



AHADITHS OF THE HOLY PROPHET(PBUH) ABOUT THE OCEANIC WORLD

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Abstract:

This book provides a comprehensive overview of Islamic culture and civilization, focusing on the arts, sciences, and philosophy of the Islamic world. The book begins with a discussion of the origins and early development of Islam, and then goes on to examine the major contributions of Muslims to art, science, and philosophy. In the realm of art, the book discusses the development of Islamic architecture, painting, and calligraphy. The book also explores the role of music and poetry in Islamic culture.

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AHADITHS OF THE HOLY PROPHET(PBUH) ABOUT THE OCEANIC WORLD

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Abstract

Various scholars have analyzed the historical process about the ocean studies since late 20th century. Human being relates with the world of ocean for numerous purposes.

Arabs were involved in the sea voyages before the advent of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula as the history talks about their reach to the far East Regions and China even.

The two major and prominent cities of the Arab world; Makkah and Madinah were well known for both overland and oceanic maritime links which provides us appropriate background of the Holy Prophet(PBUH) to make a clear understanding of the oceanic world as we see many references of the ahadiths related to the nature and characteristics of the ocean in the six authoritative books of ahadiths: Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan of Nasai, Sunan Abu Daud, Jami of Tirmidi and Sunan of Ibn Majah.

We find the references of the ahadiths by the following four ways:

1. Narration of the events of the previous nations
2. To give examples
3. Indication of profusion and extremeness
4. References about the maritime engagements

1.Narration of the events of the previous nations

The Holy Prophet(pbuh) has mentioned the ocean and voyages to narrate the historical events happened in the previous nations. In this regard, we come across various prophetic sayings which significantly indicate the existence of oceanic engagements in the pre-

historic times/times before the Common Era, and the prophetic knowledge of previous nations who engaged in the maritime traveling, tradings and fighting.

Most of the Ahadiths which narrate the oceanic engagements of previous nations are related to the Bani Israel . Bani Israel who later on known as Jewish community, who were largely dominated in the maritime mercantile world before the takeovers by the Christians and the Muslims. The earliest historical evidences of the Jewish maritime involvements go back to the times... as indicated by Michael Pearson and others, but the prophetic sayings drag our attention to the existence of Jewish maritime involvements during the times of Hazrat Musa(A.S) itself. This is only a random calculation of the earliest time in the Hadiths, on the basis of the known time of Hazrat Musa (A.S) as the earliest. We also have two other events, which could be before Musa(A.S) itself, or after that. If the earlier is the possibility, it again drags the chronology of Jewish maritime involvement backwards; it is possible mainly because the genealogical origin of the Bani Israel goes back beyond the times of Musa(A.S).

A story narrated by the Holy Prophet(pbuh) related to the oceanic world is about a man from Bani Israel who borrowed one thousand dinars from another man of Bani Israel. The debtor went on a voyage across the sea. When he finished his job and the time for payment of the debt became due, he searched for a boat but he could not find any mode of transport. He took a piece of wood and made hole and put one thousand dinars along with a letter to the lender in it and took the piece of wood to the sea and said. 'O Allah! You know well that I took a loan of one thousand Dinars from so-and-so. He demanded a surety from me but I told him that Allah's Guarantee was sufficient and he accepted Your guarantee. He then asked for a witness and I told him that Allah was sufficient as a Witness, and he accepted You as a Witness. No doubt, I tried my best to find a conveyance so that I could pay his money but could not find, so I hand over this money to You.' Saying that, he threw the piece of wood into the sea till it went out far into it, and then he went away. Meanwhile he started searching for a conveyance in order to reach the creditor's country. One day the lender came out of his house to see whether a ship had arrived bringing his money, and all of a sudden he saw the piece of wood in which his money had been deposited. He took it home to use for fire. When he sawed it, he found his money and the letter inside it. Shortly after that, the debtor came bringing one thousand Dinars to him and said, 'By Allah, I had been trying hard to get a boat so that I could bring you your money, but failed to get one before the one I have come by.' The lender asked, 'Have you sent something to me?' The debtor replied, 'I have told you I could not get a boat other than the one I have come by.' The lender said, 'Allah has delivered on your behalf the money you sent in the piece of wood. So, you may keep your one thousand Dinars and depart guided on the right path.' (Sahih Al Bukhari 3.488)

The story of Musas'(A.S) voyage through the ocean, is a detailed one and has been narrated in almost all of the Hadith Classics. *Sahih al Bukhari* says that Musa(A.S) was sitting with some Israelites. Then a man came and asked him: 'Do you know anyone who is more learned than you?' Moses replied: No. So Allah informed Musa(A.S) that His slave Khadir(A.S) is more learned than Musa(A.S). Musa(A.S) expressed his interest to meet Khadir(A.S). Allah made the fish as a sign for him and he was told that when the fish was lost, he should return to the place where he had lost it and there he would meet Khadir(A.S). Thus Musa(A.S) went on looking for the sign of the fish in the sea. The servant-boy of Musa(A.S) said to him: 'Do you remember when we betook ourselves to

the rock, I indeed forgot the fish, none but Satan made me forget to remember it.’ Musa(A.S) replied: ‘That is what we have been looking for’. They went back retracing their footsteps and found Khadir(A.S).¹ In short, both Khadir(A.S) and Musa(A.S) set out walking along the seashore, as they did not have a boat. In the meantime a boat passed by them and they requested the crew of the boat to take them on board. The crew recognized Khadir(A.S) and took them on board without fare. Then a sparrow came and stood on the edge of the boat and dipped its beak once or twice in the sea. Khadir(A.S) said: "O Musa(A.S)! My knowledge and your knowledge have not decreased Allah's knowledge except as much as this sparrow has decreased the water of the sea with its beak." Khadir(A.S) went to one of the planks of the boat and plucked it out. Musa(A.S) said, "These people gave us a free lift but you have broken their boat and scuttled it so as to drown its people." Khadir(A.S) replied, "Didn't I tell you that you will not be able to remain patient with me." Musa(A.S) said, "Call me not to account for what I forgot."² The story continues and finally Musa(A.S)' impatience towards the deeds of Khadir(A.S) finally led to the dismissal of Musa(A.S) by Khadir(A.S). Before their parting, Khadir(A.S) informed Musa(A.S) why he plucked one of the planks of boat. He did it because there was a king who used to seize every boat by force which was in order. As he plucked the plank, the King will take this boat as disintegrated one and the voyagers will escape from him.³ The event narration of Musa'(A.S) voyage also drags other references to the ocean too. Dipping of the fish into the oceanic water, walking through the coasts, etc. are examples which also point towards the oceanic beings, routes through the coastal belts, and the consumption of sea-food items.

The third story of the previous communities related to the oceanic landscapes is a story of a young court-magician who believed in Allah. In short, the king, who declared himself as god, called this man and asked him to renounce his religion. As he refused to leave his faith in Allah, the king ordered the courtiers to take him into a mountain peak and throw him down. On the mountain peak, the young man prayed to Allah, and the mountain quaked and all courtiers felt down and died. The young man came to the king by walking. The king asked him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them. He again handed him to some of his courtiers and said: Take him and carry him in a small boat and when you reach the middle of the ocean, ask him to renounce his religion, but if he does not renounce his religion throw him into the water. So they took him and he said: O Allah, save me from them and what they want to do. It was quite soon that the boat turned over and they were drowned and he came walking to the king, and the king said to him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them, and he said to the king: You cannot kill me until you do what I ask you to do. To summarize the story, finally the king did whatever the young man suggested and he was passed away. But the whole community, other than the king and his courtiers, were believed in Allah. The king ordered to massacre the whole community who embraced in the new faith.⁴ However, the oceanic world comes in the

¹ Sahih Bukhari 1.74. ,The Holy Qur'an, see 18(54 -82).

² Sahih Bukhari 1.124

³ This story is also mentioned in Sahih al Bukhari 1.78, 4.612, 4.613, 6.249, 6.250, 6.251, 9.570; and in Sahih al Muslim 30.5864; 30. 5865, 30.5866, 30.5867, 30.5868

⁴ Sahih al Muslim 42, 7148. The complete Hadith and story is:

Suhaib reported that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) thus said: There lived a king before you and he had a (court) magician. As he (the magician) grew old, he said to the king: I have grown old, send some young boy to me so

story as a mean of capital punishment to the young man, who ‘deviated’ from the customary beliefs.

Another story of the previous societies in the Hadiths connected to the maritime world is about a man who feared Allah too much. On his death-bed when he lost every hope of surviving and he had suspicion as to the righteousness of his deeds, he said to his family: If Allah should get hold of me, He would inflict such punishment on me as He would not inflict on anybody among the people. Therefore, when I die, gather for me a

that I should teach him magic. He (the king) sent to him a young man so that he should train him (in magic). And on his way (to the magician) he (the young man) found a monk sitting there. He (the young man) listened to his (the monk's) talk and was impressed by it. It became his habit that on his way to the magician he met the monk and set there and he came to the magician (late). He (the magician) beat him because of delay. He made a complaint of that to the monk and he said to him: When you feel afraid of the magician, say: Members of my family had detained me. And when you feel afraid of your family you should say: The magician had detained me. It so happened that there came a huge beast (of prey) and it blocked the way of the people, and he (the young boy) said: I will come to know today whether the magician is superior or the monk is superior. He picked up a stone and said: O Allah, if the affair of the monk is dearer to Thee than the affair of the magician, cause death to this animal so that the people should be able to move about freely. He threw that stone towards it and killed it and the people began to move about (on the path freely). He (the young man) then came to that monk and Informed him and the monk said: Sonny, today you are superior to me. Your affair has come to a stage where I find that you would be soon put to a trial, and in case you are put to a trial don't give my clue. That young man began to treat the blind and those suffering from leprosy and he in fact began to cure people from (all kinds) of illness. When a companion of the king who had gone blind heard about him, he came to him with numerous gifts and said: If you cure me all these things collected together here would be yours. He said: I myself do not cure anyone. It is Allah Who cures and if you affirm faith in Allah, I shall also supplicate Allah to cure you. He affirmed his faith in Allah and Allah cured him and he came to the king and sat by his side as he used to sit before. The king said to him: Who restored your eyesight? He said: My Lord. Thereupon he said: It means that your Lord is One besides me. He said: My Lord and your Lord is Allah, so he (the king) took hold of him and tormented him till he gave a clue of that boy. The young man was thus summoned and the king said to him: O boy, it has been conveyed to me that you have become so much proficient in your magic that you cure the blind and those suffering from leprosy and you do such and such things. Thereupon he said: I do not cure anyone; it is Allah Who cures, and he (the king) took hold of him and began to torment him. So he gave a clue of the monk. The monk was thus summoned and it was said to him: You should turn back from your religion. He, however, refused to do so. He (ordered) for a saw to be brought (and when it was done) he (the king) placed it in the middle of his head and tore it into parts till a part fell down. Then the courtier of the king was brought and it was said to him: Turn back from your religion. He refused to do so, and the saw was placed in the midst of his head and it was torn till a part fell down. Then that young boy was brought and it was said to him: Turn back from your religion. He refused to do so and he was handed over to a group of his courtiers. And he 'said to them: Take him to such and such mountain; make him climb up that mountain and when you reach its top (ask him to renounce his faith) but if he refuses to do so, then throw him (down the mountain). So they took him and made him climb up the mountain and he said: O Allah, save me from them (in any way) Thou likest and the mountain began to quake and they all fell down and that person came walking to the king. The king said to him: The king asked him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them. He again handed him to some of his courtiers and said: Take him and carry him in a small boat and when you reach the middle of the ocean, ask him to renounce his religion, but if he does not renounce his religion throw him into the water. So they took him and he said: O Allah, save me from them and what they want to do. It was quite soon that the boat turned over and they were drowned and he came walking to the king, and the king said to him: What has happened to your companions? He said: Allah has saved me from them, and he said to the king: You cannot kill me until you do what I ask you to do. And he said: What is that? He said: You should gather people in a plain and hang me by the trunk (of a tree). Then take hold of an arrow from the quiver and say: In the name of Allah, the Lord of the worlds; then shoot an arrow and if you do that then you would be able to kill me. So he (the king) called the people in an open plain and tied him (the boy) to the trunk of a tree, then he took hold of an arrow from his quiver and then placed the arrow in the bow and then said: In the name of Allah, the Lord of the young boy; he then shot an arrow and it bit his temple. He (the boy) placed his hands upon the temple where the arrow had bit him and he died and the people said: We affirm our faith in the Lord of this young man, we affirm our faith in the Lord of this young man, we affirm our faith in the Lord of this young man. The courtiers came to the king and it was said to him: Do you see that Allah has actually done what you aimed at averting. They (the people) have affirmed their faith in the Lord. He (the king) commanded ditches to be dug at important points in the path. When these ditches were dug, and the fire was lit in them it was said (to the people): He who would not turn back from his (boy's) religion would be thrown in the fire or it would be said to them to jump in that. (The people courted death but did not renounce religion) till a woman came with her child and she felt hesitant in jumping into the fire and the child said to her: O mother, endure (this ordeal) for it is the Truth.

large heap of wood and make a fire to burn me. When the fire eats my meat and reaches my bones, and when the bones burn, take and crush them into powder and wait for a windy day to throw the powder over the sea. They did so, but Allah ordered the sea to collect what was in it of his ashes, and collected his particles and asked him: Why did you do so? He replied: The only thing that made me do it, was that I was afraid of You. So Allah forgave him.⁵

2. To give examples

In the Hadiths, we can see the oceanic landscape has been used by the Holy Prophet(pbuh) to exemplify certain ethics. Right now only one Hadith of such kind, it itself shows the prophetic knowledge of oceanic world and voyages through sea. In a Hadith in *Sahih al Bukhari* narrated by Nu'man bin Bashir, the Holy Prophet(pbuh) says: 'The example of the person abiding by Allah's order and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part, and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said, 'Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those who are above us from troubling them'. So, if the people in the upper part left the others do what they had suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, both parties would be safe.'⁶

3. Indication of profusion and extremeness

In the Hadiths, we also come across the terms related to the ocean dragged to indicate the profusion and extremeness of certain things. To categorize it, in the Prophetic sayings, the contexts of ocean or sea-waves have been used either to signify the abundance of sins like the foams of ocean, which will be forgiven by the God if a person practices certain rituals, or to demonstrate the seriousness of matters under conversation. Besides these, we also find out the sayings by the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) regarding the sea, which also refer to the great quantity.

The Hadith contexts, that mention the ocean or sea-waves comparing to the abundance of sins that will be forgiven by Allah with certain chants, are plenty in numbers. The chants may vary, but the statement about abundance of the sins in comparison to the sea-waves or oceanic foams are more or less similar. The Hadiths in this genre will be like this: the Prophet(pbuh) says: 'whoever says, *Subhan Allah wa bi Hamdihi*, one hundred times a day, will be forgiven all his sins even if they were as much as the foam of the sea'.⁷ In other Hadiths, the chant will be *Subhan Allah, Alhamdu Lillah, Allahu Akbar*, thirty-three times after every prayer along with *la Ilah Illallah Wahdahu laa Shareeka Lahu Lahul Mulku Walahul Hamdu Wa Hua Alaa Kulli Shai'in Qadeer*;⁸ in another one it will be *La Ilah Illallah Wahdahu Laa Shareeka Lahu Lahul Mulku Wa Lahul Hamdu Wa Hua Alaa Kulli Shai'in Qadeer* only.⁹

⁵ The story with additions and briefings have been cited in *Sahih al Bukhari* 4.659, 4.685, 4.686, 8.487, 9.597; *Sahih al Muslim* 37.6637, 37.6638, 37.6639, 37.6640; *Ibn Majah* 16.16.52.

⁶ *Sahih al Bukhari* 3.673, 3.851

⁷ *Sahih al Bukhari* 8.414; *Sahih al Muslim* 35.6508; *Ibn Majah* 15.7.21 – all reports have been cited from the narration by Abu Huraira.

⁸ *Sahih al Muslim* 4.1243, Narrated by Abu Huraira; *Abudawud* 8, 1499

⁹ *Ibn Majah* 15.7.22

The rituals that lead to the forgiveness of abundant sins like sea-foams also could be seen in the Hadiths. In a Hadith in *Abudawud* narrated by Mu'adh bin Anas al Juhani(R.A), the Prophet(pbuh) says, 'If anyone sits in his place of prayer when he finishes the dawn prayer till he prays the two rak'ahs of the forenoon, saying nothing but what is good, his sins will be forgiven even if they are more than the foam of the sea'.¹⁰

The Hadith context, in which the ocean has been used to demonstrate the seriousness of matters, is especially visible in a saying of the Prophet(pbuh) narrated by Hazrat Aisha(R.A), wife of the Prophet(pbuh). The Prophet(pbuh) used to speak about Safiyyah(R.A) in front of Aisha(R.A) for various things. Once Aisha(R.A) said to the Prophet(pbuh): it is enough for you in Safiyyah(R.A) that she is such and such. Hearing this, the Prophet (pbuh) replied: 'You have said a word which would change the sea if it were mixed in it.'¹¹

In the sayings of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh), we have a Hadith which is related to the Prophet (pbuh) himself in which the narrator has commented on the speed of a horse rode by the Prophet(pbuh), which ran very fast 'having an energy as inexhaustible as the water of the sea'.¹² But, in another quotation of the same Hadith by the same narrator in another context, this comment has been reported as a statement by the Prophet (pbuh) himself. In that report, the Prophet (pbuh) says, 'I found it (the horse) like a sea, or, it is the sea indeed'.¹³ Here, the speed of the horse has been exemplified through sea, than the sea-water; though the meaning under intention is same. However, in both reports of the same incident, the marine scapes have been used to indicate the extraordinary speed.

Another Hadith narrated by Anas(R.A) in *Sahih al Muslim* also indicates to the ocean as the extremeness of obedience to the words of the Prophet(pbuh). The companions said to the Prophet (pbuh) at the time of Badr that they will obey all of his orders, even if he asks them to plunge their horses into the sea.¹⁴ A widely narrated Hadith, regarding a question

¹⁰ *Abudawud* 4.1282

¹¹ *Abudawud* 41, 4857. The complete Hadith could be read like this: Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: I said to the Prophet: It is enough for you in Safiyyah that she is such and such (the other version than Musaddad's has:) meaning that she was short-statured. He replied; You have said a word which would change the sea if it were mixed in it. She said: I imitated a man before him (out of disgrace). He said: I do not like that I imitate anyone even if I should get such and such.

¹² *Sahih al Bukhari* 3.795. The complete Hadith is: Narrated Anas: Once the people of Medina were frightened, so the Prophet borrowed a horse from Abu Talha called Al-Mandub, and rode it. When he came back he said: 'we have not seen anything (to be afraid of), but the horse was very fast' (having an energy as inexhaustible as the water of the sea).

¹³ *Sahih al Bukhari* 8.59.2. The complete narration of the incident also has some variations in this report, though the narrator and the event are the same. Look at the complete report: Narrated Anas: The Prophet was the best among the people (both in shape and character) and was the most generous of them, and was the bravest of them. Once, during the night, the people of Medina got afraid (of a sound). So the people went towards that sound, but the Prophet having gone to that sound before them, met them while he was saying: 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid.' (At that time) he was riding a horse belonging to Abu Talha and it was naked without a saddle, and he was carrying a sword slung at his neck. The Prophet said: 'I found it (the horse) like a sea, or, it is the sea indeed.'

There is another report of the same event narrated by the same narrator, with slight variations: Narrated Anas bin Malik: There was a state of fear in Medina. Allah's Apostle rode a horse belonging to Abu Talha (in order to see the matter). The Prophet said: 'We could not see anything, and we found that horse like a sea' (fast in speed). See *Sahih al Bukhari* 8.231.

¹⁴ *Sahih al Muslim* 19.4394. The Hadith in complete is: It has been narrated on the authority of Anas that when (the news of) the advance of Abu Sufyan (at the head of a force) reached him. The Messenger of Allah held consultations with his Companions. The narrator said: Abu Bakr spoke (expressing his own views), but he (the Holy Prophet) did not pay heed to him. Then spoke Umar (expressing his views), but he (the Holy Prophet) did not pay heed to him (too). Then Sa'd bin Ubada stood up and said: Messenger of Allah, you want us (to speak). By God in Whose control is my

of Umar bin Khattab(R.A) about a statement of the Prophet(pbuh) on the afflictions which will spread like sea-waves.¹⁵

4. References about the maritime engagements

In the Hadiths, the oceanic world has been specifically mentioned in relation to the actual maritime engagements. It could be identified in connection either to the mercantile transactions, voyages, prediction of naval expeditions, exemplification of the profusion and extremeness, or the examples. At least in certain contexts, we could see appealingly contradictory meanings in the sayings of the Prophet connected to the mercantile scenarios. Though, it is a matter of debate among the Hadith scholars, unquestionably we get references to the knowledge of the Prophet, along with his time and place, regarding the marines.

(i). voyage engagements

Regarding the voyages through seas, the Hadiths provide significant amount of the references. First of all, the jurisdiction made by the Prophet(pbuh) regarding the voyage is very comprehensible in the previously referred Hadith, in which the Prophet discourages the sailing except for *hajj* or *umrah* or for naval expeditions in Allah's path. But, we have certain clear references in which the ocean has been used for the voyages for necessities other than performing *hajj* or *umra*, or for naval expedition. The first migration of the Muslims from Makkah to Abbysinia(1000km from Makkah), escaping from the persecutions of pagans in the name accepting the new religion, was taken place through the oceanic route. The Hadiths cited in *Sahih al Bukhari* make this very clear.¹⁶

life, if you order us to plunge our horses into the sea, we would do so. If you order us to goad our horses to the most distant place like Bark al-Ghimad, we would do so.

¹⁵ *Sahih al Bukhari* 1.503. The complete Hadith is: Narrated Shaiq: that he had heard Hudhaifa saying, "Once I was sitting with `Umar and he said, 'Who amongst you remembers the statement of Allah's Apostle about the afflictions?' I said, 'I know it as the Prophet had said it.' `Umar said, 'No doubt you are bold.' I said, 'The afflictions caused for a man by his wife, money, children and neighbor are expiated by his prayers, fasting, charity and by enjoining (what is good) and forbidding (what is evil).' `Umar said, 'I did not mean that but I asked about that affliction which will spread like the waves of the sea.' I (Hudhaifa) said, 'O leader of the faithful believers! You need not be afraid of it as there is a closed door between you and it.' `Umar asked, 'Will the door be broken or opened?' I replied, 'It will be broken.' `Umar said, 'Then it will never be closed again.' I was asked whether `Umar knew that door. I replied that he knew it as one knows that there will be night before the tomorrow morning. I narrated a Hadith that was free from any misstatement" The sub-narrator added that they deputized Masruq to ask Hudhaifa (about the door). Hudhaifa said, "The door was `Umar himself."

The same Hadith also has been cited within *Sahih al Bukhari* 2.516, 3.119, 4.786, 9.216, 9.570; *Sahih al Muslim* 41.6914, 1.0267.

¹⁶ We can see a repeatedly-narrated Hadith in the *Bukhari*, in which the companions of the Prophet argue in the name of their rights over the Prophet in connection with their good deeds like migration and others. The Hadith also shows the significance of the people of the ship among the companions of the Prophet.

Bukhari 5.539: Narrated Abu Musa: The news of the migration of the Prophet (from Mecca to Medina) reached us while we were in Yemen. So we set out as emigrants towards him. We were (three) I and my two brothers. I was the youngest of them, and one of the two was Abu Burda, and the other, Abu Ruhm, and our total number was either 53 or 52 men from my people. We got on board a boat and our boat took us to Negus in Ethiopia. There we met Ja'far bin Abi Talib and stayed with him. Then we all came (to Medina) and met the Prophet at the time of the conquest of Khaibar. Some of the people used to say to us, namely the people of the ship, "We have migrated before you." Asma' bint `Umais who was one of those who had come with us, came as a visitor to Hafsa, the wife the Prophet . She had migrated along with those other Muslims who migrated to Negus. `Umar came to Hafsa while Asma' bint `Umais was with her. `Umar, on seeing Asma,' said, "Who is this?" She said, "Asma' bint `Umais," `Umar said, "Is she the Ethiopian? Is she the sea-faring lady?" Asma' replied, "Yes." `Umar said, "We have migrated before you (people of the boat), so we have got more right than you over Allah's Apostle " On that Asma' became angry and said, "No, by Allah, while you were with Allah's Apostle who was feeding the hungry ones amongst you, and advised the ignorant ones

The Muslims were migrated from Makkah to Abbysinis(present Ethiopia), in which the righteous king Najashi or Negus(real name Ashama) was ruling, using the maritime means. They were known as ‘the people of the ship’ among other Muslims. They had significant respect among other companions of the Prophet(pbuh), and they were well-received and well-regarded group.¹⁷ The Prophet(pbuh) himself has called them as ‘the people of the ship’ and informed them as they have the reward of two migrations.¹⁸

A Hadith in the *Sahih Muslim*, talking about the appearance of antichrist (Dajjal), his stay and his spy, the narrator speaks about a voyage through the sea.¹⁹ The voyagers met a beast-type of man while they lost their way in the ocean and embarked in an Island where they also met a well-built person in the nearby monastery with his hands tied to his neck and having iron shackles between his two legs up to the ankles. They talked with him, and he asked them, who were they. They replied: ‘We are people from Arabia and we embarked upon a boat but the sea-waves had been driving us for one month and they brought us near this island. We got into the side-boats and entered this island and here a beast met us with profusely thick hair and because of the thickness of his hair his face could not be distinguished from his back.’ The person replied them warning about that beast as Dajjal²⁰ and his dwelling-place is either in the Mediterranean Sea or in the Arabian Sea.²¹

amongst you, we were in the far-off hated land of Ethiopia, and all that was for the sake of Allah's Apostle . By Allah, I will neither eat any food nor drink anything till I inform Allah's Apostle of all that you have said. There we were harmed and frightened. I will mention this to the Prophet and will not tell a lie or curtail your saying or add something to it." So when the Prophet came, she said, "O Allah's Prophet `Umar has said so-and-so." He said (to Asma'), "What did you say to him?" Asma's aid, "I told him so-and-so." The Prophet said, "He (i.e. `Umar) has not got more right than you people over me, as he and his companions have (the reward of) only one migration, and you, the people of the boat, have (the reward of) two migrations." Asma' later on said, "I saw Abu Musa and the other people of the boat coming to me in successive groups, asking me about this narration,, and to them nothing in the world was more cheerful and greater than what the Prophet had said about them." Narrated Abu Burda: Asma' said, "I saw Abu Musa requesting me to repeat this narration again and again." Narrated Abu Burda: Abu Musa said, "The Prophet said, "I recognize the voice of the group of Al-Ashariyun, when they recite the Qur'an, when they enter their homes at night, and I recognize their houses by (listening) to their voices when they are reciting the Qur'an at night although I have not seen their houses when they came to them during the day time. Amongst them is Hakim who, on meeting the cavalry or the enemy, used to say to them (i.e. the enemy). My companions order you to wait for them.' "

A similar Hadith has been quoted by Imam Muslim in *Sahih Muslim* with a title ‘The Merits of Ja`far bin Abi Talib and Asma bint Umais and the People of the Boats’. See *Muslim* 31, 6096, Chapter 41.

¹⁷ See the Hadith: *Bukhari* 4.364:

Narrated Abu Musa: We got the news of the migration of the Prophet while we were in Yemen, so we set out migrating to him. We were, I and my two brothers, I being the youngest, and one of my brothers was Abu Burda and the other was Abu Ruhm. We were over fifty (or fifty-three or fifty two) men from our people. We got on board a ship which took us to An-Najashi in Ethiopia, and there we found Ja`far bin Abu Talib and his companions with An-Najashi. Ja`far said (to us), "Allah's Apostle has sent us here and ordered us to stay here, so you too, stay with us." We stayed with him till we all left (Ethiopia) and met the Prophet at the time when he had conquered Khaibar. He gave us a share from its booty (or gave us from its booty). He gave only to those who had taken part in the Ghazwa with him. but he did not give any share to any person who had not participated in Khaibar's conquest except the people of our ship, besides Ja`far and his companions, whom he gave a share as he did them (i.e. the people of the ship).

¹⁸ *Bukhari* 5.216:

Narrated Abu Musa: We received the news of the departure of the Prophet (to Medina) while we were in Yemen. So we went on board a ship but our ship took us away to An-Najashi (the Negus) in Ethiopia. There we met Ja`far bin Abi Talib and stayed with him till we came (to Medina) by the time when the Prophet had conquered Khaibar. The Prophet said, "O you people of the ship! You will have (the reward of) two migrations."

¹⁹ The Hadith is *Muslim* 41, 7028, Chapter 22. In the same chapter there are many other narrations of the same event along with variations. Some of those contain references to natures of the voyage and the ocean. See *Muslim* 41, 7029, 7030, and 7031.

²⁰ This is a long Hadith in which the narrator Fatima bint Qais talks many of her personal histories and after a while she tells: ‘I heard the voice of an announcer making an announcement that the prayer would be observed in the mosque

In the previously cited Hadith regarding the migrations, we can see another narration of a voyage as reported by Abu Musa(R.A). *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* alike reported this Hadith, though there are variations in the citations. However, in the Hadith cited by *Muslim*, we get the descriptions among the certain coasts of Yemen, in which the narrator Abu Musa(R.A) was residing.²²

Another Hadith cited in *Abudawud* and in *Ibn Majah* tells not only about the sea, but it also explains the juridical aspects connected to the prayer of a voyager. In the Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira(R.A), a man asked the Prophet(pbuh): ‘Messenger of Allah, we travel on the sea and take a small quantity of water with us. If we use this for ablution, we would suffer from thirst. Can we perform ablution with sea water?’ The Prophet(pbuh) replied: ‘Its water is pure and what dies in it is lawful food.’²³ The saying of the Prophet(pbuh) also demonstrates the Islamic approach towards the oceanic water along with its living beings. The possibility of fish-hunting from the sea, thus becomes

(where) congregational prayer (is observed). So I set out towards that mosque and observed prayer along with Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) and I was in the row of the women which was near the row of men. When Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) had finished his prayer, he sat on the pulpit smiling and said: Every worshipper should keep sitting at his place. He then said: Do you know why I had asked you to assemble? They said: Allah and His Messenger know best. He said: By Allah. I have not made you assemble for exhortation or for a warning, but I have detained you here, for Tamim Dari, a Christian, who came and accepted Islam, told me something, which agrees with what I was—telling, you about the Dajjal. He narrated to me that he had sailed in a ship along with thirty men of Bani Lakhm and Bani Judham and had been tossed by waves in the ocean for a month. Then these (waves) took them (near) the land within the ocean (island) at the time of sunset. They sat in a small side—boat and entered that Island. There was a beast with long thick hair (and because of these) they could not distinguish his face from his back. They said: Woe to you, who can you be? Thereupon it said: I am al—Jassasa. They said: What is al—Jassasa? And it said: O people, go to this person in the monastery as he is very much eager to know about you. He (the narrator) said: When it named a person for us we were afraid of it lest it should be a Devil. Then we hurriedly went on till we came to that monastery and found a well—built person there with his hands tied to his neck and having iron shackles between his two legs up to the ankles. We said: Woe be upon thee, who are you? And he said: You would soon come to know about me. But tell me who are you. We said: We are people from Arabia and we embarked upon a boat but the sea—waves had been driving us for one month and they brought us near this island. We got into the side—boats and entered this island and here a beast met us with profusely thick hair and because of the thickness of his hair his face could not be distinguished from his back.

²¹ Regarding the stay of Dajjal there are disputes among the narrators of the Hadith. However in the end of the same Hadith we could see: ‘...He said: How did he (the Prophet) deal with him? We informed him that he had overcome those in his neighbourhood and they had submitted themselves before him. Thereupon he said to us: Had it actually happened? We said: Yes. Thereupon he said: If it is so that is better for them that they should show obedience to him. I am going to tell you about myself and I am Dajjal and would be soon permitted to get out and so I shall get out and travel in the land, and will not spare any town where I would not stay for forty nights except Mecca and Medina as these two (places) are prohibited (areas) for me and I would not make an attempt to enter any one of these two. An angel with a sword in his hand would confront me and would bar my way and there would be angels to guard every passage leading to it; then Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) striking the pulpit with the help of the end of his staff said: This implies Taiba meaning Medina. Have I not, told you an account (of the Dajjal) like this? The people said: Yes, and this account narrated by Tamim Dari was liked by me for it corroborates the account which I gave to you in regard to him (Dajjal) at Medina and Mecca. Behold he (Dajjal) is in the Syrian sea (Mediterranean) or the Yemen sea (Arabian sea). Nay, on the contrary, he As In the east, he is in the east, he is in the east, and he pointed with his hand towards the east.’

²² See *Muslim* 4, 1339: Abu Musa reported: I and my companions who had sailed along with me in the boat landed with me in the valley of Buthan while the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) was staying in Medina. A party of people amongst them went to the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) every night at the time of the 'Isha' prayer turn by turn. Abu Musa said: (One night) we (I and my companions) went to the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) and he was occupied in some matter till there was a delay in prayer so much so that it was the middle of the night. The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) then came out and led them (Musa's companions) in prayer.

See also *Bukhari* 4.364 and 5.216, or footnotes 6 and 7

²³ *Abudawud*: 1, 83; and in *Ibn Majah* 2.3.12

justifiable through Islamic terms. Possibly it also legalizes the voyages for the fish-hunting.

Regarding the voyages of the companions of the Prophet(pbuh), we find certain references. Many of the previously cited Hadiths were referring to their voyages, mostly during the lifetime of the Prophet(pbuh) itself. Another Hadith by *Abudawud* points out to the voyage of Abu Busrah al Ghifari(R.A), a companion of the Prophet(pbuh) from Cairo. As he was quiet old, he was lifted into the boat and his meal was brought to him.²⁴ The Hadith also shows the presence of Arab navigation from Cairo to the West Asian lands.

(ii). *naval expedition engagements*

The previously cited Hadith of *Abudawud* undoubtedly includes the sailing through the sea for the sake of naval expeditions, as the Prophet(pbuh) says the one who is fighting in Allah's path is excepted from the prohibition of sailing.²⁵ Thus, we get many references to the naval involvements of the companions through the sea-waters. In this regard, we have two genres of Hadiths: Hadiths that describe any historical moments connected to the naval expeditions, and Hadiths that predict the historical moments.

In the first category, the Hadiths that describe any historical moments connected to the naval expeditions, most of the narrations describe the expeditions in the coastal areas, in which the mentions of sea, sea-foods, or oceanic livings come up. Another Hadith in the *Sahih al Muslim* reports from Jabir bin Abdullah(R.A). In that he says that the Prophet(pbuh) sent an expedition to the sea coast and he was one among them.²⁶ In a Hadith in the *Sahih al Bhukhari* narrated by Wahab bin Kaisan(A.S) from Jabin bin Abdullah(R.A), we have reference to both naval expedition and oceanic living.²⁷ In the Hadith, Jabir (R.A) says that the Prophet(pbuh) sent troops of three hundred men to the sea-coast and appointed Abu Ubaida bin Al Jarrah(R.A) as their commander. During their journey through the sea-coast, they ran short of food, and fortunately they found a fish like a small mountain. The whole troops hunted it and ate it for eighteen days. They fixed its two ribs on the ground like an arch and a she-camel was ridden and passed through them without touching any. There are various narrations of the same event which

²⁴ *Abudawud* 13, 2406. The complete version of the Hadith is: Ja'far ibn Jubayr said: I accompanied Abu Busrah al-Ghifari, a Companion of the Apostle of Allah, in a boat proceeding from al-Fustat (Cairo) during Ramadan. He was lifted (to the boat), then his meal was brought to him. The narrator Ja'far said in his version: He did not go beyond the houses (of the city) but he called for the dining sheet. He said (to me): Come near. I said: Do you not see the houses? Abu Busrah said: Do you detest the *sunnah* (practice) of the Apostle of Allah? The narrator Ja'far said in his version: He then ate (it).

²⁵ *Abudawud*, 14, 2483.

²⁶ *Sahih al Muslim*, 21, 4761.

²⁷ *Bukhari* 5.646. The complete Hadith could be translated like this: Narrated Wahab bin Kaisan: Jabir bin `Abdullah said, "Allah's Apostle sent troops to the sea coast and appointed Abu 'Ubaida bin Al-Jarrah as their commander, and they were 300 (men). We set out, and we had covered some distance on the way, when our journey food ran short. So Abu 'Ubaida ordered that all the food present with the troops be collected, and it was collected. Our journey food was dates, and Abu Ubaida kept on giving us our daily ration from it little by little (piecemeal) till it decreased to such an extent that we did not receive except a date each." I asked (Jabir), "How could one date benefit you?" He said, "We came to know its value when even that finished." Jabir added, "Then we reached the sea (coast) where we found a fish like a small mountain. The people (i.e. troops) ate of it for 18 nights (i.e. days). Then Abu 'Ubaida ordered that two of its ribs be fixed on the ground (in the form of an arch) and that a she-camel be ridden and passed under them. So it passed under them without touching them."

provides more explanations.²⁸ In the Hadiths quoted in *Sahih al Muslim* makes clear that the 'fish like a small mountain' was whale which called *al anbar* in Arabic.²⁹

In an Hadith in the *Abudawud* narrated by Busr bin Artat, we get evidences of actual naval expedition in the oceanic water. The Hadith was brought ahead to contextualize an event of stealing. During an expedition on the sea, a thief called Misder had stolen a *bhukti* – a she-camel.³⁰ He was brought in front of the commander Busr and he said that I have heard from the Prophet (pbuh) as saying that hands are not to be cut off during a warlike expedition. However, we do not know that the expedition was actually in the sea-waters or in the coastal areas. But, the literal terms make the expedition as on the sea-waters; since we see the terms like *ala al bahar*, which literally means on the sea, than on the sea-coast.

In the second category, Hadiths that predict the historical moments in which the followers of the Prophet (pbuh) will make larger naval expeditions, we have a widely-cited Hadith related to the Prophetic dream followed by his recounting. *Sahih al Bukhari* cites it from the narration of Anas bin Malik(R.A) from Um Haram(R.A). The Prophet (pbuh) one day took a midday nap at her house, and he woke up smiling. Um Haram(R.A) asked him the reason of smile. He answered: 'I was astonished to see (in my dream) some people amongst my followers on a sea-voyage looking like kings on the thrones.' She asked him to invoke Allah to make her one of them, and the Prophet (pbuh) stated she is amongst them. He again slept and woke smiling, and the same incident with her questions and his replies happened twice or thrice.³¹ In the same narration of the Hadith along with other citations, we see that Um Haram(R.A) was married to Ubada bin al Samit(R.A) and he took her to a Jihad. In another narration, *Sahih al Bukhari* makes it clear that she sailed on the sea during the Caliphate of Mu'awiya bin Abi Sufyan(R.A), and after she disembarked, she fell down from her riding animal and died.³² In another narration, we can also see that Um Haram(R.A) was residing at the sea-shore of Hims with her husband Ubada bin al Samit(R.A).³³ The same narration also makes an interesting predicament by

²⁸ See within *Sahih al Bukhari*, 5.647, 5.648, 7.401, 7.402.

²⁹ *Sahih al Muslim*, 21, 4757. The same naval expedition has been quoted by *Sahih al Muslim* in 21. 4758, 21. 4759, 21. 4760, 21. 4761, 21. 4762.

³⁰ *Abudawud* 38, 4394: Narrated Busr ibn Artat: Junadah ibn AbuUmayyah said: We were with Busr ibn Artat on the sea (on an expedition). A thief called Misdar who had stolen a bukhti she-camel was brought. He said: I heard the Apostle of Allah say: Hands are not to be cut off during a warlike expedition. Had it not been so, I would have cut it off.

³¹ *Sahih al Bukhari*, 4.144: Narrated Anas bin Malik: Um Haram told me that the Prophet one day took a midday nap in her house. Then he woke up smiling. Um Haram asked, "O Allah's Apostle! What makes you smile?" He replied "I was astonished to see (in my dream) some people amongst my followers on a sea-voyage looking like kings on the thrones." She said, "O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah to make me one of them." He replied, "You are amongst them." He slept again and then woke up smiling and said the same as before twice or thrice. And she said, "O Allah's Apostle! Invoke Allah to make me one of them." And he said, "You are amongst the first batch." Ubada bin As-Samit married her (i.e. Um Haram) and then he took her for Jihad. When she returned, an animal was presented to her to ride, but she fell down and her neck was broken.

The same narrations with additions and subtractions could be seen within *Sahih al Bukhari* in 4.47, 4.56, 4.129, 4.175, 8.299, and 9.130.

Ibn Majah also cited the same event in 21.18.39.

³² *Sahih al Bukhari*, 4.47

³³ *Sahih al Bukhari*, 4.175. This Hadith has slight variation from the previous citation as it does not talk about the dream of the Prophet. Instead it gives a statement of the Prophet, in which he states that paradise is granted to the first batch of my followers who will undertake a naval expedition. The complete form of the Hadith is: Narrated Khalid bin Madan: That 'Umair bin Al-Aswad Al-Anasi told him that he went to 'Ubada bin As-Samit while he was staying in his house at the sea-shore of Hims with (his wife) Um Haram. 'Umair said. Um Haram informed us that she heard the

the Prophet (pbuh) that his followers will invade Caesar's City, and the first army amongst them will be forgiven their sins.

In another Hadith cited in the *Sahih al Muslim*, the Prophet(pbuh) predicts an expedition by the Muslims over a particular land, which has been identified as Constantinople. Though the Hadith specifically does not talk about the naval expedition, it contains the references of the sea along with the prediction of the conquering. In the Hadith, the Prophet (pbuh) says that the Last Hour would not come unless seventy thousand persons from Bani Israel would attack a city, which has land in one side and the sea on the other.³⁴

(iii). *mercantile engagements*

As of course, the ocean was significantly utilized for transporting the goods from the pre-historic period onwards and the mercantile objectives was the most important concern of the peoples through the ocean, the Prophet make certain statements regarding the trading through the sea.

In this hold, a very interesting Hadith is quoted by Abu Dawud(R.A), narrated from Abdullah bin Amr bin al Aas(R.A). In this hadith prophet(pbuh) says that no one should sail on the sea except the one who is going to perform hajj or umrah, or the one who is fighting in Allah's path.³⁵ The reason raised by the Prophet(pbuh) for this objection is 'under sea there is a fire, and under the fire there is a sea'. This Hadith substantiates the arguments of certain scholars who argue that the Arab Muslims were unaware of the larger possibilities of the oceanic world. Prophet's (pbuh) saying evidently prohibits the navigations through the ocean except for two clear reasons. Then, were the mercantile engagements of Arab Muslims in the following centuries, dominating the landscapes of the Indian Ocean, a violation of the prophetic saying?

At the same time, there is another saying in *Sahih al Bhukhari*, in which a Bedouin asked the Prophet(pbuh) about the emigration.³⁶ In the reply, the Prophet(pbuh) is saying you work hard beyond the seas, and Allah will not decrease any of your good deeds. In another narration, the Prophet(pbuh) clearly mentions 'do good deeds beyond the

Prophet saying, "Paradise is granted to the first batch of my followers who will undertake a naval expedition." Um Haram added, I said, 'O Allah's Apostle! Will I be amongst them?' He replied, 'You are amongst them.' The Prophet then said, 'The first army amongst my followers who will invade Caesar's City will be forgiven their sins.' I asked, 'Will I be one of them, O Allah's Apostle?' He replied in the negative."

³⁴ *Sahih al Muslim* 41, 6979. The Hadith in complete is: Abu Huraira reported Allah's Apostle (may peace be upon him) saying: You have heard about a city the one side of which is in the land and the other is in the sea (Constantinople). They said: Allah's Messenger, yes. Thereupon he said: The Last Hour would not come unless seventy thousand persons from Bani Israel would attack it. When they would land there, they will neither fight with weapons nor would shower arrows but would only say: "There is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest," that one side of it would fall. Thaur (one of the narrators) said: I think that he said: The part by the side of the ocean. Then they would say for the second time: "There is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest" that the second side would also fall, and they would say: "There is no god but Allah and Allah is the Greatest," that the gates would be opened for them and they would enter therein and, they would be collecting spoils of war and distributing them amongst themselves that a noise would be heard and It would be said: Verily, Dajjal has come. And thus they would leave everything there and would turn to him.

³⁵ *Abudawud*, Book 14, Number 2483

³⁶ *Bukhari* 2.532:

Narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri: A Bedouin asked Allah's Apostle about the emigration. The Prophet (p.b.u.h) said, "May Allah have mercy on you! The matter of emigration is very hard. Have you got camels? Do you pay their Zakat?" The Bedouin said, "Yes, I have camels and I pay their Zakat." The Prophet said, Work beyond the seas and Allah will not decrease (waste) any of your good deeds." (See Hadith No. 260 Vol. 5). (Also 3.801 -in detail)

merchants (or the sea)'.³⁷ These lines could be read as a supportive statement regarding the oceanic engagements for the livelihood purposes. As the emigration has to be conducted only after all your primary economic obligations have fulfilled, the trading also would come under the certain frames. And, working hard in the ocean connotes the mercantile engagements overseas. This Hadith is also noteworthy, as Bedouins were largely engaged in the maritime transactions in the prior and later centuries to the Prophet's(pbuh) time.

Another Hadith quoted by Ibn Majah provides certain references to the maritime engagements for the mercantile purposes. But, very interestingly, the merchants in this Hadith are not Muslims, instead they are caught by the Muslims as enemy soldiers.³⁸ The 'enemy soldiers' claim themselves as merchants, and again captivately the Muslims are not able to verify that they were actually maritime merchants or enemy soldiers. This again refers to the lackness of knowledge for the Muslims during the time of the Prophet(pbuh) about the ocean as a mean of the tradings.

Apart from the above mentioned Hadiths and their contexts, we can also find out certain Hadiths that mention the oceanic world to outline the routes, walks or journeys through the coastal areas³⁹, to describe about the oceanic livings⁴⁰, to refer to the metaphysical world⁴¹ and to outline geographical boundaries⁴².

³⁷ *Bukhari* 3.801

... The Prophet asked, "Do you milk them on the day off watering them?" He replied, "Yes." The Prophet said, "Do good deeds beyond the merchants (or the sea) and Allah will never disregard any of your deeds." (See Hadith No. 260, Vol. 5), (also 5.260, 8.186)

³⁸ Ibn Majah 21.7.16a: Malik said about enemy soldiers who were found on the seashore of a Muslim land, and they claimed that they were merchants and that the sea had driven them ashore, while the Muslims were not able to verify any of that except that their ships were damaged, or they were thirsty and had disembarked without the permission of the Muslims, "I think that it is up to the imam to give his opinion about them, and I do not think that the tax of one fifth is taken from them."

³⁹ See *Sahih al Bukhari* 3.50, 3.464, 3.663, 3.891, 4.226, 5.245, 5.646; *Sahih al Muslim* 21.4756, 42.7149; *Ibn Majah* 49.10.24

⁴⁰ See *Abudawud* 27.3806

⁴¹ See *Sahih al Muslim* 39.6699, 39.6754; *Abudawud* 40.4705

⁴² See *Sahih al Muslim* 41. 6979

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