَيِّدِكُمْ)) أَوْ قَالَ ((خَيْرِكُمْ)). فَقَعَدَ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: هَؤُلَاءِ نَزَلُوا عَلَى حُكْمِكَ. قَالَ: فَإِنِّي أَحْكُمُ أَنْ تُقْتَلَ مُقَاتِلَتُهُمْ وَتُسَبَى ذَرَارِيُّهُمْ. فَقَالَ: ((لَقَدْ حَكَمْتَ بِمَا حَكَمَ بِهِ الْمَلِكُ)).

The people of (the tribe of) Qurayzah agreed upon to accept the verdict of Saʿd. The Prophet PBUH sent for him (Saʿd) and he came. The Prophet PBUH said (to those people), "Get up for your chief or the best among you!" Saʿd sat beside the Prophet PBUH and the Prophet PBUH said (to him), "These people have agreed to accept your verdict." Saʿd said, "So I give my judgment that their warriors should be killed, and their women and children should be taken as captives." The Prophet PBUH said, "You have judged according to the King's (Allah's) judgment."

This *ḥadīth* was reported by al-Bukhārī from the following narrators, and the following is the summary of what the critics of narrators say about them:

- Abū al-Walīd: *thiqah thabat, mutqin, shaykh al-Islām, al-imām al-ḥāfiẓ* (al-Dhahabī, 1405a, p. 341; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326b, p. 273),
- from Shuʿbah: *thiqah ḥāfiẓ mutqin, amīr al-muʾminīn fi al-ḥadīth* (al-Dhahabī, 1405b, p. 202; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326b, p. 338),

- from Saʿd ibn Ibrāhīm: *thiqah, fāḍil, ʿābid, al-imām al-ḥujjah al-faqīh* (al-Dhahabī, 1422a, p. 418; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326c, p. 463),
- from Abū Umāmah (*ṣaḥābah*),
- from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (*ṣaḥābah*).

There are other similar reports containing the same subject (i.e., the appointment and judgment of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh) with different wordings in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*:

1. Another *ḥadīth* from Abū Saʿīd in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (al-Bukhārī, 1997a, *ḥadīth* no.4121):
  - from Ibn Bashshār: *thiqah, ṣadūq, al-imām al-ḥāfiẓ rāwiyat al-Islām* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 144; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 70),
  - from Ghundar or Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar: *ḥāfiẓ al-thabat, mutqin, thiqah, muʿaddib* (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 98; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 97),
  - from Shuʿbah,
  - from Abū Umāmah,
  - from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī.
2. A *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʾishah in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (al-Bukhārī, 1997a, *ḥadīth* no.4122):
  - from Zakariyyā ibn Yahyā: *ḥāfiẓ, thiqah, ṣāhib al-sunnah* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326c, p. 335, 1406, p. 216),
  - from ʿAbd Allah ibn Numayr: *al-Thiqah al-ḥāfiẓ al-imām, ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth, mustaqīm al-amr, ṣadūq* (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 244; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326d, p. 57),
  - from Hishām ibn ʿUrwah: *al-Imām al-thiqah, shaykh al-Islām, thabat, al-ḥujjah* (al-Dhahabī, 1422c, p. 34; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326b, p. 275),
  - from his father i.e. ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr: *al-Imām ʿālim al-Madīnah, al-faqīh, thiqah, thabat* (al-Dhahabī, 1422d, p. 421; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326e, p. 180),
  - from ʿĀʾishah (*ṣaḥābah*).
3. Another *ḥadīth* from Abū Saʿīd, but in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (al-Naysābūrī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no.4596):
  - Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah: *al-Imām al-ʿalam sayyid al-ḥuffāẓ, ṣadūq, thiqah ḥāfiẓ* (al-Dhahabī, 1422e, p. 122; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406, p. 623)
  - and Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-thabat, al-ḥujjah, thiqah, ṣadūq* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 123; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 425)
  - and Ibn Bashshār,
  - all narrated from Muḥammad Ibn Jaʿfar (Ghundar),



- from Shuʿbah,
  - from Abū Umāmah,
  - from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī.
4. Another *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʾishah, but in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (al-Naysābūrī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no.4598):
- Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah
  - and Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAlā al-Hamdani: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-thiqah shaykh al-muḥaddithīn* (al-Dhahabī, 1422e, p. 394; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 385),
  - from ʿAbd Allah ibn Numayr
  - from Hishām
  - from his father
  - from ʿĀʾishah.
5. A *ḥadīth* from Ibn ʿUmar in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (al-Naysābūrī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no.4592):
- Muḥammad ibn Rāfiʿ: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-ḥujjah al-qudwah, thiqah maʾmūn, thabat fāḍil* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 214; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 160),
  - and Ishāq ibn Manṣūr: *thiqah maʾmūn, ṣadūq, al-imām al-faqīh al-ḥāfiẓ al-ḥujjah* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 258; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326f, p. 249),
  - from ʿAbd al-Razzāq: *al-ḥāfiẓ al-kabīr ʿālim al-Yaman, thiqah* (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 563; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326d, p. 310),
  - from Ibn Jurayj: *al-Imām al-ʿallāmah al-ḥāfiẓ shaykh al-Ḥarām, thiqah faqīh fāḍil* (al-Dhahabī, 1422c, p. 325; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406). Note: Ibn Ḥajar mentions that Ibn al-Jurayj is a *mudallis* of the third *ṭabaqah*, but al-Arnāʾūṭ in commenting on the same narration in *Musnad Aḥmad* notes that Ibn al-Jurayj did not commit *tadlis* in this particular narration. See: (Ibn Ḥanbal, 1421, *ḥadīth* no. 6367),
  - from Mūsā ibn ʿUqbah: *al-Imām al-thiqah al-kabīr, thiqah* in *maghāzi* (al-Dhahabī, 1422c, p. 114; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326g, p.360),
  - from Nāfiʿ: *al-Imām al-muftī al-thabat ʿālim al-Madīnah, thiqah* (al-Dhahabī, 1422c, p. 95; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326g, p. 412),
  - from Ibn ʿUmar (*ṣaḥābah*).

Additionally, there are also other *ḥadīth* from the *kuttub al-sittah* reporting the same incident. Several narrations mention it in general:

1. *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*, narrating the whole incident (al-Tirmidhī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no.1582):

- from Qutaybah: *Shaykh al-Islām al-muḥaddith al-imām al-thiqah, ṣadūq, thiqah maʾmūn* (al-Dhahabī, 1422e, p. 13; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326h, p. 358).
  - from al-Layth: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ shaykh al-Islām, ṣadūq, thiqah thabat*, (al-Dhahabī, 1422f, p. 136; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326h, p. 459).
  - from Abū al-Zubayr: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ, ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth, thiqah ṣadūq* (al-Dhahabī, 1422a, p. 380; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 440).
  - from Jābir (*ṣaḥābah*).
2. *Sunan Abī Dāwud*, narrating the incident without mentioning Saʿd (al-Sijistānī, 2008a, *ḥadīth* no.3005):
- Muḥammad ibn Yahyā ibn Fāris: *al-Imām al-ʿallāmah al-ḥāfiẓ al-bārī shaykh al-Islām, imām al-ḥadīth, thiqah maʾmūn, mutqin* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 273; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 511).
  - from ʿAbd al-Razzāq,
  - from Ibn Jurayj,
  - from Mūsā ibn ʿUqbah,
  - from Ibn ʿUmar.
3. *Sunan Abī Dawud*, focusing on the killing of a woman, but mentions that the men were killed and does not mention Saʿd (al-Sijistānī, 2008a, *ḥadīth* no. 2671):
- from ʿAbd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Nufayli: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ ʿālim al-Jazīrah, thiqah maʾmūn, ṣāḥib al-ḥadīth* (al-Dhahabī, 1405a, p. 634; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406, p. 321),
  - from Muḥammad Ibn Salamah: *al-Imām al-muḥaddith al-muftī, thiqah, fāḍil ʿālim* (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 49; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 193),
  - from Muḥammad ibn Ishāq,
  - from Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn al-Zubayr: *ʿālim, thiqah* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 39),
  - from ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr,
  - from ʿĀʾishah.

Also, there are narrations of ʿAṭīyyah al-Quraẓī. ʿAṭīyyah al-Quraẓī said that when he was a child during the incident, he was spared during the killing as he has not reached puberty at the time:

1. *Sunan al-Nasāʾī* (al-Nasāʾī, 2007b, *ḥadīth* no. 3459), this seems to be the only narration of this incident to not mention ʿAṭīyyah al-Quraẓī by name:

- from Rabīʿah ibn Sulaymān: *al-Imām al-muḥaddith al-faqīh al-kabīr, ṣadūq thiqaḥ* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 587; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326c, p. 245),
  - from Asad ibn Mūsā: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-thiqaḥ, asad al-Sunnah, mashhūr, ṣāliḥ al-sunnah*, sometimes narrates *ḥadīth gharīb* (al-Dhahabī, 1405a, p. 162; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326f, p. 260).
  - from Ḥammād ibn Salamah: *al-Imām al-quḍwah shaykh al-Islām, thiqaḥ, hasan, ḥāfiẓ thiqaḥ maʾmūn*, sometimes narrates *ḥadīth munkar* (al-Dhahabī, 1405b, p. 444; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326c, p. 11).
  - from Abū Jaʿfar al-Khaṭmi: *thiqaḥ, ṣadūq* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326h, p. 151, 1406, p. 432),
  - from ʿUmārah ibn Khuzaymah: *thiqaḥ*, does not narrate many *ḥadīth* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326e, p. 416),
  - from Kathīr ibn Sāʿib (*ṣaḥābah*)
2. *Sunan al-Nasāʾī* (al-Nasāʾī, 2007b, *ḥadīth* no. 3460):
- from Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-quḍwah shaykh al-Islām, thiqaḥ* (al-Dhahabī, 1405c, p. 212; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 472),
  - from Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah: *al-Imām al-kabīr, al-ḥāfiẓ* of his time, *al-ḥujjah, thiqaḥ maʾmūn thabat, mutqin*, memory changes at old age, sometimes does *tadlis* to *thiqaḥ* narrators (al-Dhahabī, 1422f, p. 454; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326b, p. 117, 1406, p. 245),
  - from ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿUmayr: *al-Ḥāfiẓ, ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth, thiqaḥ thabat fi al-ḥadīth*, some say *mukhtaliṭ*, makes mistakes in one or two *ḥadīth*, memory changed when he was approaching his death (al-Dhahabī, 1422a, p. 438; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326d, p. 411),
  - from ʿAṭīyyah al-Quraẓī (*ṣaḥābah*).
3. *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, with different chain (al-Nasāʾī, 2007a, *ḥadīth* no. 4984):
- from Ismāʿīl ibn Masʿūd: *ṣadūq, thiqaḥ* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326f, p. 331),
  - from Khālid ibn al-Ḥārith: *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-ḥujjah al-imām, thiqaḥ thabat, thiqaḥ maʾmūn*, among the *shuyūkh* of Basra (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 126; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326c, p. 82),
  - from Shuʿbah,
  - from ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿUmayr,
  - from ʿAṭīyyah.
4. *Sunan Abī Dawūd* (al-Sijistānī, 2008b, *ḥadīth* no. 4404):

- from Muḥammad ibn Kathīr: *al-Imām al-Muḥaddith*, some say *layyin jiddan* and *ḍaʿīf*, some say *thiqah* (al-Dhahabī, 1405a, p. 380; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 415), Ibn Ḥajar concludes him as *ṣadūq* but makes mistakes (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406, p. 504),
  - from Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah,
  - from ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿUmayr,
  - from ʿAṭīyyah.
5. *Sunan Ibn Mājah* (Ibn Mājah, 2007, *ḥadīth* no. 2541):
- from Abū Bakr ibn Abī Shaybah
  - from ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ al-muṭqin muḥaddith Qazwīn*, *thiqah ṣadūq*, great scholars travel to learn from him (al-Dhahabī, 1422e, p. 459; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326e, p. 378).
  - from Wakīʿ: *al-Imām al-ḥāfiẓ muḥaddith* of Iraq, *maṭbūʿ al-ḥifdh*, *ḥāfiḍh ḥāfiḍh*, *ḥāfiḍh muṭqin*, *fāḍil*, *thiqah ḥāfiḍh ʿābid*, some say he makes mistakes (al-Dhahabī, 1422b, p. 140; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326i, p. 123, 1406, p. 581),
  - from Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah,
  - from ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿUmayr,
  - from ʿAṭīyyah
6. *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* (al-Tirmidhī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no. 1584):
- from Hannad: *al-Imām al-ḥujjah al-quḍwah zayn al-ʿābidīn*, *thiqah*, *ṣadūq* (al-Dhahabī, 1422e, p. 465; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326i, p. 70),
  - from Wakīʿ,
  - from Sufyān,
  - from ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn ʿUmayr
  - from ʿAṭīyyah.

As shown above, even if Ibn Ishāq and the other historians are to be rejected, there is an overwhelming number of credible narrators reporting the same incident.

## 2.2 Criticism Levelled Against the Narrators

A second issue to be mentioned regarding the *sanad* is the credibility of those involved in the incidents. Barakat Ahmad noted that Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī and Abū Umāmah “...were Ansari and were more interested in reporting the status of Saʿd” and ʿAṭīyyah was too young during the incident and this is not credible (Ahmad, 1979, pp. 79, 81). He also mentioned that this entire ordeal may be a pro-Umayyad fabrication. Arafat also

mentioned that there are descendants of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh who possibly fabricated the event to defend the reputation of their ancestor (Arafat, 1976, p. 105).

With regards to the credibility of the reports by Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī and Abū Umāmah, this is a strange accusation. Abū Saʿīd and Abū Umāmah are honourable companions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH which, according to *ijmāʿ* of the Sunnī scholars, are honest and reliable (Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1412, pp. 37–38). Usually, it is the Rāfiḍah who accuse the companions as liars, (al-Dhahabī, 1382b, pp. 5–6; al-ʿAsqalānī, 1326a, p. 94). Such accusation was also made by some orientalisists such as Ignác Goldziher, which turns out to be baseless (Saad & Rabiū, 2019). Barakat Ahmad did not use their arguments or provide any reference at all. He only mentioned such accusation in a few lines without further explanation.

Regarding the “pro-Umayyad fabrication” allegation, Barakat Ahmad also puts such a bold claim in just one sentence without any particular analysis, evidence, or even reference. This agrees with the claim of Goldziher that the *aḥadīth* were all fabricated due to Umayyad related conflicts. Such a generalised claim is founded on both baseless assumptions towards the relations between the *ʿulamāʾ* at the time and the Umayyad rulers, and ignorance towards the rigorous method of *al-jarḥ waʾl-taʿdīl* by the *ʿulamāʾ* of *ḥadīth* (Iffah, 2016).

In contrast to that, the scholars of *ḥadīth* have attested to the credibility of all of the narrators in numerous chains as shown earlier. It is noted that there are some narrators in the chains which have weaknesses. However, there are two points here: (i) neither of these weaknesses are very bad nor do they relate to the character and personal integrity of the narrators which is precisely where the allegations are directed to, and (ii) there are multiple chains narrating (more or less) the same incident corroborating each other and not all chains have these semi-weak narrators.

Additionally, the literature does not show any pro-Umayyad *ḥadīth* fabricators. Some are accused of it, such as Awānah ibn al-Ḥakam. However, such accusation was mentioned with *ṣiḡhat tamrīd* by Ibn Ḥajar (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1390, p. 386), and declared as *mawḍūʿ* by Fawāz ibn Farḥān (al-Shammarī, n.d., p. 431), and al-Dhahabī concludes that Awānah bin al-Ḥakam is *ṣadūq* (al-Dhahabī, 1405b, p. 201). Goldziher also made such accusation towards al-Zuhrī, but this also turns out of no basis (Iffah, 2016).

There was indeed a narration praising the Umayyads narrated by ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs. However, the *ʿulamāʾ* not only ruled the narration as not authentic, they also furiously attacked ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs as many said he was a liar and a Rāfiḍī. Ibn Ḥajar concluded that he was said to be a Rāfiḍī, often made mistakes, but *ṣadūq* (al-ʿAsqalānī, 1406, p. 312). This shows that the *ʿulamāʾ* will not stay silent shall there be any narrators who fabricate *ḥadīth* even if they are pro-Umayyad. Their approach on *al-jarḥ waʾl-taʿdīl* is very meticulous, rigorous, and fair, and thus cannot be dismissed by Barakat Ahmad’s baseless one-liner accusation.

With regards to the “descendants of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh,” only one such narrator could be found in the transmission of the event in question. It is reported in the *Ṭabaqāt*

of Ibn Saʿd. His name is ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr ibn Saʿd ibn Muʿādh (Ibn Saʿd, 1994, p. 351). Alajmi and El-Sharawy have noted that while ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr is the grandson of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, there are some problems with this narration: his biography cannot be found (hence *dabt* and *ʿadl* cannot be established). He did not relate his informant and his date of death is not known. Additionally, his *matn* contradicts literally every other narration of the event by positioning his grandfather as advisor to Prophet Muḥammad rather than judge (Alajmi & El-Sharawy, 2010, pp. 22, 32–33). Most importantly, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Amr was not in any of the relied upon chains we previously examined.

Finally, regarding the case of ‘Aṭīyyah being ‘merely a boy’, it seems that Barakat Ahmad misunderstands the *bāliḡh* requirement for *ḥadīth* narrators. Indeed, it is true that a narrator is required to be *bāliḡh* (has reached puberty) for her/his narration to be accepted (al-Qatḥthan, 2005, p. 117; Ghouri, 2017, p. 157). However, this requirement applies when narrating the *ḥadīth*, and not when receiving the *ḥadīth*. Meaning, if a narrator was not *bāliḡh* when receiving the *ḥadīth* but already *bāliḡh* when transmitting it, there is no problem in it (al-Qaʿān, 2005, p. 181). This is why there are *ḥadīth* from companions such as Ibn ‘Abbās, Maḥmūd ibn Rabīʿah and others who narrated events occurring during their childhood and declared as *ṣaḥīḥ* (al-Bukhārī, 1414, *ḥadīth* no. 77, 1997d, *ḥadīth* no. 5035). As the narrations indicate, ‘Aṭīyyah was an adult when he narrated them, so his narrations are perfectly acceptable. Additionally, the narrations imply that he was not so young anyway.

In short, all accusations towards the *sanad* of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgment do not stand and were merely assumptions without any strong evidence.

### 3. Arguments Related to *Matn* (Text)

Other than attacking the credibility of the narrators, there are also criticisms related to the content of the narration regarding the event. With regards to this issue, there are three general criticisms: (i) regarding alleged contradictions between different narrations; (ii) regarding alleged contradictions between the content of the narrations with the *sharīʿah*; and (iii) other circumstances which raise question about the plausibility of certain events mentioned in the narration.

#### 3.1 Alleged Contradiction between Narrations

With regards to the alleged contradictions between different narrations concerning the judgment of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, Barakat Ahmad points out basically two problems: (i) Who appointed Saʿd ibn Muʿādh as the judge? (ii) Who meted out the judgment? (Ahmad, 1979, p. 78)

Especially looking at narrations just in the *ṣaḥīḥayn*, some narrations say that it was (i) the people of Banū Qurayzah who appointed Saʿd ibn Muʿādh as the judge, and (ii) it was he who passed the judgment (al-Bukhārī, 1997b, *ḥadīth* no. 6262):

أَنَّ أَهْلَ قُرَيْظَةَ نَزَلُوا عَلَى حُكْمِ سَعْدٍ، فَأَرْسَلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِلَيْهِ فَجَاءَ فَقَالَ: ((قَوْمُوا إِلَى سَيِّدِكُمْ)) أَوْ قَالَ ((خَيْرِكُمْ)). فَقَعَدَ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: هَؤُلَاءِ نَزَلُوا عَلَى حُكْمِكَ. قَالَ: فَإِنِّي أَحْكُمُ أَنْ تُقْتَلَ مُقَاتِلُهُمْ

وَتُسَبَّى ذُرَارِيُّهُمْ، فَقَالَ: ((لَقَدْ حَكَمْتَ بِنَا حَكَمَ بِهِ الْمَلِك)).

The people of (the tribe of) Qurayzah agreed upon to accept the verdict of Sa'd. The Prophet PBUH sent for him (Sa'd) and he came. The Prophet PBUH said (to those people), "Get up for your chief or the best among you!" Sa'd sat beside the Prophet PBUH and the Prophet PBUH said (to him), "These people have agreed to accept your verdict." Sa'd said, "So I give my judgment that their warriors should be killed, and their women and children should be taken as captives." The Prophet PBUH said, "You have judged according to the King's (Allah's) judgment."

Another narration (i) did not mention Sa'd ibn Mu'adh at all, but (ii) implies that it was Prophet Muḥammad PBUH instead who passed the judgment (al-Naysābūrī, 2007, *ḥadīth* no.4592):

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ يَهُودَ بَنِي النَّضِيرِ وَفُرَيْطَةَ حَارَبُوا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَأَجَلَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ بَنِي النَّضِيرِ وَأَقْرَ فُرَيْطَةَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ حَتَّى حَارَبَتْ فُرَيْطَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَتَقَتَلَ رِجَالَهُمْ وَقَسَمَ نِسَاءَهُمْ وَأَوْلَادَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ إِلَّا أَنْ بَعْضَهُمْ لَحِقُوا بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَأَمَنَهُمْ وَأَسْلَمُوا، وَأَجَلَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَهُودَ الْمَدِينَةِ كُلَّهُمْ بَنِي قَيْنِقَاعٍ وَهُمْ قَوْمُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ سَلَامٍ، وَيَهُودَ بَنِي حَارِثَةَ، وَكُلَّ يَهُودِيٍّ كَانَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ.

Narrated Ibn 'Umar: "the Jews of Banū Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah fought against the Messenger of Allah PBUH. He expelled Banū Naḍīr, and allowed Qurayzah to stay on, and granted favour to them until they too fought against him. Then he killed their men, and distributed their women, children, and properties among the Muslims, except that some of them had joined the Messenger of Allah PBUH and he granted them security. They embraced Islam. The Messenger of Allah PBUH turned out all the Jews of Medina. Banū Qaynuqā' (the tribe of 'Abd Allah ibn Salām) and the Jews of Banū Ḥārithah and every other Jew who was in Madinah."

In the third version, the texts mentioned that Banū Qurayzah surrendered to Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, and it was the latter who appointed Sa'd ibn Mu'adh who then (ii) passed the judgment (al-Bukhārī, 1997a, *ḥadīth* no.4122):

أُصِيبَ سَعْدٌ يَوْمَ الْخَنْدَقِ، رَمَاهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ يُقَالُ لَهُ جَبَانُ ابْنِ الْعَرِيقَةِ، رَمَاهُ فِي الْأَكْحَلِ، فَضَرَبَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ خَيْمَةً فِي الْمَسْجِدِ لِيَعُودَهُ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ، فَلَمَّا رَجَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ مِنَ الْخَنْدَقِ وَضَعَ السَّلَاحَ وَاعْتَسَلَ، فَأَتَاهُ جِرِيرٌ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ - وَهُوَ يَنْفُضُ رَأْسَهُ مِنَ الْعُبَارِ فَقَالَ قَدْ وَضَعْتَ السَّلَاحَ وَاللَّهِ مَا وَضَعْتُهُ، أَخْرَجَ إِلَيْهِمْ. قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ "فَأَيْنَ؟". فَأَشَارَ إِلَى بَنِي فُرَيْطَةَ، فَأَتَاهُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَتَزَلُّوا عَلَى حُكْمِهِ، فَرَدَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَى سَعْدٍ، قَالَ فَإِنِّي أَحْكُمُ فِيهِمْ أَنْ تُقْتَلَ الْمُقَاتِلَةُ، وَأَنْ تُسَبَّى النِّسَاءُ وَالذَّرِيَّةُ، وَأَنْ تُقَسَمَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ.

"Sa'd was wounded on the day of Khandaq when a man from Quraysh, called Ḥibbān bin al-'Ariqah hit him (with an arrow). He shot an arrow at Sa'd's medial arm vein (or main artery of the arm). The Prophet PBUH pitched a tent (for Sa'd) in the mosque so that he would be near for the Prophet PBUH to treat him. When

the Prophet returned from the (battle) of al-Khandaq and laid down his arms and took a bath, Gabriel came to him while he (Gabriel) was shaking the dust off his head, and said, “You have laid down the arms?” He said, “By Allah, I have not laid them down.” He (Gabriel) said, “Go out to them (to attack them).” The Prophet PBUH said, “Where?” Gabriel pointed towards Banū Qurayzah. So, the Messenger of Allah PBUH went to them (i.e., Banū Qurayzah) (i.e., besieged them). They then surrendered to the Prophet’s judgment, but he directed them to Sa’d to give his verdict concerning them. Sa’d said, “I give my judgment that their warriors should be killed, their women and children should be taken as captives, and their properties distributed.”

Faced by this alleged contradictions, Barakat Ahmad conclusively doubts all narrations. Then, with some other reasons (which will be discussed later), he gives his own version of what he thinks could have happened, i.e., that only the leaders of Banū Qurayzah were executed (Ahmad, 1979, pp. 90–92).

This approach does not seem to be the correct way of dealing with contradictory narrations. Responding to alleged contradictions between multiple *aḥādīth* by suspending judgment is a known approach, but it is the last resort. Reconciling the meanings of the content is the first step, finding evidence of abrogation (if any) is the second one, then *tarjīḥ* (preferring the stronger narrations in terms of *sanad*) is the third approach (Ghouri, 2015, pp. 199–205). Only when these approaches are impossible that we may resort to suspension (Ghouri, 2015, p. 206), and this is the last option.

With regards to the first question, Banū Qurayzah first met Prophet Muḥammad PBUH to surrender and seek judgment but then the former requested judgment by Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh. The latter, as indicated in all reports mentioning him, only arrived at the scene after being summoned for this judgment. This means that, on one hand, it is correct to say that Banū Qurayzah surrendered to Prophet Muḥammad PBUH (referring to the initial surrender) who appointed Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh based on the former’s request. On the other hand, it is also correct to say that Banū Qurayzah surrendered to Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh’s judgment as per the outcome of negotiation with Prophet Muḥammad PBUH.

The issue of who passed the judgment can also be reconciled by considering the different perspectives in perceiving the event. Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh’s judgment is binding upon the Muslims. Hence, it is acceptable to assume that the leader of the Muslims, i.e., Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, led the execution of the judgment. Therefore, there seems to be no contradiction here. Rather it is a difference of perspective in seeing the same event. This is normal for narrations narrated by different narrators (Rahman, 2016, p. 430). In fact, while the narrations seem to share different emphasis on the details, the bigger picture can be observed in the narrations of Ibn Ishāq.

It is understood that Ibn Ishāq’s narrations, even in the most favourable view towards him, are still considered *ḍaʿīf* (weak). However, there are some essential parts of this particular incident which are corroborated by narrations in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* as well as in other *al-kutub al-sittah*. Addressing al-Imām al-Bukhārī’s use of *ḍaʿīf ḥadīth* as *ḥujjah*, Ibn



Hajar commented that weaker narrations can be used to assist in explaining the stronger narrations (Noor, 2019).

### 3.2 Contradiction with the Islamic Legal Rulings

In the eyes of those who criticise the judgment of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, and other critics of Islam, it seems nonsensical and ‘un-Islamic’ to kill the entire fighting men of Banū Qurayzah for an act of treachery decided by a few elites. In regard to this, Barakat Ahmad and Arafat cited some verses, such as the following:

﴿وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ﴾

“And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.” (Surah al-Isrā’ verse 15)

Arafat in particular cited Surah Muḥammad verse 4:

﴿فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخْنَسْتُمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوَتَاقَ فَإِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا﴾

“So, when you meet those who disbelieve [in battle], strike [their] necks until, when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either [confer] favour afterwards or ransom [them] until the war lays down its burdens.”

This, according to Arafat, means that it is not permissible to kill war captives. This position is also held by other modern scholars, such as Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī (al-Qardhawi, 2010, pp. 708–710) and Muhammad Munir (Munir, 2010, pp. 466–480) who argue that the captives killed by Prophet Muḥammad PBUH are all due to specific crimes beyond mere belligerency (i.e. not merely due to being captives *per se*).

Ibn Rushd noted that there is a minority of jurists who hold that it is impermissible to kill captives, considering Surah Muḥammad verse 4 as mentioned above (Ibn Rushd, 2000, pp. 456–457). Such opinion may lend support to the position of Arafat, al-Qaraḍāwī, and Munir on the matter. However, Ibn Rushd also noted that the majority of jurists allow the Imām to decide the fate of the captives, either they are executed, enslaved, ransomed, or released gratuitously, depending on which is in the best interest of the Muslims i.e. *maṣlaḥat*. (Ibn Rushd, 2000, p. 456). What to make of this?

At face value, the opinion of the majority may seem to be stronger. In the aftermath of the Battle of Badr, it was narrated that Prophet Muḥammad PBUH decided to not execute all the captives and demanded ransom instead (Ibn Katsir, 2016a, pp. 121–122). Then, Surah al-Anfāl verse 67 was revealed:

﴿مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يُبْخِنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

“It is not for a prophet to have captives [of war] until he inflicts a massacre [upon Allah 's enemies] in the land. Some Muslims desire the

commodities of this world, but Allah desires [for you] the Hereafter. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.”

Some of the *mufasssīrīn* mention that this verse is to indicate that Prophet Muḥammad PBUH should have executed the captives of Badr (Amrullah, n.d., pp. 2809–2810; Ibn Rushd, 2000, p. 456). At least, this verse indicates that execution is a viable option depending on *maṣlaḥat*, and the previously mentioned Surah Muḥammad verse 4 does not mean to prohibit execution because Prophet Muḥammad PBUH himself had applied execution (Ibn Rushd, 2000, pp. 456–457).

However, such a debate would require an extensive examination of the textual proofs due to differences of opinion. For instance, an argument in *Tafsīr Jalālayn* suggests that the verse 67 of Sūrah al-Anfāl was abrogated by the verse 4 of Sūrah Muḥammad (al-Maḥallī & al-Suyūṭī, 2007, p. 192). Additionally, there are a number of contemporary scholars who suggest that Saʿd ibn Muʿadh had actually applied Jewish Law in his judgment, which is beyond the scope of the present study (Muhammadin, 2019). Ultimately, it seems that neither opinion is contradicted by Saʿd ibn Muʿadh’s judgment.

It is obvious that the majority opinion regarding the Sharī ruling on captive execution is easily consistent with Saʿd ibn Muʿadh’s judgment. If this is the correct opinion, there should be no problem. The minority view, however, could pose a real problem. In this case, saying that the Chiefs of Banū Qurayzah and Banū al-Naḍīr are most responsible is acceptable. Nevertheless, to say that the rest of their army are free from responsibility is not so easy to accept as well. The treachery of Banū Qurayzah brings a grave threat: the entire Muslim population was caught in a pincer between the armies of both the Quraysh coalition and Banū Qurayzah (al-Qurṭubī, 2015, p. 323; Ibn Kathīr, 2016b, p. 237). This was a threat of extermination. It is unimaginable to say that the soldiers of Banū Qurayzah were blameless. Therefore, even the minority opinion would make sense considering the crime of Banū Qurayzah.

Having said all the above, the claim that the narration on Saʿd ibn Muʿadh’s judgment contradicts the *Sharīah* is not strongly convincing. Thus, from this perspective, the *matn* still stands. On the other hand, the critics seem to have misunderstood the *sharīah* provisions regarding execution of war captives and what to make of the narration on Saʿd ibn Muʿadh’s judgment. It should suffice that Prophet Muḥammad PBUH himself acknowledged that judgment by saying ‘*laqad ḥakamta fīhim bi-ḥukm al-malik*’ (you have judged [similar to] the judgment of al-Malik [Allah]).

#### 4. Implausibility of Events Related to the Judgment

There are some other instances that Barakat Ahmad and Arafat noted to be strange surrounding the circumstances of Saʿd ibn Muʿadh’s judgment. The presentation of these strange matters may build up doubt towards the entire narration, mostly the version of Ibn Ishāq. The list is quite long, and it is difficult to discuss all of them.

Some of these issues have alternative reasonable explanations, albeit not necessarily very convincing. For example, Barakat Ahmad argues that it makes no sense for Banū Qurayzah to accept Saʿd ibn Muʿadh as a judge, since it is like inviting a massacre.

This considers how the latter, despite his tribe (Banū Aws) being a close ally to the former, is clearly more loyal to the Muslims and they have exchanged insults and threats earlier in the confrontation (Ahmad, 1979, p. 80). This is not implausible. The truth is that we do not have much information regarding the entire thought process of the leaders of Banū Qurayzah at the time. If one were to argue based on plausibility, then it would also make sense that Banū Qurayzah knew that, considering the situation, submitting to Saʿd ibn Muʿādh's judgment might be their best bet. Other major companions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH have previously interceded for enemies of Islam. ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, for example, during the conquest of Makkah has sought protection for ʿAbd Allah ibn Saʿd ibn Abī Sarḥ who used to be a scribe for Prophet Muḥammad PBUH but apostatised and joined the *kuffār* (As-Sallabi, 2007b, pp. 50–51). It is noted that the conquest of Makkah occurred after the battle of Khandaq. The point is that intercessions by loyal companions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH towards enemies of Islam is not inconceivable, and such enemies would still attempt to seek for it.

The trade of insults earlier only appealed to the apparent hasty and hot-tempered character of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, which does not necessarily translate into poor judgement. Another (higher ranking) companion i.e. ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was characterised with similar traits yet still recognised for being just (As-Sallabi, 2007a). What is that compared to the long-standing alliance before? After all, even Barakat Ahmad himself mentions that some companions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH from Banū Aws appealed to Saʿd ibn Muʿādh requesting leniency for Banū Qurayzah.

Other alleged problems are overstressing speculations. For example, Barakat Ahmad claimed that ʿAlī ibn Abi Ṭālib and al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām (i.e. the executioners) did not seem to have any psychological or personality problems due to the trauma which, according to psychologists, should have been suffered by people who have been involved in such massacres (Ahmad, 1979, pp. 86–87). The problem with this claim is that it makes conclusions based on a general psychology concept from a 'glance-through' of ʿAlī and al-Zubayr's life by someone did not experience the life of those figures. This claim also seems to assume that persons involved in such a massacre would automatically and suddenly be emotionally incompetent.

However, the main case against this alleged problem is that it undermines the companions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, who are the best of the generations and have the strongest *īmān*, understanding of the *dīn*, and resolve and perseverance to defend Islam (al-Munajjid, 2006). Especially ʿAlī ibn Abi Ṭālib and al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām are in the multiple most 'elite' lists: most high-ranking companions, *ahl al-Badr*, the ten companions promised *Jannah*, and most notable Muslim warriors who have fought in so many battles (al-Ashfahani, n.d., pp. 297–427, 437–452; As-Sallabi, 2010).

Other alleged problems include some matters which are difficult to explain. For example, why were the captives brought all the way to Madinah, put into just one house, executed, and buried in the middle of the city? Not only that the logistics of this arrangement is unnecessarily difficult, but it would cause the spread of diseases. It would have made more sense to execute and bury them outside Banū Qurayzah's own fort or in

the outskirts where trenches have already been dug for the previous battle (Ahmad, 1979, pp. 84–86). One must admit that these details given by Ibn Ishāq are difficult to accept.

All of these questions of plausibility have one thing in common: neither of them really negates the authenticity of Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgment. They only make us question why certain things happened, or the details of what happened afterwards, etc. As mentioned above, one cannot pretend that something did not happen, just because the lack of knowledge on why or how it happened.

The reality is that there are numerous witnesses for Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgment narrated through multiple chains of good *sanad* which provides certainty (*yaqīn*). These questions of plausibility, even seen altogether collectively, gives us only doubt (*shakk*). As per *qawāʿid fiqhiyyah* which states the following: “*al-yaqīn lā yazūl bi’l-shakk* (certainty is not overruled by doubt)” and such criticisms cannot be accepted (al-Shathri, 1426, pp. 77–78).

### Conclusion

Although some arguments of Barakat Ahmad, Arafat, and other critics, seem to be questionable, their works still warrant further examination in relation to the story of Banū Qurayzah specifically or other Jewish tribes generally. Perhaps a more curious mind who wishes to truly understand the history of relationship between the Muslims and the Jews would benefit from such examination. The more truth one discovers from the life of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, the more virtues that could also be explored and applied for the benefit of knowledge and humanity. However, as far as the scope of this article is concerned i.e., regarding Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgement, it seems that the criticisms do not stand. The claims raised to cast doubt towards the *sanad* have been refuted. While there may be questions on the credibility of the historians involved, there is a good number of other credible narrators to support the narration in question. The claims raised to cast doubt towards the *matn* have also been refuted. Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgement, from a *ḥadīth* standpoint, is unquestionably authentic. The next endeavour for contemporary researchers, especially those who are researching *siyar*, is to further examine what legal rulings can be extracted from Saʿd ibn Muʿādh’s judgement. There is a great necessity for the development of *siyar* generally and *fiqh al-jihād* specifically. It is hoped that this research had clarified the current confusion on the matter and provided useful material for further research.

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