

The following ahadeeth are used to make claims on the supposed literacy of the prophet ↓:

Bukhari 114: **Narrated 'Ubaidullah bin `Abdullah: Ibn `Abbas said, "When the ailment of the Prophet (ﷺ) became worse, he said, 'Bring for me (writing) paper and I will write for you a statement after which you will not go astray.' But `Umar said, 'The Prophet is seriously ill, and we have got Allah's Book with us and that is sufficient for us.' But the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) differed about this and there was a hue and cry. On that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to them, 'Go away (and leave me alone). It is not right that you should quarrel in front of me." Ibn `Abbas came out saying, "It was most unfortunate (a great disaster) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was prevented from writing that statement for them because of their disagreement and noise. (Note: It is apparent from this Hadith that Ibn `Abbas had witnessed the event and came out saying this statement. The truth is not so, for Ibn `Abbas used to say this statement on narrating the Hadith and he had not witnessed the event personally. See Fath Al-Bari Vol. 1, p.220 footnote.) (See Hadith No. 228, Vol. 4).**

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ سُلَيْمَانَ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي ابْنُ وَهْبٍ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي يُونُسُ، عَنْ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ لَمَّا اشْتَدَّ بِالنَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَجَعُهُ قَالَ " أَنْتُونِي بِكِتَابٍ أَكْتُبُ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَا تَضَلُّوْا بَعْدَهُ " . قَالَ عُمَرُ إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْهِ الْوَجَعُ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ حَسْبُنَا فَأَخْتَلَفُوا وَكَثُرَ اللَّعْظُ . قَالَ " فُؤِمُوا عَنِّي، وَلَا يَنْبَغِي عِنْدِي التَّنَازُعُ " . فَخَرَجَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ يَقُولُ إِنَّ الرَّرِيَّةَ كُلَّ الرَّرِيَّةِ مَا حَالَ بَيْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَبَيْنَ كِتَابِهِ .

Muslim 1637b: **Sa'id b. Jubair reported from Ibn Abbas that he said:**

Thursday, and what about Thursday? Then tears began to flow until I saw them on his cheeks as if they were the strings of pearls. He (the narrator) said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Bring me a shoulder blade and ink-pot (or tablet and inkpot), so that I write for you a document (by following which) you would never go astray. They said: Allah's Messenger (may peace upon him) is in the state of unconsciousness.

حَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، أَخْبَرَنَا وَكَيْعٌ، عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ مَعْوَالٍ، عَنْ طَلْحَةَ بْنِ مُصَرِّفٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ وَمَا يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ . ثُمَّ جَعَلَ تَسِيلُ دُمُوعُهُ حَتَّى رَأَيْتُ عَلَى خَدَّيْهِ كَأَنَّهَا نِظَامُ اللُّؤْلُؤِ . قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَنْتُونِي بِالْكَتِفِ وَالذَّوَاةِ - أَوْ اللُّوْحِ وَالذَّوَاةِ - أَكْتُبُ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَنْ تَضَلُّوْا بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا " . فَقَالُوا إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَهْجُرُ .

Muslim 1637a: **Sa'id b. Jubair reported that Ibn 'Abbas said:**

Thursday, (and then said): What is this Thursday? He then wept so much that his tears moistened the pebbles. I said: Ibn 'Abbas, what is (significant) about Thursday? He (Ibn 'Abbas) said: The illness of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took a serious turn (on this day), and he said: Come to me, so that I should write for you a document that you may not go astray after me. They (the Companions around him) disputed, and it is not meet to dispute in the presence of the Apostle. They said: How is lie (Allah's Apostle)? Has he lost his consciousness? Try to learn from him (this point). He (the Holy Prophet) said: Leave me. I am better in the state (than the one in which you are engaged). I make a will about three things: Turn out the polytheists from the territory of Arabia; show hospitality

to the (foreign) delegations as I used to show them hospitality. He (the narrator) said: He (Ibn Abbas) kept silent on the third point, or he (the narrator) said: But I forgot that. This hadith was mentioned through another chain.

حَدَّثَنَا سَعِيدُ بْنُ مَنْصُورٍ، وَفُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، وَأَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ وَعَمْرُو النَّاقِدُ - وَاللَّفْظُ لِسَعِيدٍ - قَالُوا حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، عَنْ سُلَيْمَانَ الْأَحْوَلِ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ جُبَيْرٍ، قَالَ قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ وَمَا يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ ثُمَّ بَكَى حَتَّى بَلَ دَمْعُهُ الْحَصَى . فَقُلْتُ يَا ابْنَ عَبَّاسٍ وَمَا يَوْمَ الْخَمِيسِ قَالَ اشْتَدَّ بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَجَعُهُ . فَقَالَ " انْتُونِي أَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَا تَضِلُّوا بَعْدِي " . فَتَنَازَعُوا وَمَا يَنْبَغِي عِنْدَ نَبِيِّ تَنَازُحٍ . وَقَالُوا مَا شَأْنُهُ أَهْجَرَ اسْتَفْهَمُوهُ . قَالَ " دَعُونِي فَأَلْذِي أَنَا فِيهِ خَيْرٌ أَوْصِيكُمْ بِثَلَاثٍ أَخْرِجُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ مِنْ جَزِيرَةِ الْعَرَبِ وَأَجِيزُوا الْوَقْفَ بِخَوْفٍ مَا كُنْتُمْ أَجِيزُهُمْ " . قَالَ وَسَكَتَ عَنِ الثَّلَاثَةِ أَوْ قَالَهَا فَأَنْسَيْتُهَا . قَالَ أَبُو إِسْحَاقَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ بَشِيرٍ، قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ

Muslim 1637c: *Ibn Abbas reported:*

When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was about to leave this world, there were persons (around him) in his house, 'Umar b. al-Khattab being one of them. Allah's Apostle (ﷺ) said: Come, I may write for you a document; you would not go astray after that. Thereupon Umar said: Verily Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is deeply afflicted with pain. You have the Qur'an with you. The Book of Allah is sufficient for us. Those who were present in the house differed. Some of them said: Bring him (the writing material) so that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) may write a document for you and you would never go astray after him And some among them said what 'Umar had (already) said. When they indulged in nonsense and began to dispute in the presence of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), he said: Get up (and go away) 'Ubaidullah said: Ibn Abbas used to say: There was a heavy loss, indeed a heavy loss, that, due to their dispute and noise. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) could not write (or dictate) the document for them.

وَحَدَّثَنِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ رَافِعٍ، وَعَبْدُ بْنُ حُمَيْدٍ، - قَالَ عَبْدُ أَخْبَرَنَا وَقَالَ ابْنُ رَافِعٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّزَّاقِ، - أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ، عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُتْبَةَ، عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ، قَالَ لَمَّا حَضَرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَفِي الْبَيْتِ رَجَالٌ فِيهِمْ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " هَلُمَّ أَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَا تَضِلُّونَ بَعْدَهُ " . فَقَالَ عُمَرُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَدْ عَلَبَ عَلَيْهِ الْوَجَعُ وَعِنْدَكُمْ الْقُرْآنُ حَسْبُنَا كِتَابُ اللَّهِ . فَاخْتَلَفَ أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ فَاخْتَصَمُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ قَرَّبُوا يَكْتُبْ لَكُمْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كِتَابًا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ . وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ مَا قَالَ عُمَرُ . فَلَمَّا أَكْثَرُوا اللَّغْوَ وَالِاخْتِلَافَ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " قُومُوا " . قَالَ عُبَيْدُ اللَّهِ فَكَانَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ يَقُولُ إِنَّ الرِّزْيَةَ كُلَّ الرِّزْيَةِ مَا حَالَ بَيْنَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ اخْتِلَافِهِمْ وَلَعَطِهِمْ .

Bukhari 4251: **Narrated Al-Bara:**

When the Prophet (ﷺ) went out for the `Umra in the month of Dhal-Qa'da, the people of Mecca did not allow him to enter Mecca till he agreed to conclude a peace treaty with them by virtue of which he would stay in Mecca for three days only (in the following year). When the agreement was being written, the Muslims wrote: "This is the peace treaty, which Muhammad, Apostle of Allah has concluded." The infidels said (to the Prophet), "We do not agree with you on this, for if we knew that you are Apostle of Allah we would not have prevented you for anything (i.e. entering Mecca, etc.), but you are Muhammad, the son of `Abdullah." Then he said to `Ali, "Erase (the name of) 'Apostle of Allah'." `Ali said, "No, by Allah, I will never erase you (i.e. your name)." Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) took the writing sheet...and he did not know a better writing..and he

wrote or got it the following written! "This is the peace treaty which Muhammad, the son of `Abdullah, has concluded: "Muhammad should not bring arms into Mecca except sheathed swords, and should not take with him any person of the people of Mecca even if such a person wanted to follow him, and if any of his companions wants to stay in Mecca, he should not forbid him." (In the next year) when the Prophet (ﷺ) entered Mecca and the allowed period of stay elapsed, the infidels came to `Ali and said "Tell your companion (Muhammad) to go out, as the allowed period of his stay has finished." So the Prophet (ﷺ) departed (from Mecca) and the daughter of Hamza followed him shouting "O Uncle, O Uncle!" `Ali took her by the hand and said to Fatima, "Take the daughter of your uncle." So she made her ride (on her horse). (When they reached Medina) `Ali, Zaid and Ja`far quarreled about her. `Ali said, "I took her for she is the daughter of my uncle." Ja`far said, "She is the daughter of my uncle and her aunt is my wife." Zaid said, "She is the daughter of my brother." On that, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave her to her aunt and said, "The aunt is of the same status as the mother." He then said to `Ali, "You are from me, and I am from you," and said to Ja`far, "You resemble me in appearance and character," and said to Zaid, "You are our brother and our freed slave." `Ali said to the Prophet "Won't you marry the daughter of Hamza?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "She is the daughter of my foster brother."

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُوسَى، عَنْ إِسْرَائِيلَ، عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ، عَنِ الْبَرَاءِ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - قَالَ لَمَّا اعْتَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي ذِي الْقَعْدَةِ، فَأَبَى أَهْلُ مَكَّةَ أَنْ يَدْخُلَهُمْ مَكَّةَ، حَتَّى قَاضَاهُمْ عَلَى أَنْ يُقِيمَ بِهَا ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ، فَلَمَّا كَتَبُوا الْكِتَابَ كَتَبُوا، هَذَا مَا قَاضَى عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ. قَالُوا لَا نُفَرُّ بِهَذَا، لَوْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مَا مَنَعْنَاكَ شَيْئًا، وَلَكِنْ أَنْتَ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ "أَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَأَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ". ثُمَّ قَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ "أَمَحُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ". قَالَ عَلِيٌّ لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا أَمَحُوكَ أَبَدًا. فَأَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْكِتَابَ، وَلَيْسَ يُحْسِنُ يَكْتُبُ، فَكَتَبَ هَذَا مَا قَاضَى مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ لَا يَدْخُلُ مَكَّةَ السَّلَاحَ، إِلَّا السَّيْفَ فِي الْقِرَابِ، وَأَنْ لَا يَخْرُجَ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا بِأَحَدٍ، إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَتَّبِعَهُ، وَأَنْ لَا يَمْنَعُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ أَحَدًا، إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُقِيمَ بِهَا. فَلَمَّا دَخَلَهَا وَمَضَى الْأَجَلَ أَتَوْا عَلِيًّا فَقَالُوا قُلْ لِصَاحِبِكَ الْخُرْجَ عَنَّا، فَقَدْ مَضَى الْأَجَلَ. فَخَرَجَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَتَبِعَتْهُ ابْنَةُ حَمْزَةَ تُنَادِي يَا عَمَّ يَا عَمَّ. فَتَنَاقَلَهَا عَلِيٌّ، فَأَخَذَ بِبَيْدِهَا وَقَالَ لِفَاطِمَةَ - عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ - دُونَكَ ابْنَةُ عَمِّكَ. حَمَلَتْهَا فَأَخْتَصَمَ فِيهَا عَلِيٌّ وَرَيْدٌ وَجَعْفَرٌ. قَالَ عَلِيٌّ أَنَا أَخَذْتُهَا وَهِيَ بِنْتُ عَمِّي. وَقَالَ جَعْفَرُ ابْنَةُ عَمِّي وَخَالَتُهَا تَحْتِي. وَقَالَ رَيْدُ ابْنَةُ أَخِي. فَقَضَى بِهَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لِحَالَتِهَا وَقَالَ "الْخَالَةُ بِمَنْزِلَةِ الْأُمِّ". وَقَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ "أَنْتَ مِنِّي وَأَنَا مِنْكَ". وَقَالَ لِعَمْرِ "أَشْبَهْتَ خَلْقِي وَخَلْقِي". وَقَالَ لِرَيْدٍ "أَنْتَ أَخُونَا وَمَوْلَانَا". وَقَالَ عَلِيٌّ أَلَا تَتَرَوْنَ بِنْتَ حَمْزَةَ. قَالَ "إِنَّهَا ابْنَةُ أَخِي مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ".

The claim is that the prophet, who Muslims posit was illiterate throughout his life, was actually able to write perhaps later on, since he apparently said ‘bring for me paper and I will write it for you’ and “messenger was prevented from writing that statement for them”.

Or

‘So that I write for you a document’

Or

“Took the writing sheet.. and he wrote (or got it written)”

This of course has huge implications on the deen: if the prophet was indeed able to write, then he may have written the quran himself, or so the claim goes.

Claim: “The Prophet (saw) wanted to write before his death”

When the Prophet (saw) was ill before his death, he told / asked those around his deathbed to bring him a sheet to write some instructions for them. It was narrated he said:

اَتُّونِي بِالْكَتِفِ وَالِدَّوَاةِ - أَوْ اللَّوْحِ وَالِدَّوَاةِ - أَكْتُبُ لَكُمْ كِتَابًا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا

"Bring me a shoulder blade and ink-pot (or tablet and inkpot), so that I write for you a document (by following which) you would never go astray." (Sahih Muslim 1637 b)

The argument here is then the prophet was asking for writing materials to write something for them, so he must have been literate to do this.

It is not uncommon to say something like, "the president wrote to so and so" meaning he ordered someone to do so. For example, the prophet wrote messages to kings and the narrations use the **very same** term (كتب) but the Prophet certainly appointed writers for this job who wrote them on his behalf. (Tafseer al-Qurtubi, Vol. 13, p. 352)

This is supported by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani's observation that in the normal course of events, the Prophet (saw) appointed writers to write the revelation, messages to kings and contracts. It would be unusual to say he wanted to write himself in his last death throes. (Ibn Hajar, Fath al-Bari, Vol. 7, pp. 504-505)

There is no narration saying he actually wrote anything whilst there are many narrations where he would ask others to write for him - this leaves this interpretation as highly doubtful.

Moreover, in Ibn Hajar's Sharh of Bukhari 114:

قوله: (**أكتب**) هو بإسكان الباء جواب الأمر، ويجوز
الرفع على الاستئناف، وفيه مجاز أيضا أي: **أمر بالكتابة**.
ويحتمل أن يكون على ظاهره كما سيأتي البحث في
المسألة في كتاب الصلح إن شاء الله تعالى، **وفي مسند**
أحمد من حديث علي أنه المأمور بذلك ولفظه: " أمرني

“His saying ‘اكتب’ ... is figurative as well, that is, **he is ordering (the scribe) what to write..** and in Al: hadeeth in Musnad Ahmad Ali was the one who was ordered to do that”

If we look at the Takhreej of the Ahadeeth, particularly those in Musnad Ahmad - we see in the Sharh of Musnad Ahmad 1935 (Haashiyah Musnad al Imaam):

بشيء يكتب فيه (اكتب لكم) أي: ألق عليكم ما
تكتبونه، ويمكن أن يقال أنه أراد مباشرته إن قلنا أنه
كان يحسن الخط بتعليم الله تعالى زيادة في الإعجاز

“And “اكتب لكم”, that is, **I relay upon you what you are going to write.**”

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) was extremely ill as Aisha (ra) said:

دَخَلَ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - وَهُوَ بَيْنَ رَجُلَيْنِ وَرَجُلَاهُ تَخَطَّانِ بِالْأَرْضِ

"The Messenger of Allah (saw) entered upon me, (supported) **between two men, with his feet making lines along the ground.**" (Ibn Majah Hadith 1686)

Moreover, in Bukhari 4459:

Narrated Al-Aswad:

It was mentioned in the presence of `Aisha that the Prophet (ﷺ) had appointed `Ali as successor by will. Thereupon she said, "Who said so? I saw the Prophet, **while I was supporting him against my chest. He asked for a tray, and then fell on one side and expired, and I did not feel it.** So how (do the people say) he appointed `Ali as his successor?"

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو زُهْرٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ عَوْنٍ، عَنْ إِبرَاهِيمَ، عَنِ الْأَسْوَدِ، قَالَ ذُكِرَ عِنْدَ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَوْصَى إِلَى عَلِيٍّ، فَقَالَتْ مَنْ قَالَهُ لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَإِنِّي لَمُسْنِدْتُهُ إِلَى صَدْرِي، فَدَعَا بِالطَّسْتِ فَأَنْخَنَتْ فَمَاتَ، فَمَا شَعُرْتُ، فَكَيْفَ أَوْصَى إِلَى عَلِيٍّ

In such a state, even if he was literate, he would not have been able to physically write something of such importance. This would further suggest what he meant was 'he would ask someone to write.', on top of the many Shurooh illuminating this.

Claim: “The Prophet (saw) wrote part of the Hudaybiyyah Treaty”

It was narrated regarding the Hodaybiyyah treaty:

فَلَمَّا كَتَبُوا الْكِتَابَ كَتَبُوا، هَذَا مَا قَاضَى عَلَيْهِ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ. قَالُوا لَا نُقِرُّ بِهِدَا، لَوْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مَا مَنَعْنَاكَ شَيْئًا، وَلَكِنْ أَنْتَ مُحَمَّدٌ بِنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ " أَنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَأَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ". ثُمَّ قَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ " امْحُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ". قَالَ عَلِيُّ لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا أَمْحُوكَ أَبَدًا. فَأَخَذَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْكِتَابَ، وَلَيْسَ يَحْسَنُ يَكْتُبُ، فَكَتَبَ هَذَا مَا قَاضَى مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ

"When the agreement was being written, the Muslims wrote: "This is the peace treaty, which Muhammad, Apostle of Allah, has concluded." The infidels said to him, "We do not agree with you on this, for if we knew that you are Apostle of Allah, we would not have prevented you from anything (i.e. entering Mecca, etc.), but you are Muhammad, the son of Abdullah." Then he said to Ali, "Erase Apostle of Allah'." Ali said, "No, by Allah, I will never erase you (i.e. your name)." Then Allah's Messenger (saw) took the writing sheet, and he did not know a better writing, and he wrote the following: 'This is the peace treaty which Muhammad, the son of Abdullah...'" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4251)

The argument here is this demonstrates the Prophet (saw) could write.

This however does not give the full picture as it ignores other evidences that elaborate this event in further detail.

Just like all the other nuances of the Arabic language, Scholars establish that the term (كتب) appearing in this hadith has to be understood in light of other narrations, as narrations explain one another, and **context** and **corroboration matter** with regards to the definitions of Arabic terminology. They say he ordered Ali to write and others state he did not know the place of the written line. It is narrated in al-Bukhari:

فَقَالَ لِعَلِيٍّ " امْحُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ". فَقَالَ عَلِيُّ وَاللَّهِ لَا أَمْحَاهُ أَبَدًا. قَالَ " فَأَرِنِيهِ ". قَالَ فَأَرَاهُ إِيَّاهُ، فَمَحَاهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بِيَدِهِ

"He (the Prophet) asked Ali to erase the expression of Apostle of Allah. On that Ali said, 'By Allah, I will never erase it.' Allah's Apostle said (to Ali), 'Let me see the phrase. When Ali showed him the phrase, the Prophet (saw) erased the expression with his own hand.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari 3184)

In the narration of Muslim, it says:

فَأَمَرَ عَلِيًّا أَنْ يَمْحَاهَا فَقَالَ عَلِيُّ لَا وَاللَّهِ لَا أَمْحَاهَا . فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَرِنِي مَكَانَهَا " . فَأَرَاهُ مَكَانَهَا فَمَحَاهَا وَكَتَبَ " ابْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ "

"He (the Prophet) told Ali to strike out the words. Ali said: No, by Allah, I will not strike them out. The Messenger of Allah (may Peace be upon him) said: Show me their place (on the parchment). So Ali showed him their place and the Prophet struck them out; **and Ali wrote: Ibn Abdullah.**" (Sahih Muslim 1783c)

In the previous two narrations, the prophet could not recognize the written line and asked Ali to show him the words.

In light of this narration, scholars establish the sentence in the first hadith, "Then Allah's Messenger (saw) took the writing sheet" refers to the sentence in the other two clarifying narrations: "he (the Prophet) struck them out," then Ali "he wrote" the rest. (al-Qurtubi, Ibn Hajar and Ibn Kathir)

The last line of the narration could be falsely predicated to posit that the prophet was the one who wrote 'Ibn Abdullah', but in reality, all the other narrations of this Hadeeth clearly elaborate that it was actually Ali who wrote it, upon the Prophet's command.

The Prophet asked Ali where the line 'Apostle of Allah' was as he could not recognise it, then the Prophet was shown it and he struck it off, and then had Ali write 'Ibn Abdullah'.

In Fath al Bari:

بذلك ليس متحتما، فلذلك امتنع من امتثاله. ووقع في
رواية يوسف بعد " فقال لعلي: امح رسول الله، فقال: لا
والله لا أمحاه أبدا. قال: فأرنيه، فأراه إياه فمحا النبي
صلى الله عليه وسلم بيده " ونحوه في رواية زكريا عند

Ibn Hajar states: "so he said, 'so show me it', so he was shown it, and the Prophet erased it with his hand."

Now after this, Ibn Hajar goes into extensive detail about the part of the narration where it says 'فكتب' and explicates all the nuances of it.

If the anti Islamic Polemicist thinks he is smart for bringing such a claim that "hey look it says the prophet wrote but the quran and sunnah says he was illiterate 🤪" then let him know he is a fool that deserves no acknowledgement.

This issue that supposedly 'the prophet wrote' was brought up to Ulama centuries ago and they addressed it:

الأحاديث. وعن قصة الحديبية بأن القصة واحدة والكاتب فيها علي وقد صرح في حديث المسور بأن عليا هو الذي كتب، فيحمل علي أن النكتة في قوله: " فأخذ الكتاب وليس يحسن يكتب " لبيان أن قوله: " أرني إياها " أنه ما احتاج إلى أن يريه موضع الكلمة التي امتنع علي من محوها إلا لكونه كان لا يحسن الكتابة، وعلى أن قوله بعد ذلك: " فكتب " فيه حذف تقديره فمحاها فأعادها لعلي فكتب. وبهذا جزم ابن

“And as for the story of Hodaybiyyah.. the writer in it is Ali, and it is stated in the Hadeeth of Masoor that Ali is the one who wrote... and for the saying ‘فكتب’.. he returned it to Ali and he (Ali) wrote.”

And Ibn Hajar goes onto elaborate and dismantle numerous weak and fabricated narrations which somehow say the prophet wrote, such as:

وقوله لمعاوية: " ألق الدواة وحرف القلم وأقم الباء وفرق السين ولا تعور الميم " وقوله: " لا تمد بسم الله " قال: وهذا وإن لم يثبت أنه كتب فلا يبعد أن يرزق علم وضع الكتابة، فإنه أوتي علم كل شيء. وأجاب الجمهور بضعف هذه الأحاديث.

“And his saying to Mu’aawiyah.. {write the letters like this}.. and his saying ‘don’t lengthen Bismillah’.. {and the prophet knew literacy} because he was given the knowledge of all things. And the majority of the Ulama addressed the weakness in these Ahadeeth”

So any Hadith such as this, and the others that Ibn Hajar dissects, has been established by the majority of the Ulama and Muhadditheen that they are weak and fabricated.

Conclusion of these claims

Both narrations, when reviewed in detail and contextualised, do not suggest the literacy of the Prophet. In fact they show the converse - the prophet's illiteracy.

Let's approach these Ahadeeth from a slightly different angle now.

In the Quran, in verses 7:157, 29:48, and others, Allah mentions [↓](#)

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُجِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (١٥٧)

Those who follow the Messenger, the Ummiyy (unlettered) prophet whom they find written with them in the Torah and the Injil , and who bids them what is fair and forbids what is unfair, and makes lawful for them good things, and makes unlawful for them impure things, and relieves them of their burden, and of the shackles that were upon them. So, those who believe in him and support him, and help him and follow the light sent down with him, those are the ones who are successful.” 7:157

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لِأَنَّكَ أَلْمِيطُلُونَ) (٤٨)

You (O Prophet,) have never been reciting any book before this, nor have you been writing it with your right hand; had it been so, the adherents of falsehood would have raised doubts. 29:48

Bukhari and Muslim, both knowing what these verses are saying - why would they put Ahadeeth which supposedly say the prophet wrote in their Saheehayn? The two great imams who would pray two Raka'at before putting each Hadith in their compilation - and who would leave out any Munkar Ahadeeth that seem to be Ghareeb and strange, why would they include these Ahadeeth in their books if they said the prophet was actually writing - but they **left out the other narrations which go into detail how the prophet apparently told people how to write the alphabet and read some lines etc?** It is common sense at this point, that if they excluded reports which are clearly erroneous and fabricated that the prophet wrote things down, but they included these Ahadeeth, that they **knew these are not in reference to the Prophet himself actually writing.**

May Allah heal the brains of these claimants since rationale is clearly beyond them.