

Saeid Sobhani

Rijāl Studies

An Introduction

Saeid Sobhani
RIJĀL STUDIES

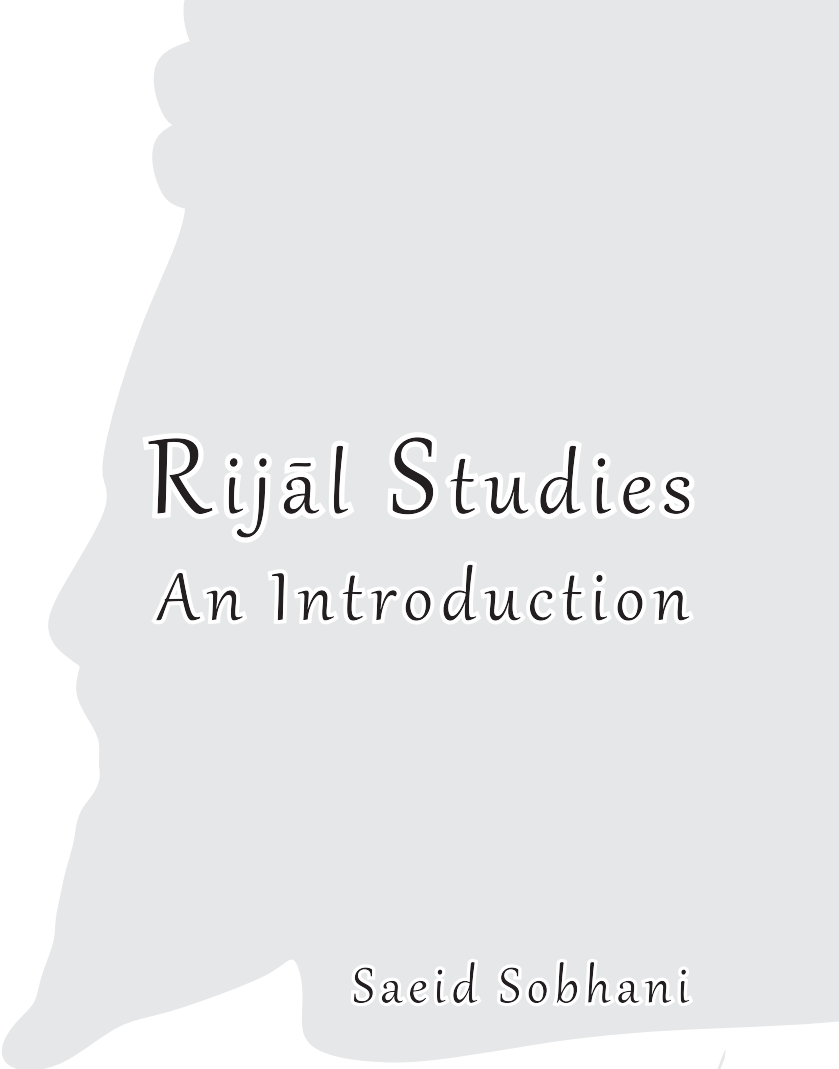
The narrators of hadith did not have the same aptitude in committing the hadiths to their memory. They had varying degrees of trustworthiness and retentiveness. Some were also mendacious and untrustworthy individuals who fabricated and distorted the hadiths for their personal gains. As long as a jurisconsult is not assured of the authenticity of the hadiths, he cannot utilise them in issuing a religious decree or fatwa. The science of Rijāl (*ʿIlm al-Rijāl*) equips a jurisconsult with a toolkit to investigate the biographies of the narrators and assess their trustworthiness and capability, thereby establishing a reliable procedure for selecting authentic narrations. With more than two decades of experience in teaching, Sobhani expertly introduces key topics and addresses issues such as how the reliability of narrators can be achieved. Designed for advanced students looking to gain a deep understanding of this discipline, the book is written in a clear and succinct manner in sixteen lessons. Each lesson concludes with a summary as well as questions to test the comprehension of the reader.

Saeid Sobhani is a Shi'i scholar and a distinguished lecturer in Islamic studies. He has written extensively on subjects such as jurisprudence, exegesis of the Qur'an, theology and philosophy.



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INTRODUCTION

A review of the history of human intellectual disciplines show that sciences have not emerged instantaneously. Rather they have grown over time and have been perfected through ages under the influences of a multiplicity of causes. Islamic sciences (*‘ulūm*), especially the discipline of hadith, have had such a trajectory. In its initial stages, hadith was merely concerned with hearing and learning the statements of the Infallibles (as), committing them to the memory or writing them down, and eventually transmitting them to those who were yearning to learn them.

Hadith has a noble status in Islam because, after the Qur’an, it is the most important source from which the intentions of Shari’a can be derived. From the Shī’ī perspective, after Prophet Muhammad (s) the infallible Imams were in charge of the explication of Shari’a. The Imams would explain the revelation at various stages and further explicate jurisprudential and theological issues with their own hadiths.

The narrators of hadith were not equal in committing the hadiths to their memory, and in being trustworthy and honest. There were also mendacious and untrustworthy individuals among the narrators of hadith. Also the similarity in the names of some of the narrators would mean that a jurisconsult would lose confidence in the hadiths narrated by such narrators. As a rule, a jurisconsult cannot issue a certain fatwa until he is fully confident that narrations that form the basis of that fatwa can be trusted.

In this manner, in the history of hadith and in the transmission of hadiths to the later generation such problems as fabrication,

distortion, misspelling and other impairments emerged. Hence, Muslim scholars established a number of disciplines to distinguish the reliable from the unreliable hadiths so that they could benefit from the pristine discourses of the Infallibles (as). One such discipline is the science of Rijāl which plays a role in filtering the authentic hadiths from non-authentic one. A jurisconsult can utilise this science to find out about the life of the narrators and assess their trustworthiness and retentiveness, thereby establishing a reliable procedure for deriving religious decrees.

Not only the jurisconsults, but also the scholars in such fields as history, exegesis and theology need the science (*‘Ilm*) of Rijāl because the hadiths of the Infallibles (as) form a significant part of the sources in these fields. Such scholars cannot truly utilise these sources without employing the methods and procedures of the science of Rijāl.

Considering the importance of the discipline of Rijāl, we approached the eminent scholar Dr Saeid Sobhani and suggested that he would write such a textbook on the science of Rijāl, taking into account that he has taught Rijāl courses for more than two decades. The current literature on Rijāl is mostly translated into English, and hence is not free from problems associated with translations. However, the current book has been authored in English by a scholar who has mastered this field is certainly more successful in teaching the Rijāl concepts than translated works.

Dr Sobhani takes the readers’ hand and navigates them through important Rijāl themes by providing numerous examples, making the journey through this book a fun and pleasant undertaking.

The book is comprised of 15 chapters. Here are some of the most important sections:

- Defining the *‘Ilm al-Rijāl*
- Arguments for the *‘Ilm al-Rijāl*
- Arguments against *‘Ilm al-Rijāl*
- How Know Narrators’ Qualities
- A Glance at Modern and Old *‘Ilm al-Rijāl* Literature

INTRODUCTION

This book is suitable for anyone interested in gaining a deep understanding of the discipline of Rijāl. Advanced students of this field will certainly benefit from this work as well.

The sequel to this book, focusing on the topic of the *ʿIlm al-Dirāya*, is currently being written by Dr Sobhani and will become available in due course, God willing.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Dr Sobhani for his efforts as well as the publication team who worked hard to make sure this book would be published and presented to the students of the science of Rijāl.

Seyed Hashem Moosavi
Director of Cotemporary Thought Press (CTP)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Saeid Sobhani was born into a senior clerical family in the holy city of Qom in 1963. He completed his high school education while being spiritually trained under the guidance of his father Grand Ayatollah Ja'far Sobhani.

For two decades from 1982 to 2002, he attended the lectures of eminent scholars of Qom and mastered such disciplines as Arabic literature, logic, Islamic philosophy, exegesis of the Qur'an, the theological schools of thoughts (*milal wa nihāl*), the science of narrators and narrations (*'ilm al-rijāl and al-dirāyah*), theology (*kalām*), Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*).

He received his advanced seminary training under three senior Ayatollahs. He was a student of Grand Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi Amoli and attended his discourses on exegetical sciences and philosophy. He received his advanced training in jurisprudence under the late Grand Ayatollah Mirza Javād Tabrīzī. Simultaneously he also attended classes offered by his father on *uṣūl al-fiqh* and theology. These three erudite scholars have played the most important role in shaping his system of thoughts. In addition to pursuing his advanced training, he also taught in the most prominent universities and seminaries of Iran.

Having been immersed in the ocean of spirituality and knowledge of the holy city of Qom for two decades, Sobhani moved to the U.K. in 2002 to serve as a resident *'ālim* as well as to pursue his advanced academic training in a Western context. He received his M.A. in Inter-Faith Relations from the University

of Glasgow and his Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from the University of Edinburgh.

His two-decade-long sojourn in the West has further amplified his understanding of Western academic tradition as well as Occidental cultural currents. He is currently serving as a senior lecturer at the Islamic College and Hawza ‘Ilmiyya of England in London.

He has published a number of articles and books (in English, Farsi, and Arabic) on a wide array of subjects including theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, the principles of jurisprudence, exegesis of the Qur’an, history, *rijāl* studies and fundamentals of belief. His publications include *Religious Diversity in Contemporary Shi’i Thought* (2022), *Nayl al-Waṭar min Qā’idah lā Ḍarar* (The Jurisprudential Maxim of No Harm, 1999) and *Jahān-bīnī va Shinākht* (Epistemology, 1988)

Lesson ONE

An Overview of the Disciplines of the Narrators' Biographical Accounts and Narration Analysis



مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ
 النُّعْمَانِ عَنْ أَبِي أُسَامَةَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع يَقُولُ..... كُونُوا دُعَاةً إِلَى
 أَنْفُسِكُمْ بِغَيْرِ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَكُونُوا زِينًا وَلَا تَكُونُوا شَيْنًا¹

Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā, from ‘Alī Abī al-Nu‘mān, from Abī Usāmah, from Abī ‘Abd Allāh (as) says “Become propagators to yourselves without [using] your tongue. Be adornments [to us], and do not be [as sources of] disgrace [to us].

As you can see above, each narration comprises of two parts: chain (*sanad*) and text (*matn*). A chain, consisting of several narrators, serves as a channel conducive to the text. The chain illustrates the manner through which Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb (258-329/871-940), who lived 150 years after the martyrdom of Imam al-Ṣādiq (83-148/702-765), transmitted the text. The narrators form the adjoining rings of a chain that connect Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb, for instance, to the Imam. That is how the individuals mentioned in the rings form the chain of hadith.

The second part of the narration is the text. It reports the saying (*qawl*), action (*fi‘l*), and tacit approval (*taqrīr*) of the Imam.

If we want to find the level of validity of any narration and consequently act upon it, we need to take three steps:

- Evaluation of each ring of the chain individually;
- Evaluation of the chain as a whole;
- Evaluation of the text.

1. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 77, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.

FIRST STEP: EVALUATION OF EACH RING

In the eyes of Muslim thinkers, the chain of hadith plays a significant part in the authenticity of a narration. Prophet Muhammad says, "the hadith shapes your religion. Be aware of [the source] from whom you receive it."¹ Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) also emphasizes the significance of the chain of hadith and enjoins his followers to mention the chain correctly and precisely.²

The scholars of the discipline of biographical evaluation (*'ilm al-rijāl*), in order to understand the level of validity of any hadith, reflect upon each ring in the chain of the hadith. In other words, they hold that the reliability of each narrator, that forms the chain of hadith, should be examined individually. The validity of each hadith, therefore, partly depends on the narrators' reliability.

In this step, we need to reflect upon the biographical accounts of each narrator in the chain of hadith individually and be aware of many elements, including the following:

1. To know the identity, teachers and students of the narrator and the time and place in which he flourished.
2. To know his beliefs, i.e. whether the narrator was from the Shi'ah school of thought. If he was Shi'ah, was he from the Imāmiyyah or another Shi'ah school?
3. To perceive the level of the narrator's retentiveness (*dabt*), accuracy, and appreciation of religious concepts.
4. To identify the narrator's behaviour, moral qualities, trustworthiness, reputation, and truthfulness.

It is obvious that any hadith may gain its validity through its narrators' reliability. Demonstrating qualities, e.g. trustworthiness, truthfulness and retentiveness, may increase

1. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 1, p. 384, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut 1981.

2. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 52, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.

the credibility of the hadith narrated from the Imam and vice versa. When we are not aware of each narrator's qualities, it is challenging to achieve certainty about the authenticity of the narration. These qualities may be found by the application of the principles of *'ilm al-rijāl*. It introduces the narrators' biographical accounts and the levels of their validity.

DEFINITION OF *'ILM AL-RIJĀL*

In light of what was mentioned above, *'ilm al-rijāl* can be defined as the discipline which discusses hadith narrators' specific qualities, e.g. trustworthiness, truthfulness and retentiveness, in order to determine their reliability.¹ These qualities play an essential role in the acceptance or rejection of hadith. *'Ilm al-rijāl* may be defined as the discipline of evaluating hadith narrators' qualities as reflected in their biographical accounts.

An important question arises here: when we ascertain reliability of each narrator of a hadith individually, can we consider such hadith as an acceptable and valid narration and consequently act upon it? The answer is negative. Such narration, according to hadith scholars, needs to be considered from other angles. To find the level of hadith validity, we need to take another step.

SECOND STEP: EVALUATION OF THE CHAIN

Each hadith, as mentioned above, consists of a chain and a text. *'Ilm al-rijāl* discusses the narrators' levels of validity individually by considering their faith, trustworthiness, retentiveness and accuracy. In the second step, having assessed each narrator's level of validity individually, we need to look at the chain as a whole. In other words, if we liken the *sanad* of a hadith to a chain formed by a certain group of narrators, the second step considers

-
1. Characteristics like the height and weight of narrators bear no significance in *'ilm al-rijāl* and are not considered as standards for the acceptance or rejection of their hadith narrations.

the consistency and stability of the chain as a whole. The level of chain consistency may increase the level of validity of the text and vice versa. The coherence of the chain depends on many elements. Mention will be made of a number of them below.

1. Did the narrators quote the text from an Imam or his companions (*ṣaḥābah*)?
2. If they narrated from an Imam, did they mention his name?
3. How did a narrator, whose name is mentioned in the chain of hadith, receive the text? Did he receive it (from the previous narrator) directly or indirectly?
4. Are the names of all the narrators mentioned in the chain?
5. Are all the narrators in the chain of hadith Imāmī, trustworthy and retentive?

It goes without saying that if all the narrators in the chain of hadith are Imāmī, trustworthy, accurate in narrating, and also narrated the hadith from an Imam whose name is mentioned, this shows a high level of consistency and coherence of the chain. As a result, this increases the level of textual authenticity. The following two examples will further illustrate the point in question.

عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ حَمَّادٍ عَنْ حُرَيْرٍ عَنْ زُرَّارَةَ قَالَ: قُلْتُ لَهُ الرَّجُلُ يَنَامُ وَهُوَ عَلَى وُضُوءٍ....¹

From Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah. Zurārah says that I told him about a person sleeping with *wuḍū'*...

Zurārah, in this hadith, does not clarify whether he heard the text from an Imam or from someone else.² Such narrations,

1. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 8, Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, Tehran 1986.

2. Such hadith is termed as *muḍmar*.

due to chain inconsistency, will be considered weak unless some other pieces of evidence specify that Zurārah narrated the text from an Imam.

أَخْبَرَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِدْرِيسَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يُونُسَ عَنْ رَجُلٍ
عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي قَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ...¹

In this hadith, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs narrates the text, through three links, from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). The problem is that Muḥammad ibn Yūnus, the second link, quotes from an unknown person (*'an rajulin*). Since the name of 'a certain man' is not identifiable, qualities like trustworthiness and accuracy remain unknown. Due to chain inconsistency, the hadith loses its value and credibility.²

Having become acquainted with the first and second steps successfully, in order to determine the authenticity of any hadith, we need to take final step.

THIRD STEP: TEXTUAL EVALUATION

In the last step, we need to evaluate the text (*matn*) in terms of clarity and coherence. In other words, textual clarity and coherence play a significant part in the level of hadith authenticity. Even if all the narrators were trustworthy and the chain of hadith, as a whole, were consistent, lack of textual clarity and coherence would divest the hadith of value and credibility. Textual ambiguity may arise from different elements, some of which will be mentioned below.

LEXICAL AMBIGUITY

Difficult words and terms may be found in narrations whose meanings are unattested in Arabic lexicons and the meaning

1. 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 2, p. 245, Dār al-Kitāb, Qum 1984.
2. Such hadith is termed *mursal*.

of the hadith may thus remain ambiguous. Some scholars have attempted to elucidate such words and terms. *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth al-Khāṣṣah* by Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Ṭurayhī al-Najafī (d.1085/1674) is the most comprehensive commentary in this particular field of hadith studies.¹ Today, the term of “*gharīb al-ḥadīth*” denotes this field of studies.

SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY

Sometimes, all the words and phrases used in the text of hadith are clear, but the meaning of the sentence is generally unclear. Two instances of such obscurity will be mentioned below.

1. One night Prophet Muhammad, pointing to the full moon, said, “You will see your Lord as you see this moon.”

إنكم سترون ربكم كما ترون هذا القمر.²

As we see, lexical meanings are individually clear, however, the textual meaning, due to contradiction to Islamic beliefs, is ambiguous. Such narration is called *mutashābih* and its authenticity depends on its consistency with Islamic beliefs.³ So if a hadith contradicts the Qur’an or other authentic texts, it loses its clarity and, consequently, its validity.

1. Sobhānī, *Dirāsāt fī ‘ilm al-Dirāyah*, pp. 75-76, 1993.

2. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, vol. 31, pp. 569, 526, al-Risālah, Lebanon 1992.

3. In other words, the hadith text can be decisive (*muḥkam*) or ambiguous (*mutashābih*). The first one is a hadith whose meaning without any evidence (*qarīnah*) is very obvious. For instance:

كل ماء طاهر الا ما علمت انه قذر

“Water is pure (*tāhir*) unless you know it becomes impure (*najis*).”

This hadith has a precise meaning without any indication of or an investigation of other sources. On the contrary, *mutashābih* is a hadith whose meaning is unclear. For clarity, we need to find some pieces of evidence from other sources such as narrations or the Qur’an.

2. Let us take a look at these two narrations

أَحْمَدُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عَيْسَى عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ مَحْبُوبٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ بْنِ صُهَيْبٍ قَالَ
 سَمِعْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع يَقُولُ لَا يُصَلِّي الْمُتَمِّمُ بِقَوْمٍ مُتَوَضِّئِينَ.¹
 مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْحَمِيدِ عَنْ أَبِي جَمِيلَةَ عَنْ أَبِي أُسَامَةَ
 عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي الرَّجُلِ يُجْنِبُ وَ لَيْسَ مَعَهُ مَاءٌ وَ هُوَ إِمَامُ الْقَوْمِ قَالَ تَعَمَّ
 يَتَمِّمُ وَيُؤْمُهُمْ.²

As you see the meaning of the words and text of each narration is clear. In the first hadith, an imam with dry ablution (*tayamum*) cannot lead the prayer if his followers performed ablution (*wuḍūʿ*). However, in the second one, it is permissible. When we consider these two narrations independently, the meaning is clear, but when we put them together, a kind of ambiguity and inconsistency arises in our mind, in that one of them does not seemingly sound accurate. In such conditions, both narrations lose credibility. Many scholars have worked in this field and have compiled books aiming at clearing up this kind of conflicting narrations. *Maʿānī al-Akhhbār* by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (306-381/918-991) and *Rawḍah al-Muttaqīn* by Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī (1031-1110/1621-1698) are important books in this field. Such books are termed *fiqh al-ḥadīth*.

In brief, in the second and third steps we need to evaluate the consistency of the chain as a whole and clarity of the text. It is worth noting that, these two steps are treated in the discipline of narration analysis (*ʿilm al-dirāyah*) whose goal is to analyse and evaluate narration from two angles: consistency of the chain as a whole; textual clarity and coherence.

1. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 3, 166, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.

2. Ibid, p. 165.

DEFINITION OF *'ILM AL-DIRĀYAH*

As mentioned above, *'ilm al-dirāyah* analyses the hadith from two angles: the consistency of the chain and textual clarity and coherence. The consistency of the chain depends on a number of elements e.g. a complete and uninterrupted line of narrators linking back to an Imam through whom these narrators are considered trustworthy, truthful and retentive. Textual clarity depends on congruity with other authentic sources. Therefore, *'ilm al-dirāyah* discusses the quality of both the chain and the text.

It is worth noting that the disciplines of *'ilm al-tarājim* (biography) and *fihris* (cataloging) are close to *'ilm al-rijāl*. We will now discuss them briefly.

'ILM AL-TARĀJIM (BIOGRAPHY)

'Ilm al-tarājim studies the lives and times of prominent characters who were the sources of positive (or negative) influence in human society, whether or not they were hadith narrators. For instance, Kh^wājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597-672/1200-1273), a philosopher, theologian, jurist, and astronomer, played a significant role in the development of these disciplines. Due to major contributions, his biography and works have been mentioned in *tarājim* sources. Nevertheless, since he is not among hadith narrators, *rijāl* scholars have not included his name in their works, though biographical accounts of many painters, artists, lawyers, historians, physicists, among others, are to be found in *tarājim* books.

Books such as *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*,¹ *A'yān al-Shī'ah*² and *Rayhānah al-Adab*³ are amongst the books of *al-tarājim*.

1. Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī (d. 1313/1895).

2. Sayyid Muhsin al-Amīn (d. 1377/1957).

3. Muḥammad 'Alī al-Mudarris al-Tabrīzī (d.1373/1953).

‘ILM AL-FIHRIST

The discipline of cataloging deals with recording books and their authors irrespective of whether these authors are hadith narrators, compilers of hadith books, distinguished figures or not. So if there is someone like Kh^wajah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, who is both the source of the influence and the author of the books, his name can be found in the books of *tarājim* and *fihris*t. *Al-Dharī‘ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī‘ah* is one of the most remarkable books in the field of *al-fihrist*. The author, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭih-rānī (1293-1389/1876-1969) records the names of more than fifty-three thousand Shi‘ah scholars’ books in twenty-five volumes.

Having now had an overview of ‘*ilm al-rijāl* and *dirāyah*, it is worth noting that since this textbook serves as an introduction to ‘*ilm al-rijāl*, the next lesson will address its significance and necessity. Nevertheless, ‘*ilm al-dirāyah* will be studied in the next volume.

SUMMARY

A hadith consists of two parts, chain and text. The chain, consisting of a number of narrators, is a channel conducive to the text which records the saying (*qaw*l), action (*fi‘l*), and tacit approval (*taqrīr*) of an Imam. In order to gain the authenticity of every hadith, it needs to be studied from three angles. In the first step, the level of each narrator’s reliability in the chain of hadith needs to be evaluated individually. This is part of ‘*ilm al-rijāl*. In the second step, the consistency and coherence of the chain as a whole should be assessed. Finally, the level of clarity of the text should be considered, as well. The last two steps are parts of ‘*ilm al-dirāyah*.

However, ‘*ilm al-tarājim* and *al-fihrist* are very close to ‘*ilm al-rijāl*. The former studies the biographical accounts of prominent and influential figures who were the sources of positive (or negative) influence in human society, whether or

not they were hadith narrators. The latter records the books of authors and compilers, again irrespective of their being hadith narrators or not.

QUESTIONS

1. How many steps should we take to evaluate a narration?
2. Provide an example for textual clarity and ambiguity?
3. What is the subject matter and the goal of the discipline of *'ilm al-dirāyah*?
4. What is the difference between *'ilm al-rijāl* and *fihrist*?
5. What is the definition of *'ilm al-tarājim* and *'ilm al-fihrist* and what is their difference?
6. What knowledge does *gharīb al-ḥadīth* and *fiqh al-ḥadīth* refer to? What are the most important books in these two fields?

Lesson TWO

Significance and Necessity of *ʿIlm al-Rijāl*



The previous lesson discussed the definition of *‘ilm al-rijāl* and its difference with *‘ilm al-dirāyah*. Since this textbook aims to familiarize the readers with *‘ilm al-rijāl*, we proceed to address its significance and necessity. There are different views on the necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. The majority of jurists consider it an essential prerequisite for deducing religious rulings from narrations. A minority of jurists, however, have a firm belief that the study of *‘ilm al-rijāl* is not needed. This lesson will discuss the necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, and the views on the second group will be addressed in the next lesson. The proponents of *‘ilm al-rijāl* have presented several reasons, a few of which will be touched upon below.

1. RECOGNITION OF RELIABLE NARRATIONS

Jurists, in order to deduce religious rulings, need narrations.¹ Considering narrations of the infallible Imams and juridical deduction, they make a religious decision (*fatwā*). However,

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1. The foundations of Shi‘ah jurisprudence are the Qur’an, Sunna, intellect (*‘aql*) and consensus (*ijmā’*). In deducing religious rulings, jurists, compared to the other three sources, mainly make use of narrations. In other words, a small number of religious rulings can be deduced from the Qur’an, *‘aql* and *ijmā’*. Nearly five hundred Qur’anic verses refer to religious rulings. Moreover, all the details of religious practices, such as the quality of prayer, the number of its units and the like are not mentioned in the Qur’an. The scope of *‘aql* and *ijmā’* are limited, in that they are applicable only to some religious rulings. In light of what has been mentioned, it can be concluded that narrations constitute the most comprehensive source for jurists.

each narration has to satisfy some conditions and possess certain characteristics in order to be termed ‘authentic.’¹ Some jurists hold that authenticity of narrations only depends on the trustworthiness of narrators, while others add the condition of retentiveness (*dabt*). For other jurists, narrators’ beliefs constitute an essential component in determining authenticity. Therefore, for them, apart from the previous conditions, being Imāmī² could be another condition for the acceptability of a narration. Hence, there are many conditions that can authenticate a hadith.

It is clear that if these jurists want to know whether the narrators, whose names are mentioned in the narration chain, are trustworthy, retentive and Imāmī, they need to apply the principles of ‘ilm al-rijāl. In other words, no narration is authentic unless its narrators possess some key requirements such

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1. It should be noted that according to the verses “Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge” (17:36) and “Indeed conjecture is no substitute for the truth” (36:10), jurists are obliged to achieve knowledge (*‘ilm*) and certainty. In other words, in deducing religious rulings, they cannot rely on the narrations for which they may not provide certainty.

A *mutawātir* narration is indubitably valid since it provides ‘ilm. Although a solitary narration (*khābar wāḥid*) does not reflect ‘ilm, the majority of Shi‘ah scholars lean on its validity. They present many proofs from the Qur’an and other sources, though they lie beyond the scope of this textbook. They, however, add that every *khābar wāḥid* is not valid unless it possesses some conditions such as trustworthiness, truthfulness and retentiveness.

2. There are two examples for an Imāmī: 1. If someone at the moment believes in the imamate of all the twelve Imams, they are known as, Twelver Shi‘ah or *Ithnā ‘Asharī*: 2. Whoever accepts the imamate of the Imam of the time. For instance, at the time of the Sixth Imam, whoever accepted Imam al-Ṣādiq as the Imam was considered an Imāmī, even if he was not aware of the imamate of the next Imam. Therefore, those who fail to accept the Imam of their own times are termed as non-Imāmī. For instance, the Ismā‘īlis contemporaneous with the Seventh Imam are considered as non-Imāmī since they did not recognize the Imamate of the Seventh Imam..

as trustworthiness, truthfulness and retentiveness. The jurists, in order to be aware of these requirements, need to apply *‘ilm al-rijāl*. Therefore, the need of jurists to delve into *‘ilm al-rijāl* stems from their need for authentic narrations.

2. SOLVING CONTRADICTING NARRATIONS

Sometimes the jurist, in the act of deducing religious practice, encounters two contradicting narrations that cannot be customarily reconciled. In order to solve the problem, the infallible Imams elucidated some solutions. For example, the Imam enjoins the preference of one narration over a conflicting one by considering the narrators' qualities. When the narrator of one hadith is more trustworthy and more pious, we should accept this tradition and ignore the other. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) states:

الحكم ما حكم به أعدلهما وأفقههما وأصدقهما في الحديث وأورعهما ولا يلتفت إلى ما يحكم به الآخر

The [correct] ruling is the one given by whichever of them is more morally upright, learned, truthful in narration, and pious, and the ruling of the other one should be put aside.¹

In another tradition, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), concerning the question of what needs to be done upon encountering two contradicting narrations, replied that the narration of the more trustworthy and the more truthful narrator needs to be taken into consideration.²

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 68; Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 302, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986).

2. Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il wa Mustanbaṭ al-Masā'il*, vol. 17, p. 303, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987.

It is clear that in order to identify the more trustworthy, the more knowledgeable and so on, we should consider their biographical accounts through *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

3. RECOGNITION OF DISSIMULATION NARRATIONS

Names of the narrators from the school of Ahl al-Sunnah occur in some narration chains.¹ In the eyes of Shi‘ah jurists, being Imāmī is one of the important conditions for accepting a tradition.² These jurists, applying the principles of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, consider each narrator’s beliefs. It is worth mentioning that followers of other schools of thought sometimes questioned an Imam about religious teachings. The Imam, due to precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyyah*),³ answered them according to their views (not his own view). Many narrations might thus be issued owing to precautionary dissimulation. For distinguishing such narrations from one another, we need to examine the narrators’ beliefs which falls within the purview of *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

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1. Al-Najāshī mentions the name of some Sunni narrators who narrated from the infallible Imams; instances of whom include: Ḥātam ibn Ismā‘īl (p. 147), Ḥarb ibn Ḥasan (p.148), Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Muḥammad (p. 205), Ṭalḥah ibn Zayd (p. 207), al-Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād (p. 310), Ishāq ibn Bashshār (p. 72), Khālīd ibn Ṭahmān (p. 151) and Ibrāhīm ibn Rajā’ (p.23), see Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1986.
 2. Ja‘far ibn Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *Ma‘ārij al-Uṣūl*, p. 49, Qum: Āl al-Bayt, n.d.; Muḥammad Ḥasan ‘Āmilī, *Ma‘ālim al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 199, Daftar-i Intishārāt-i Islāmī, Qum, n.d.
 3. Precautionary dissimulation, as a Qur’anic teaching, denotes that “a Muslims is permitted to conceal his beliefs in situations wherein, as a result of expressing it, his life, honor, or property would be endangered.” For further details, see, Ja‘far Sobhani, *Doctrine of Shi‘i Islam: A Compendium of Imami Beliefs and Practices*, trans. Reza Shah Kazami, pp. 150-4, I.B.Tauris Publishers, London/New York 2001.

4. RECOGNITION OF FABRICATED NARRATIONS

Collections of narrations clearly show that all the narrators were not truthful and reliable; rather, some of them, as Prophet Muḥammad (s) predicted, were liars and unknown. This fact can be proven by the hadith of Sulaymān ibn Qays al-Hilālī who had wondered why Imam ‘Ali considered some narrations strange, incredible, and unacceptable. He asked the Imam about the rejection and if those narrators fabricated traditions. The Imam replied: when the Prophet realized that certain individuals had falsely attributed sayings to him, he said in one of his sermons, “Those who falsely attribute sayings to me have increased in number, and the abode of whoever fabricates sayings will be in hellfire.” The Imam added that they would continue their fabrication even after his demise.¹

Moreover, Imam al-Ṣādiq holds that Mughīrah ibn Sa‘īd fabricated and disseminated many narrations.² Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān saw some compilations of hadith from the followers of Imam al-Ṣādiq in Iraq. He took those books to Imam al-Riḍā (as) who rejected the authenticity of most of them.³

Many fabricated narrations, as mentioned above, have found their way into Shi‘ah hadith collections.⁴ Jurists need to ascertain the authenticity of narrations and identify fabricators through *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 62-3.

2. Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, pp. 489, 491, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1984.

3. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 250, Dār al-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1982; al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 489.

4. ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Amīnī mentions the name of some fabricators. For instance, he says that ‘Uthmān ibn Miqsam fabricated 25,000 narrations, Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad al-Qirāṭī made up 10,000 hadiths; see ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Amīn, *al-Ghadīr*, vol. 5, pp. 464-66, Markaz-i al-Ghadīr, Qum 1995.

5. THE SCHOLARS' CONDUCT

The history of hadith indicates that Shi'ah scholars, from the time of the infallible Imams, in order to evaluate the text of narrations, used to measure the narrators' trustworthiness, truthfulness, retentiveness, faith, etc. Some followers of the Imams, such as 'Abd Allāh ibn Jabalah al-Kinānī (d. 834/1430), al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb (d. 839/1435) and 'Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍḍāl (d. 883/1429), codified the books on narrators' biographical accounts and qualities.¹ Moreover, it is reliably attested that the infallible Imams themselves validated some narrators. For instance, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muhtadī asked Imam al-Riḍā (as) that it would be difficult for him to visit the Imam frequently and asked him if he could pose his questions on religious issues to Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān as a reliable (*thiqah*) man. The Imam consented.² Aḥmad ibn Ishāq, in another hadith, requested Imam al-Hādī (as) to recommend someone to answer religious questions. The Imam said that since 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd was reliable and honest, they could trust and follow him.³

The Shi'ah scholars continued this approach down the centuries. For instance, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (385-460/995-1067) describes the continuation of such conduct until the first Islamic century. He states that Shi'ah scholars are used to classifying the narrators according to the level of their reliability. They validate the reliable narrators and weaken the unreliable ones. They praise the reliable narrators due to their commendable qualities and criticize the unreliable ones. They used to say openly that this narrator is a liar and that narrator's faith is not to be trusted, and so on. These scholars compiled many books on the narrators' qualities.

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1. Ja'far Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 57, Mu'assasah al-Imām al-Ṣādiq, Qum 2015.
 2. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 27, p. 148, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988.
 3. Ibid, p. 147.

Al-Ṭūsī added that this was their conventional practice, old and new, and it had never been discontinued.¹

In light of what has been said, it can be concluded that the most prominent scholars from the time of the infallible Imams, in order to assess the credibility of a hadith, used to refer to the biographical accounts and attributes of narrators through *‘ilm al-rijāl*. Even the infallible Imams declared the reliability of many narrators, and never denounced such continuous practice. It thus shows the legitimacy and significance of *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

Having acquainted ourselves with the views of the proponents of the necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, the next lesson will study its opponents’ arguments.

SUMMARY

This lesson attempted to look at the significance and necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. The majority of jurists consider it an essential requirement for the act of deducing religious rulings from narrations. They tried to highlight its indispensability from five angles.

Firstly, hadith authenticity depends on some essential qualities, such as the narrators’ trustworthiness and truthfulness. In order to find out these biographical accounts, we need to apply the principles of *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

Secondly, in the process of deduction jurists may come across two contradicting narrations, which cannot be customarily reconciled. To resolve the contradiction, jurists need to prefer one of the narrations by its narrator’s qualities. In order to find out these qualities, jurists are supposed to apply the discipline of *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

Thirdly, since, in the eyes of Shi‘ah jurists, the dissimulating narrations are not valid, they, in order to find out these narrations,

1. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *‘Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, pp. 141-2, Sitārah, Qum 1997.

need to distinguish such narrations based on their faith through *'ilm al-rijāl*.

Fourthly, there are many fabricated and invalid narrations. To identify these narrations, jurists need to know the qualities of their narrators via *'ilm al-rijāl*.

Fifthly, the most prominent Shi'ah scholars from the time of the infallible Imams have been evaluating narrations by investigating the qualities of narrators through the principles of *'ilm al-rijāl*. It reveals the legitimacy and significance of *'ilm al-rijāl*. This method, which was not disapproved by the Imams, could be used as a sound proof for the legitimacy of *'ilm al-rijāl*. Moreover, the Imams themselves validate some narrators.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the function of *'ilm al-rijāl* in resolving the contradicting narrations?
2. How can we distinguish dissimulating narrations through *'ilm al-rijāl*?
3. Why is it important for a jurist to know the dissimulating narrations?
4. How was the conduct of scholars on *'ilm al-rijāl*?
5. What is the function of *'ilm al-rijāl* in identifying fabricated narrations?

Lesson THREE

The Arguments for the Unnecessity of *ʿilm al-Rijāl*



The previous lesson discussed the significance and necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. This lesson aims to assess the views of the thinkers who have a firm belief in the unnecessary of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. Ayatollah ‘Abd Allāh Māmaqānī (1290-1351/1873-1932), in his *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, refers to twelve arguments put forward by these thinkers,¹ of which two arguments will be touched upon below.

- The Authenticity of the Four Books (*al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*)
- The Compensation of the Weakness of a Hadith by *shubrah*

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR BOOKS (*AL-KUTUB AL-ARBA‘AH*)

All the scholars of the *Akhhbārī* school of thought are unanimous in recognizing the authenticity of all the narrations of the Four Books (*al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*); namely, *al-Kāfī*, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār*.² From the perspective of the *Akhhbārīs*, the authors of the Four Books only compiled authentic (*mu‘tabar*) narrations. At this point, the question that should be discussed and scrutinized is what is exactly intended by the term *mu‘tabar* (authentic). There are two possibilities.

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1. ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 77-110, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010. See also, ‘Alī al-Kanī, *Tawḍīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp.44-53, Dār al-Ḥadīth, Qum 2000.
 2. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *al-Fawā‘id al-Ṭūsiyyah*, p. 10, al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Ilmiyyah, Qum 1982.

- Firstly, all narrations of the Four Books are certain in issuance (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*), i.e. the authors were sure that all those narrations were definitely narrated by an Infallible.
- Secondly, all the narrations of the Four Books are authentic in terms of validity (*ḥujjah*).

The difference between these two views is that according to the first meaning, the authors, according to some pieces of evidence,¹ attain certainty that those narrations, irrespective of their narrators’ reliability, undeniably were quoted by an Infallible. On the contrary, in the second meaning, the authors recognize the authenticity of all the narrations collected in the Four Books, not because they had been undeniably issued from Imams, rather for their validity from their own perspective. In other words, they collected only the narrations, which were a proof between themselves and God.

Based on each of these two possible meanings, it would be pointless to investigate the narrators’ biographical accounts for reliability or non-reliability of narrators in an effort to verify the authenticity of the narrations. In other words, *‘ilm al-rijāl* is conducive to recognizing authentic narrations; however, the compilers of the Four Books have already confirmed the authenticity of their narrations (based on one of the above-mentioned two possible meanings) and consequently, there is no need for jurists to investigate narration chains through *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

The following section will address the authenticity of the Four Books based on two possible meanings in turn. First, it considers *al-Kāfī* with the first possible meaning, that is, the definiteness in the issuance of *al-Kāfī*’s narrations (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*).

1. For instance, al-Kulaynī quotes a hadith from a book where the Imam confirmed the authenticity of that book. Such evidence will be discussed in Lesson Seven.

DEFINITENESS IN ISSUANCE OF NARRATIONS IN *AL-KĀFĪ*

As has been mentioned, the Akhbārī thinkers accept the authenticity of all narrations collected in *al-Kāfī*. According to the first meaning of authenticity (*i'tibār*), they attain certainty that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* were definitely narrated by the Infallible.¹ Consequently, the assessment of the narrators, irrespective of their truthfulness, to achieve the reliability of narration is unnecessary. Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī (d. 1036/1626), one of the proponents of this idea, clearly states that, since there is confidence in the issuance of these narrations, there is no need to investigate further through *'ilm al-rijāl*.²

This argument needs to be thoroughly examined. Firstly, al-Kulaynī himself, the author of *al-Kāfī*, does not claim that all his book's narrations are definitely quoted by Imams (*maqtū' al-ṣudūr*). Rather he, in his introduction, refers to the existence of many inauthentic narrations in the book. He states that when we encounter contradicting narrations, distinguishing them will be difficult unless we measure them with three standards suggested by the Imams. As he states, the first standard is that, in order to distinguish authentic narrations, we need to compare "the narrations against the Qur'an, and ignore whatever stands in contradiction to it."³ Al-Kulaynī then adds that despite having these three standards, it is difficult to evaluate all narrations and consequently discover the truth. He finally admits that it would be better to be prudent and cautious by leaving the issue to the

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1. Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī, *al-Fawā'id al-Madaniyyah*, pp. 371-2, al-Nashr al-Islāmī, Qum 2003; Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nādirah*, vol. 1, p. 17, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1985.
 2. Al-Fāḍil al-Tūnī, *al-Wāfiyah fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, p. 261, Majma' al-Fikr al-Islāmī, Qum 1991; Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 35.
 3. The other two standards are the following: 1. The hadith is authentic when it agrees with the Shi'ah viewpoint; 2. the hadith is authentic when it has been unanimously agreed upon.

infallible Imams and follow what they enjoin, that is, “Whichever you chose out of obedience will be excusable for you.”¹

This statement clearly indicates that al-Kulaynī does not believe in the definite issuance of all *al-Kāfī*’s narrations by the Infallible (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). It goes without saying that the contradiction between the two narrations arises when one of them is unthematic. If the Imams definitely uttered all of *al-Kāfī*’s narrations, as Akhbārī scholars claim, there would be no room for al-Kulaynī to discuss how we may resolve two contradicting narrations through Qur’anic verses and other standards. Moreover, if al-Kulaynī himself did not have certainty about the authenticity of the narrations collected in *al-Kāfī* (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*), how may Akhbārī scholars did establish the credibility?

Secondly, if all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are definitely issued by the Imams, why does Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, who compiled his book after *al-Kāfī*, cast doubt upon the authenticity of many of the narrations in *al-Kāfī*? Al-Ṣadūq, having quoted some narrations from *al-Kāfī*, clearly states “I do not act upon this hadith.” Instead, he prefers another hadith which does not appear in *al-Kāfī*.²

Furthermore, later renowned scholars, such as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī³ and Shaykh al-Mufīd,⁴ raised questions about the authenticity of many narrations in *al-Kāfī*.⁵ The evidence may prove that al-Ṣadūq, al-Ṭūsī and al-Mufīd, who were contemporaneous

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

2. Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yahḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 4, p. 203, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1992.

3. Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, pp. 27-9, Dār al-Zahrā, Beirut 1992.

4. Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *Jawābāt Abl Maṣṣil fī al-‘Adad wa al-Ru’yah*, pp. 19-20, The International Conference of Shaykh al-Mufīd, Qum 1992; al-Khu‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 30-33.

5. For more information, see Muslim Dāwarī, *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl bayna al-Naḍariyyah wa al-Taṭbīq*, pp. 35-60, Cultural Institue of Sāhib al-Amr, Qum 2008.

with al-Kulaynī, were not confident about the issuance of all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*).

In light of what has been mentioned above, it can be concluded that not only al-Kulaynī was not certain that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* were definitely quoted from infallible Imams, but also some great scholars were not convinced of the authenticity of issuance of these narrations (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). If we accept that all narrations are not *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*, then, in order to appraise the narrations, we need to evaluate the narrators by applying the principles of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. It proves the necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl* in examining the authenticity of the narrations in *al-Kāfī*.

As mentioned above, *Akhhārī* scholars are unanimous in accepting the authenticity (*i‘tibār*) of all the narrations in *al-Kāfī*. There are two possible meanings of authenticity here. Firstly, all the narrations included in the Four Books, as mentioned above, are certain in issuance from Imams (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). Secondly, all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are authentic in their validity (*ḥujjah*). Now we deal with the credibility of *al-Kāfī* according to the second meaning.

AUTHENTICITY OF NARRATIONS IN *AL-KĀFĪ*

According to the second meaning of authenticity, all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are authentic in terms of their validity (*ḥujjah*). It means that although all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are not *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*, the author has testified to their authenticity (*ḥujjiyyah*) through ascertaining their narrators' qualities. In his introduction, al-Kulaynī states that he was requested to compile a religious book based on “*ṣaḥīḥ* narrations narrated from the truthful Imams.”¹ This statement shows that his aim was to compile *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations, and consequently al-Kulaynī collected

1. As he says “بِالْأَثَارِ الصَّحِيحَةِ عَنِ الصَّادِقِينَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ” al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, pp. 8-9.

only the narrations which serve as proof between himself and God.¹

If we accept the second meaning, it implies that there is no room for *‘ilm al-rijāl*. It is clear that *‘ilm al-rijāl* aims to lead us towards *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations through ascertaining the narrators’ qualities. When al-Kulaynī has already selected the *ṣaḥīḥ* ones by the narrators’ qualities, there is no need for us to re-select the *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations through *‘ilm al-rijāl*.

In response, before examining the above argument, a brief note is required here. The meaning of the term “*ṣaḥīḥ*” in the eyes of early scholars (*mutaqaddimīn*)² and later scholars (*muta’akhkikīrīn*)³ is different. In the eyes of early scholars, *ṣaḥīḥ* refers to a hadith definitely quoted by the Infallible (*maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr*), whereas in the perspective of later scholars, it is a narration in which all narrators, mentioned in the chain, are *‘ādil* (trustworthy), Imāmī and connected to an Infallible.⁴

As you can see, *ṣaḥīḥ* should possess three conditions: 1. Connection of the chain to an Imam; 2. Trustworthiness of all the narrators; 3. All the narrators should be Imāmī. In other words, if the early scholars, due to some pieces of evidence, are certain in the issuance of narration from an Imam, that hadith is *ṣaḥīḥ*, irrespective of the narrator possessing the conditions. Nevertheless, if one of the narrators of that hadith were not trustworthy (or non-Imāmī), that hadith would not be considered *ṣaḥīḥ* for later scholars. Therefore, one hadith can be *ṣaḥīḥ* in the eyes of early scholars but may not be as such from the perspective of later scholars due to the narrators’ qualities. Hence, the

1. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 30, pp. 251-65, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988; al-Astarābādī, *al-Fawā’id al-Madaniyyah*, pp. 371-378.

2. The scholars, who have been before ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1326), are termed early scholars.

3. The scholars after al-Ḥillī are termed later scholars.

4. Ja‘far Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah fī ‘Ilmay al-Rijāl wa al-Dirāyah*, p. 165, Markaz-i Nashr-i al-Muṣṭafā, Qum 2017.

relation between *ṣaḥīḥ* in the eyes of early and later scholars is partial inclusion (*‘umūm wa khusūs min wajh*). As you see, the standard in evaluating narrations for early and later scholars is entirely different.¹

Now we proceed to examine the Akhbārī claim that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are *ṣaḥīḥ*, i.e. *ḥujjah*. There are some points to be taken into account here.

Firstly, al-Kulaynī was an early scholar and the term *ṣaḥīḥ* in *al-Kāfī* must be treated according to early scholar’s perspective, i.e. *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr* and not the second meaning, i.e. *ḥujjah*. However, this is contrary to the second presupposition that all the narrations of *al-Kāfī* are authentic (*mu‘tabar*).

Secondly, if we accept the second meaning and maintain that al-Kulaynī has chosen *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations based on narrators’ qualities, we still need *‘ilm al-rijāl*. A *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith is a narration whose narrators have certain qualities. Nevertheless, scholars are not unanimous as to the nature of such qualities. Retentiveness, for instance, may be an essential element for a *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith for one jurist, while others do not consider it as essential. Therefore, one hadith may be *ṣaḥīḥ* from the point of view of al-Kulaynī and not as such from the point of view of another scholar due to their different standards.

Moreover, differing views from scholars may change their outcome on classifying the narrations. Suppose all jurists agree that a *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith must satisfy the three conditions, i.e. its connectedness to an Imam through trustworthy and Imāmī narrators. Now assume a hadith whose chain consists of five narrators. If one jurist maintains that the chain satisfies, from his perspective, all the *ṣaḥīḥ* narration’s conditions, i.e. the hadith connected to an Imam through trustworthy and Imāmī narrators, it will be unquestionably *ṣaḥīḥ* to him. However, if another jurist, having investigated the narrators’ qualities, claims that the hadith possesses all the conditions of *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations, apart from the trustworthiness of the third link of the chain,

1. The issue will be discussed in detail in Lesson Seven.

for instance. It thus implies that such hadith cannot be *ṣaḥīḥ* to him. That is why two jurists can have two different views on one hadith.

In sum, someone might prefer the second meaning (*ḥujjiyyah*) and maintain that since al-Kulaynī has already selected the *ṣaḥīḥ* ones, there is no need for him to re-select the *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations through ‘*ilm al-rijāl*. In response, it can be said that this is not an acceptable argument for the unnecessary of ‘*ilm al-rijāl*, since the standards of two thinkers may not be the same, and consequently one hadith, due to different views, may not be *ṣaḥīḥ* to all jurists. Therefore, each jurist should re-select and evaluate the validity of any hadith through applying the rules of ‘*ilm al-rijāl* (not by following what others have already selected) and consequently show the significance and necessity of such ‘*ilm* to every jurist.

Thirdly, many pieces of evidence indicate that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are not *ṣaḥīḥ*, according to other prominent scholars. For instance, the name of Muḥammad Mūsā al-Hamdānī is mentioned twenty times in the chains of *al-Kāfī*’s narrations. Al-Ṣadūq, following his teacher, Ibn Walīd, claims that al-Hamdānī is untruthful and unreliable.¹ Likewise, al-Ṣadūq considers some *al-Kāfī*’s narrators such as al-Sakūnī,² Samā‘ah ibn Mihrān³ and Wahb ibn Wahb⁴ weak or unreliable in their creed. Moreover, al-Najāshī considered as weak, or in *rijāl* parlance “weakened”, some of the narrators in *al-Kāfī*, like Muḥammad

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1. Al-Ṣadūq states, “If my teacher accepts any narrator, I will accept him and if he rejects the narrator, I will reject him as well.” Ibn Walīd rejects the reliability of Muḥammad Mūsā al-Hamdānī; see Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 2, pp. 90-91, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1992.
 2. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 4, p. 344. The name of al-Sakūnī occurs in *al-Kāfī* more than four hundred and fifty times.
 3. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 2, p. 121. The name of Samā‘ah ibn Mihrān occurs three hundred and fifty times in *al-Kāfī*.
 4. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 4, p. 35. The name of Wahb ibn Wahb occurs more than twenty times in *al-Kāfī*.

ibn ‘Alī al-Ṣayrafī,¹ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Sayyārī,² ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Kathīr al-Hāshimī³ and ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Aṣamm⁴ due to their weak or incorrect beliefs.

Fourthly, al-Kulaynī, as mentioned in the previous section, referred to the existence of many inauthentic narrations in *al-Kāfī*. This is further evidence for the necessity of ‘ilm al-rijāl in ascertaining the validity of *al-Kāfī*’s narrations.

Fifthly, if we agree that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are certain in issuance (*maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr*) or *ḥujjah*, yet we still need ‘ilm al-rijāl to authenticate other hadith sources, such as *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah* and *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

To summarize, firstly, al-Kulaynī himself does not claim certainty in issuance (*maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr*) of *al-Kāfī*’s narrations. Secondly, later some contemporaneous scholars were not convinced of the authenticity of the issuance of these narrations (*maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr*). Thirdly, due to some evidence, it is very difficult to claim the *ḥujjiyyah* of all the narrations in *al-Kāfī*. Fourthly, al-Kulaynī indirectly accepted the existence of inauthentic narrations in *al-Kāfī*. Therefore, all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are neither *maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr* nor *ḥujjah*; therefore, we need ‘ilm al-rijāl to differentiate between the authentic and inauthentic narrations. Fifthly, if we agree that all narrations in *al-Kāfī* are *ḥujjah*, we still need ‘ilm al-rijāl for the assessment of other *ḥadith* sources.

As mentioned earlier, *Akhhārī* scholars, due to their view on the authenticity of *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*, emphasize the unnecessary

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1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 332. Al-Kulaynī narrates nearly two hundred and fifty narrations from him, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 74, vol. 4, p. 54, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.
 2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 80. Al-Kulaynī narrates nearly forty narrations from him, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 34, vol. 6, pp. 8, 303, 305, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.
 3. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 234. Al-Kulaynī narrates nearly thirty narrations from him.
 4. Ibid, p. 217. Al-Kulaynī narrates nearly one hundred narrations from him.

of ‘*ilm al-rijāl*. The next section aims to look at their views on the second book, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*.

MAN LĀ YAḤḌURUHU AL-FAQĪH

It is one of the most authentic books next to *al-Kāfī*. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, in the introduction, states:

وَلَمْ أَقْصِدْ فِيهِ قَصْدَ الْمُصَنِّفِينَ فِي إِيرَادِ جَمِيعِ مَا رَوَوْهُ بَلْ قَصَدْتُ إِلَى إِيرَادِ مَا
أُفْتِيَ بِهِ وَأَحْكُمُ بِصِحَّتِهِ وَأَعْتَقِدُ فِيهِ أَنَّهُ حُجَّةٌ فِيمَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ رَبِّي تَقَدَّسَ ذِكْرُهُ
وَتَعَالَتْ قُدْرَتُهُ وَجَمِيعِ مَا فِيهِ مُسْتَخَرَجٌ مِنْ كُتُبٍ مَشْهُورَةٍ عَلَيْهَا.

He asserted that he did not intend to compile all narrations, as his predecessors did. Instead, he says “my aim was to select the narrations according to which I issued fatwa.” He added “I regard them as *ṣaḥīḥ* and believe in their validity between me and my Lord.”¹

It seems that al-Ṣadūq does not claim that all the narrations in *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh* were definitely quoted by Imams (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). Rather, he selected the narrations for which there was proof (*ḥujjah*) between himself and his Lord.² If al-Ṣadūq has already selected *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations, there is no need for others to re-select them through ‘*ilm al-rijāl*.

In response, this book and the method of selecting narrations do not render ‘*ilm al-rijāl* unnecessary for the following reasons: Firstly, if we agree that al-Ṣadūq selected only the *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations, it cannot oblige the other jurists, due to different perspectives, to consider them as *ṣaḥīḥ* (as was explained above in detail).³ Secondly, al-Ṣadūq compiled nearly six thousand narrations, and one-third of them are *mursal*. How can we thus rely entirely on all

1. Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 1, pp. 2-5, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1992.

2. Therefore, *ṣaḥīḥ* is more general than *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*.

3. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 35.

the narrations of this book while one-third of them are *mursal*?¹ It is clear that these kinds of narrations are not authentic from the perspective of the majority of scholars.² Thirdly, if we agree that all the narrations included in *Man Lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh* are *hujjah*, we still need ‘ilm al-rijāl for the evaluation of other hadith sources, such as *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah* and *Biḥār al-Anwār*.

In sum, al-Ṣadūq did not claim the definite issuance of his book’s narrations (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*); rather, he claims their *hujjiyyah*. The argument may not convince later scholars, due to the discrepancies of views, to accept their *hujjiyyah*.

As discussed earlier, Akhbārīs maintain that ‘ilm al-rijāl is useless since all the traditions included in the Four Books are authentic. This section aims to look at their views on the third and fourth books, i.e. *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār*.

TAHDHĪB AL-AḤKĀM AND AL-ISTIBṢĀR

These are among the Four Books (*al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*) whose narrations is claimed by Akhbārīs to be authentic. According to Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, al-Ṭūsī narrated and compiled the narrations of the two books from reliable people.³ The statement indicates the authenticity (‘*itibār*) of the narrations included in the two books. If al-Ṭūsī selected narrations from such reliable people, there would be no need for others to re-select them through ‘ilm al-rijāl.

In response, firstly, al-Ṭūsī did not claim the definite issuance (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*) of the narrations included in these two books; instead, he compiled them from authentic (*mu‘tabar*) sources. The

1. Ibid, p. 35.

2. *Mursal* is a hadith in which there is a missing link in its narration chain.

3. Muḥammad al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Wāfi*, vol. 1, pp. 23-4, Intishārāt-i Imām Amīr al-Mu‘minin, Isfahan 1386.

term *mu'tabar* is more general than *maqtū' al-ṣudūr*.¹ Therefore, it means that al-Ṭūsī, according to his standard, selected the narrations of these two books from reliable people. As we mentioned earlier, one hadith, due to different perspectives, may not be *mu'tabar* for all jurists. Thus, the jurists' need to evaluate narrations emphasizes the necessity of 'ilm al-rijāl. Secondly, al-Ṭūsī acknowledges the existence of weak narrations and also the narrations that some Jurists have acted contrary upon some of them.²

The existence of weak narrations in *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār* compel other jurists to evaluate the narrations included in these two books through 'ilm al-rijāl, and it is further indicative of the necessity of the discipline. Thirdly, if we agree that all the narrations included in *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār* are *ḥujjah*, we still need 'ilm al-rijāl for evaluating other hadith sources.

As mentioned above, this lesson aims to touch upon the views of the opponents of 'ilm al-rijāl. Having discussed the *Akhhārīs*' first argument, the following section will now address their second argument.

COMPENSATION OF THE WEAKNESS OF A HADITH BY *SHUHRAH*

The second argument against the necessity of 'ilm al-rijāl is that the majority of jurists make use of *shuhrah al-'amaliyyah* in their

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1. As mentioned above, the relation between *maqtū' al-ṣudūr* and *mu'tabar* is partial inclusion (*'umūm wa khusūṣ min wajb*).
 2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4. For further details on the manner and the reason by which al-Ṭūsī rejects some of the narrations in *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār*, see Dāwarī, *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 82-3.

evaluation of a weak hadith.¹ When the majority act upon a weak hadith, it reveals their reliance on that hadith and consequently, it elevates the level of its validity. In other words, if we realize that most of the jurists issued their fatwa upon a hadith, it demonstrates the validity of that hadith in their view, whether the narrators of that hadith are reliable or not. Similarly, if the jurists ignored a hadith and did not issue a fatwa based upon it, such hadith is not valid, even if its narrators are reliable. The standard for the validity of any narrations is accordingly the *act* of the majority of jurists, rather than its narrators' *qualities*, e.g. trustworthiness and accuracy. Consequently, some conclude that there is no need to investigate narrators' qualities through the rules of *'ilm al-rijāl*.

In response, generally speaking, it is a useful standard; however, the views held by the majority of jurists on every religious issue is rarely attainable, at least to all scholars. The standard is not thus applicable everywhere as will be explained below. The views of jurists on religious rulings might be one of four types:

First, there are some issues concerning which the majority of jurists issued fatwas while relying on a hadith. In this case, it might be said that there is no need for *'ilm al-rijāl*, since the acting of the majority of jurists upon a hadith reveals its reliability. In other words, we can justify that if a hadith were weak, the majority would not issue fatwas accordingly. However,

1. There are two more types of *shubrah*: *shubrah al-riwā'īyyah* and *shurah al-fatwā'īyyah*:

1. When many scholars, such as al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq and al-Ṭūsī mentioned one hadith in their own books that is *shubrah al-riwā'īyyah*, whether or not the jurists have utilized the narration in issuing a decree;
2. When the majority of early jurists issued a fatwa on a specific religious ruling but we cannot find any evidence (hadith or Qur'anic verses) to substantiate such fatwa, it would be an instance of *shurah fatwā'īyyah*. For degree of validity of the two types of *shubrah*, see *'ilm al-uṣūl* sources.

not all religious rulings are like this type; thus, there are three more types that symbolize the necessity of *'ilm al-rijāl*. They are as follows.

Second, there are some religious issues not mentioned in jurisprudential books. So, there is no *shubrah al-'amaliyyah* with which one can evaluate the authenticity of a hadith.

Third, there are some issues that only a minority of jurists discussed in their books and acted upon the hadith. In the second and third types, there occurs no *shubrah al-'amaliyyah* that can be used as a criterion for hadith reliability.

Fourth, there are some issues in which fifty per cent of jurists acted upon a hadith, whilst fifty per cent acted upon another. Therefore, there are two types of *shubra al-'amaliyyah*, and as both are equal, we cannot prefer one over the other.

In sum, there are no *shubrah al-'amaliyyah* in the second and third types that can be used as a criterion for the evaluation of hadith. There are two equal *shubrah al-'amaliyyah* in the fourth type, but the question is, how can one prefer one over the other? In the last three types, how can we assess the validity of narrations through the act of the majority of jurists upon a hadith?¹ Therefore, such standard is not applicable everywhere, and we need *'ilm al-rijāl* to assess the validity of narrations through narrators' qualities.

It is to be noted in passing that the credibility of any narration depends on the reliability of its narrators. Moreover, the reliability of narrators depends on their specific qualities such as trustworthiness, belief and retentiveness. The following lesson will discuss how we may know such qualities.

SUMMARY

All the *Akbbārī* scholars hold that the authors of the Four Books only compiled authentic narrations. There are two possible

1. *Sobhani, Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 36.

meanings for authenticity. Firstly, all the narrations of these four books are certain in issuance from Imams (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). Secondly, all narrations included in the Four Books are authentic and reliable in terms of their validity (*ḥujjah*). Based on both meanings, there is no need for *‘ilm al-rijāl*, as maintained by Akhbārīs.

In response, regarding definiteness in issuance (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*) of the narrations in *al-Kāfī*, it can be said, firstly, that al-Kulaynī himself does not claim that the Imams definitely quoted all the narrations of his book; instead, he implicitly refers to the existence of some inauthentic narrations in his book. Secondly, some contemporaneous and great scholars were also not convinced of definite issuances of all the narrations included in *al-Kāfī*. We need *‘ilm al-rijāl* to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic narrations.

Regarding the second meaning of authenticity (*ḥujjah*), it could be said that if al-Kulaynī considered all his narrations *ḥujjah*, it would not imply that they should be *ḥujjah* for other jurists as well. Therefore, one hadith, due to different perspectives, cannot be *ṣaḥīḥ* for all jurists. Consequently, each jurist should re-select and evaluate the validity of any hadith through the rules of *‘ilm al-rijāl*. Moreover, due to some evidence, it is difficult to claim that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are *ḥujjah*, even from al-Kulaynī’s perspective. Therefore, all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are not *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*, nor are they *ḥujjah*. We need *‘ilm al-rijāl* to differentiate between authentic and inauthentic narrations.

Fourthly, if we agree that all the narrations in *al-Kāfī* are *ḥujjah*, we will still need *‘ilm al-rijāl* for the assessment of other hadith sources. Nevertheless, regarding the other books of the four series, it may not be proved that all their narrations are *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr* or *ḥujjah*.

The second argument for the unnecessary of *‘ilm al-rijāl* was the act of the majority of jurists upon a hadith. When the majority acts upon a hadith and issues a fatwa accordingly, that hadith is *ḥujjah*. Such a standard is an acceptable method if we know that

the majority acts upon a hadith. However, it is not applicable, in three instances:

1. There are some religious issues untouched by jurists in their jurisprudential books;
2. There are some religious issues concerning which only the minority issued fatwas;
3. There are some religious issues concerning which fifty percent of jurists issued fatwa according to one hadith and fifty percent according to another, and consequently there is no majority. In short, finding the views of the majority is often very difficult.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the Akhbārī's views on the authenticity of *al-Kāfi*? Mention two possible meanings for the term *mu'tabar*.
2. Does al-Kulaynī himself believe that all the narrations of his book were definitely quoted by the Imams? Why?
3. Does Shaykh al-Ṣadūq hold that all the narrations in *al-Kāfi* were definitely quoted from the Imams? Why?
4. Akhbārīs hold that jurists' *shuḥrah al-‘amaliyyah* is a comprehensive standard for evaluating narrations. What is intended by it? Do you agree with them?

Lesson FOUR

How May We Come
to Know Narrators' Qualities?



Hadith, as mentioned in Lesson One, gains its authenticity through the credibility of its narrators which in turn depends on their specific qualities, such as faith, trustworthiness and retentiveness. Authenticity of hadith is indicated by the narrators' possession of these qualities. At this point, the question that should be discussed here is: how can we verify these features and the level of credibility of the narrators? The best way is to be in company with the narrators of the hadith. It means that we, in light of association with the narrators, may discover the level of their trustworthiness and retentiveness and so on. There are various accounts of some narrators about their *mashā'ikh* that are rooted in this method. Jamāl ibn Darrāj, for instance, describes the qualities of Zurārah's class and his students:

ما رأيت رجلا مثل زرارۃ بن أعين... فما نكون حوله إلا بمنزلة الصبيان في
الكتاب حول المعلم

I never saw a man like Zurārah ibn A'yan... We encircled him, like children encircling their teacher in the school.¹

Moreover, Ibn Abī 'Umayr admires the great obedience of Jamāl ibn Darrāj, his teacher, and Jamāl reports that his master, Ma'rūf ibn Kharrabūdh, was wholeheartedly obedient to God.² Furthermore, Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī, through his association with Abū Ṭālib al-Anbārī, states that "I know him." For most of his life, he was Wāqifī, then he converted to Imāmī and "was a

1. Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 346, 372, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1984.

2. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 471.

man adorned with the noble qualities of total obedience to God and humility.”¹

It is obvious that this method, due to the passage of time, is not possible for contemporary jurists. Nevertheless, the scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* attempt to present some methods to be treated in this lesson and the following lessons. They hold that narrators' reliability may be proven through confirmation of reliability (*tawthīqāt*). There are two types of confirmation:

- Specific Confirmation (*Tawthīq al-Khāṣṣ*)
- General Confirmation (*Tawthīq al-‘Āmm*)

If the reliability of a specific narrator is confirmed, it is regarded as specific confirmation. The confirmation of a group of narrators under a general heading is termed general confirmation.² For now, we shall focus on the former.

SPECIFIC CONFIRMATION

The specific confirmation of reliability can be discovered in a few ways, of which we will explain the following:

- Statements of the Infallible
- Statements of the Scholars of *Rijāl*.

STATEMENTS OF THE INFALLIBLE

If an Infallible Imam, according to a hadith, confirms the reliability of a particular narrator, it definitely establishes his reliability. For instance, ‘Alī ibn al-Musayyib, as al-Kashshī narrates, asked Imam al-Riḍā (as), “Since I live too far away and it is difficult for me to visit you regularly, how may I have my religious questions answered?” The Imam suggested that he could

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 232.

2. There are two other ways, i.e. confirmation of the reliability of the book and confirmation of the reliability of the way.

pose his questions to Zakariyyā ibn Ādam al-Qummī, whom he considered as trustworthy in investigating religious issues.¹ This hadith clearly indicates the reliability of Zakariyyā ibn Ādam by an Infallible Imam.

The scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* hold that the above confirmation of reliability depends on two conditions. First, the chain of hadith should be authentic since the reliability of Zakariyyā ibn Ādam cannot be proven through resorting to a weak hadith. Second, the validated person should not be the narrator of the hadith. In other words, Zakariyyā ibn Ādam cannot quote a hadith from Imam al-Riḍā (as) that the Imam confirmed his reliability, or else it would lead to two problems:

1. It would imply a circular argument. In other words, on the one hand, we want to prove the reliability of Zakariyyā ibn Ādam through this hadith, and on the other hand, the reliability of that hadith depends on that of Zakariyyā ibn Ādam. It would be an obvious vicious circle;
2. If the transmitter of the reliability is the narrator of the hadith himself, the people may mistrust such a transmitter,² since the pious people usually do not mention their own virtues in public.

Such a method of establishing a narrator's reliability is the most trustworthy way; however, we cannot prove the reliability of thousands of narrators simply by a few statements quoted from the Infallible. The method, consequently, is not a practical one.

Having discussed the first confirmation of reliability, the following section aims to address the second confirmation, i.e. statements of *rijāl* scholars.

1. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 858.

2. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 152.

STATEMENTS OF *RIJĀL* SCHOLARS

Rijāl scholars may fall into two classes: early scholars (*mutaqaddimīn*) and later scholars (*muta'akhhirīn*). The term early scholars is applied to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) predecessors and later scholars implies his successors.¹ Now we may turn to early scholars' confirmation and the levels of their credibility.

Early Scholars of *Rijāl*

If an early *rijāl* scholar specifies a narrator's reliability, it is considered an approved way of establishing the narrator's reliability. Al-Najāshī, for instance, in the biographical account of 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ya'fūr states:

عبدالله بن ابي يعفور... ثقة ثقة، جليل في أصحابنا، كريم على أبي عبد الله عليه السلام، و مات في أيامه، و كان قارئاً يقرئ في مسجد الكوفة.

'Abd Allāh ibn abī Ya'fūr... is reliable, reliable.² He was great amongst the scholars and noble-minded (*karīm*) in the eyes of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and died in the Imam's times. He used to recite the Qur'an in the mosque of Kufa.³

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1. Shi'ah jurists fall into two classes as well: early jurists and later jurists. The term 'early jurists' is applied to predecessors of Ja'far ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, known as, Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 672/1273) and 'later jurists' denotes his successors. Therefore, al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, known as 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325) is the first jurist amongst later ones.
 2. A very trustworthy narrator is referred to as *reliable, reliable*.
 3. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 213.

The proclamation of al-Najāshī, as an early *rijāl* scholar may prove the reliability of Abī Ya‘fūr.¹ A question might here arise concerning the reason for validating early scholars’ views. In reply to this question, it can be said that their views will be valid when we are able to classify their statements into one of the following: 1. Testimony (*shahādah*); 2. Expertise. They will be treated below.

Testimony

If we consider the statements of al-Najāshī as a testimony of a narrator’s reliability, it may validate his statement, but it should possess the conditions of *shahādah*. One of the rules applicable for the testimony is that the witness (*shāhid*) should gain knowledge through his sense perception (*ḥiss*). He is supposed to narrate what he saw or heard. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) states, “Do not testify unless you know it as you are aware of the palm of your hand.”² In other words, the details provided by the *shāhid* should be based on his own senses, such as seeing and hearing, rather than on his conjecture (*ḥads*) or his independent reasoning (*ijtihād*).

It seems that the testimony of early scholars, due to their proximity in time with the Imams, was based on their senses. It is worth mentioning that the testimony provided by an early scholar may be established through one of these two types: 1. The confirmer, for instance, was a contemporary of the narrator whom he knew in person very well; 2. The confirmer was not contemporary with the narrator.

In the former case, it is clear that the confirmer’s testimony can be assembled on his seeing or hearing. In the latter case, although al-Najāshī was not contemporaneous with the narrator, he might

1. To be familiar with narrators’ biographical accounts from the time of early scholars, see *Rijāl al-Barqī*, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah* and *Rijāl al-Najāshī*. It is worth mentioning that Ibn ‘Uqdah, Banī al-Faḍḍāl, Ibn Nūḥ, ‘Alawī ‘Aqīqī, Shaykh al-Mufīd, Sayyid al-Murtaḍā, and ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī are amongst early scholars of *rijāl*.

2. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, pp. 27, 322, 341.

have heard the qualities of the narrator from truthful people. Al-Najāshī, as an early *rijāl* scholar, on many occasions, quotes from his predecessors. He, for instance, in the biographical account of Ṣāliḥ ibn Muqātil, states, “Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn [known as, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī] has mentioned this...”¹ or “the scholars of *rijāl* said this point.”² It shows that al-Najāshī does not rely on his conjecture; rather, he refers to his senses.

The other evidence, provided by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, is that early scholars based their confirmation of reliability on their senses, rather than on conjecture. He states, “We found that the sect separated the narrators” and confirmed reliable ones and identified weak ones. They discussed the qualities of narrators by saying that, for example, that this narrator is a liar or that one is a Wāqifī or another one is a Faṭaḥī. They compiled books about narrators' biographical accounts.³ It shows that the discussions on narrators' qualities were common amongst early scholars, and they recorded the qualities in books.

Based on the said evidence, we may conclude that early scholars, in their treatment of narrators' reliability relied on the senses. It means that they either saw narrators or heard their qualities from trustworthy people. Therefore, in both types, they established their testimonies on senses. The testimony of early scholars is thus an approved method for establishing narrators' reliability.

As mentioned above, the proclamation of early *rijāl* scholars may prove a narrator's reliability in two ways: 1. Testimony; 2. Expertise. Now, we turn to address the second method, i.e. referring to experts.

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 198.

2. Ibid, pp. 27, 113, 124, 164, 318.

3. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, 141, Sitārah, Qum 1997.

Referring to Experts

There is no doubt that people in their daily lives refer to experts' opinions. A patient should follow what his doctor prescribes. If a doctor forbids a patient from fasting, the patient needs to follow his instructions. The expert opinion in the evaluation of the financial losses in a car accident is valid. Although experts mostly do not establish their opinions on senses, the conduct of rational people approves such method. Such conduct, moreover, has not been censured by infallible Imams. Therefore, it can be said that the sense perception is not considered as a condition for the validity of the statements of experts. So the views of experts are valid whether they establish their views through sense perception or not.

If we consider early *rijāl* scholars' views in the classification of experts, we will see that their professional opinions in '*ilm al-rijāl* concerning narrators' reliability are valid, even if they do not rely on the senses. It is worth mentioning that such a statement should engender trust (*wuthūq*) and conviction (*iṭmīnān*). Therefore, the reports of al-Najāshī, as an expert in *rijāl*, concerning narrators' reliability may be considered as an approved method of confirmation.

In sum, we must put the statements of early *rijāl* scholars into one of the two categories of testimony and expertise, wherein narrators' reliability may be proved by early scholars' confirmation.

As mentioned above, *rijāl* scholars could be divided into two classes: early scholars and later scholars. Having touched upon the first class, we now discuss the confirmation of later scholars and their levels of credibility.

Later *Rijāl* Scholars

The important question here is whether narrators' reliability may be proved by the confirmation of a later scholar.¹ It can be said, in reply, that they can be divided into those who quoted the statements of early scholars and those who presented their own views.

If they quoted the opinions of early scholars, there is no doubt that this is an accepted way of establishing the narrators' reliability. However, it is not due to the validity of the confirmation of later scholars; instead, it is due to the validity of early scholars' opinions. For instance, 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, as a later scholar, in the biographical account of 'Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ya'fūr, quoted exactly from al-Najāshī,² as an early scholar. Since we have already accepted the confirmations of early scholars, it is acceptable to quote from them.

The critical question is about the validity of the confirmation of later scholars when they do not present early scholars' statements. In response, the statements of later scholars can be further divided into two groups: the first group established their statements on the senses; the second group based theirs on conjecture. We will discuss these two types below.

First Group of Later Scholars

The first group refers to those *rijāl* scholars who flourished from the demise of al-Ṭūsī (460/1067) till the seventh/thirteenth century, like Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn (d. 585/1189) and Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192). They were contemporaneous with a number of hadith narrators whom they knew well. Through association and

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1. The term later scholars, as mentioned above, is applied to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) successors.
 2. For further details on al-Najāshī, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 213. For further details on al-Ḥillī, see Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl fī Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, p. 266-67, Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī, Mashhad 2002.

companionship with the narrators, these *rijāl* scholars verified the level of their trustworthiness and retentiveness, among others. Moreover, due to temporal proximity, those scholars gained familiarity with narrators' qualities from authentic sources available to them. In light of what has been said, it can be concluded that those scholars' reliance on narrators' reliability was based on their senses. Considering those *rijāl* scholars' reliance on sense perception, we may conclude that such confirmation is an approved way of establishing narrators' reliability.

However, the confirmation of the first type of later scholars can be considered as referring to the experts as well and, as mentioned above, sense perception is not a condition for the validity of the statements of experts. The views of these scholars are thus valid whether they establish their views on sense or not.

To sum up, the validity of the first type of later scholars' statements may be proved through testimony or expertise.

Second Group of Later Scholars

The second group refers to those *rijāl* scholars who flourished from the seventh/thirteenth century onwards. Mirza Muḥammad Amīn al-Astarābādī (d. 1208/1793), Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī (d. 1205/1790), Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī (d. 1050/1640) and Sayyid Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm (d. 1212/1797) can be considered amongst the second group of later *rijāl* scholars. A question might arise here: What is the difference between these two groups? Well, there are essential differences between them. While the first group had been either contemporaneous with some hadith narrators or had learned about narrators' qualities through available sources, the second did not have such sources whereby they could have access to the narrators' biographical accounts and qualities. In other words, those books which had served as sources for the first group were not available to the second group.

The other important question here is: Could we prove narrators' reliability by the confirmation of the second group? In response, it could be said that if we consider their statements

under the classification of testimony, it will not be valid. The reason for the invalidity of such testimony is that they did not establish their testimony on senses. In other words, the witness is supposed to have gained his knowledge through sense perception (*ḥiss*). Due to their posteriority to the narrators and unavailability of reference books, they could not rely on their senses. They could not satisfy the condition of testimony. Nevertheless, they presented their own views by conjecture (*ḥads*) or independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). It is obvious that the view of a *mujtahid* is convincing for him, but not necessarily for other scholars. If a *mujtahid*, due to extremist narrations of a narrator, considers him as an extremist narrator (*ghālī*), he may not necessarily convince other *mujtahids* to accept the narrator as an extremist, since such narrations may not be *ghuluw* to others.

In short, the statements of these groups, as a testimony, may not prove narrators' reliability. But if we consider the confirmation of the second group as referring to experts, it may prove narrators' reliability provided that it engenders trust (*wuthūq*) and conviction (*iṭmīnān*). As mentioned above, sense perception is not a condition for the validity of the statements of experts; rather it should produce conviction.

As stated before, there are thus two types of confirmation – specific and general. The following lessons will discuss the general ones.

SUMMARY

There are two types of confirmation – specific and general. If the reliability of a certain narrator is confirmed, it is called specific confirmation (*tawthīq al-khāṣṣ*). The confirmation of a group of narrators under a broad heading is termed general confirmation (*tawthīq al-‘āmm*). There are two forms of specific confirmations: confirmation of an Infallible Imam and the confirmation of *rijāl* scholars. An Imam's confirmation is the most reliable method of establishing narrators' reliability. It, however, depends on

two conditions: the chain of hadith should not be weak and the source on the reliability should not be the narrator of the hadith himself.

Rijāl scholars may confirm narrators' reliability. They are divided into two classes: early scholars and later scholars. The first implies al-Ṭūsī's (d. 460/1067) predecessors and the latter is applied to his successors. Confirmations of early scholars are valid since they, due to temporal proximity to narrators, established their testimony on sense perception. Moreover, confirmations of early scholars may be substantiated by expert opinions.

The statements of later scholars may be divided into two groups. The first group established their statements on the senses, and the second group based their statements on conjecture. It goes without saying that the confirmations provided by the first group are justifiable since they are considered as testimony or expert opinions. The statements of the second group cannot be valid if we want to consider them as testimony. Due to their posteriority to narrators, they did not gain their knowledge through the senses, and consequently, failed to meet the condition of testimony. Instead, they presented their own views based on conjecture or independent reasoning. A *mujtahid*'s opinion may not be necessarily convincing to other scholars. Yet, if we consider the confirmation of the second group as referring to the experts, it may prove narrators' reliability on the condition that it engenders trust and conviction.

In sum, if we consider the statements of *rijāl* scholars under the category of testimony, they will be valid provided that they established them through senses. But if we consider them as expert opinions, they will be valid on the condition that they happen to be conducive to trust and conviction.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the definitions of general and specific confirmations of reliability?

2. Could you mention two types of specific confirmations of reliability?
3. What has validated the confirmations of early *rijāl* scholars?
4. Are the confirmations of later *rijāl* scholars valid? Please elaborate.
5. What is the best method of specific confirmation of reliability? Elaborate if it depends on conditions.

Lesson FIVE

General Confirmations of Reliability



GENERAL CONFIRMATIONS OF RELIABILITY

1. Representing An Imam
2. Master of The Permit
3. Frequently Narrating from An Imam
4. Frequently Quoting Distinguished Narrators
5. Companions of Imam al-Şādiq (as)
6. Scholars of Consensus (*Aşhāb al-Ijmā'*)
7. *Mashā'ikh al-Thiqāh* (Reliable *Mashā'ikh*)
8. *Mashā'ikh* of Aḥmad Ibn 'Īsā
9. *Mashā'ikh* of Banī Faḍḍāl
10. *Mashā'ikh* of Ja'far ibn Bashīr
11. *Mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Za'farānī
12. *Mashā'ikh* of 'Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭarī
13. *Mashā'ikh* of Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī
14. *Mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā
15. Narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*
16. Narrators in *Tafsīr al-Qummi*

As mentioned in the previous lesson, narrators' reliability may be proved by confirmation of reliability (*tawthīqah*). There are two types of confirmation: specific and general. If the reliability of a specific narrator is confirmed, it is called a specific confirmation (*al-tawthīq al-khāṣṣ*). Confirmation of a group of narrators under a general heading is named general confirmation (*al-tawthīq al-ʿamm*). Specific confirmations were discussed in Lesson Four. This lesson aims to focus on general confirmations of reliability. There are many examples for general confirmations of reliability, the most important of which will be dealt with below in this lesson and the following lessons.

REPRESENTING AN IMAM

The issue of *wikālah* was a very complicated one that emerged from the time of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) and expanded from the time of the Ninth Imam. The reason for the expansion of *wikālah* was due to the restrictions imposed on later Imams. The rulers limited Imams' religious activities and they were sometimes placed under house arrest. From the time of the Ninth Imam, we can notice three critical phenomena that occurred due to the rulers' oppression: 1. The Imams entrusted their affairs to others (*wikālah*); 2. The communication of the Imams with the people was carried out in the form of writing letters;¹ 3. The addressees of the letters were mentioned ambiguously.² Now we discuss only the first phenomena.

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1. Since people were not allowed to see the Imam, they communicated with them through letters. We see at the time many proofs of letters such as "I wrote to Abī Jaʿfar al-Thānī" (i.e. the Ninth Imam); "I wrote to Abī al-Ḥasan al-Thālith" (i.e. the Tenth Imam).
 2. Fearing the cruel suppression by despotic rulers, the Imam's followers did not clearly mention his name as the addressee in their letters. For the Ninth Imam, they mentioned in the letters, "I wrote to the Man" (*al-Rajul*), and for the Tenth Imam, "I wrote to *al-ʿĀlim* and *Sayyidi*."

It is reflected in historical records that the Imam¹ sometimes appointed one of the narrators as his agent to represent him in one of his affairs. The question to consider here is: Can we consider such an agency (*wikālah*) as a way of establishing the reliability of the agent (*wakīl*)?² There are three views in this regard: 1. It absolutely indicates the agents' reliability; 2. It does not signify the reliability of the agents; 3. It is indicated conditionally. They will be discussed below.

FIRST VIEW

Some Muslim thinkers hold that the agency from Imam can discover the agent's reliability, whether he was appointed by Imam for personal issues, such as buying a house for Imam, or religious issues. Ayatollah al-Māmaqānī (d. 1351/1905) considers it as a sign of the trustworthiness and reliability of Imam's agent.³ The followers of this view attempt to prove it by two pieces of evidence; firstly, the inseparability of agency from reliability and secondly by the traditional report. Now we discuss these two pieces of evidence.

The Inseparability of Agency from Reliability

Any reasonable person is cautious in delegating his important affairs to others and usually entrusts his chores to trusted

1. Dāwarī mentioned the names of twenty-nine agents of Imams, see, Dāwarī, *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 487.
2. The terms denoting or implying the agent (*wakīl*) and the agency (*wikālah*) include *qayyim* or *qawwām*; *tawallī*; *ṣāhib*; *ṭarīq*; *niyābah*; *al-Abwāb al-'Arba'ah*; *qahramān*; *safīr*; *bāb*.
3. 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Miqbās al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, vol. 2, pp. 7-8, Dalīl-i Mā, Qum 2006. Mirza al-Qummī, *Qawānīn al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 485, Maktabah al-'Ilmiyyah al-Islāmiyyah, n.d., Tehran; Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Māzandarānī al-Ḥā'irī, *Muntaba al-Maqāl fī Ahwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 7, p. 474, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1995; Muḥsin al-A'rajī, *'Uddah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 134, Ismā'īliyan, Qum 1994; Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 5, pp. 263-4, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987.

individuals. They do not authorize unreliable people to manage their affairs and consequently do not trust them with their tasks. This conduct is prevalent among all the people. Such collective conduct of rational people shows that if someone devolves his affairs to an agent, it implies the reliability of the agent in the eyes of the transferor. The proponents of this idea hold that such a necessary corollary between the agency (*wikālah*) and trustworthiness (*‘adālah*) of the agent (*wakīl*) is applicable to the Imam as well. In other words, if the people refer to reliable agents, the Imam, due to the significance of his responsibility, must also entrust his affairs to reliable agents as a priority, since an untruthful agent may falsely attribute something to the Imam.

In light of what has been discussed, it can be concluded that due to the inseparability of agency from reliability, the agency from the Imam can prove the truthfulness of the agent. Having discussed the first evidence for the reliability of the Imams’ agents, the following section turns its attention to the second evidence for the proponents of this view.

Traditional Report

The reliability of the Imam’s agents can be proved through the hadith as well. Ḥasan ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd intended to hand over some money to Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī when he was under house arrest in the city of Samarra. Upon arrival at Samarra, due to the inaccessibility of the Imam, he was doubtful whether to pass it to Ḥājiz ibn Yazīd, his representative. Finally, he received a letter from the Imam, saying, “There is no room for doubt in us and those who represent us.” The Imam added, “Hand over what you have to Ḥājiz ibn Yazīd.”¹

This saying of the Imam, stating that there is no room for doubt “in those who represent us,” clearly indicates the reliability of the Imams’ agents.

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 521.

SECOND VIEW

Contrary to the first group, some other *rijāl* scholars hold the view that the agency of the Imam cannot be indicative of the agent's reliability. In other words, since the above two arguments could not convince them, they do not accept the reliability of the Imams' representatives. This section aims to discuss how they scrutinize the above two arguments.

Critique of the First Argument

Regarding the first argument, they maintain that there is no necessary corollary between the agency (*wikālah*) from the Imam and the truthfulness of the agent (*wakīl*). The reason for this assertion is the existence of the large number of the Imams' agents who were criticized by the Imams themselves. Al-Ṭūsī has dedicated a special chapter in *al-Ghaybah* to the agents censured by the Imams.¹ For instance, after the martyrdom of the Seventh Imam, his representatives, 'Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Baṭā'inī, Ziyād ibn Marwān al-Qandī, and 'Uthmān ibn 'Īsā al-Rawwāsī, did not pass what they had collected to Imam al-Riḍā.² Accordingly, if representing an Imam is a sign of reliability, how can we justify the existence of unreliable representatives? Therefore, these scholars conclude that representation does not imply the reliability of the agent, and consequently, it is not evidence for the reliability of the *wakīl*.³

Critique of the Second Argument

As mentioned above, two pieces of evidence for the reliability of the Imam's agents were scrutinized by some scholars. Regarding

1. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*, pp. 351-3, Dār al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmiyyah, Qum 1990; see also Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, *Nihāyah al-Dirāyah*, pp. 420-2, Mash'ar, Qum, n.d.
2. Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*, pp. 65, 352.
3. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 71-2; al-Ṣadr, *Nihāyah al-Dirāyah*, p. 417.

the second one, they hold that the above hadith cannot prove the reliability of the Imam's agent for two reasons: 1. The hadith is weak.¹ The hadith is more particular (*akhaṣṣ*) than the claim. The reason for the particularity of the hadith is that it seemingly refers to those agents who took the position of *wikālah* from the infallible Imam, only in the issues of *imāmah* and *wilāyah*. In other words, the Imam appointed them as his deputies in the issue of *wilāyah*, similar to the four deputies of the Twelfth Imam.² Therefore, the hadith does not refer to the reliability of all agents of the Imam in all the affairs of his daily life such as serving as the Imam's deputy in his estates.³

In light of what has been mentioned, in the eyes of these scholars, the reliability of the Imams' representatives cannot be proved by these two pieces of evidence. Having discussed these two groups' views, the next section will discuss the third view.

THIRD VIEW

The followers of this view hold that the agency of the Imam may imply the reliability of the Imams' representatives. Nevertheless, they maintain that it depends on three conditions: 1. The agency should be for important religious affairs, rather than for minor and personal issues; 2. The agent should be the Imam's representative for an extended period; 3. He should not have been censured.⁴ Therefore, this may serve as evidence for reliability concerning whoever possesses the three qualities.

This perspective can be proved from three angles. Firstly, if an agent had been a liar or dishonest, the Imam would have

1. Al-Khu'i, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 72. One of the narrators in the chain of hadith is Ḥasan ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd who is unknown (*majhūl*).

2. They are as follows: 1. 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd al-'Amrī; 2. Muḥammad ibn 'Uthmān ibn Sa'īd 'Amrī; 3. Ḥusayn ibn Nūḥ Nawbakhtī; 4. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad Samurī.

3. Al-Khu'i, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 72.

4. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 49.

discharged him. History shows that the Imams dismissed some agents due to corruption. Therefore, if a person had been the Imam's representative for an extended period of time without any condemnation, this can be a sign of his reliability. It can be thus concluded that the Imam only appointed reliable people for religious issues.¹ Secondly, in some narrations, the Imam enjoins people to follow the instructions of his representative. When Imam al-Hādī dispatched Abū 'Alī ibn Rāshid as his representative in Baghdad, he enjoined them to obey him, saying that obeying him will be tantamount to obeying the Imam.² The statement of the Imam "obeying my representative will be tantamount to obeying me" indicates that the Imam appointed only reliable people and it is a sign of the agent's reliability, since the Imam never enjoined people to obey a liar.

Thirdly, the conduct of reasonable individuals indicates that people are cautious in entrusting their important affairs to others and they usually entrust their affairs to trusted individuals.

To summarize, serving as an Imam's agent in important religious issues for a long period of the time without being subject to censure may indicate the agent's reliability. Having discussed the first general confirmation of reliability, the next section will investigate the other general confirmation, i.e. the master of the permit.

THE MASTER OF THE PERMIT

The second general conformation of reliability is mastership of permit. However, before commencing the discussion, it would be

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1. Al-Māzandarānī al-Ḥā'irī, *Muntaba al-Maqāl fī Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 7, p. 474; Sobhani, *Dirāsah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, p. 163.
 2. Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ghaybah*, p. 350; see also al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 800.

appropriate to mention that a narrator can receive a hadith from sources through one of the following three ways:

- *Samā'*, i.e. a student hears a hadith from his teacher.
- *Qirā'ah*, i.e. a student reads a hadith to his teacher, and the teacher approves of its authenticity.
- *Ijāzah*, i.e. a teacher, by providing a compilation of hadith, permits his student to quote from it. In this method, the teacher is named the master of the permit (*shaykh al-ijāzah*).¹

The masters of permit (*mashā'ikh al-ijāzah*) were not usually compilers and many of them were not even the companions of the Imams; rather, they had access to the books compiled by their predecessors.² For instance, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, in *Man Lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh*, quoted from books which he could not have seen their authors due to his posteriority to them. He quoted from the books of 'Alī ibn Mahziyār al-Ahwāzī who died nearly fifty years before him. However, al-Ṣadūq, with the permission of his teacher, cited from 'Alī ibn Mahziyār's books.³

Now the critical question is whether a teacher's reliability is confirmed when he provides a reliable student with a permit to quote hadith from him. For example, if al-Ṣadūq got permission from his teacher for a quotation from a book (which he received from his teacher), can that teacher be said to be reliable in al-Ṣadūq's opinion? In other words, is being the 'master of permit' a sign of the master's reliability? If the answer is positive, then we may draw a general rule that establishes the reliability of all the masters of the permit as a second general confirmation of reliability (*al-tawthīq al-'āmm*)? There are three views in this regard which will be discussed below.

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1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 73. There are more ways which will be discussed in the next volume.
 2. Muḥammad al-Kalbāsī, *al-Rasā'il al-Rijālīyyah*, vol. 4, p. 141, Dār al-Ḥadīth, Qum 1991.
 3. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

FIRST VIEW

Some scholars, such as Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī and Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī (d. 1205/1790) hold that being the master of the permit is a great position that signifies trustworthiness and truthfulness.¹ Even Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad (1107-1186/1695-1772), known as Muḥaddith al-Baḥrānī (1107-1186/1695-1772), inclines to the view that they are at a high level of trustworthiness and reliability.² It seems that for them, the reliability of the student implies the reliability of his teacher. For them, the master of the permit may thus establish reliability.

SECOND VIEW

On the contrary, some contemporary scholars, e.g. Ayatollah Khomeini³ and Ayatollah al-Khu'ī, believe that serving as the master of permit is not a sign of reliability. Al-Khu'ī attempts to prove his view by two arguments. First, there is no difference between a master of permit and *samā'*. As mentioned above, al-Ṣadūq, for instance, may receive a hadith by hearing it from his teacher (*samā'*) or through quoting from a book compiled by early scholars by the permission of his teacher. For al-Khu'ī, the qualities of these two methods are the same. In other words, the master of permit does not enjoy any specific characteristics, which is lacking by *samā'*. He concludes that al-Ṣadūq's hearing hadith from his teacher does not necessarily indicate the latter's reliability. Similarly, being a master of permit cannot denote the reliability of the person granting the permit. That is, as quoting a reliable person from his teacher (by *samā'*) does not prove the

1. Al-Kalbāsī, *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 4, p. 143.

2. Sulaymān ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Baḥrānī, *Mi'rāj Ahl al-Kamāl ilā Ma'rifah Ahl al-Rijāl*, Kitābkhānah-yi Mar'ashī Najafī, p. 64, Qum 1991; see also, Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nādirah*, vol. 6, pp. 47-8, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1985.

3. Rūḥ Allāh Khomeini, *al-Makāsib al-Muḥarramah*, vol. 1, p. 359, Markaz-i Nashr-i Āthār, Qum 1994.

reliability of the teacher, mastership in granting the permit does not entail the reliability of the person granting it either. The comparison can be made since the qualities of *samāʿ* and *shaykh al-ijāzah* are the same.

Second, if being a master of permit can be a sign of reliability, why some of them have been weakened by *rijāl* scholars? For instance, Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad Yaḥyā¹ and Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamdān al-Khaṣībī,² as the masters of the permit,³ were weakened by al-Najāshī.⁴ If being a master of permit is thus a sign of reliability, they should not be weakened. Therefore, their being weakened shows that being the master of permit cannot be a sign of reliability.

In light of what has been mentioned above, serving as the master of permit cannot be a sign of reliability for some contemporary scholars.

THIRD VIEW

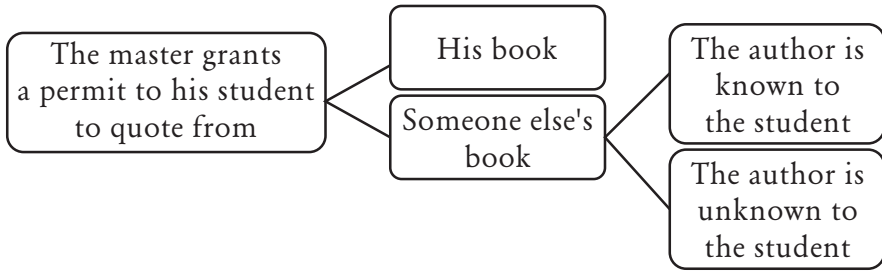
The followers of this view reject the first and second views, maintaining that we may classify the master's granting permits into two types: 1. The teacher permits his student to narrate from his book; 2. The teacher permits his student to narrate from another compiler. The second may fall into two groups: 1. The author of the book is known to the student; 2. The author of the book is unknown to the student. Now, we proceed to touch upon these types.

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 64.

2. Ibid, p. 67.

3. They granted permit to Tallaʿukbarī; see Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, pp. 422-3, Jāmiʿah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1994.

4. Al-Khuʿī, *Muʿjam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 73.



First: A Shaykh Grants Permit to His Student to Quote from His Book

In this type, a shaykh, providing his collection of narrations, permits his reliable student to quote from it. Such permission neither indicates the shaykh's reliability nor the authenticity of the book's narrations. There are two points here: 1. The master of permit is not necessarily the sign of reliability; 2. Such permission does not necessarily imply the authenticity of the narrations of the book. The first claim can be proved by what al-Khu'ī elaborated above, i.e. as narrating by a reliable person from his teacher (through *sāmā'*) does not necessitate the reliability of the teacher; mastership in permit does not imply the reliability of the permit granter either, since *sāmā'* and *shaykh al-ijāzah* share the same quality.

Regarding the second claim, it should be noted that since the reliability of the permit granter cannot be proved by being *shaykh al-ijāzah*, the narrations of the book cannot be considered as authentic. If we discover the author's reliability through *'ilm al-rijāl*, the book's narrations can be viewed as authentic.

Therefore, the permit of *shaykh al-ijāzah* does not indicate the reliability of the shaykh, nor does it prove the authenticity of his book. To summarize, it seems that there is no function or benefit for such a permit. Now the critical question is why does the shaykh uselessly grant permit to his student?

In response, it would be appropriate to say that if someone finds a hadith in the book of *al-Kāfī*, for instance, it would not be right to say that al-Kulaynī 'informed me of' this hadith

(*akhbaranī al-Kulaynī*), since in reality al-Kulaynī did not narrate it to him (he just found the hadith in al-Kulaynī's book). Nevertheless, if al-Kulaynī granted him the permit, it would be accurate to say that al-Kulaynī 'informed him of' this hadith by permission. In other words, receiving a hadith from a book by the author's or compiler's permission is the same as hearing a hadith from the author or compiler of the book. In sum, the advantage of the permit is no more than showing the sincerity of the narrator by mentioning the manner of receiving the hadith. In the first type, the mastership of permit is not thus sufficient to establish the reliability of the shaykh.

Second: A Shaykh Grants Permit for a Book Whose Author Is Known

In the second type, a shaykh permits quoting from a book in which the author is known. He, for instance, providing his student with a copy of *al-Kāfī*, permits him to quote from it. This type indicates two points. First, it goes without saying that the shaykh's permission does not indicate the authenticity of *al-Kāfī*, since the attribution of the book to its author is evident. So, if the author of the book is a reliable person, the permission of the shaykh has no effect on the credibility of the book since the student has already recognized the credibility of the author. Second, it does not prove the shaykh's reliability, as mentioned above. The only role of such permission is that, as the student did not hear any hadith from al-Kulaynī, he could not say that al-Kulaynī informed me of this hadith (*akhbaranī* or *haddathanī al-Kulaynī*). In other words, the direct attribution of the hadith to al-Kulaynī himself would not be accurate. Therefore, when the student mentions that he was granted permission by his shaykh, it confirms his sincerity and builds a connection of the chain of hadith from the Imam to himself.

It would seem that the second type of permit was common in the past. Al-Ṣadūq in *Man Lā Yahdurhu al-Faqīh*, quoted from

well-known books¹ through the permission of his shaykh. Such permission was just to acquire the connection of the chain and enable al-Ṣadūq to claim *haddathanī* or *akhbaranī*. Al-Ṣadūq, for instance, narrates a hadith from the book of ‘Alī ibn Mahziyār:

رَوَى عَلِيُّ بْنُ مَهْزِيَّارٍ قَالَ قُلْتُ لَهُ (الامام الجواد) رَوَى بَعْضُ مَوَالِيكَ عَنْ آبَائِكَ
أَنَّ كُلَّ وَفٍّ إِلَى وَفٍّ مَعْلُومٍ...²

It is clear that al-Ṣadūq could not directly narrate from ‘Alī ibn Mahziyār, since ibn Mahziyār had died fifty years before him; instead, he received the hadith from ibn Mahziyār’s book by his Shaykh’s permission. He, in order to show his sincerity and to form a connection of the chain of hadith from the Imam to himself, referred to his masters of permit in the appendix (*mashīkhah*) of his book, saying:

و ما كان فيه عن علي بن مهزيار فقد رويته عن أبي عن محمد بن يحيى العطار،
عن الحسين بن إسحاق التاجر، عن علي بن مهزيار.³

In light of what has been said, it can be concluded that the permit of *shaykh al-ijāzah*, in the first and second types, does not indicate the reliability of the shaykh, nor does it prove the authenticity of the book.

Third: A Shaykh Gives Permit for a Book Whose Author Is Unknown

In the third type, the student requested permission from his Shaykh about a book for which the attribution to its author is not established. For instance, the student received a book from his shaykh, and the student is not sure whether its author is a reliable person or not. It seems that the third type, contrary to

1. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh*, vol. 1, pp. 3-4.

2. Ibid, vol, 4, p. 237.

3. Ibid, vol. 4, p. 446.

the first and second types, indicates the reliability of the master of the permit. Now the critical question is how does the third type denote the shaykh's reliability?

To respond, on the one hand, it is clear that the student cannot rely upon a book unless he achieves the authenticity of the book through its author. On the other hand, since he does not know the real author, the validity of the book is uncertain and it thus poses a challenge to the student. It seems that this problem can be resolved only by his master of permit. In other words, if al-Shaykh confirms the authenticity of the book, it can pave the way for the student to rely on it, otherwise he cannot. So, in the eyes of the student, the key to the authenticity of the book is al-Shaykh's confirmation.

The student's request from his shaykh to quote from a book can implicitly indicate the shaykh's reliability. This view depends on some premises. First, the authenticity of the book depends on the permission and confirmation of the book by the shaykh. Second, the confirmation of the shaykh depends on his reliability. Whenever the student requests his teacher for permission, it thus indicates that the student has already accepted the shaykh's reliability. If the student did not believe in his master's reliability, it would be in vain to request his permission. The third type of the master of the permit is indicative of reliability.¹

In summary, if the student knows that the author of the book is anonymous and having permission has no effect on the authenticity of the book, it would be useless to request permission from his master. Therefore, the request of student, indirectly implies his teacher's reliability.

The next lesson will discuss further instances of general confirmation of reliability.

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 335-342.

SUMMARY

This lesson aimed to discuss the first and second general confirmations of reliability (*al-tawthīq al-‘āmm*). The first one was the representation of the Imam. There are three views in this regard: 1. It absolutely indicates the reliability of the agents; 2. It does not indicate the agent’s reliability; 3. It may be indicative of reliability on some conditions. The first view can be proved by two arguments:

1. Inseparability of agency from reliability, i.e. any rational person is cautious in entrusting his important affairs to others and usually entrusts his affairs to trusted individuals. They do not rely on unreliable people and, consequently, do not transfer their issues to them. If someone devolves his affairs to an agent, it implies the reliability of the agent in the eyes of the transferor.
2. The reliability of Imam’s agents can be proved via the hadith as well.

On the contrary, the second view holds that the agency of the Imam may not indicate the reliability of the agent. The existence of some unreliable and dishonest agents indicates that the agency of the Imam cannot be indicative of the reliability of the *wakīl*. The third view maintains that the agency of the Imam may imply the reliability of the Imams’ representatives on three conditions: 1. The agency should be for important religious affairs, rather than for minor and personal issues; 2. The agent should be the Imam’s representative for an extended period of time; 3. Such representative should not have been subject to the Imam’s censure.

This lesson also discussed the second general confirmation of reliability, i.e. the master of permit. While early scholars accepted the master of permit as a sign of reliability, later scholars disapproved of it. Later scholars tried to prove their view by two arguments. First, there is no difference between a master of permit

and *samāʿ*. Just as quoting a reliable person from his teacher (by *samāʿ*) does not imply the reliability of the teacher, mastership in permit does not entail the reliability of the permit granter either. Secondly, in the books of *rijāl*, the reliability of some of the masters of permit was questioned which indicates that it cannot be a sign of reliability.

However, the third view classified the masters of permit into different types: 1. The teacher gives permission to his student to narrate from his book; 2. The teacher gives permission to his student to narrate from someone else's book. The second may be further divided into two groups: 1. The author of the book is known to the student; 2. The author of the book is unknown to the student.

Now, we touch upon these three types. In the first and second types the shaykh's permit does not indicate the shaykh's reliability, nor does it prove the authenticity of the book. Such permission was simply granted to form the connection of the chain and enable a narrator to claim *haddathanī* or *akhbaranī*. Unlike the other two types, the third one can indicate the reliability of the master of the permit. This view depends on some premises: first, the authenticity of the book depends on the permission and confirmation of the book by the shaykh. Second, the confirmation of the shaykh depends on his reliability. Whenever the student thus requested his teacher for permission, it indicated that the student had already accepted the reliability of the shaykh. If the master were not reliable for the student, his request would have been in vain. Accordingly, the third type is a sign of reliability.

QUESTIONS

1. Can the agency of the Imam be a sign of reliability? There are two views. Please explain them in detail?
2. Some hold that agency may imply the reliability of the Imams' representatives on three conditions. Please mention them.

3. What is intended by the master of permit? What is al-Khu'i's view?
4. Some scholars classify the masters of the permit into three types. Could you explain them in detail?

Lesson SIX

General Confirmation of Reliability



The previous lesson discussed two types of general confirmation of reliability. This lesson aims to discuss further types:

- Frequently Narrating from An Imam
- Frequently Quoting Distinguished Narrators
- The Companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq

FREQUENTLY NARRATING FROM AN IMAM

The first type of general confirmation occurs when a narrator frequently quotes an Infallible Imam, which may implicitly indicate the narrator's reliability. Now we touch upon this type of general confirmation. There are three views in this regard. Some hold that it can establish the narrator's reliability and there are others who disapprove of it. The third view takes into account certain conditions considering the indication of reliability. Let us take a look at these views.

FIRST VIEW

The followers of this view maintain that multiplicity of narrations by a narrator quoting from an Imam, in religious beliefs and rulings, indicate that he is necessarily an individual with impeccable beliefs. They add that such quality renders the narrator commendable. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Jabal al-ʿĀmilī, known as Shāhid al-Thānī (911-965/1505-1557), accepted such standard on the condition that the narrator be not subject

to censure by *rijāl* scholars.¹ This view can be proven by two arguments: traditional reports and intellectual reasoning.

Traditional Reports

The adherents of the first view refer to three narrations whose contents indicate that narrators' commendable qualities depend on the number of their narrations. Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) states:

اغْرِفُوا مَنَازِلَ النَّاسِ عَلَى قَدْرِ رَوَايَتِهِمْ عَنَّا

Recognize people's dignity by the number of narrations they narrate from us.²

It seems that this hadith assesses the validity of the narrators according to the number of their narrations. Therefore, in the eyes of the Imam, whoever has more narrations has a higher status.

Intellectual Reasoning

They also maintain that frequently narrating from an Imam logically implies the narrator's reliability. They attempt to elaborate on this fact with two pieces of evidence. Firstly, narrating many narrations from an Imam shows the narrator's intense love for, and a very close relationship with, the Imam. In other words, it indicates his enthusiasm for and closeness (*taqarrub*) to the Imam and consequently signifies his greatness and trustworthiness. Secondly, the multiplicity of narrations indicates that the Imam considered him trustworthy, and due to his trustworthiness, the Imam entrusted him with the transmission of many narrations.

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1. Al-Māmaqānī, *Miqbās al-Hidāyah*, vol. 2, pp. 10-11; see also al-A'rajī, *Uddah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 144; 'Alī al-Khāqānī, *Rijāl al-Khāqānī*, pp. 345-6, Markaz-i Nashr, n.d., Qum.
 2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 50. There are two more narrations similar to what we mentioned above, see al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 5-6.

In other words, if he were not reliable, the Imam would not have provided him with many narrations.¹

In short, the multiplicity of narrations shows a narrator's interest and strong passion for religious teachings; consequently, it implies his reliability. Moreover, since the Imam has narrated many narrations to him, it indicates that he was a trustworthy person from the Imam's perspective. Therefore, such person is considered by any reasonable individual as trustworthy.

In light of these two arguments, it can be concluded that frequently narrating from an Infallible signifies the narrator's reliability. Having discussed the first view, the following section aims to look at the second view.

SECOND PERSPECTIVE

Contrary to the first group, some other scholars of *rijāl* hold that frequently narrating from an Infallible cannot be a sign of the narrator's reliability. In other words, since the above two arguments could not convince them, they do not accept it as a sign of reliability. This section aims to discuss how they investigate the above two arguments.

Critique of the First Argument

Regarding the first argument – i.e. the people's dignity depends on the number of their narrations – they produce two proofs. Firstly, all three narrations are weak, and consequently, they cannot justify their claim. Secondly, the meaning of the three narrations is not that whoever excessively quotes from an Imam is regarded as being highly dignified and reliable, regardless of whether the narrations were sound or weak. If this were the case, then those who narrate weak narrations in large numbers should also be praised. All Muslim thinkers are unanimous over the fact that not only is it a negative point for the narrator, but also it

1. 'Alī al-Fānī al-Iṣfahānī, *Buḥūth fī Fiqh al-Rijāl*, p. 160, al-ʿUrwah al-Wuthqā, Beirut 1987.

weakens him. Therefore, the meaning of the three narrations, i.e. quoting only *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations in large quantities, is a sign of a narrator's credibility.¹ Consequently, these three narrations are more particular (*akḥaṣṣ*) than what the first group attempts to prove.

In short, they claimed that it is a sign of reliability to have collected a large number of narrations (whether they are *ṣaḥīḥ* or weak) from an Imam, while the three narrations indicate the dignity and reliability of the narrator on condition that you already know that he had collected only *ṣaḥīḥ* narrations.

Moreover, some narrations indicate that the standard is not merely the the quantity, but their level of understanding of, such narrations. It says:

اعْرِفُوا مَنَازِلَ شِيعَتِنَا عَلَى قَدْرِ رَوَايَتِهِمْ عَنَّا وَفَهْمِهِمْ مِنَّا²

Recognize the dignity of our followers by the number of narrations they narrate from us and the level of their understanding of us [i.e. the Imams].

It is clear, according to the above hadith, that excessive quoting is not enough; rather, it depends on the level of their understanding of the hadith as well. It requires that a narrator should be aware of the meaning, interpretation and authenticity of the hadith. In another hadith, Imam al-Bāqir, in addition to the number of narrations, also insists on understanding (*fahm*) of narrations. In the eyes of the Imam, the value of everyone depends on the profundity of his knowledge. He adds that reflecting upon narrations can “elevate a believer to the highest level of *īmān*.”³ Therefore, merely frequently quoting is not a privilege for a narrator, nor is it indicative of his reliability.

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 75.

2. Al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 148.

3. Muḥammad al-Ṣadūq, *Ma'ānī al-Akḥbār*, p. 1, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisin, 1982 Qum.

Furthermore, it seems that it implies a circular argument when we consider frequently narrating from an Imam as a standard for the reliability of a narrator in that, on the one hand, we want to prove the reliability of such a narrator through his frequently quoting authentic narrations, and on the other hand, the authenticity of his narrations depends on the narrator's reliability. It is an obvious vicious circle. Therefore, the hadith cannot be a criterion for the reliability of such a narrator; rather, it should be evaluated through other tools.

Critique of the Second Argument

As mentioned, the second argument consists of two parts: 1. It is a sign of closeness; 2. It is a sign of trustworthiness. Regarding the former, i.e. 'frequently narrating' as indicative of a narrator's closeness to the Imam and his deep faith, it can be said that such an argument cannot show a narrator's reliability for two reasons. Firstly, the multiplicity of narrations does not imply a constant companionship (*taqarrub*) to the Imam. Like other people, he might be in a public place, such as a mosque, where he could hear the Imam. Hearing from an Imam does not thus necessitate being one of his close companions. Secondly, an Imam's companionship is not a sign of reliability, as history testifies to the sinfulness of some of them. Al-Najāshī weakened many frequently narrating narrators, revealing that it is not a sign of reliability.¹ If it were not true, he could not have weakened them.

Regarding the second part, it can be said that Imams used to recite the narrations in public places where thousands of truthful and untruthful people were present. Thus, if someone claims having heard many narrations from the Imam, it does not indicate that the Imam trusted him and consequently, he was not necessarily trusted by the Imam. He may have been in a public

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 37 (N:75), 60-1 (N: 138), 109 (N:276), 200 (N:533), 225 (N: 591).

place and heard them like thousands of other people.¹ Frequently narrating is not thus necessarily a token of reliability. Now we turn to discuss the third view on frequently narrating from an Imam.

THIRD PERSPECTIVE

This view considers it a sign of a narrator's reliability on the condition that most of his narrations happen to be in accordance with the other authentic narrations quoted by reliable people.² For instance, if he quoted one hundred narrations and, after comparing them with other authentic narrations, we realize that seventy of them are *ṣaḥīḥ*, then we may regard him as a reliable narrator, and consequently the rest of his narrations, that is thirty narrations, will be considered as *ṣaḥīḥ* as well. Therefore, his narration's high consistency with other authentic narrations is a sign of his dedication and, consequently, shows his greatness and trustworthiness.

In conclusion, frequently narrating from an Infallible is an instance of the general confirmation of reliability. There are three views in this regard; some hold that it can establish the narrator's reliability, whilst others disapprove of it. The third view holds that it can be a sign of reliability on the condition that we discover most of his narrations as being *ṣaḥīḥ*. Having evaluated the first general confirmation, the following section aims to discuss the next general confirmation of reliability.

FREQUENTLY QUOTING DISTINGUISHED NARRATORS

Rijāl books testify that many reliable and distinguished scholars quote from some narrators for whom there is no evidence for

1. Al-Fānī al-Iṣfahānī, *Buḥūth fī Fiqh al-Rijāl*, pp.160-61.

2. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, pp. 53-4.

their reliability. Can we draw a general rule and maintain that if a reliable narrator quotes from another narrator whose reliability is not established, this act in itself serves as a sign that the narrator who has been quoted is reliable?

The majority of Muslim specialists are in unison over the view that it can establish the reliability of the person from whom they narrated (*marwī ‘anhu*).³ Ayatollah Ḥusayn al-Burūjirdī (d. 1380/1960) holds that frequently quoting distinguished jurists indicates the reliability of the person from whom they narrated.⁴

However, there are three conditions for such a standard. Firstly, they should be amongst the great scholars of hadith (*ajillā’*), such as the people of consensus (*aṣḥāb al-ijmā’*), al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq, al-Ṭūsī, and al-Mufīd.⁶ Secondly, they should frequently narrate from that person (*marwī ‘anhu*). Al-Mufīd, for instance, quoted from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Walīd 582 narrations; hence, this form of quoting may indicate the reliability of Ibn Walīd. It is clear that if a distinguished person quotes only a few (i.e. three or four) narrations from a narrator, it does not indicate the reliability of the said narrator. The history of hadith indicates that distinguished scholars rarely quoted from unknown people,

3. Dāwarī, *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 488.

4. Ḥusayn al-Burūjirdī, *Nihāyah al-Taqrīr fī Mabāḥith al-Ṣalāh*, vol. 3, p. 232, Markaz-i Fiqhī-yi A’immah al-Āthār, Qum 1999. See also al-A’rajī, *‘Uddah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 134; Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Māzandarānī al-Ḥā’irī, *Muntaba al-Maqāl fī Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 90, Āl al-Bayat, Qum 1995; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Wahīd al-Bihbahānī, *al-Fawā’id al-Rijālīyyah*, p. 50, Maktab al-I’lām al-Islāmī, Qum 1984.

5. There are 18 distinguished reliable people. This issue will be discussed in the next lesson.

6. *Ajillā’* refers to those people who were strongly and greatly praised. Al-Najāshī, for instance, describes ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mughīrah al-Bajālī as quite reliable (*thiqah thiqah*), and nobody can reach his glory, religion and piety. He also describes Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Sufyān as *shaykh*, *thiqah* and a great figure amongst our *aṣḥāb*; see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 68, 215. For further examples, see pp. 39, 62, 68, 405, 419, 450.

and even if they ever did such quoting, it would not have rendered those unknown people reliable.¹ Thirdly, that person should not be weakened by *rijāl* scholars.

For instance, we see al-Kashshī praised Muḥammad ibn Sinān, since many great scholars, such as Ibn Shādhān, Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā al-‘Abīdī and ‘Ayyūb ibn Nūḥ narrated from him.² If a distinguished hadith scholar frequently narrated from a person whose reliability had not been weakened, it can be a sign of that person’s reliability since frequently quoting from an untrustworthy person is a negative point for hadith narrators³ and it may weaken the narrators themselves. It goes without saying that nobody wants to destroy one’s own reputation by quoting from weak sources.

It seems that the great scholars do not frequently quote from a narrator unless they know him well and are aware that no one

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1. It is clear that the narrations quoted by such untrustworthy person are not valid. Now the question arises that if they are not authentic, why did distinguished scholars quote from them? In response, it should be noted that it is true that such a narration is weak and invalid, but the goal is not that the jurists are supposed to act upon these weak narrations. Instead, the purpose of quoting such narrations is to compile them in a book that scholars can reflect upon them in future. If they find that the contents of those weak narrations are in accordance with the Qur’an and authentic narrations, then they will definitely not be considered as weak. Therefore, the purpose of quoting and preserving weak narrations is not to act on them, but the purpose is that if the scholars find any sign for the issuance of hadith from an Imam in future, they can consider them as *ṣaḥīḥ*.
 2. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma’rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, pp. 508-9.
 3. As mentioned above, frequently quoting from an unreliable person was a negative point. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid (d. 274/887) and Sahl ibn Zīyād (d. circa 868/1463), due to frequently quoting from unreliable people, were exiled from the city of Qum; see Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 349.

has questioned his reliability. It is clear that if they had known, they would have not frequently narrated from him.¹

In light of what has been mentioned, we can conclude that the great scholars of hadith frequently quoting from a person whose reliability was not weakened is a sign of that person's reliability. In the next section we proceed to discuss the next general confirmation of reliability.

THE COMPANIONS OF IMAM AL-ṢĀDIQ

When the fire of discord was raging between the Umayyad and the 'Abbāsid Caliphates, Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) took advantage of this relative freedom and introduced many students to the religious teachings of Islam. He trained many jurists and scholars of hadith through whom religious teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt were transmitted to the next generations. This was a great opportunity and tremendous success not destined for any other Imams who came before or after him. Imam al-Ṣādiq had reportedly four thousand students.

It seems that due to such outstanding achievement, some scholars of *rijāl* maintain that all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq are reliable unless we happen to be aware of their unreliability. Now, can we hold all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq as reliable? There are two views in this regard; some accepted this benchmark, whilst others disapproved of it. We discuss these two views below.

1. A limited number of Muslim scholars do not believe that frequently quoting distinguished jurists indicates the reliability of the person from whom they narrated. Therefore, they do not accept this standard unless we prove that these *Ajillā'* only narrated from reliable persons; see Dāwarī, *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 488-90; al-Ṣadr, *Nihāyah al-Dirāyah*, pp. 415-6.

FIRST VIEW

Some *rijāl* scholars maintain that being companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) is a sign of reliability.¹ It seems that this idea was first presented by Shaykh Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1692).² He appears to have borrowed the idea from al-Mufīd who, in his biographical account of Imam al-Ṣādiq, states:

فإنَّ أصحاب الحديث قد جمعوا أسماء الرواة عنه من الثقات على اختلافهم في الآراء والمقالات، فكانوا أربعة آلاف رجل.

The hadith specialists have collected the names of those who narrated [from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)], who were reliable despite the difference in views and beliefs, and they were four thousand people.³

Referring to what al-Mufīd states, Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī accepts the view that all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) are reliable unless we come to know of any evidence against their trustworthiness.⁴ Now the question remains: How did al-Mufīd know that the Imam had four thousand students? In response, it seems that he was informed of the names of the Imam's students through the book of Ibn ʿUqdah (d. 333/944) on *rijāl*. Although a copy of this book is no longer extant, al-Ṭūsī included a large part of the contents of Ibn ʿUqdah's book in his own work which he devoted to *rijāl*.⁵ However, other distinguished scholars, such

1. ʿAlī Namāzī, *Mustadrakāt ʿIlm Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 64, Jāmiʿah Mudarrisīn, Tehran 1993; Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, vol. 7, p. 71, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987.

2. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-Āmil fī ʿUlamāʾ Jabal ʿĀmil*, vol. 1, p. 83, Maktabah al-Andalus, Baghdad, n.d.

3. Muḥammad al-Mufīd, *al-Irshād fī Maʿrifah Hujaḡ Allāh ʿalā al-ʿIbād*, vol. 2, p. 179, Kungirah-yi Mufīd, Qum 1992.

4. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, vol. 1, p. 83.

5. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 17.

as Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī¹ (d. 508/1114), al-Ṭabirsī² (d. 535/1140), and Ibn Shahrāshūb³ (d. 588/1192), emphasized the significance of such view.

SECOND VIEW

The second view does not accept this form of general confirmation of reliability and maintains that relying on it is problematic due to the following reasons:

Firstly, it seems that all the Muslim scholars are not unanimous in considering all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) as reliable since some later scholars, e.g. al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī⁴ (d. 676/1277), Muḥammad al-ʿĀmilī,⁵ known as Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384) and Ḥusayn al-ʿĀmilī (d. 984/1576, Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's son)⁶, only mentioned the number of his students without labeling them as reliable.⁷ If all the Imam's students were reliable, they would have mentioned it. So it is possible that they did not believe in the reliability of all the students.

Secondly, this view that all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) are reliable, is similar to the views of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Ashʿarites, who believe in the trustworthiness of all the followers of Prophet Muḥammad.⁸ The Shiʿah theologians do not accept

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1. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī, *Rawḍah al-Wāʿiẓīn wa Baṣīrah al-Muttaʿiẓīn*, vol. 1, p. 207, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, Qum 1996.
 2. Faḍl ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭabrisī, *Iʿlām al-Warā bi-Aʿlām al-Hudā*, vol. 1, p. 535, Āl al-Bayat, Qum 1996.
 3. Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, vol. 4, p. 247, ʿAllāmah, Qum 1956.
 4. Jaʿfar ibn Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, *al-Muʿtabar fī Sharḥ al-Mukhtaṣar*, vol. 1, p. 26, Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ, Qum 1987.
 5. Muḥammad al-ʿĀmilī, *Dhikrā al-Shīʿah fī Aḥkām al-Sharīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 59, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988.
 6. Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī, *Wuṣūl al-Akhyār ilā Uṣūl al-Akbbār*, p. 60, Majmaʿ al-Dhakhāʾir al-Islāmiyyah, Qum 1981.
 7. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ʿIlm al-Rijāl*, pp. 325-7.
 8. Al-Khuʾī, *Muʿjam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 56.

the view of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Ash'arites because it contradicts the Holy Qur'an.¹

Thirdly, how can we accept that all the Imam's students are reliable while al-Ṭūsī weakened some of them?² Moreover, it seems that al-Ṭūsī does not consider all of the Imam's students reliable since he only confirmed the reliability of seven students and did not mention anything about the reliability of the rest.³

Fourthly, the statement of al-Mufīd indicates that the Imam's students had different views on beliefs and theological issues. They had different views on Divine predestination (*jabr*), free will (*ikhtiyār*), divine attributes (*ṣifāt*), whether they are united with His Essence (*'ayn al-dhāt*) or added to His Essence (*zā'id 'ala al-dhāt*), infallibility of the Imam, etc. So, how can we consider them all reliable while they had these very different perspectives?⁴

To summarize, the second view does not accept being a student of the Imam as a sign of reliability.

Having mentioned two views on the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq, we may present another view, that is, the Imam had many students and only four thousands of them were reliable; nonetheless, there would be no benefit in making such a claim. In other words, if we know that the Imam had ten thousand students, for instance, and only four thousand students were reliable, such information would not be of any use since there is no way of identifying reliable people from amongst ten thousand

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1. The companions of the Prophet in the Qur'an are of two classes. First, some were praised, such as the verses 9:100; 48:18, 29; 59:8. Second, some were censured, such as the verses, 63:1; 9:101, 47, 60; 33:12; 3:154; 49:6, 14; 8:16. If the companions were divided into categories, how can we consider all of them as reliable and trustworthy? For further details, see Ja'far Sobhani, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal*, vol. 1, pp. 261-380, Mu'assasah al-Imam al-Ṣādiq, Qum 2006.
 2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, pp. 158, 191, 237, 587, 289, 589.
 3. Akbar Turābī, *Paḏbūhishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 320, al-Muṣṭafā, Qum 2011.
 4. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, pp. 57-8; Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī, *Samā' al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 153, Walī-yi 'Aṣr, Qum 1998.

people; we do not know which of them were reliable. However, according to this view, there is no benefit in *rijāl* studies.

The next lesson will discuss more examples of general confirmations of reliability.

SUMMARY

This lesson examined three general confirmations of reliability.

Frequently Narrating from An Infallible

There are three views in this regard. Some hold that it can establish the narrator's reliability but there are scholars who disapprove of it. The third view considers it as a conditional sign of reliability. The first view, according to the hadith, holds that the multiplicity of narrations of a narrator from an Imam indicates his trustworthiness. In other words, whoever has more *narrations* possesses further trustworthiness. Moreover, frequently narrating from an Imam reasonably implies the narrator's reliability for two reasons: 1. It shows his interest and strong compassion for religious teachings, and consequently, it implies his reliability; 2. Since the Imam has narrated many narrations to him, it indicates that he was a trustworthy person in the eyes of the Imam. This means if he were not reliable, the Imam would not have narrated many narrations to him. The other scholars of *rijāl* hold that frequently narrating from an Infallible cannot be a sign of the narrator's reliability. That is to say, since the above two pieces of evidence could not convince them, they do not accept it as a sign of reliability. They maintain that the chain of hadith is weak. Furthermore, excessive narrating from an Imam does not logically imply the narrator's reliability, since history attests to the sinfulness of some of them. The third view holds that it can be a sign of reliability on the condition that we discover that most of his narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ*.

Frequently Quoting Distinguished Narrators

We know that many distinguished scholars quoted from some narrators for whom there is no evidence of for their reliability. The majority of scholars hold the view that the reliability of *marwī ‘anhu* can be established by adhering to the following three conditions. First, they should be amongst the great scholars of hadith (*Ajillā*). Second, they should frequently narrate from that person (*marwī ‘anhu*). Third, that person should not be weakened by the scholars of *rijāl*. The reason is that frequently quoting from an unreliable person is a negative point for narrators, and it actually weakens them. It is clear that nobody wants, through quoting from weak sources, to destroy his or her own reputation.

The Companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq

There are two opinions in this regard; some maintain that all the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq are reliable unless we happen to be aware of their unreliability, while the other scholars disapproved of such standard for some reasons. First, all the Muslim scholars are not unanimous about the issue that all the Imam’s students are reliable. Second, this view is very similar to the view of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and Ash‘arites who believe in the trustworthiness of all the Prophet’s followers. Third, al-Ṭūsī weakened some of the Imam’s students. Fourth, the statement of al-Mufīd indicates that the Imam’s students had different views. So, how can we consider them all to be reliable?

QUESTIONS

1. If someone frequently quotes from an Imam, can we consider this as a sign of reliability? There are three views, mention them.
2. If one of the distinguished scholars frequently narrates from a narrator whose reliability is not established, can we consider this a sign of that narrator’s reliability? Answer in detail.

3. What does “the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq,” as a general confirmation, mean? Who did first present it? Where is the root of such an idea?
4. How do opponents of the general confirmation of “the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)” reject it? According to the view of the opponents, is there any benefit in *rijāl* studies? Why?
5. If we accept the general confirmation of “the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq,” will there be any benefit in it for *rijāl* studies? Why?

Lesson SEVEN

General Confirmation



SCHOLARS OF CONSENSUS: PART ONE

As mentioned earlier, there are many examples for general confirmation. In this lesson and subsequent one, we aim to evaluate another example of general confirmation, that is, the scholars of consensus (*aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*).

The question of scholars of consensus is one of the most critical topics in *ʿilm al-rijāl*. The reason for the importance of this discussion is that the narrations of the scholars of *ijmāʿ* play a very significant role in Shiʿah jurisprudence, whereby most of the narrations in the domain of jurisprudence usually go back to them. They are distinguished narrators among the companions of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Imams. All Shiʿah scholars consider these narrators reliable and accord them a very high degree of credibility. However, there are different opinions about their level of reliability. This lesson and the next one aim to discuss this topic from three angles:

- The origin of the scholars of consensus;
- The numbers and names;
- The views of scholars on *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SCHOLARS OF CONSENSUS

The term *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* is a new expression established by later scholars (*mutaʾakkhbirīn*). However, its root and origin date back to the well-known *rijāl* specialist al-Kashshī (d. 340/951). Unfortunately, the book is not extant but al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067) has included parts of al-Kashshī's book in his *Maʿrifah Ikhtiyār*

al-Rijāl. Al-Kashshī, in three sections of his book, refers to this principle by the title of “*tasmīyah al-fuqahā min aṣḥāb al-Imam*” (the names of Jurists among the companions of the Imam). Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (1254-1320/1838-1902), in his extensive research, maintains that the great scholars, throughout centuries, have accepted the principle of *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*. He refers to al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Shahrāshūb (d. 588/1192), ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī (648-726/1250-1325), Ḥasan Ibn Dāwūd (673-707/1274-1307), Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384), Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 966/1558), Shaykh al-Bahāʾī (d. 1031/1621), Muḥaqqiq al-Dāmād (d. 1041/1631), Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī (d. 1070/1660), Fakr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī (d. 1085/1674), Muḥaqqiq al-Sabziwārī (d. 1090/1679), and Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (d. 1110/1698).¹

NUMBERS AND NAMES

Al-Kashshī classifies the distinguished students of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Imams into three categories and states that *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* are comprised of eighteen scholars. In the first category, he refers to six students of the Fifth and Sixth Imams and states;

أجمعت العصابة على تصديق هؤلاء الأولين من أصحاب أبي جعفر . عليه السلام . وأصحاب أبي عبد الله . عليه السلام . وانقادوا لهم بالفقه ، فقالوا : أفقه الأولين ستة : زرارة ، ومعروف بن خريز ، و بريد ، و أبو بصير الأسدي ، والفضيل بن يسار ، و محمد بن مسلم الطائفي .

1. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 7, pp. 12-20. It seems that, as Ayatollah Sobhani states, there would be no point in accepting the statements of such scholars since they did not do research on such consensus; instead, they relied on al-Kashshī's claim. Accordingly, the scholars' acceptance of such statements through centuries does not make such consensus strong, see Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 175.

The scholars have unanimously agreed upon the most distinguished students of Abī Ja‘far (as) and students of Abī ‘Abd Allāh (as). The scholars followed them in jurisprudence, saying the most knowledgeable of them are six: Zurārah, Ma‘rūf ibn Kharrahbūdh, Burayd, Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī,¹ al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasar, and Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Ṭa‘ifī.²

In this category, al-Kashshī mentioned the six common and most distinguished *aṣḥāb* of the Fifth and Sixth Imams. In the second category, he mentions six students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as):

أجمعت العصابة على تصحيح ما يصحّ عن هؤلاء وتصديقهم لما يقولون...
وهم ستة نفر: جميل بن دراج، و عبد الله بن مسكان، و عبد الله بن بكير،
وحماد بن عثمان، وحماد بن عيسى، وأبان بن عثمان.

The scholars have united in authenticating what has been authenticated from these six students and believed what they say ... they are six students: Jamīl ibn Darrāj, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muskān, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr, Ḥammād ibn ‘Uthmān, Ḥammād ibn ‘Isā, and Abān ibn ‘Uthmān.³

In the above statement, he cited six students of Imam al-Ṣādiq who are in terms of knowledge, lower than the previous category. In the third category, he refers to six common students of the Seventh and Eighth Imams. He states:

أجمع أصحابنا على تصحيح ما يصحّ عن هؤلاء وتصديقهم وأقرّوا لهم بالفقّه
والعلم، وهم ستة نفر... يونس بن عبد الرحمن، و صفوان بن يحيى بَيّاع السابري،

1. Instead of Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī, some name Abū Baṣīr al-Murādī, who is Layth ibn al-Bakhtarī, see al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 507. Both of them, however, as al-Najāshī states, are reliable (*thiqah*), see Ibid, vol. 1, p. 396.

2. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 507.

3. Ibid, p. 673.

ومحمد بن أبي عمير، وعبد الله بن مغيرة، والحسن بن محبوب، وأحمد بن محمد بن أبي نصر.

Our companions have united in authenticating what has been authenticated by them [these six people]. Believing them confirm their [six people] understanding (*fiqābah*) and knowledge. They are Yunis Ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā Bayyā‘ al-Sāburī, Muḥammad ibn Abī ‘Umayr, ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mughīrah, al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb,¹ and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr.²

The third category, in terms of knowledge, is lower than the other two categories. There is a minor disagreement about the names of people;³ however, in total, they are eighteen narrators. Now the important and critical question is about the interpretation of what al-Kashshī said above. There are four interpretations for al-Kashshī’s statements, which the next section aims to discuss in detail.

THE VIEWS OF SCHOLARS ON *AṢḤĀB AL-IJMĀ’*

As mentioned, al-Kashshī introduced eighteen prominent students of four Imams, known as *aṣḥāb al-ijmā’*, with slightly different statements. In the first category, he states:

أجمعت العصابة على تصديق هؤلاء الأولين

In the second and third ones, he says:

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1. Instead of Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, three other narrators have been mentioned; some name al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Faddāl. Followers of the next view prefer Fuḍālah ibn Ayyūb, and adherents of the third view name ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Īsā.
 2. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, pp. 830-1.
 3. see the footnotes of the first and third groups.

أَجْمَعَتِ الْعَصَابَةُ عَلَى تَصْحِيحِ مَا يَصَحَّ عَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ وَتَصْدِيقِهِمْ

The critical question is the meaning of the above two statements. The second statement consists of two parts, and they are:

1. أَجْمَعَتِ الْعَصَابَةُ عَلَى تَصْحِيحِ مَا

2. يَصَحَّ عَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ

The first part is crucial, and the accurate interpretation of *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* depends on its meaning. However, we begin our discussion with the second part due to its simplicity. I would like to make the second part clear with a hadith from al-Kulaynī.

قال الكليني:

1. عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

2. عَنْ أَبِيهِ

3. عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ

4. عَنْ ابْنِ أُذَيْنَةَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قَالَ...¹

Al-Kashshī's statement is a conditional sentence, comprised of two parts. The second part of this statement, i.e. "What has been authenticated by them [these six people]"², is the if-clause. The main clause is: "Authenticating what."³ What is the meaning of if-clause here? In response, al-Kulaynī narrates the above hadith from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) via four links (*wāsiṭah*). The third link is Ibn Abī 'Umayr, who is among the *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*. The meaning of the if-clause here is as follows: "if the narrators in the chain of hadith, from al-Kulaynī till Ibn Abī 'Umayr are reliable..."

1. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 451, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1986.

2. يَصَحَّ عَنْ هَؤُلَاءِ

3. أَجْمَعَتِ الْعَصَابَةُ عَلَى تَصْحِيحِ مَا

Therefore, the second part of al-Kashshī's phrase, i.e. the if-clause, signifies that when all the narrators, from the beginning up until one of the people of *ijmā'* are reliable (*thiqah*), we need to take another step which depends on the meaning of main-clause. This will be discussed in the next section.

The main question is the meaning of the first part and the main-clause of al-Kashshī's statement, that is, "Authenticating what".¹ The different perspectives stem from the meaning of conjunction, that is, *mā al-marwūl*. In response, there are two possible meanings for the *mā al-marwūl*: 1. Narrating (*ḥikāyah*); 2. Narration (*ḥadīth*). The scholars presented four interpretations from this phrase, and the next section will discuss them in turn.

The First Interpretation

The first view maintains that the conjunction *mā al-marwūl* refers to narrating and quoting (*ḥikāyah*) of those eighteen people, and we confirm their narrating (not narrations). It consequently means that they are honest in transmitting the hadith; that is, they are truthful. When we authenticate the narrating of Ibn Abī 'Umayr, as one of the people of *ijmā'* in the above hadith, it indicates that he is honest in transmitting the hadith, and consequently, he is truthful and reliable in quoting. In other words, Ibn Abī 'Umayr exactly transmitted what he had heard, but whether what he had heard was true or not is beyond the scope of this statement. Therefore, it does not imply the reliability of his *shaykh*, Ibn 'Uzaynah (the person from whom Ibn Abī 'Umayr narrated), nor does it indicate the authenticity of the hadith.

Let us discuss this view analytically by focusing on the above-mentioned hadith. Al-Kulaynī narrated it from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) via four links. In order to evaluate the hadith, there are two issues to be considered. First, we ought to prove the reliability of the first and second links via the *rijāl* sources. Having verified them, we need to assess the third and fourth links.

1. تصحيح ما

According to the first interpretation, there is no need to evaluate the third link, i.e. Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, as one of the people of *ijmā‘* since they are recognized as trustworthy. Nevertheless, we must evaluate the reliability of the fourth link. In other words, the first interpretation can only prove the reliability of the third link as a member of *ijmā‘*. However, the reliability of the third link does not necessitate the reliability of the fourth link. Therefore, as long as we do not prove the reliability of the fourth link, the hadith cannot be considered *ṣaḥīḥ*. Yes, if we prove it, then the hadith will be authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*).

To summarize, the first view asserts only the reliability of the members of *ijmā‘*. It indicates neither the authenticity of hadith nor the reliability of the person from whom the scholars of consensus narrated (*marwī ‘anhu*).

It might be said that the *mā al-mawṣūl* refers to the second possible meaning, that is, the narration (*ḥadīth*). So, it means that all the narrations of those eighteen people are *ṣaḥīḥ*. In response, al-Kashshī has only described the first group¹ with some admiring phrases, e.g. “the most distinguished students of Imam al-Bāqir (as) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)” and “the scholars followed them in jurisprudence”² and “the most knowledgeable.”³ If *mā al-mawṣūl* in “authenticating what” in the second and third group refers to the narrations (*aḥādīth*) of these people, al-Kashshī should have mentioned such phrase to the first group as well, since he believes the first group are more knowledgeable than the second and third groups. In other words, since al-Kashshī did not describe the first group with the phrase “authenticating what” while they were the most knowledgeable, it indicates that the phrase “confirming the most distinguished students”⁴ denotes their narrating. Therefore,

1. The students of the Fifth and Sixth Imams.

2. هؤلاء الأولين من أصحاب أبي جعفر . عليه السَّلام . وأصحاب أبي عبد الله . عليه السَّلام .

وانقادوا لهم بالفقه

3. أفقه الأولين

4. تصديق هؤلاء الأولين من أصحاب

according to the first interpretation, those eighteen people are honest in transmitting the *ahādīth*, and consequently, truthful and reliable. They exactly transmitted what they heard.

Let us glance at the previous Shi‘ah scholars’ views and see how they interpreted al-Kashshī’s three statements. It seems that they referred to the first interpretation, i.e. that the people of *ijmā‘* are truthful in narrating. For instance, Ibn Shahrāshūb, who was nearly contemporaneous with al-Kashshī, refers to the first interpretation when he describes the second¹ and third groups.² Instead of using *mā al-mawṣūl*³, he states that “the scholars have united in confirming six jurisprudents,”⁴ which denotes they are reliable. In other words, Ibn Sharāshūb interprets al-Kashshī’s phrase “authenticating what”⁵ as authenticating these people (not their narrations), and it clearly refers to the first interpretation.

Therefore, Ibn Sharāshūb’s interpretation is good evidence for the followers of the first interpretation, as he interprets al-Kashshī’s phrase “authenticating what”⁶ as authenticating these people. It clearly supports the first view.

Furthermore, Ibn Dāwūd, one of the specialists of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, interpreted al-Kashshī’s three statements according to the first interpretation. He states:

أجمعت الصحابة على ثمانية عشر رجلا فلم يختلفوا في تعظيمهم غير أنهم
يتفاوتون ثلاثة درج

-
1. The students of the Sixth Imam.
 2. The students of the Seventh and Eighth Imams.
 3. Which may imply two meanings: narrating and narration.
 4. واجتمعت العصابة على تصديق ستة من فقهاء. Ibn Sharāshūb, *Manāqib*, vol. 4, pp. 280, 325.

5. أجمعت العصابة على تصحيح ما

6. أجمعت العصابة على تصحيح ما

The scholars have united on eighteen men, and they did not differ in their veneration except that they differed [in] three degrees.¹

What Ibn Dāwūd understands from al-Kashshī is precisely the first meaning. Like Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (1007-1090/1598-1680),² some other scholars, such as Sayyid ‘Alī al-Tabāṭabā’ī (1161-1231/1748-1815), the author of *Riyāḍ al-Masā’il*,³ and Ayatollah Khomeini⁴ supported this interpretation from al-Kashshī’s statements.

It is worth noting that this interpretation cannot consider *aṣḥāb al-ijmā’* as a general confirmation of reliability (*al-tawthīq al-‘āmm*), since it does not indicate the reliability of the *mashā’ikh* of those eighteen people. Therefore, the interpretation in question bears no benefit to *rijāl* studies.

In conclusion, the understanding of the previous scholars indicates that the statements of al-Kashshī refer to the first meaning; that is, those eighteen scholars are honest in transmitting the hadith, and consequently, they are reliable. It indicates neither the reliability of their *marwī ‘anhu* (those from whom they narrated) nor the authenticity of their narrations.

As mentioned earlier, there are four interpretations of al-Kashshī’s statements on the people of *ijmā’*. Now we turn to discuss the second interpretation. Nevertheless, before that, a short introduction should be noted here. The scholars of *rijāl* divided the trend of hadith studies into two periods: a. before Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 673/1274): b. after him.

1. Ḥasan Ibn Dawūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, p. 384, Tehran University, Tehran 1963.

2. Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Wāfi*, vol. 1, p. 27.

3. Māzandarānī al-Ḥā’irī, *Muntaba al-Maqāl fī Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 56.

4. Ayatollah Khomeini, *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah*, vol. 1, pp. 345-6, Hikmat, Qum 1956.

In the first period, many external pieces of evidence were available to prove the authenticity of the hadith. In that era, the only acceptable standard for the correctness of hadith was external evidence. Accordingly, they divided the hadith into *ṣaḥīḥ* and *non-ṣaḥīḥ*. So, for them, the *ṣaḥīḥ* is a hadith whose issuance from the Imam is proved by external evidence. There are many external signs, such as:

- The hadith agrees with the Qur'an;
- It agrees with the hadith *mutawātir*;
- It agrees with *ijmā'*;
- The hadith source is from a principle (*aṣl*)¹, an acceptable author or a book confirmed by the Imam.

For them, the characteristics of narrators were not significant. If they found some external signs for issuance of the hadith, they considered it as *ṣaḥīḥ*, whether the narrators were reliable or not, and vice versa. It was the method adopted by early scholars.

However, after Ibn Ṭāwūs, these external signs were diminishing. So, the scholars of *rijāl* attempted to find another standard for the evaluation of *hadith*. They realized that the best standard is internal evidence, that is, the characteristics of narrators, such as trustworthiness, retentiveness and faith. Accordingly, they divided the hadith into four categories:

- *Ṣaḥīḥ*, a narration in which all its narrators are trustworthy and Imami;
- *Ḥasan*, a narration in which all its narrators are Imami, but there is no evidence for the trustworthiness of all or some of them. However, they were praised (*mamdūḥ*);
- *Muwaththaq*, a narration in which all its narrators (or some of them) are non-Imāmī but all reliable;
- *Da'īf*, when the narrators are untrustworthy or unknown.

1. *Aṣl* in this sense, denotes a hadith book for which the author either narrated directly from the Imam or narrated on the authority of a person who heard them from the Imam.

It is the method adopted by later scholars. As we see, the early and later scholars have different standards for the classification of hadith, and consequently, the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ* is different to them. The relation between *ṣaḥīḥ* in early and later scholars' eyes is one of partial inclusion (*'umūm wa khusūṣ min wajh*).

Having familiarized ourselves with this introduction, we proceed to discuss the second interpretation of al-Kashshī's statements.

Second Interpretation

This interpretation maintains that *mā al-mawṣūl* in "authenticating what"¹ refers to narration (*ḥadīth*). It holds that since al-Kashshī belonged to the time of early scholars, we have to interpret the phrase "authenticating what"² based on the definition of the term *ṣaḥīḥ* at that time. Accordingly, it means that the narrations of those eighteen people, due to external evidence, are *ṣaḥīḥ*; that is, we are confident in their issuance from Imams (*maqṭū' al-ṣudūr*).³ This interpretation implies the reliability of those eighteen people as well. In other words, the second interpretation indicates three things: a. they are reliable (*thiqah*); b. their narrations are *maqṭū' al-ṣudūr*; c. it does not necessitate the reliability of the person from whom they narrated (*marwī 'anhu*)

Let us discuss the second interpretation analytically by focusing on the above-mentioned hadith. Al-Kulaynī narrated a hadith of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) via four links. Contrary to the previous view, there is only one obligation: verification of the reliability of the first and second links via the *rijāl* sources. Having verified them, *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'* inform us that the third link, that is, Ibn Abī 'Umayr, is one of the people of *ijmā'*, and his narration is *maqṭū'*

1. تصحيح ما

2. تصحيح ما

3. Muḥammad Bāqir Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshiḥ al-Samāwiyyah*, p. 46, Dār al-Khilāfah, Qum 1893; see also al-Māzandarānī al-Ḥā'irī, *Muntaha al-Maqāl fī Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 50.

al-ṣudūr. In other words, since he had access to some external evidence, it convinced him in the issuance of the hadith from Imam. So, from the perspective of Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, the hadith was definitely issued by the Imam.

The important question is whether there is any need to assess the fourth link. In response, it could be said that since the third link can convince us in the issuance of hadith from the Imam, there is no need to investigate the reliability of the fourth link, that is, Ibn ‘Uzaynah. So, the hadith is *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr* and *ṣaḥīḥ*, whether the narrators between the Imam and the people of *ijmā‘* were *thiqah* or not. In other words, awareness of the reliability or unreliability of the fourth link does not affect the authenticity of hadith.

Similarities and Dissimilarities between the Two Interpretations

In the light of what was mentioned above, we can conclude that there are two similarities between the first and second interpretations: a. all eighteen people are reliable; b. it does not indicate the reliability of their *mashā’ikh*. The difference between them is that, the first interpretation holds that the narration is *ṣaḥīḥ (ḥujjah)* on the condition that their *mashā’ikh* are reliable. So, it does not imply the definiteness of the issuance of hadith from Imam. The second one holds that the hadith, due to external signs, is *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*, irrespective of the reliability of their *mashā’ikh*.

It is worth mentioning that the second interpretation, like the previous one, cannot consider *aṣḥāb al-ijmā‘* as a general confirmation of reliability (*al-tawthīq al-‘āmm*). Therefore, there is no benefit in it for *rijāl* studies, since it does not prove the reliability of the *mashā’ikh* of the people of *ijmā‘*.

In conclusion, the second interpretation maintains that the *mā al-mawṣūl* in “authenticating what” should be interpreted according to early scholars’ view. So, it refers to the narration. Such a view indicates three things: a. they are reliable; b. the narrations are *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*; c. it does not indicate the reliability of their

mashā'ikh. Thus, it means that the narrations of those eighteen people, due to external signs, are *maqtū' al-ṣudūr*.

Critique of the Second Interpretation

This interpretation is acceptable on condition that the scholars before al-Kashshī have already investigated those eighteen people's narrations and realized that they always relied upon external evidence. However, evaluating their narrations had been nearly impossible for them for two reasons. Firstly, the number of their narrations are significant and, as we said, most of the Shi'ah narrations in the realm of jurisprudence were traced back to them. Secondly, they were not compiled in a specific book; instead, they were scattered in many books at that time. It is seemingly impossible to believe that the scholars before al-Kashshī had examined thousands and thousands of narrations of those eighteen people scattered in many books and realized that they were enclosed by external evidence.¹ If all their narrations were in one available book, it may have been possible for them to assess whether they were enclosed with external signs or not. Therefore, this interpretation was not practical for them.

As mentioned earlier, there are four interpretations for the people of consensus. The next lesson will address the third and fourth interpretations.

SUMMARY

The discussion on scholars of consensus (*aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*) constitutes one of the most critical topics in *'ilm al-rijāl*. It is a new term devised by later scholars. However, its root and origin date back to the well-known *rijāl* specialist al-Kashshī. Later the great scholars, throughout the centuries, have accepted this principle. Al-Kashshī classifies the distinguished students

1. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 77; see also al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 7, p. 383.

of the four Imams into three categories and states in a way that they are eighteen narrators. The Shi'ah scholars consider these narrators reliable and accord a very high degree of credibility to them. However, there are different opinions about their level of trust. The scholars presented four interpretations. The first view maintains that the conjunction *mā al-marwṣūl* refers to the narrating of those eighteen people. In other words, they are honest in transmitting the hadith, and consequently, they are reliable. However, it implies neither the reliability of the person from whom they narrated nor the authenticity of hadith. This interpretation was supported by many scholars.

The second interpretation maintains that the *mā al-marwṣūl* in “authenticating what” refers to narration (*ḥadīth*). Since al-Kashshī lived in the time of early scholars, we have to interpret the phrase “authenticating what” based on the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ* as used at the time. So, it means that the narrations of those eighteen people, due to external evidence, are *ṣaḥīḥ*, and they were confident in the issuance of the narrations from Imams (*maqṭū' al-ṣudūr*). This interpretation indicates three things: a. they are reliable (*thiqah*); b. their narrations are *maqṭū' al-ṣudūr*; c. it does not imply the reliability of the person from whom they narrated (*marwī 'anhu*).

The second interpretation may pose a challenge to accepting that the scholars before al-Kashshī had already assessed those eighteen people's narrations and realized that they had relied upon external signs. The reason for the impossibility lies in two things: firstly, the number of their narrations is significant; secondly, they were not compiled in a specific book; instead, they were spread in many books.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the general meaning of *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*? Is it a new term? If it is not new, what was the previous term?

2. The term “authentication what has been authenticated” consists of two parts. Illustrate the second part by a hadith.

تصحيح ما يصح عنهم

3. What is the first interpretation for the *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*?
4. What is the second interpretation for the *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*?
5. What is the similarity and dissimilarity between the first and second interpretations?
6. What is the standard for the evaluation of hadith for early and later scholars? Why did they have different standards?

Lesson EIGHT

General Confirmation



SCHOLARS OF CONSENSUS: PART TWO

As mentioned in the previous lesson, the scholars of consensus is one of the examples of the general confirmation. They are eighteen narrators from among the companions of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Imams. The Shi'ah scholars consider them reliable and accord a very high degree of credibility to them. However, there are different opinions about their level of trust.

As mentioned, al-Kashshī introduced prominent students of four Imams, known as *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*, in the three groups. The critical question is the meaning “authenticating what”¹ in these statements. The scholars of *rijāl* draw four interpretations from them. The previous lesson discussed the first and second interpretations:

- The first view only indicates the reliability of the members of *ijmā'*. It asserts neither the authenticity of their narrations nor the reliability of the person from whom the scholars of consensus narrated (*marwī 'anhu*).
- The second view indicates the following:
 1. They are reliable;
 2. Their narrations are *maqṭū' al-ṣudūr*;
 3. It does not necessitate the reliability of the person from whom they narrated (*marwī 'anhu*).

This lesson aims to study the third and fourth interpretations of al-Kashshī's statements.

1. تصحيح ما

THIRD INTERPRETATION

The third interpretation, like the previous one, maintains that *mā al-mawṣūl* in “authenticating what”¹ refers to narration (*ḥadīth*). Contrary to the second interpretation, the third view holds that the narrations of those eighteen people, due to internal evidence, are *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*). It means that the members of *ijmāʿ* were reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals. Ḥusayn al-Nūrī tries to prove this perspective, stating that al-Kashshī intended to present the view that the Shiʿah scholars have been unanimous on the reliability of those eighteen members of *ijmāʿ* who, due to their commitment, only narrated from reliable people.

To justify his view, al-Nūrī likens those eighteen people to *mashāʾikh al-thiqāt*. They are three reliable narrators: Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā, al-Bazanṭī, and Muḥammad Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, that always narrate from reliable people.² Al-Nūrī maintains that if we accept that these three narrators have such commitment, it will pave the way to accepting that the members of *ijmāʿ* also narrate only from reliable people.³

One may question that what encouraged al-Nūrī to be drawn to the third interpretation? In response, he states that the acceptance of the second interpretation was nearly impossible for two reasons. Firstly, the number of their narrations is significant and most of the Shiʿah narrations in the realm of jurisprudence dated back to them. Secondly, they were not compiled in a specific book; instead, they were spread over many books at that time. It is seemingly impossible to believe that the scholars before al-Kashshī have examined thousands and thousands of narrations of those eighteen people, scattered in many books, and realized that they were enclosed by external evidence. However, the third interpretation does not suffer from such difficulty. He added that, via thorough research, it is possible to realize

1. تصحيح ما

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 154.

3. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasāʾil*, vol. 7, p. 27.

the commitment of *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* that they only quoted from reliable people.¹ It seems that the impossibility of the second interpretation has led al-Nūrī to lean to the third interpretation.

However, this view indicates the following:

1. *Aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* are reliable people;
2. The person from whom they narrated is reliable (*marwī ʿanhu*);
3. Their narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*).

Let us discuss the third view analytically by focusing on the hadith mentioned in the previous lesson.

قال الكليني:

1. عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

2. عَنْ أَبِيهِ

3. عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ

4. عَنْ ابْنِ أُذَيْنَةَ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) قال...²

Al-Kulaynī narrated the hadith of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) through four links. As with the previous viewpoint, there is one duty: just verification of the reliability of the first and second links via the books of *rijāl*. Having verified them, the principle of *ijmāʿ* informs us that the third link, that is, Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, who is one of the people of *ijmāʿ*, is reliable, and always narrates from reliable people, and thus the narration is *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*). In other words, since Ibn Abī ʿUmayr is reliable, and his *marwī ʿanhu*, i.e. Ibn ʿUzaynah, is also reliable, consequently the hadith is authentic (*ḥujjah*).

It is worth noting that since the third interpretation can prove the reliability of all the *mashāʾikh* of those eighteen people, *aṣḥāb*

1. Ibid, p. 27

2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 451.

al-ijmāʿ can be considered as a general confirmation of reliability. There are thus benefits in it for *rijāl* studies.

There are two differences between the second and third interpretations. In the second one, the narration is *ṣaḥīḥ* due to external evidence, while the third one is *ṣaḥīḥ* due to internal evidence. In other words, the second interpretation indicates that the hadith is *maqtūʿ al-ṣudūr*, and *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* were confident in the issuance of narrations from the Imam. However, the third view signifies that *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ* only selected the narrations for which a proof (*ḥujjah*) existed between themselves and their Lord. Thus, they do not claim the definite issuance of their narrations from the Imam; instead, they believe in their narrations' credibility (*ḥujjiyyah*).

Another difference is that the second interpretation cannot be considered as one of the *al-tawthīqah al-ʿāmm*, since it does not prove the reliability of *marwī ʿanhu*. However, it is one of the general confirmations of reliability according to the third interpretation.

To summarize, the third view maintains that *mā al-marwūl* in "authenticating what" refers to the narration, and it means that their narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ* due to internal evidence. Such a view indicates the following:

1. They are reliable;
2. They always narrate from reliable people;
3. It implies the authenticity (*ḥujjiyyah*) of the narration.

The third interpretation was critiqued by some scholars which will be discussed in the next section.

Critique of the Third Interpretation

Some contemporary scholars argued against al-Nūrī's interpretation, and we mention them in turn.

1. If we accept that those eighteen people's narrations are always *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*) since they never narrate from weak and unknown (*majhūl*) people, this could actually be seen as a negative point for them, in that it compels them to refrain from quoting widely transmitted (*mutawātir*)¹ or abundant (*mustafīḍ*)² narrations when their narrators are weak. However, there is no reason to ignore the *mutawātir* or *mustafīḍ* narrations, when their narrators are weak³ (*da'if*), unknown⁴ (*majhūl*) or neglected⁵ (*muhmal*) because there is no condition for the reliability of their narrators. We know that the scholars generally used to narrate from weak or unknown narrators when narrations were *mustafīḍ* and *mutawātir*.⁶
2. Al-Nūrī believes that, in the eyes of al-Kashshī, those eighteen people and their *mashā'ikh* are reliable. The question, however, is that al-Kashshī's phraseology clearly does not imply this meaning. In other words, al-Kashshī should have formed his statement in a way that conveyed the same meaning that al-Nūrī wanted. Al-Kashshī, for instance, should have said that "the scholars have been unanimous on the reliability of those eighteen people and the one from whom they narrate,"⁷

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1. *Mutawātir* is a hadith whose number of narrators in every level of the transmission chain is such that it is usually impossible for that hadith to be fabricated. 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Miqbās al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, vol. 1, pp. 89-90, Intishārāt-i Dalil-i Mā, Qum 2006.
 2. *Mustafīḍ* is a hadith whose number of narrators is three or more, but the number does not reach the level of a *mutawātir* one.
 3. A weak narrator is one who has been weakened by one of the scholars of *rijāl*, such as al-Najāshī.
 4. *Majhūl* narrator is one whose name is not mentioned in the books of *rijāl* or is mentioned, but it is said that we do not know him, see Sobhani, *Dirāsāt fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, p. 119.
 5. A *muhmal* narrator is a narrator whose name is mentioned in the books of *rijāl*, but he is neither praised nor censured. Ibid, p. 118.
 6. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 192.

7. «أجمعت العصابة على وثاقة من نقل عنه واحد من هؤلاء»

and so on. However, we know that al-Kashshī's statements do not verbally indicate al-Nūrī's view.¹

3. As mentioned above, al-Nūrī claimed that being aware that the external signs enclosing all the narrations of *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'* were not nearly practical to the scholars in the past due to two reasons: abundance of their narrations and spreading them in different books. Now the important question is: how did they realize that all of them were confirmed by external evidence? However, for al-Nūrī, the third interpretation does not suffer from such a difficulty. He added that, via thorough research, we can determine that they always quoted from reliable people.²

It can be argued that, it would be hard likewise to believe that the scholars of *rijāl*, in the time of al-Kashshī, investigated all the narrations of those eighteen people and concluded that they always narrate from reliable people. How did they know the reliability of *marwī* 'anhu while there was no *rijāl* book available for the scholars at that time to be aware of the names and qualities of the narrators?³

4. Another criticism against al-Nūrī is that we do not accept that the members of *ijmā'* always narrate from reliable people, rather sometimes they narrated from weak individuals.⁴ For instance, Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb,⁵ Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī⁶ and 'Abd Allāh ibn Mughīrah,⁷ as the members of *ijmā'* narrated from Mufaḍḍal ibn Ṣāliḥ whom al-Najāshī weakened.⁸ Moreover,

1. Ibid, p. 193.

2. Al-Nūrī, *Khatimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 7, 27.

3. Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 193

4. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 63-4.

5. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 4. 188; Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 136, Dār al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, Tehran 1986.

6. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 208, vol. 3, p. 231, vol. 4, p. 502, vol. 7, pp. 44, 318.

7. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, p. 46.

8. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 128.

while ‘Amr ibn Shimr was weakened by al-Najāshī,¹ Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb² and ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mughīrah³ narrated from him. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that the eighteen members of *ijmā‘*, due to their commitment, always narrated from reliable people.

As we said, there are four interpretations of al-Kashshī’s statements; three of them have now been discussed and we will now aim to discuss the fourth one.

FOURTH INTERPRETATION

As we said, al-Kashshī classifies the distinguished students of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Imams into three groups. In the first group, he refers to six students of Imam al-Bāqir (as) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). The second group refers to six students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as). Six students of the Seventh and Eighth Imams were mentioned in the third group. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shaftī (1175-1260/1761-1844) made a distinction between the first group with the second and third groups. The first group refers to the narration (*ḥadīth*), and the other two groups refer to narrating (*ḥikāyah*). Now we can discuss both in turn.

In the eyes of al-Shaftī, the first group refers to hadith, in that we believe in their narrations. In other words, the first statement, “اجمعت العصابة على تصديق هؤلاء الاولين”, indicates that the scholars were confident in the issuance of the narrations of those six reliable narrators from the Imam (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). The reason for the authenticity (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*) of their narrations is that those six people are reliable and narrated directly from the Imam. There is thus no doubt in the issuance of hadith from the Imam (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). Al-Shaftī added that this is why al-Kashshī

1. Ibid, p. 128.

2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, pp. 119, 208, 251.

3. Ibid, vol. 6, p. 301.

sufficed by saying “believing in them”¹ for the first group and not “authenticating what.”² Al-Shaftī does not discuss the reliability or unreliability of *mashā’ikh* (*marwī ‘anhu*) of those six narrators since there is no link between them and the Imam, as they directly narrated from him.

However, the second and third groups refer to the narrating (*ḥikāyah*) in that those narrators are reliable and their *Mashā’ikh* (*marwī ‘anhu*) to the Imam are reliable as well. It indicates that their narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*) due to the reliability of those twelve students and the reliability of the person from whom they narrated. In the eyes of al-Shaftī, since these two groups usually do not narrate directly from the Imam, we need to accept that those twelve students and their teachers (up to the Imam) are reliable. That is why al-Kashshī, regarding the second and third groups, says, “authenticating what,”³ and not “believing in them.”⁴ In other words, when the people of *ijmā’* directly narrate from the Imam, al-Kashshī refers to “believing in them,”⁵ and when they indirectly narrate from the Imam, he refers to “authenticating what has been authenticated.”⁶ This compelled al-Kashshī to present his idea in two different clauses.⁷

It is worth noting that al-Shaftī’s first group cannot establish the general confirmation of reliability as they narrated directly from the Imam. Nevertheless, the second group can establish

1. علی تصدیق هؤلاء

2. علی تصحیح ما

3. علی تصحیح ما

4. علی تصحیح ما

5. علی تصدیق هؤلاء

6. علی تصحیح ما یصحّ عن هؤلاء

7. They are علی تصحیح ما یصحّ عن هؤلاء & علی تصدیق هؤلاء ; see Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā’il al-Rijālīyyah*, pp. 42-43, Maktabah Masjid Sayyid, Isfahan 1996.

al-tawthīq al-‘āmm, since it indicates the reliability of the *mashā’ikh* of twelve people of *aṣḥāb al-ijmā’*.

To summarize, al-Shaftī divided al-Kashshī’s statements into two groups: a. those narrated directly from the Imam; b. those usually narrated indirectly from the Imam. In the first group, the statement refers to *ḥadīth*, in that their narrations are *maqṭū‘ al-ṣudūr*, since they are reliable and received the ḥadīth from the Imam directly. In the second group, it refers to narrating (*ḥikāyah*), in that they are truthful in transmitting the ḥadīth and their teachers (*mashā’ikh*) are reliable as well. Their narrations are thus *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*).

Critique of the Fourth Interpretation

It seems that there are two arguments against al-Shaftī’s interpretation.

Firstly, it appears that, in the eyes of al-Shaftī, there are two types of consensus: 1. One for the first group, which they always narrate directly from the Imams; 2. The other one for the second group, which they usually narrate indirectly from the Imams. Such a view implies that the basis of the first *ijmā’* is narration (*ḥadīth*), and that of the other is narrating (*ḥikāyah*). However, it seems that al-Kashshī’s three statements refer to one *ijmā’*. If the basis of *ijmā’* is narration, we should take this meaning for both groups. Likewise, if the basis of *ijmā’* is narrating, we need to apply this meaning to both groups. Since there is only one *ijmā’*, we should consider one meaning, whether narration or narrating, for both groups.

Secondly, al-Shaftī’s claims that the first group always directly narrates from the Imam (without any link) is incomplete. For instance, Zurārah, from the first group, narrated indirectly from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) via fourteen *mashā’ikh*.¹ For instance,

1. They are Abū al-Khaṭṭāb, Bukayr, al-Ḥasan al-Bazzāz, al-Ḥasan ibn al-Sirrī, Ḥumrān, Ḥumrān ibn A‘yan, Sālīm ibn Abī Ḥaṣṣah, ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibn ‘Utbah al-Hāshimī, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Ajlan, Abd al-Malik, ‘Abd al-Wāḥid ibn al-Mukhtār al-Anṣārī, ‘Umar ibn Ḥanzalah,

عَلِيٍّ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ ابْنِ حُبُوبٍ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ سَالِمٍ عَنْ زُرَّارَةَ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ الْبَرَّازِ
 قَالَ قَالَ لِي أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَ لَا أُخْبِرُكَ بِأَشَدِّ مَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ ثَلَاثٌ
 قُلْتُ بَلَى قَالَ إِنْصَافُ النَّاسِ مِنْ تَغْسِيكَ وَ مُوَاسَاةُكَ أَخَاكَ وَ ذِكْرُ اللَّهِ فِي كُلِّ
 مَوْطِنٍ.¹

In this hadith, Zurārḥ narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) via al-Ḥasan al-Bazzāz. Moreover, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, as one of *aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ*² narrated indirectly from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) through six *mashāʾikh*³ and likewise Burayd ibn Muʿāwiyah via one link.⁴ The others also narrated indirectly from the Imam. Therefore, the fact that the first group always directly narrates from the Imam is not accurate.⁴

The next lesson will discuss further examples for the general confirmation of reliability.

SUMMARY

Aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ are eighteen renowned companions of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Imams. The Shiʿah scholars consider them reliable and accord a very high degree of credibility to them. However, there are four opinions about their level of trust. Two views were discussed in the previous lesson. The third interpretation maintains that the *mā al-marwūl* in “authenticating what” refers to the narration, in that those eighteen people’s narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ* (*ḥujjah*) due to internal evidence. This view

al-Fuḍayl, Muḥammad ibn Muslim and al-Yasaʿ, see Abū al-Qāsim al-Khuʿī, *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 8, pp. 254-5, Dār al-Zahrāʾ, Beirut 1992.

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 145.

2. Abū al-Qāsim al-Khuʿī, *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 18, p. 246, Dār al-Zahrāʾ, Beirut 1992.

3. Ibid, vol. 15, p. 160.

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ʿIlm al-Rijāl*, pp. 197-8.

holds that it is possible to ascertain the reliability of the people from whom they narrated. In other words, this view indicates the following:

1. They are reliable;
2. The person from whom they narrated is reliable (*marwī ‘anhu*);
3. Their narrations are *ḥujjah*.

The difference between the second and third interpretations is clear. In the second one, the narration is *maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr* due to external evidence, and in the third interpretation, their narrations are *ḥujjah* due to internal evidence. However, the third interpretation was scrutinized by some scholars whose views are as follows:

First, it is difficult to accept that *aṣḥāb al-ijmā‘* always narrated from reliable people since it would have actually been a negative point for them.

Second, if al-Kashshī wanted to say that those people and the people from whom they narrated were always reliable, he would have said, “the scholars have been unanimous on the reliability of those eighteen people and the ones from whom they narrate,” and he would have thus presented his view clearly.

Third, it is also very hard to believe that the scholars of *rijāl* who were contemporaneous with al-Kashshī investigated all the narrations of those eighteen people and concluded that they all always narrated from reliable people.

Fourth, we do not accept that the members of *ijmā‘* always narrated from reliable people since they sometimes narrated from weak people.

The fourth interpretation distinguished the first group from the second and third groups. The first group refers to narration, in that their narrations are *ṣaḥīḥ* (*maqtū‘ al-ṣudūr*). The reason for the authenticity (*qaṭ‘ī al-ṣudūr*) of their narrations is that those six people always narrated directly from the Imam. The second and third groups refer to narrating, in that they are truthful in

transmitting the *ḥadīth* and also their *mashā'ikh* up to the Imam are reliable. As a result, their narrations are *ḥujjah*.

It seems that there are two arguments against such interpretation.

First, it appears that, according to the fourth view, there are two consensuses:

1. One for the first group, which they narrated directly from the Imams;
2. Another for the second group, which they mostly narrated indirectly from the Imams. However, it seems that al-Kashshī's three statements refer to one *ijmā'*.

Second, the belief that the first group always directly narrated from the Imam (without any link) is incomplete.

QUESTIONS

1. What is al-Nūrī's view on *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*? What encouraged him to lean to this view?
2. Can al-Nūrī's view establish general confirmation of reliability? If so, why?
3. Is al-Nūrī's view acceptable? If so, why?
4. What is al-Shaftī's view on *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*?

Lesson NINE

General Confirmation



RELIABLE *MASHĀ'IKH* (*MASHĀ'IKH AL-THIQĀT*)

The previous two lessons discussed *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*, and the different interpretations among scholars. This lesson aims to discuss and analyze another general confirmation of reliability, that is, the reliable *mashā'ikh* (*mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*). It means that if one of these *mashā'ikh* were to quote a hadith from a person, it would be a sign of the reliability of that person. The scholars of *rijāl*, in the chapter of *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, usually refer to this general rule, according to which:

لا يروون و لا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

They do not narrate or mention a discontinued hadith unless from a reliable person.

Three important issues should be discussed here:

- Who are they?
- What is the benefit of such a rule?
- Where is the root of this rule?

In reply to the first question, they are three well-known scholars: Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr (d. 217/832), Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā Bayyā' al-Sāburī (d. 210/825) and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanī (d. 221/835).

In response to the second question, there are two outcomes: the benefits to *rijāl* and jurisprudential studies.

- The benefits to *rijāl* studies: The benefit to *rijāl* studies is that whenever they quote a hadith from a person, it would signify that person's reliability. In other words, if that person is unknown¹ (*majhūl*) or neglected² (*muhmal*), he is considered as reliable according to this principle. In light of this principle, all the narrators from whom these three people quoted will be identified as reliable.
- The jurisprudential benefits: Discontinued³ (*mursal*, pl. *marāsīl*) narrations of these three people will be equally as valid as *masānīd* (singular: *musnad*), i.e.⁴ this principle can validate their *marāsīl*.

Regarding the third question, it seems that the basis of this principle stemmed from al-Ṭūsī's *Uddah al-Uṣūl*. He states that when two narrations are in conflict, we should see how the narrators quoted the hadith. If one of them is *mursal* and the other is *musnad*, we should consider the qualities of the *mursal* narrator through the books of *rijāl*. If we do not know the commitment of the *mursal* narrator, i.e. whether he always narrates from reliable or unreliable people, we should prefer the *musnad* over the *mursal* narration. And if we know that the narrator of the *mursal* has such commitment that he always narrates from reliable people, then his *mursal* narration will be as valid as the *musnad*. Therefore, both contradicting *mursal* and *musnad* are equal, and we cannot prefer the *musnad* over *mursal*. Al-Ṭūsī added that since Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr always narrated from reliable people, the

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1. A *Majhūl* narrator is one whose name is not mentioned in *rijāl* books or it is mentioned but it is said that he is not known to *rijāl* scholars; see Sobhani, *Dirāsāt fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, p. 119.
 2. A *muhmal* narrator is a narrator whose name is mentioned in *rijāl* books but no one has praised or censured him; see *ibid.* p. 118.
 3. The name of one or more narrators is not mentioned in the chain of hadith. Such hadith is weak.
 4. The names of all narrators including the Imam is mentioned in the chain of hadith.

Shi'ah scholars consider the *marāsīl* of these three scholars as valid as the *masānīd* of the others.¹

Al-Ṭūsī's statement leads us to two essential points:

- If someone narrates a *mursal* narration and he is so careful and cautious that we know that he always quotes from reliable people, his *mursal* narrations will be valid;
- Amongst the cautious narrators, there is no doubt that Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā, and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr always narrated from reliable people.

Having referred to the principle, it would be appropriate to describe the biography of the *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* briefly. Let us begin with Ibn Abī 'Umayr.

MUḤAMMAD IBN ABĪ 'UMAYR

He was one of the very renowned Shi'ah scholars even in the eyes of the Ahl al-Sunnah. He quoted many narrations from the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Imams. He was arrested during the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd and severely tortured. He was imprisoned for four years. In order to save Ibn Abī 'Umayr, his sister buried his books, and as a result they perished. It also has been said that she left the books in a room where they were destroyed by flood. Therefore, after his release from prison, he narrated narrations from memory. If he remembered the name of the narrators, he would quote them in the form of *musnad*, and when he had forgotten them, he would quote them in the form of *mursal*. For this reason, the great Shi'ah scholars equaled his *mursal* narrations to his *musnad* ones.²

It is worth mentioning that Ibn Abī 'Umayr quoted from four hundred and eighteen narrators, of whom only one hundred and

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, pp. 154-5.

2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 326-7; Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah wa Uṣūlhim wa Asmā' al-Muṣannifīn wa Aṣḥāb al-Uṣūl*, pp. 404-5, Maktabah al-Ṭabāṭabā'i, Qum, n.d.

seventy-five are reliable. There is no specific confirmation for the reliability of the rest, i.e. two hundred and forty-two.¹ If we accept the above general rule, however, their reliability can be confirmed.

ŞAFWĀN IBN YAḤYĀ BAYYĀ‘ AL-SĀBURĪ

Al-Najāshī states that Şafwān ibn Yaḥyā originally was from Kufa. He was respected by Imam al-Riḍā (as) and quoted many narrations from him. Al-Kashshī considered him as the companion of the Seventh Imam. He had an agency (*wikālah*) from the Eighth and Ninth Imams. He was distinguished in piety, and it has been said that he compiled 30 books.² Şafwān ibn Yaḥyā, in the eyes of al-Ṭūsī, was the most reliable and pious narrator of his time. He was known to recite 150 units of prayers every day, fast for three months out of 12 months in a year and pay the Islamic tax (*zakāh*) three times every year. It is said that he had nearly eighty teachers (*mashā’ikh*).³ Some hold that he had nearly 230 teachers, of whom 109 were reliable, and 110 were *majhūl* or *muhmal*.⁴

AḤMAD IBN ABĪ NAṢR AL-BAZANTĪ

He was from Kufa and met the Eighth and Ninth Imams. He was respected by both.⁵ Al-Ṭūsī holds that he was also one of the companions of the Seventh Imam. He was described as reliable (*thiqah*) and highly venerable (*jalīl al-qadr*).⁶

1. Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 242; see also Ghulāmriḍā ‘Irfāniyān, *Mashā’ikh al-Thiqāh*, p. 204, Daftar-i Tablīgāt-i Islāmī, Qum 1998.

2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 197.

3. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi‘ah*, p. 241.

4. ‘Irfāniyān, *Mashā’ikh al-Thiqāh*, p. 206; Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 119.

5. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 75.

6. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 332.

It is worth mentioning that Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazantī quoted from one hundred and fifteen narrators, of which only fifty-three are reliable. There is no specific confirmation for the reliability of the other sixty-two narrators, and they are either *majbūl* or *muhmal*.¹ If we accept the above general rule, their reliability can be confirmed.

However, according to al-Ṭūsī's statement, if one of these three scholars were to quote a hadith from a person, it would be a sign of the reliability of the quoted person. This principle, like other *rijāl* principles, has been analyzed by the Shi'ah scholars. There are two views on this rule which will be discussed in the next section.

First View

Some scholars accept this principle and consider it a sign of the reliability of the *mashā'ikh* of those three scholars. They present three pieces of evidence which will be discussed below.

Firstly, al-Ṭūsī was very familiar with the narrators' biography and characteristics as he states that "we found that the sect separated the narrators" and confirmed the reliable ones and identified the weak ones. They discuss narrators' characteristics by saying that, for instance, such and such narrator is a liar, another one is a Wāqifi, and the other one is a Faṭaḥī. They compiled books about the narrators' biographical accounts.² It shows that the discussion on narrators' characteristics was a common practice in al-Ṭūsī's time. Moreover, al-Ṭūsī's statement expresses his proficiency in the field of the narrators and their characteristics. A survey of al-Ṭūsī's *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah* and *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* indicates his comprehensive mastery of the disciplines of cataloging (*fihrist*) and *rijāl* studies. It shows that he had access to a large library,

1. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 126; see also: Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 242; Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 259.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 141.

and in order to praise or criticize a narrator, he used to refer to those books or what he heard from his teachers.

Al-Ṭūsī was thus aware of the perspective of a large group of the Shi'ah jurists who equaled the *marāsīl* and *masānīd* hadith narrated by the above-mentioned three individuals. The testimony of al-Ṭūsī, as an expert in *'ilm al-rijāl*, is a convincing proof. It indicates that all *mashā'ikh* of these three people are reliable, and their *marāsīl* are valid.

Secondly, the testimony of al-Ṭūsī is not lower than that of al-Kashshī on *aṣḥāb al-'ijmā'*. When we accept the testimony of al-Kashshī about the eighteen prominent students of the Four Imams, we could accept the testimony of al-Ṭūsī about these three people since both, in terms of validity, are apparently similar. Moreover, the commitment of *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* that they always narrated from reliable people is not an unusual or new claim. The books of *rijāl* introduce some careful and cautious narrators who always narrated from reliable people such as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, Muḥammad ibn Bashīr al-Bajalī, Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il ibn Maymūn al-Za'farānī and 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ṭaṭārī. Therefore, the belief that *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* always narrated from reliable people is not a new phenomenon.

Thirdly, many scholars accepted the principle that *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* are reliable and always narrated from reliable people. Ḥusayn al-Nūrī's study indicates that many jurists have agreed with this view throughout the centuries, such as Sayyid ibn Ṭāwūs, Ja'far al-Ḥillī known as Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (602-676/1205-1277), 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (648-726/1250-1325), Shahīd al-Awwal (d. 786/1384), Ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī (d. 841/1437), Muḥaqqiq al-Karakī (d. 940/1533), Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 965/1557), Shaykh al-Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1620), and Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī (d. 1205/1790). These prominent jurists' views, in the course of centuries, can support the fact that *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* always narrated from reliable people.¹

1. Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 209-13.

It is appropriate to say that these three scholars quoted from seven hundred and sixty-three narrators. There is no specific confirmation for the reliability of four hundred and five of them. They are either *muhmal* or *majhūl*. In light of this principle, we can prove the reliability of them. However, as mentioned above, there are two views on this principle, and the next section aims to discuss the second view.

Second View

Some scholars disagree with the above principle and maintain that it cannot indicate the reliability of a person from whom these three people narrated. They try to prove their disagreement with some pieces of evidence which we will now discuss below.

Firstly, it might be said that al-Ṭūsī presented his view by *ijtihād*.¹ It is evident that the view of a *mujtahid* is convincing for himself, but not for other scholars, as discussed in Lesson Four.

In response, it seems that al-Ṭūsī's testimony was based neither on his conjecture (*ḥads*) nor on his understanding and independent reasoning (*ijtihād*). Rather, he achieved it via his perception (*ḥiss*) in that he, as a competent scholar, saw that the conduct of jurists was to rely on the *marāsil* of *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, a method pointed out by al-Ṭūsī and handed down by him to us. As mentioned in Lesson Four, such testimony can be a convincing proof. He described the academic atmosphere of his time: i.e. the jurisprudents examined narrators' qualities by saying that, for example, such and such narrator is a liar, another one is a Wāqifi, and the other one is a Faṭaḥī. They compiled books about the narrators' biographical accounts.² It shows that the discussion on narrators' qualities was common amongst the early scholars who treated them in their books.

To summarize, al-Ṭūsī was aware of the perspective of a large group of the Shi'ah jurists who gave equal weight to the *marāsil*

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 61.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 141.

and *masānīd* narrated by those three individuals. He did not thus make such point by *ijtihād*; instead, he narrated the method adopted by earlier scholars. The testimony of al-Ṭūsī, as an expert in *‘ilm al-rijāl*, is a convincing proof.

Secondly, if al-Ṭūsī considers the *marāsīl* of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* as authentic, why does he reject, in his *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, some of the *marāsīl* narrated by Ibn Abī ‘Umayr? For instance, in the amount of water that determines the level of *kurr*, referring to the hadith narrated by Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, he states that it is *mursal* and in contradiction to the other narrations.¹ Moreover, on the subject of inheritance, referring to the hadith narrated by Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, states that it is *mursal*.² He, furthermore, repeated the same view regarding Ibn Abī ‘Umayr’s narration as *mursal*.³ So these three pieces of evidence are in contradiction to what he states in his *‘Uddah al-Uṣūl* that the *marāsīl* of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* are as valid as the *masānīd* of the others.

In rebuttal, it can be said that he wrote *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām* when he was twenty-five years old and probably was not aware of the rule in question. However, *‘Uddah al-Uṣūl* was compiled when he was nearly fifty years of age. It goes without saying that he was more sagacious in writing the latter since he was in the peak of his intellectual maturity.⁴ Therefore, there is no contradiction between *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām* and *‘Uddah al-Uṣūl* since he changed his mind as he was more advanced in years.

Thirdly, it has been declared that these three people always narrate from reliable people. The question to ask here is who actually made this claim? If it is their claim, and al-Ṭūsī via an authentic hadith narrated from them, it is an acceptable rule. Therefore, it can indicate the reliability of their *mashā’ikh*.⁵

1. Idem, *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 43.

2. Ibid, vol. 9, p. 313.

3. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 31.

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 213-4.

5. In that case, if we see that they narrated only a few (i.e. three or four) narrations from weak people, they would say that they did not have

Nevertheless, if al-Ṭūsī reached this rule through induction (*istiqrā'*) it is acceptable in *masānīd*, rather than *marāsīl*.

In explaining this issue, it must be said that regarding the *masānīd*, it is possible to apply the method of complete induction (*istiqrā' al-tāmm*) and investigate all their *masānīd* and, consequently, obtain certainty that they always narrated from reliable people. This would be, however, be problematic in *marāsīl*.¹ This can be illustrated by an example. Al-Kulaynī narrates:

عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ رَجُلٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ:
مَنْ مَثَّلَ مَثَلًا....²

As you can see, Ibn Abī 'Umayr quotes from an anonymous person ('*an rajulin*') and in reality, the name of *rajul* and his characteristics are unknown. Not only this *rajul* is unknown to us, but also there is no room for investigation. If we knew him, we would probably consider him weak. There are many cases in which Ibn Abī 'Umayr quoted from unknown people ('*an rajulin*').³ How may we thus believe that Ibn Abī 'Umayr (and the other *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*) always narrated from a reliable person? This shows that al-Ṭūsī's claim cannot be based on certainty.

In response, if we only look at the *masānīd* of Ibn Abī 'Umayr, for instance, we notice that amongst the thousands of his narrations, he did not narrate from weak people except for perhaps one, two, or three narrators. In other words, the percentage of weak narrations in comparison to authentic narrations is nearly insignificant. It can, therefore, be concluded that Ibn Abī 'Umayr in *masānīd* always narrated from reliable

knowledge from 'the world of unseen' (*ghayb*) and there could occur an accidental mistake. They can thus present an acceptable excuse.

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 62-3.
2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 527.
3. Ibid, pp. 447, 500; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, pp. 398, 406, 482, vol. 5. 119, 463, 497.

people. If we can establish this as a basis for how Ibn Abī ‘Umayr quotes in *masānīd* narrations, we can conclude that he also narrates from reliable people in his *marāsil*.¹ In other words, if Ibn Abī ‘Umayr has such a commitment that he, in *masānīd*, always transmitted from reliable people, he will have the same commitment in his *marāsil*, in that he always narrated from reliable people. Therefore, his *marāsil* are valid.

It might be asked that we, in *masānīd*, can gain certainty that they always narrated from reliable people, but in *marāsil*, reaching such certainty is difficult. In other words, having such commitment in *masānīd* does not lead us to the certainty that they definitely quoted from reliable people in *marāsil* as well. Yes, we can believe that they very likely have such commitment. However, with uncertainty, how can we accept that they always quoted from reliable people in *marāsil*?

In response, we may solve this problem as follows: It is true that wise people are cautious in important issues and look for certainty (*yaqīn*). However, we know that *sharī‘ah*, in religious practices, does not require us to gain certainty, but rather to gain *īmīnān* (conviction). Therefore, if these three people have such a commitment that they, in *masānīd*, always narrated from reliable people, we can obtain *īmīnān* (not *yaqīn*) that they also narrated from reliable people in their *marāsil*. From the *sharī‘ah* point of view, such *īmīnān* is acceptable. Therefore, we have *īmīnān* that they, in *marāsil*, narrated from reliable people and thus their *marāsil* are *ḥujjah*.

Fourthly, it seems that the principle that *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* always narrated from reliable people was frequently breached. Some of such instances will be dealt with below:

1. For instance, al-Kulaynī states:

1. Sobhani, *Kullīyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 269-71.

قال الكليني عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن الحسين بن أحمد المنقري، قال: سمعت أبا إبراهيم يقول: «من استكفى بآية من القرآن...»¹

In this *hadith* Ibn Abī ‘Umayr narrated from al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad al-Minqarī, while al-Najāshī weakened him.² As you can see, this rule seems to have been breached by quoting from a weak people.

In response, it seems that al-Minqarī was one of the *ghulāḥ*.³ He was thus weakened due to his belief, rather than for his unreliability. In other words, there is no contradiction between being *ghālī* and truthfulness. A *ghālī* can be truthful in quoting. Moreover, al-Ṭūsī did not claim that these three people always narrated from trustworthy (*‘ādil*) and Imāmī narrators; instead, they narrated from reliable people. It is evident that a *qhalī* can be reliable when we know that he is truthful in narrating.⁴

2. Ibn Abī ‘Umayr also narrated from ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’inī,⁵ despite his being weak⁶ and a Wāqifī. ‘Alī ibn Ḥamzah was one of the agents of the Seventh Imam, although he later denied the Imamate of the Eighth Imam whilst claiming that the Seventh Imam was the last. Therefore, this rule seems to have been breached by quoting from a weak person.

In response, it is possible to believe that Ibn Abī ‘Umayr heard the *hadith* from al-Baṭā’inī when he had a correct belief. In other words, he had possibly received it from al-Baṭā’inī before the martyrdom of the seventh Imam as he was reliable

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 623.

2. Al-Khu’ī, *Mu’jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 64. There are four more narrations which Ibn Abī ‘Umayr narrated from al-Minqarī; see, al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 79, vol. 6, p. 270, vol. 7, p. 295, vol. 8, p. 373.

3. [i.e. extremist (*ghālī*, pl. *ghulāḥ*), ed.]

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 243-5.

5. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 3, p. 255.

6. Al-Khu’ī, *Mu’jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 64.

and upstanding in the eyes of Imam at that time. Furthermore, the previous answer can be applicable here as well, that is, the wrong belief does not conflict with reliability. In other words, a Wāqifī's narrations can be acceptable, providing we know he strictly avoids lying in narration.¹

3. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī narrated from 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Shāmī, and he is weak.²

روى الكليني عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن أحمد بن محمد بن أبي نصر،
عن عبدالله بن محمد الشامي، عن حسين بن حنظلة، عن أحدهما قال أكل
الكباب...³

As you can see, al-Bazanṭī narrated from al-Shāmī, and he is weak.

In rebuttal, there are two 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Shāmī, and one of them is the shaykh of al-Bazanṭī, and he is *thiqah*. The other one who was born nearly one hundred years after al-Bazanṭī, is weak, and he cannot be the shaykh of al-Bazanṭī. So, it seems that the nominal similarity between two al-Shāmīs has caused such a problem.⁴ Therefore, al-Bazanṭī narrated from reliable people.

4. Ibn Abī 'Umayr, moreover, narrated from 'Alī ibn Ḥadīd.⁵ The hadith says:

الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ حَدِيدٍ عَنْ جَمِيلِ بْنِ دَرَّاجٍ عَنْ
بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ...⁶

1. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, pp. 117-8.
 2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 348.
 3. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 319.
 4. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, pp. 127-8.
 5. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 67.
 6. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 7, p. 276.

Al-Ṭūsī weakened ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd in different sections of his book.¹ It thus shows that the principle was contravened.

In response, it seems that there is a scribal error in the chain of the hadith. The chain was “*and* ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd”² and not “*from* ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd.”³ Therefore, the meaning is that Ibn Abī ‘Umayr and ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd both narrated from Jamīl ibn Darrāj. Ibn Abī ‘Umayr thus narrated from Jamīl ibn Darrāj, and he is reliable, but he did not narrate from ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd. Consequently, the rule is not undermined. Replacing the word “and” with “from” occurred in many chains of narration, as stated by Shahīd al-Thānī’s son. He maintains that since the writers, in order to connect the names of narrators in the chain of *ḥadīth* they usually use the word “from” (*‘an*). In other words, what quickly comes to the mind of the writers of hadith was the term *‘an*, not *wa*. This caused many problems in the chain of narrations, and the term *wa* replaced *‘an* by mistake in many instances.⁴

There are some pieces of evidence that may support this misreading. Firstly, Ibn Abī ‘Umayr excessively narrated from Jamīl ibn Darrāj directly. He directly narrated about three hundred narrations from Jamīl.⁵ It is thus quite hard to believe that Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, who narrated a large number of narrations from Jamīl directly, would have quoted from Jamīl via a medium.

Secondly, oneness of the category (*waḥdah al-ṭabaqah*) is a good sign indicating that Ibn Abī ‘Umayr could not quote from ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd. Both Ibn Abī ‘Umayr and ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd are in one

1. Ibid, p. 101; Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *al-Istibṣār*, vol. 1, p. 40, vol. 3, p. 95, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Tehran 1970.

2. الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ وَعَلِيِّ بْنِ حَدِيدٍ عَنْ جَمِيلِ بْنِ دَرَّاجٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ

3. so, the chain is not like الْحُسَيْنُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ حَدِيدٍ عَنْ جَمِيلِ بْنِ دَرَّاجٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ أَصْحَابِهِ

4. Ḥasan ibn al-Shahīd al-Thānī, *Muntaqa al-Jumān*, vol. 1, pp. 25-6, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1983.

5. Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 23, p. 114, Dār al-Zahrā’, Beirut 1992.

category, and they are the companions of the Seventh and Eighth Imams. Therefore, ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd cannot be the shaykh of Ibn Abī ‘Umayr. In fact, they were merely contemporaries. Third, there is only one hadith which Ibn Abī ‘Umayr narrated from ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd. It may provide further evidence that ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd was not his Shaykh. If ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd had been his Shaykh, Ibn Abī ‘Umayr would have had to narrate many narrations from him. In light of these three pieces of evidence, it can be concluded that there is a misreading in the chain of hadith, and consequently, Ibn Abī ‘Umayr did not narrate from a weak person.¹

However, there might be more pieces of evidence that *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* sometimes narrated from weak people. Nevertheless, one of the following answers can be valid. They are as follows:

1. Some of these weak people are not the teachers of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*; rather, they are their peers. In other words, due to mistakenly replacing the word “and” with “from” we thought that *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* narrated from weak people.
2. Some of them were weakened due to their belief, not due to unreliability. A person with unacceptable beliefs can be reliable when we know that he was truthful in narrating.
3. There is no universal agreement on the weakness of some of these weak people. It means that if they quote a weak narrator, it does not imply that this person is considered weak by all *rijāl* scholars.
4. The root of some of the problems lies in the similarity of names (*ishtirāk al-lafẓī*) between weak people and reliable people.²

To summarize, *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* quoted many narrations and a study of their narrations shows that more than ninety percent of them were narrated from reliable individuals. Although they

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 240-3.

2. For the evidence and answers, see Ibid, pp. 217-265.

may quote from weak people in a few instances, but considering the multiplicity of their narrations from reliable people, it can be claimed that their purpose was to narrate from trustworthy individuals. If we see that they have such commitment that they always quoted, in the form of *musnad*, from reliable people, we will be assured that, due to such commitment, they narrated from reliable people in the form of *marāsīl* as well.

Having now discussed *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, the next lesson will treat further general confirmations of reliability.

SUMMARY

This lesson discussed *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* as one of forms of the general confirmation of reliability. They are three well-known scholars in this respect: Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā Bayyā' al-Sāburī, and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazantī. According to al-Ṭūsī, if one of these *mashā'ikh* were to quote a hadith from someone, it would be a sign of that person's reliability. Moreover, their *marāsīl* will be valid as well. This principle has been analyzed by Shi'ah scholars.

There are two views in this respect. Some accepted this view and presented three arguments. First, al-Ṭūsī was very familiar with the narrators' biographical accounts and characteristics. His books indicate that he was aware of the perspective of a large group of the Shi'ah jurists who gave equal weight to the *marāsīl* and *masānīd* of those three people. The testimony of al-Ṭūsī, as an expert in *'ilm al-rijāl*, is a convincing proof. Therefore, it indicates that all *mashā'ikh* of those three people are reliable, and their *marāsīl* are valid too. Secondly, the testimony of al-Ṭūsī is not less acceptable than the testimony of al-Kashshī on *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*. Thirdly, many scholars accepted this principle that *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* are reliable and always narrated from reliable people.

On the contrary, some disagreed with the above principle and maintained that it could not indicate the reliability of a person

from whom these three people narrated. They tried to prove their disagreement with some pieces of evidence. First, it might be said that al-Ṭūsī presented his view by *ijtihād*, and the view of a *mujtahid* is convincing only for himself. Second, in his *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* al-Ṭūsī rejected some *marāsīl* of Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, and it is against what he claimed. Third, how do we know that those three people always narrated from reliable individuals while there is no room for investigation in *marāsīl*? Fourth, the principle that those three people always narrated from reliable people was seemingly undermined. However, these four arguments were answered in this lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*?
2. How does al-Ṭūsī conclude that *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* only narrated from reliable people? Was it his *ijtihād*?
3. Al-Ṭūsī holds that the *marāsīl* of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* are as valid as the *masānīd* of others. Why does he reject some of their *marāsīl* in *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*?
4. How could we justify the narrations of *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt* from weak people? Mention four justifications.

Lesson TEN

General Confirmation



The previous lesson discussed that Ibn Abī ‘Umayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā, and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr, known as *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable scholars and always narrated from reliable individuals. Moreover, the Shi‘ah scholars consider the *marāsil* of these three scholars as valid as the *masānīd* of the others. Al-Ṭūsī described them as:

لا يروون و لا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

They do not narrate or mention a discontinued hadith unless from a reliable person.¹

The scholars of *rijāl* maintain that there are six other scholars who, similar to *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals. They are as follow:

- Aḥmad ibn ‘Īsā
- Banī Faḍḍāl
- Ja‘far ibn Bashīr
- Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Za‘farānī
- ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭarī
- Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Najāshī

This lesson aims to reflect upon them and see whether we can draw a rule of general confirmation of reliability to prove the reliability of the *mashā’ikh* of these six people. Now we discuss them in turn, and begin with Aḥmad ibn ‘Īsā.

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Uddah al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, pp. 154-5.

MASHĀ'IKH OF AḤMAD IBN MUḤAMMAD IBN ‘ĪSĀ

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā (d. 280/893) was one of the great and venerable (*jalīl al-qadr*) Shi‘ah scholars and the head of traditionalists (*muḥaddithīn*) in Qum. Al-Ṭūsī mentioned him as one of the companions of the Eighth Imam and considered him reliable.¹ Moreover, he was one of the students of the Ninth and Tenth Imams.² He is described by al-Najāshī as “the great scholar (*shaykh*) and jurisprudent of Qum.”³

Some scholars of *rijāl* maintain that Ibn ‘Īsā always narrated from reliable people. They argue that Ibn ‘Īsā had expelled three narrators (namely Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Khālīd al-Barqī,⁴ Sahl ibn Ziyād al-Ādamī,⁵ and Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Abū Samīnah⁶) from the city of Qum due to quoting from weak people. This indicates that Ibn ‘Īsā himself was scrupulous in quoting the hadith and did not narrate from weak individuals. If he had done so, he would not have expelled them. In other words, when he expelled the people from Qum due to narrating from weak people, it shows that he himself was against quoting from weak people and, consequently always narrated from reliable individuals.

In response, this argument can be refuted by two counterarguments. First, the reason for their expulsion was not merely for quoting one or two narrations from weak people but for frequently and excessively narrating from them. Three pieces of evidence indicate that they narrated continuously from weak narrators:

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 351.

2. Ibid, 373, 383.

3. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 82; al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi‘ah*, p. 68.

4. Aḥmad ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, p. 39, Dār al-Ḥadīth, Qum 2001; al-Hillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, p. 76.

5. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 185.

6. Ibid, 332.

1. In the biographical account of al-Barqī, al-Ṭūsī states that he is reliable, but “he profusely quoted from weak people and relied on *marāsīl*.”¹
2. ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī maintains that al-Barqī frequently quoted from weak people and trusted the *marāsīl*.²
3. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī holds that the people of Qum criticized al-Barqī since he was not scrupulous about the sources of his narrations.³ In other words, the qualities and reliability of *marwī ‘anhu* was not important for al-Barqī.

These three pieces of evidence indicate that the reason for exile was not merely quoting one or two narrations from weak individuals; rather, it was due to excessively narrating from them.

In light of what has been mentioned above, we may conclude that although Ibn ‘Īsā was scrupulous in quoting *ḥadīth*, it does not imply that he never narrated from weak individuals. Therefore, he may have quoted ḥadīth from weak narrators in a few instances.

Secondly, another piece of evidence that may refute the claim that Ibn ‘Īsā always narrated from reliable individuals is that he sometimes narrated from weak ones, like Muḥammad ibn Sinān,⁴ ‘Alī ibn Ḥadīd,⁵ Ismā‘īl ibn Sahl⁶ and Bakr ibn Ṣāliḥ.⁷

Generally speaking, the argument that Ibn ‘Īsā had expelled three narrators from the city of Qum (due to quoting from weak people) is no convincing reason to prove that he is amongst those scholars that do not narrate or mention a discontinued ḥadīth

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, pp. 51-2.

2. Al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, p. 76.

3. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, p. 39; al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, p. 76.

4. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 1, p. 33.

5. Ibid, p. 59.

6. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 427.

7. Ibid, p. 101.

unless narrated from a reliable person.¹ Instead, there is some evidence that he sometimes narrated from weak people. It is thus difficult to accept that he always narrates from reliable people. Consequently, considering the reliability of all the *mashā'ikh* of Ibn 'Īsā and the authenticity of his *marāsil* requires further attention.

As mentioned above, the scholars of *rijāl* maintain that there are six other people who, similar to *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals. The following section aims to evaluate the second one, that is, Banī Faḍḍāl.

MASHĀ'IKH OF BANĪ FADḌĀL

Banī (the children of) Faḍḍāl is a group consisting of Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl and his three children, Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan, Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan, and 'Alī ibn Ḥasan. They quoted an abundance of narrations; however, they were from the school of Faṭahīyyah. Some scholars of *rijāl* hold that the *mashā'ikh* of Banī Faḍḍāl are reliable and always narrate from reliable people. They referred to the *hadith* that states:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ فِي كِتَابِ الْعَيْبَةِ عَنْ أَبِي الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ تَمَّامٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْكُوَيْ
خَادِمِ الشَّيْخِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ رَوْحٍ عَنْ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ رَوْحٍ عَنْ أَبِي مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ
أَنَّهُ سُئِلَ عَنْ كُتُبِ بَنِي فَضَّالٍ - فَقَالَ خُذُوا بِمَا رَوَوْا وَدَرُوا مَا رَأَوْا.

Due to the abundance of narrations of Banī Faḍḍāl and their unacceptable belief, some of the Shi'ah questioned the Eleventh Imam about the authenticity of their narrations. The Imam replied by saying "take what they narrate and leave what they interpret."² In the perspective of some scholars, "take what they

1. لا يروون ولا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

2. Hurr al-'Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, pp. 27, 102; al-Majlisi, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 2, p. 253.

narrate” indicates that they always narrated from reliable people. Based on this hadith, al-Shaykh al-Anṣārī (1214-1281/1799-1864) maintains that Banī Faḍḍāl always narrated from reliable people, and their *marāsīl* are valid.¹

It can, therefore, be said that, according to the hadith, some scholars deduce two outcomes regarding the narrations of Banī Faḍḍāl:

1. If Banī Faḍḍāl were to narrate from a person, it would signify that person’s reliability;
2. If they narrated in the form of *mursal*, it is valid, since the Imam commands us to accept their narrations.

In response, this hadith can be criticized in terms of the chain (*sanad*) and signification (*dalālah*). As far as the chain is concerned, ‘Abd Allāh al-Kūfī, in the chain of hadith, is *majhūl*² (unknown), and the *hadith* is not authentic.³ In terms of its signification, it seems that the Imam does not want to state that Banī Faḍḍāl always narrated from reliable individuals and that all their *marāsīl* are valid. Instead, he wanted to clarify that the incorrectness of a narrator’s beliefs does not affect his narrations. In other words, it cannot invalidate the narrations.

Let us make the hadith even clearer. Banī Faḍḍāl quoted many narrations while they held their own flawed beliefs. It seems that some of the Shi‘ah thought that their erroneous beliefs might invalidate their narrations. As mentioned above, the Imam replied, “Take their narrations and leave their interpretation.” It means that their misguided beliefs do not invalidate their narrations as long as they are reliable and truthful in quoting (*ḥikāyah*).

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1. Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī, *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*, vol. 1, p. 36, Kungirah-yi Shaykh-i Anṣārī, Qum 1994.
 2. *Majhūl* is a narrator whose name is mentioned in the books of *rijāl*, but nobody praised or censured him.
 3. Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 68, vol. 12, p. 361, Dār al-Zahrā’, Beirut 1992.

Indeed, the Imam prevented his followers from accepting their thoughts and beliefs.

Based on this, whatever applies to other reliable narrators would apply to Banī Faḍḍāl. It means that whenever a reliable narrator with sound beliefs quoted from a person, we should investigate the reliability of that person (*marwī ‘anhu*), and the same standard should be applied to the quotations of a non-Imāmī reliable narrator.¹

Generally, the above *hadith* may not prove the validity of any *masānīd* or *marāsīl* narrations narrated by Banī Faḍḍāl. Therefore, the *hadith* is no convincing evidence to prove that Banī Faḍḍāl are amongst the scholars narrating or mentioning a discontinued *hadith* unless from a reliable person.² Instead, the Imam states that the incorrect belief of a narrator cannot invalidate his narrations. If he is reliable and narrates from a reliable source, it is acceptable. The general confirmation of reliability of Banī Faḍḍāl’s *mashā’ikh* is problematic.

As mentioned earlier, the scholars of *rijāl* maintain that there are six other people, which like *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals. The following section aims to evaluate the third class of those narrations, i.e. the *mashā’ikh* of Ja‘far ibn Bashīr.

MASHĀ’IKH OF JA‘FAR IBN BASHĪR

Some scholars of *rijāl* maintain that the *mashā’ikh* of Ja‘far ibn Bashīr are reliable.³ They quote al-Najāshī who says, “Ja‘far ibn Bashīr is amongst the ascetic, devout, and pious of our companions. He is reliable” and he is called “the bloom

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 278-9.

2. لا يروون ولا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

3. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 7, p. 109; Muḥammad al-Astarābādī, *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Ahwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 3, p. 191, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2001.

of knowledge.” He quoted from reliable people and reliable individuals narrated from him. He also compiled an index book (*mashyakhab*).¹ Sayyid ‘Alī al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, one of the great jurists in the 12th/18th and 13th/19th centuries, referring to al-Najāshī’s perspective, maintains that Ja‘far ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people. Referring to the hadith:

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحَسَنِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنْ
جَعْفَرِ بْنِ بَشِيرٍ عَنْ بَعْضِ رِجَالِهِ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ...²

he states that even though the hadith is *mursal*, since Ja‘far ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people, such *mursal* is valid.³

These scholars, referring to what al-Najāshī stated, maintain that since Ja‘far ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people, if he narrated from someone, it would be a sign of that person’s reliability. Moreover, his *marāsil* are valid as well. To summarize, he is amongst those scholars who only narrate or mention a discontinued hadith from a reliable person.⁴

However, some other scholars disagree with the statement that Ja‘far ibn Bashīr always narrates from reliable people. They present three pieces of evidence. Firstly, the statement of al-Najāshī does not mean that Ja‘far ibn Bashīr only narrated from reliable people; rather, it means that Ibn Bashīr narrated (not always) from reliable people as the reliable individuals narrated from him as well. Al-Najāshī’s statement does not thus refer to any restriction (*ḥaṣr*).

Secondly, if we accepted the first part of al-Najāshī’s statement that Ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people, the second part, that is, only the reliable people quoted from him, is not

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 119.

2. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 29, p. 222, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988.

3. ‘Alī al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, *Riyāḍ al-Maṣā’il*, vol. 16, p. 367, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1997.

4. لا يروون ولا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

logical. The reason for illogicality is how we can accept that only reliable people quoted from Ibn Bashīr while this would actually be something beyond Ibn Bashīr's control.

Lastly, there are some pieces of evidence that Ja'far ibn Bashīr narrated from weak people.

محمد بن علي بن محبوب، عن محمد بن الحسين، عن جعفر بن بشير، عن صالح بن الحكم، قال: سألت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام. عن الصلاة في السفينة...¹

In the above hadith, Ibn Bashīr narrated from Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Hakam, an individual who al-Najāshī weakened him.² Moreover, he narrated from 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ju'fī, and he is weak as well.³ Furthermore, al-Ṭūsī invalidated the *mursal* narrations of Ja'far ibn Bashīr.⁴ The three pieces of evidence may refute what was claimed that Ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people and that his *marāsīl* are valid.⁵

To summarize, al-Kashshī's statement may not prove that Ja'far ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people and consequently his *marāsīl* cannot be classified as authentic. Therefore, there is no convincing evidence to support that Ibn Bashīr is amongst those scholars who only narrate or mention a discontinued hadith from reliable people.⁶ It seems that the general confirmation of reliability of *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Bashīr is questionable.

As stated above, the scholars of *rijāl* maintain that there are six other people who, similar to *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals.

The next section aims to evaluate the fourth of these, i.e. the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'il al-Za'farānī.

1. Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 5, p. 354, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1980.

2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 200.

3. Ibid, p. 129.

4. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 196.

5. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 279-280.

6. لا يروون ولا يرسلون الا عن ثقة

MASHĀ'IKH OF MUḤAMMAD IBN ISMĀ'IL AL-ZA'FARĀNĪ

It has been said that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Za'farānī, like Ibn Bashīr, always narrated from reliable people.¹ The basis of this view is al-Najāshī's report, in which he says "Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl is reliable, eminent (*'ayn*).² He narrated from reliable and the reliable narrated from him. He met the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq."³ The statement thus implies that if Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl narrated from someone, it will signify that person's reliability. Moreover, his *marāsīl* are valid as well.

However, some scholars reject the above general confirmation of reliability for two reasons. Firstly, the statement of al-Najāshī does not require that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl only narrated from reliable people; rather, it means that he quoted from reliable people as the reliable people narrated from him as well. Therefore, al-Najāshī's report is not indicative of any restriction. Secondly, if we accept the first part of al-Najāshī's declaration that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl always narrated from reliable people, the second part, i.e. only the reliable people quoted from him, is not logical as we mentioned above.⁴

It, therefore, seems that the general confirmation of reliability of *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl is questionable. As stated previously, *'ilm al-rijāl* states the existence of six other scholars, similar to *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt* who always narrated from reliable individuals and their *marāsīl* are authentic.

The next part aims to evaluate the fifth one of them, i.e. the *mashā'ikh* of 'Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭarī.

1. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 7, p. 110.

2. *'Ayn* is used in the sense of being the elite, best, and the most noble of a group, likening it to the eyes as the best part of the body, see Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 149.

3. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 345.

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 280.

MASHĀ'IKH OF 'ALĪ IBN ḤASAN AL-ṬĀṬARĪ

He was one of the shaykhs of the school of *Wāqifiyyah* and a “jurist and reliable in [narrating] hadith.”¹ However, it has been claimed that al-Ṭāṭarī always narrated from reliable people. The basis of this perspective is al-Ṭūsī’s statement. In the biography of al-Ṭāṭarī, al-Ṭūsī says that “he was a Wāqifi, extremely stubborn (*shadīd al-‘inād*) in his school.” He compiled some books in jurisprudence in which “he quoted from reliable narrators.”² It seems that Shakh al-Bahā’ī noticed this fact for the first time. After citing a hadith, he says that although al-Ṭūsī took this hadith from al-Ṭāṭarī, the companions believed that he was trustworthy in narrating the hadith. Al-Bahā’ī added that al-Ṭūsī quoted many narrations about *qiblah* from one of al-Ṭāṭarī’s jurisprudential books. In al-Ṭūsī’s opinion, Al-Ṭāṭarī compiled all his jurisprudential books with the narrations quoted only from reliable narrators. Al-Bahā’ī, due to al-Ṭūsī’s testimony, tends to accept al-Ṭāṭarī’s narrations.³

Therefore, al-Ṭūsī’s testimony that “al-Ṭāṭarī quoted from reliable narrators” indicates that if he narrated from a person, it signifies that person’s reliability and, consequently, his *marāsīl* are authentic.⁴

However, in response, it seems that al-Ṭūsī’s testimony is more specific (*akhaṣṣ*) than what was claimed. In other words, al-Ṭāṭarī, as al-Ṭūsī claimed, compiled his jurisprudential books with narrations quoting from reliable narrators. However, it does not imply that he also compiled his non-jurisprudential

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 254-5.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi’ah*, p. 272.

3. Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Bahā’ī, *al-Ḥabl al-Matin*, p. 190, Baṣīratī, Qum, n.d.); Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Bahā’ī, *Mashriq al-Shamsayn*, p. 274, Baṣīratī, Qum, n.d.

4. Al-Baḥrānī, *al-Ḥadā’iq*, vol. 1, pp. 20-1; al-Wahīd al-Bihbahānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, p. 48; Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, pp.474-5, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987.

books quoting only from reliable people as well.¹ Therefore, due to al-Ṭūsī's testimony, only al-Ṭāṭarī's jurisprudential narrations can be acceptable, not his non-jurisprudential narrations e.g. theological narrations. Moreover, as al-Ṭūsī mentioned, he was extremely stubborn in his faith, that is, Wāqifiyyah. He held radical stance against the Imāmiyyah who opposed him. Furthermore, in order to support his school of thought, he wrote many books.² In light of what has been said, the authenticity of al-Ṭāṭarī's non-jurisprudential narrations is thus questionable.

Indeed, according to al-Ṭūsī's testimony, it may be said that al-Ṭāṭarī only narrated from reliable people in his jurisprudential books. The critical question here is how to know whether al-Ṭūsī took the hadith from al-Ṭāṭarī's jurisprudential books? In response, whenever al-Ṭūsī starts the chain of hadith with the name of al-Ṭāṭarī, it signifies that the hadith is taken from his jurisprudential books (rather than his other books). For instance:

عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ الطَّاطَرِيُّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ زِيَادٍ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ حَنْظَلَةَ قَالَ قَالَ لِي
أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع)...³

As you see, the hadith began with the name of al-Ṭāṭarī; it shows that al-Ṭūsī took it from al-Ṭāṭarī's jurisprudential books. Therefore, as confirmed by al-Ṭūsī, since al-Ṭāṭarī narrated in his jurisprudential books only from reliable people, it can be concluded that all his jurisprudential narrations are authentic. Moreover, it signifies the reliability of the person whom al-Ṭāṭarī reported from, that is, Muḥammad ibn Ziyād.

To summarize, we can draw a general confirmation of reliability according to which all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Ṭāṭarī are reliable,

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 69; Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 281.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*, p. 272.

3. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2, p. 23, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, Qum 1986.

but only in his jurisprudential books. Similarly, his *marāsil* are authentic only in those books.

The next part aims to evaluate the sixth person, who similar to *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, only narrated from reliable people.

MASHĀ'IKH OF AḤMAD IBN 'ALĪ AL-NAJĀSHĪ

Abū al-'Abbās, known as al-Najāshī (372-459/982-1066), is one of the great scholars in *'ilm al-rijāl*. His views on the confirmation and weakening of narrators have attracted the attention of the Shi'ah jurists. He is the author of one of the four primary books in *'ilm al-rijāl*. From what he stated about his *mashā'ikh*, in general, or in particular, it can be deduced that he quoted only from the trustworthy *mashā'ikh* of the hadith. Therefore, it can be claimed that his *mashā'ikh* are trustworthy and his *marāsil* are authentic. We discuss some of these pieces of evidence below, which indicates that he only narrated from reliable people.

1. Al-Najāshī states in the biographical account of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad 'Ayyāsh al-Jawharī (d. 401/1010) that "he was my friend and my father's friend. I heard many narrations from him. Since my teachers weakened him, I did not narrate anything from him and avoided him (i.e. his narrations)."¹ This highlights that al-Najāshī would leave aside narrations that were doubtful in terms of authenticity.
2. Al-Najāshī, in the biography of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Mālīk, states that he was weak in narrating hadith. Moreover, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī² maintains that Ibn Mālīk would fabricate narrations and quote from unknown people. Al-Najāshī added, "I heard from someone that Ibn Mālīk was corrupt in his beliefs and in his narrating." Despite Ibn Mālīk's weakness in beliefs and quoting, al-Najāshī wonders why his teachers,

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 85.

2. Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī was a contemporary of al-Najāshī.

‘Alī ibn Hammām and Abī Ghālib al-Rāzī, narrated from him.¹ This indicates that al-Najāshī would not confirm the reliability just based on his teacher’s classification.

3. Al-Najāshī, in the biography of Ishāq ibn Ḥasan ibn Bakrān Abū al-Ḥusayn al-‘Aqrā’ī, states that “he heard many narrations (*kathīr al-sama’*), however, he was weak in his belief.” Al-Najāshī saw him in Kufa, quoting narrations directly from al-Kulaynī. However, al-Najāshī, due to the weakness of Ishāq ibn al-Ḥasan, did not quote from him.²

These three pieces of evidence indicate that al-Najāshī had such commitment that he himself did not narrate from weak people, and consequently, all his *mashā’ikh* are reliable.

It might be argued that what can be understood from al-Najāshī’s statements is that he did not narrate from weak people, but it does not mean that he did not narrate from unknown (*majhūl*) people. In response, it can be said that he did not quote from weak narrators due to the invalidity of their narrations. In this case, he should have avoided the unknown narrators because they are not classified as valid either. In other words, he refrained from weak narrators because as a highly pious scholar he would not allow himself to narrate invalid narrations. Naturally, such piety should not allow him to narrate a hadith from an unknown narrator as well.

Sayyid ‘Alī al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī states that two points can be deduced from al-Najāshī’s statements: firstly, he strongly avoided weak narrators and those under suspicion of unreliability; secondly, he trusted all those who narrated from them. He considered them trustworthy and sound in religion and, consequently, their narrations are free from weakness in any form.³

Furthermore, there is more explicit evidence to show that al-Najāshī has committed himself to quote from only reliable

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 122.

2. Ibid, 74.

3. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol., 3, pp. 148-152.

people.¹ Ḥusayn al-Nūrī mentioned the name of thirty-one reliable *mashā'ikh* of al-Najāshī.² Therefore, all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Najāshī are reliable unless he himself makes mention of their weakness.³

In conclusion, we can draw a general rule that all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Najāshī are reliable unless he weakened them. Moreover, his *marāsil* are authentic.

The next lesson will discuss further examples for general confirmations.

SUMMARY

This lesson discussed the six great scholars' biographies analytically. It was said that they, like *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, are reliable and always narrated from reliable individuals. Consequently, their *marāsil* are authentic as the *masānīd* of other narrators. This lesson assessed the general confirmation of reliability about these six great scholars. Can we hold that all the *mashā'ikh* of these six people are reliable?

The first one is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā. It was said that the fact he banished three narrators from Qum, due to their quoting from weak individuals, indicated that he himself did not rely upon weak people. In response, the reason for expelling them was not due to quoting one or two narrations from unreliable people but for frequently and excessively narrating from them. Thus, although Ibn 'Īsā was scrupulous in quoting, it does not imply that he never narrated from weak people. Therefore, he may have quoted a small number of hadith from weak narrators. Therefore, we cannot claim that all his *mashā'ikh* are reliable.

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 396.

2. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, pp. 153-8.

3. Muḥammad Mahdi Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 96-100, Maktabah al-Ṣādiq, Tehran, n.d.; al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 51; Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 281-88.

Moreover, there are some signs that he sometimes narrated from weak people.

The second group is Banī Faḍḍāl from the school of Wāqifiyyah. It has been declared that Banī Faḍḍāl, according to the hadith “take what they narrate,” are reliable and always narrate from reliable people. In response, firstly, the hadith is weak. Secondly, it does not prove that they always narrated from reliable individuals and that all their *marāsīl* are valid. Instead, the Imam wanted to clarify that the incorrectness of the narrators’ belief does not affect the reliability of their narrations and it thus may not invalidate the narrations.

The third person is Ja‘far ibn Bashīr. Some scholars, referring to al-Najāshī’s statement, maintain that since Ibn Bashīr always narrated from reliable people, his *mashā’ikh* are reliable, and his *marāsīl* are authentic. In response, firstly, the statement of al-Najāshī does not indicate that Ja‘far ibn Bashīr only narrated from reliable people; rather, it indicates that Ibn Bashīr did not always narrate from reliable people. Thus, such a statement does not refer to any restriction that he always narrated from reliable people. Secondly, there are some signs that Ibn Bashīr narrated from weak people. Moreover, al-Ṭūsī invalidated his *marāsīl*.

The fourth person is Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Za‘farānī. Some scholars, referring to al-Najāshī’s statement, i.e. “He is reliable and narrated from reliable narrators,” maintain that all his *mashā’ikh* are reliable. In response, it can be claimed that the above statement does not indicate that he always narrated from reliable people. Therefore, we cannot draw a general rule for the reliability of all his *mashā’ikh*.

The fifth person is ‘Alī ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭarī. Some scholars, referring to al-Ṭūsī’s declaration that al-Ṭāṭarī had compiled some books on jurisprudence in which “he quoted from reliable narrators,” believe that all his *mashā’ikh* are reliable and his *marāsīl* are authentic. In response, it seems that al-Ṭūsī’s testimony is more specific (*akhaṣṣ*) than the claim of the authenticity of all al-Ṭāṭarī’s narrations. In other words, it only indicates the

authenticity of the narrations in his jurisprudential books, rather than his theological books as well as his other books. Therefore, we can draw a general rule that all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Ṭāṭarī are reliable only in his jurisprudential books, and his *marāsil* are authentic only in these books.

The sixth person is Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najāshī. From his book, two points can be grasped. Firstly, he strongly avoided weak and suspicious narrators. Secondly, he trusted all those from whom he narrated. He considered them trustworthy and sound in belief and, consequently, their narrations free from weakness. Therefore, it can be drawn as a general confirmation of reliability that all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Najāshī are reliable unless he weakened them. Moreover, his *marāsil* are authentic.

QUESTIONS

1. Are all the *mashā'ikh* of al-Ṭāṭarī reliable? Answer in detail.
2. Some hold that all the *mashā'ikh* of Banī Faḍḍāl are reliable. How did they prove that? What can you say in response?
3. What is the reason for the reliability of all the *mashā'ikh* of Ibn 'Isā? What is your response?
4. Some draw a general confirmation of reliability for the *mashā'ikh* of Ja'far ibn Bashīr. How do they prove it? What is your reply?
5. Can we draw a general confirmation of reliability for al-Najāshī's *Mashā'ikh*? Answer in detail.

Lesson ELEVEN

General Confirmation



Al-Kutub al-Arba'ah,¹ as briefly treated in Lesson Two, are undoubtedly the most important sources of hadith within the school of the Shi'ah.² However, there are other hadith sources that share some familiarity with them, and the level of validity of their authors and their *mashā'ikh* plays a significant role in hadith studies. Among them, we can mention the following books:

- *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*
- *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*
- *Tafsīr al-Qummī*

The critical point that this lesson and the next lesson aim to reflect upon is to assess the validity of these books and the level of their authors' commitment. Can we believe that the authors only narrated from reliable people? Can we draw a general confirmation of reliability for all the *mashā'ikh* of the authors of these books, in such a way that if they narrate from a person, it signifies the reliability of that person? This lesson aims to consider *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah* and *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. *Tafsīr al-Qummī* will be discussed in the next lesson.

THE NARRATORS IN *NAWĀDIR AL-ḤIKMAH*

Before *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah*, *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*, was one of the most comprehensive and authoritative books. Muḥammad ibn

1. That is, *al-Kāfī*; *Man Lā Yaḥḍurubu al-Faqīh*; *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*; *al-Istibṣār*.
 2. It will be discussed in the next volume.

Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā,¹ the author of *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*, was one of the great narrators from the time of the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Imams.² Al-Najāshī maintains that he was reliable in narrating hadith. However, some scholars, as al-Najāshī adds, presented different views. On occasions, it has been mentioned, that “he narrated from weak people”, “relied on *marāsīl*” and “is inattentive about the people from whom he narrated.” Al-Najāshī also stated that Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Walid (d. 343/954), an eminent *rijāl* scholar and a teacher of al-Ṣadūq, later evaluated the narrators in *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah* and excluded twenty-four *mashā’ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad due to their weakness.³ This evaluation was later accepted by al-Ṣadūq and Ibn Nūḥ; however, Ibn Nūḥ claims that, amongst the excluded *mashā’ikh*, Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ‘Ubayd is not weak.⁴ So he excluded twenty-three *mashā’ikh*.

Moreover, al-Ṭūsī quotes statements of al-Ṣadūq with a minor difference; nevertheless, he added two more weak narrators⁵ to the

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1. Since he quoted from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Barqī (d. 274/887) and Sa’d ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ash‘arī (d. 299/911) narrated from him, it can be concluded that he died in c. 300/912.
 2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, pp. 408-9.
 3. They are: 1. Muḥammad ibn Musā al-Hamdānī; 2. Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Mu‘ādhī; 3. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Rāzī; 4. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Sayyārī; 5. Yūsuf ibn Sukht; 6. Wahb ibn Munabbih; 7. Abū ‘Alī al-Nayshābūrī; 8. Abū Yaḥyā al-Wāsiṭī; 9. Muḥammad ibn Abū ‘Alī Samīnah; 10. Sahl ibn Ziyād al-Ādamī; 11. Muḥammad ibn ‘Isā ibn ‘Ubayd; 12. Aḥmad ibn Hilāl; 13. Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī al-Hamdānī; 14. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Shāmī; 15. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Rāzī; 16. Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa‘īd; 17. Aḥmad ibn Bashīr al-Riqqī; 18. Muḥammad ibn Hārūn; 19. Mamawayh ibn Ma‘rūf (or Mu‘āwīyah ibn Ma‘rūf, in some manuscripts); 20. Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Mihrān; 21. Al-Ḥasan ibn al-Husayn al-Lu‘lu‘ī; 22. Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Mālik; 23. Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥārith; 24. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Dimashqī.
 4. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 348-9.
 5. That is, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Kufī and al-Haytham ibn ‘Alī.

list of excluded *mashā'ikh*,¹ and consequently, al-Ṭūsī excluded twenty-six *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad for their weakness. Now the critical point is whether we may conclude that all the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad are reliable apart from these twenty-six excluded *mashā'ikh*? There are two views regarding this question which will be treated below.

FIRST VIEW

Some scholars like Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī² (d. 1266/1849), Mīr Dāmād³ (d. 1041/1631), Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr⁴ (d. 1354/1935), Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm⁵ (d. 1390/1970), and Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī⁶ (d. 1205/1790) accepted the general confirmation of reliability of the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad.⁷ According to Ibn Walīd, Ibn Nūḥ and al-Ṭūsī's statements, these scholars maintain that all his *mashā'ikh*, apart from the excluded list,⁸ are reliable. These three scholars' statements can prove this general confirmation, when considered as testimony (*shahādah*) or when they themselves are considered as an expert (*ahl al-khibrah*). If we agree that only twenty-six *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad are weak, as al-Ṭūsī claims, it would imply that the rest

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī'ah*, pp. 408-411.

2. Muḥammad Ḥasan al-Najafī, *Jawābir al-Kalām*, vol. 7, p. 421, Dār al-Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, Beirut 1984.

3. Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshih*, p. 95.

4. Al-Ṣadr, *Nihāyah al-Dirāyah*, p. 425.

5. Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm, *Mustamsak al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*, vol. 5, p. 310, Dār al-Tafsīr, Qum 1995.

6. Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, pp. 53-4; Muḥammad Bāqir Waḥīd al-Bihbahānī, *al-Ta'līqah 'alā Manhaj al-Maqāl*, p. 397, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1995.

7. See also al-A'rajī, *Uddah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 145-6.

8. The excluded list according to Ibn Walīd is twenty-four but according to al-Ṭūsī it is twenty-six. However, in the eyes of Ibn Nūḥ, there are twenty-three excluded narrators.

of his *mashā'ikh*, that is, five hundred and twenty-nine¹, will be classified as reliable.²

SECOND VIEW

Some scholars refute the general confirmation of reliability of the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. They hold that we do not know Ibn Walīd's standards as well as his arguments in considering twenty-four of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad's *mashā'ikh* as weak. He might have relied on the standard of *aṣālat al-'adālah* (the primacy of trustworthiness). It means that every believer (*mu'min*) is reliable unless we see any sign of sinfulness in him. Therefore, in the eyes of Ibn Walīd, if a *mu'min* narrator quotes a hadith, as long as we have not heard any weakness about him, he can be considered reliable.

Nevertheless, such a person's reliability is not acceptable for those who believe in the principle of *ithbāt al-'adālah* (the verification of trustworthiness) in that we cannot rely on any narrator unless we have already proven his trustworthiness.³ Therefore, according to the principle of *Itbbāt al-'adālah* there is no proof for the reliability of unexcluded *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad⁴ unless we assess them individually. Ayatollah al-Khu'ī, in the biographical account of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, states that the reliance of Ibn Walīd on the narration of a person does not reveal his goodness (*ḥuṣn*), let alone the trustfulness (*'adālah*) of that person since he might rely on *aṣālat al-'adālah*. In other words, in the eyes of Ibn Walīd,

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1. According to Ibn Nūḥ, the number of reliable narrators is five hundred and thirty-two. However, in the eyes of Ibn Walīd the number of reliable narrators is five hundred and thirty-one.
 2. For the names of those reliable *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, see Dāwarī, *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 135-147.
 3. It means that we should deduce his trustworthiness via witnessing his acting upon his religious obligations, e.g. establishing prayers and fasting.
 4. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol., 1, pp. 70-1.

every hadith from a Shi'ah narrator is acceptable unless the narrator appears, in his view, to be sinful.¹

In summary, since Ibn Walid's standard for evaluating the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad is not clear to us and may rely on *aṣālat al-'adālah*, it is not easy to accept this general confirmation of reliability (*al-tawṭhīq al-'āmm*), i.e. the confirmation of the reliability of all the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, apart from the excluded people.² After expressing the two views, the following section aims to analyze them.

Criticism and Analysis

As mentioned above, due to the ambiguity of Ibn Walid's standard, there is a disagreement amongst the scholars on the reliability of the narrators in *Nawādir al-Hikmah*. Some maintain that all *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad are reliable apart from the excluded people while others reject such general confirmation. The first view seems to be more accurate. To further clarify, it might be said that reflection upon the excluded *mashā'ikh* may verify that his standard was not *aṣālat al-'adālah*; instead, he, according to *ithbāt al-'adālah*, evaluated Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad's *mashā'ikh*. Some pieces of evidence may serve as the foundation for this argument:

1. As mentioned above, Ibn Walid excluded twenty-four narrators, one of them being Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Ubayd whom he considered as weak. Ibn Nūḥ accepted all of Ibn Walid's evaluations but only criticized Ibn Walid for the exception (*istithnā*) of Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā. He holds that it is unclear to him why Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā was excluded by Ibn Walid while his trustworthiness and reliability were

1. Ibid, vol. 16, p. 51.

2. The excluded list according to Ibn Walid is twenty-four but according to al-Ṭūsī it is twenty-six. However, in the eyes of Ibn Nūḥ, there are twenty-three excluded narrators.

obvious.¹ The statement “his trustworthiness and reliability were obvious” denotes that Ibn Walīd’s standard was *ithbāt al-‘adālah*. In other words, if Ibn Walīd excluded Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā according to *asalat al-‘adālah*, Ibn Nūḥ should have argued that why he was excluded while there was not any proof against him.

Therefore, the sentence “his trustworthiness and reliability were obvious” implies that his standard was *ithbat al-‘adālah*. In other words, if his criterion was *aṣālat al-‘adālah*, he should not have excluded Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā since nobody had reprimanded him. Therefore, we can conclude that Ibn Walīd achieved the trustworthiness of the unexcluded *mashā’ikh* of Ibn Aḥmad.²

2. It seems that al-Ṣadūq used to follow his teacher, Ibn Walīd, in *‘ilm al-rijāl*. For instance, he states that Ibn Walīd does not authenticate the hadith of the prayer on the day of *Ghadīr al-Khum*. Ibn Walīd attributes the invalidity of the narration to the narrator, being Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Hamdānī who, according to Ibn Walīd, seems to be a known liar. Al-Ṣadūq adds that the narrators and the narrated hadith, disapproved of by his teacher, were not authentic to him.³ This statement shows that al-Ṣadūq recognized Ibn Walīd as a specialist in *rijāl* and followed his views and evaluations of narrators. Thus, if Ibn Walīd relied on *aṣālat al-‘adālah* in evaluating the narrators, there was no reason for al-Ṣadūq to follow Ibn Walīd. Since this rule may be easily applied, al-Ṣadūq himself could have evaluated the narrators by applying *aṣālat al-‘adālah*.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Ibn Walīd evaluated all the *mashā’ikh* of Muhammad ibn Ahmad through *ithbāt al-‘adālah*. It

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 348.

2. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 294.

3. Al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 2, pp. 90-1.

means that he realized the unreliability of twenty-four narrators and in the same fashion he also realised the justice of the rest.¹

In light of what al-Ṣadūq stated, it could be concluded that Ibn Walīd assessed the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad via *ithbāt al-'adālah*. It results in speculation (*ẓann*) or assurance (*iṭmīnān*) of the reliability of the unexcluded *mashā'ikh* of *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*'s author.

In sum, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā's *mashā'ikh* is an instance of general confirmation of reliability, i.e. when he narrates from a person, it signifies the reliability of that person.

Having discussed Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad's *mashā'ikh*, we now discuss Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh's *mashā'ikh* in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* in the following section.

NARRATORS IN *KĀMIL AL-ZIYĀRAH*

The author of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*² is Abū al-Qāsim Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh (d. 383/993), one of the most outstanding scholars in hadith and jurisprudence.³ He has been praised and recognized by the great scholars of *rijāl*. Al-Najāshī describes him as “one of our reliable companions and a distinguished jurispudent and hadith scholar.” In addition to approving of him, al-Najāshī is full of praise for him, stating that “whatever you say about goodness, trustworthiness and jurisprudence of the scholars, Ibn Qūlawayh is above them.”⁴

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fi 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 294-5.

2. There are different names for this book. Al-Najāshī mentioned it as the *Book of al-Ziyārāt*, al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 124; al-Ṭūsī entitled it *Jāmi' al-Ziyārāt*, see al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*, p. 109; al-Nūrī and Ibn Qūlawayh titled it as *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, p. 248; Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, p. 4, al-Murtaḍawīyyah, Najaf 1977.

3. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 418. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī holds that Ibn Qūlawayh died in 368/978; al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*, p. 123.

4. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 123

Al-Ṭūsī portrays him as “reliable with many books in different disciplines of jurisprudence.”¹ There are many statements on the reliability of Ibn Qūlawayh by most distinguished scholars such as al-Shaykh al-Bahā’ī, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, al-Shaykh Sulaymān al-Māḥūzī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayhī, al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī and Ibn Ṭāwūs.²

This book has been considered one of the essential Shi‘ah hadith sources down the centuries. Al-Ṭūsī, al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, al-Majlisī and the other scholars have trusted this book and quoted its narrations. Some scholars hold that the mentioned narrators in the chain of narrations of this book are reliable. They refer to the statement of Ibn Qūlawayh in the introduction as he states:

وقد علمنا أننا لا نخطط بجميع ما روي عنهم....، و لكن ما وقع لنا من جهة
الثقات من أصحابنا. رحمهم الله برحمته. ولا أخرجت فيه حديثاً روي عن الشُّذَّاذ
من الرجال يؤثر ذلك عنهم عليهم السَّلام المذكورين، غير المعروفين بالرواية،
المشهورين بالحديث والعلم.

Ibn Qūlawayh says that there are many narrations, and he cannot access and include all of them. Therefore, he has mentioned only the narrations that reached him from reliable companions. In this book, he has not quoted from irregular narrators (*shudhād*), i.e. those who are not famous in the quotation of hadith and knowledge, even though their hadith is from the Infallible.³

The important point here is: Can we derive a rule and state that all the direct and indirect *mashā’ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh are reliable? There are two views here, which we discuss here now.

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi‘ah*, p. 109.

2. See the introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* by the late Abū al-Qāsim al-Gharawī al-Urdūbādī (1275/1857-1333/1914) published at the beginning of Ibn Qūlawayh, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad. *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. pp. 1-8, al-Murtaḍawīyah, Najaf 1977.

3. Ibid, pp. 4-5.

FIRST VIEW

The first view maintains that all the narrators, from the beginning of the chain of hadith to the Imam, are reliable.¹ According to this view, anyone mentioned in the chains of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* is reliable. If we accept that one person's testimony in a subject (*mawḍūʿ*) is sufficient, it implies that nearly three hundred and eighty eight narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* will be classified as reliable.² This view can be proven via some pieces of evidence:

1. The term “reached us from reliable people”³ is generally used, and it covers the narrators which he directly or indirectly received the hadith from them. In other words, the statement “my collection is from reliable people” is general, and it naturally encompasses all the narrators, whether he directly or indirectly collected from them.
2. The phrase “*aṣḥābunā min al-thiqāt*,” also commonly used, covers Ibn Qūlawayh's teachers and the teachers of his teachers. Yet, if he said “*mashā'ikhinā min al-thiqāt*,” it would only refer to his direct teachers. As it can be seen, the term “*aṣḥābina min al-thiqāt*” denotes the reliability of Ibn Qūlawayh's teachers and that of their teachers.
3. He declares that he did not narrate from irregular narrators (*shudhādh*), that is, all the narrations of this book are from famous and trusted people. The phrase “from famous and trusted people” is generally indicative of all the narrators in the chain, whether Ibn Qūlawayh narrated directly or indirectly from them.

1. Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 30, p. 202; al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 50. However, Ayatollah al-Khu'ī later changed his view.

2. Abū Ṭālib Tajlīl, *Mu'jam al-Thiqāh wa Tartīb al-Ṭabaqāt*, pp. 211-224, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1984.

3. “لكن ما وقع لنا من جهة الثقات” .3

4. If Ibn Qūlawayh's statement only refers to his direct *mashā'ikh* (not the *mashā'ikh* of his *mashā'ikh*), the authenticity of the narrations of the book, which he sought to prove, can no longer be trusted, since every narration, in which some narrators (only direct *mashā'ikh*), but not all, are authenticated, is not recognized as authentic.¹ In other words, the authenticity of every narration depends on the authenticity of all of its narrators.

In summary, the first view holds that the statement of Ibn Qūlawayh is general and indicative of the reliability of all the narrators in the chain of every hadith in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. The confirmation of Ibn Qūlawayh can prove the reliability of all the three hundred and eighty eight narrators of this book.

As mentioned earlier, there are two views regarding the authenticity of the narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. The following section aims to touch upon the second view.

SECOND VIEW

The second view holds that ibn Qūlawayh aims to confirm only the reliability of his direct *mashā'ikh*, not the *mashā'ikh* of his *mashā'ikh*. In other words, the statement only denotes the reliability of the individuals from whom ibn Qūlawayh directly narrates, not all the people mentioned in the chain of hadith up to the Infallible. According to this perspective, the reliability of thirty-two direct *mashā'ikh* of ibn Qūlawayh can be confirmed.² The following evidence can support this perspective.

1. He prayed for mercy (*istirḥām*) for all his *mashā'ikh*.³ However, amongst his indirect *mashā'ikh* were tens of people from the schools of Wāqifiyyah and Faṭahiyyah who, it could be said,

1. Dāwarī, *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 184.

2. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, pp. 251-7.

3. He satates: لكن ما وقع لنا من جهة الثقات من أصحابنا. رحمهم الله برحمته

do not deserve such a prayer.¹ Moreover, he narrates from ‘Umar ibn Sa‘d, the *shaykh* of Naṣr ibn Muzāḥim, the author of *Waq‘ah al-Ṣiffīn*.² Therefore, the request for mercy in Ibn Qūlawayh’s introduction may indicate that he did not intend this for all the narrators, but only for his direct *mashā’ikh*.³

2. Ibn Qūlawayh states that “I have mentioned only the narrations that reached me from reliable companions.” He adds: “I have not quoted from irregular narrators (*shudhādh*), i.e. those who are not famous in the quotation of hadith and knowledge, even though their hadith is from the Infallible.”⁴ However, there are many non-famous narrators amongst his indirect *mashā’ikh*. Abān al-Azraq, Ibrāhīm ibn Shu‘ayb and Aḥmad ibn Bashīr are not known narrators since they only quoted one or two narrations. It is yet another evidence that Ibn Qūlawayh did not mean to confirm the reliability of all the narrators in his book; rather, he only wanted to confirm the reliability of his direct *mashā’ikh*.⁵
3. There are more than one hundred and seventy *mursal* narrations in this book. He, for instance, quotes this hadith:

حدثني أبي و محمد بن يعقوب، عن احمد بن ادريس، عن عمن ذكره، عن محمد بن
سنان، عن محمد بن علي، رفعه، قال: قال رسول الله (ص): يا علي من زارني
في حياتي، او بعد مماتي او زارك في حياتك او بعد موتك...⁶

1. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, pp. 49, 63, 84, 100, 108, 119, 246, 248, 294.
 2. Ibid, pp. 71, 72, 90, 93.
 3. Sobhani, *Kullīyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 301-3.
 4. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, p. 4.
 5. Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 11, 306.
 6. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*.

As seen, this hadith is *mursal*, so how could Ibn Qūlawayh confirm the reliability of the narrator, whose name is not mentioned in the chain of hadith?¹

4. Al-Najāshī considers some of the indirect *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh, such as Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Abī 'Uthmān² and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Mihrān,³ as weak.⁴ This is further evidence to support that Ibn Qūlawayh does not intend to confirm the reliability of all the narrators mentioned in the book.

To summarize, the second view holds that the statement of Ibn Qūlawayh, in the introduction of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, only indicates the reliability of thirty-two of his direct *mashā'ikh*.⁵ Most scholars have accepted the second view and believed that the author has only sought to authenticate his direct *mashā'ikh*. Therefore, all his direct *mashā'ikh* are reliable unless weakened by others.⁶ It is worth noting that *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, due to the status of the author and the confirmation and praise bestowed on him by great scholars, is considered a very important book. Nevertheless, it does not mean that all its narrations are valid.

The next lesson will discuss the last general confirmation of reliability.

1. Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 307.

2. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, e.g. pp. 80, 104.

3. Ibid, p. 172.

4. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 61, 350. He states that Ibn Mihrān is: غال، كذاب، فاسد المذهب و الحديث.

5. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, pp. 252-7.

6. This is a general rule that the general confirmation of the reliability can prove a person's reliability when he is not weakened. Therefore, if one of the direct *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh, for instance, was weakened by one of the scholars of *rijāl*, the general confirmation cannot prove his reliability.

SUMMARY

The *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, in *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*, fall into the category of general confirmations of reliability. Ibn Walīd evaluated the narrators in this book and excluded twenty-four *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad due to their weakness. This evaluation was later also accepted by al-Ṣadūq and Ibn Nūḥ. Moreover, al-Ṭūsī added two more weak narrators to the list of excluded *mashā'ikh*, and consequently he excluded twenty-six *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad due to their weakness. Nevertheless, there are two views on this general confirmation of reliability. Some scholars accepted this *al-tawthīq al-‘āmm*, that is, all the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, apart from these excluded narrators are reliable. Such reliability is invalidated by other scholars, claiming that they do not know Ibn Walīd’s standard and his evaluation in that he considered only twenty-four *mashā'ikh* as weak. He might have relied on the standard of *aṣālat al-‘adālah*, in that every believing narrator is reliable unless we see any sign of sinfulness in him.

In reply to the second view, it might be said that reflection upon the excluded *mashā'ikh* may verify that the standard of Ibn Walīd was not *aṣālat al-‘adālah*; instead, he, according to *ithbāt al-‘adālah*, evaluated Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad’s *mashā'ikh*. It may be corroborated by some pieces of evidence.

The *Mashā'ikh* of Abū al-Qāsim Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh, in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, falls into a category of general confirmations of reliability. This book has been considered one of the essential Shī‘ah hadith sources down the centuries. The author is one of the most outstanding scholars in hadith and jurisprudence. He has been praised and authenticated by the great scholars of *rijāl*. There are two views regarding the narrators mentioned in this book. Some maintain that all the narrators, from the beginning of the chain of hadith to the Imam, are reliable. According to this view, nearly three hundred and eighty-eight narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* may be classified as reliable. This idea can be proven via some pieces of evidence:

1. The statement of Ibn Qūlawayh is general and thus indicates the reliability of all the narrators in the chain of every hadith in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. The confirmation of Ibn Qūlawayh can prove the reliability of all the narrators of this book.
2. He claims that he did not narrate from irregular narrators, that is, all the narrations of this book are from famous and trusted people. This statement is general and indicates the reliability of all the narrators in the chain, whether Ibn Qūlawayh narrated directly or indirectly from them.
3. If Ibn Qūlawayh's statement only refers to his direct *mashā'ikh*, the authenticity of the narrations of the book, which he sought to prove, can no longer be trusted. Since the authenticity of any narration depends on the authenticity of all its narrators.

The second views hold that Ibn Qūlawayh aims to confirm only the reliability of his direct *mashā'ikh*. According to this perspective, the reliability of thirty-two of his direct *mashā'ikh* can be confirmed. Some evidence can support this view.

1. Ibn Qūlawayh claims that he does not narrate from non-famous narrators, while there are many non-famous narrators amongst his indirect *mashā'ikh*. It may indicate that he did not mean to confirm the reliability of all the narrators in his book, rather only his direct *mashā'ikh*.
2. Some of the indirect *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh are weak, and this is another piece of evidence that he does not intend to confirm the reliability of all the narrators.
3. There are more than one hundred and seventy *mursal* narrations in this book, and the confirmation of the narrator's reliability, whose name is not mentioned in the chain of hadith, is difficult.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the author of *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*? Who evaluated the book for the first time? What did he do? Who did approve of this evaluation?
2. Some scholars state that we cannot agree that all the *mashā'ikh* of Muḥamad ibn Aḥmad, in *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*, are reliable apart from excluded ones by Ibn Walīd. Please elaborate. How can we respond to them?
3. Some scholars hold that all the direct and indirect *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* are reliable. Mention three of their pieces of evidence.
4. Some scholars maintain that only the direct *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* are reliable. Mention three of their pieces of evidence.

Lesson TWELVE

General Confirmation



As mentioned in the previous lesson, there are major hadith compilations of great significance in hadith studies. The previous lesson discussed *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah* and *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. This lesson aims to consider the level of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, and its *mashā'ikh* as the last general confirmation of reliability.

NARRATORS IN *TAFSĪR AL-QUMMĪ*

‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim al-Qummī (d. 309/921) was of the great scholars of hadith and a prominent Shi‘ah commentator. Al-Najāshī portrays him as reliable in hadith narration and of true faith. He heard many narrations and wrote many books,¹ e.g. *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, *Kitāb al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh* and *Qurb al-Isnād*.² It is reported that al-Kulaynī quoted five thousand six hundred and thirty narrations from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm who had also served as his teacher. The authors of *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah* quoted eight thousand one hundred and sixty-nine narrations from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, which shows his distinction and prominence in the field of hadith due to this large number.

However, ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm is one of the great Shi‘ah hadith scholars. In the introduction to his book he states,

نحن ذاكرون ومخبرون بما ينتهي إلينا ورواه مشايخنا وثقاتنا عن الذين فرض الله
طاعتهم

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 260.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, p. 266.

We mention and inform what has reached us and what our *mashā'ikh* and our reliable ones have quoted from those following whom was a divine obligation.¹

This statement indicates that 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm quoted narrations from his masters and reliable sources, which they had received from the Infallibles. When reading this statement, the question that may arise is: Can we draw a general rule indicative of the narrators' reliability as mentioned in his book? There are two views here. Some scholars hold that the above statement indicates that all the narrators, whether they are direct or indirect *mashā'ikh* of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, are reliable.² The second view holds that it only proves the reliability of the direct *mashā'ikh* of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm.³ Before analyzing these two views, it would be appropriate to mention that this book consists of two parts: introduction and text. Any discussion on the reliability of narrators mentioned in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* depends on two things; a) who is the author of the introduction, b) who is the author of the text. The next section aims to discuss these two points in turn.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE INTRODUCTION?

A question may be raised here: What is the significance of discussing the authorship of the introduction? It is worthy of note that the important part of any book is the text, rather than its introduction. What is thus the need to discuss the introduction and to know who the author is? In response, it can be said that the answer to this question can be clear from the statement in the introduction that 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm has written in which he quotes the narrations that his masters and reliable sources have

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1. 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 4, Dār al-Kitāb, Qum 1984.
 2. Ḥurr al-Āmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 30, p. 202; al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 49; Namāzī, *Mustadrakat 'Ilm Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 61.
 3. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 103.

received from the Infallibles.¹ If the author of the introduction is ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the above statement in the introduction can be a testimony to the reliability of the narrators mentioned in the text. In other words, the reliability of the narrators in the text depends on the fact that the author of the introduction is actually ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm. However, if the author of the introduction is not ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the above testimony cannot prove the narrators’ reliability mentioned in the text.

We note that there are some pieces of evidence that may denote that the author of the introduction is not ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, some of which shall be discussed here.

1. It is stated on page five of the introduction:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ قَالَ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْهَاشِمِيُّ الْقُمِّي فَالْقُرْآنُ
مِنْهُ نَاسَخٌ...²

If the author of the introduction were ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the clause قَالَ أَبُو الْحَسَنِ عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْهَاشِمِيُّ الْقُمِّي would be placed at the beginning of the introduction, rather than on page five. It may thus show that the introduction was compiled by someone else.

2. After the introduction and at the beginning of the text, it is stated:

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَبَّاسُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، قَالَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ...³

Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās is one of the direct students of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm. The chain of hadith reveals that the first part of the text is written by one of the students of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm’s students. Therefore, the first part of the text was written neither by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm nor by al-‘Abbās, but by one of

1. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 4.

2. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, p. 5.

3. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 27.

the students of al-‘Abbās. If the author of the first part of the text had been one of the students of al-‘Abbās, consequently neither ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm nor al-‘Abbās could have possibly written the introduction.

3. As it will be discussed, the text is not entirely by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm but it is a collection of two interpretations compiled by someone else. If we accept this view, the author of the introduction is not ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, but the actual compiler of those two interpretations.

According to these three arguments, it can be claimed that the author of the introduction was neither ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm nor al-‘Abbās; instead, he was one of the indirect students of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm who had collected the commentary and written an introduction to it. However, his name and qualities are not mentioned in *‘ilm al-rijāl*, and consequently, he is unknown. Therefore, if the introduction belongs neither to ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, nor to al-‘Abbās, the testimony that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm quotes the narrations that his masters and reliable people have received from the Infallible¹ will lose its value, and consequently, can no longer serve as evidence for the reliability of the narrators mentioned in the text. In other words, since the author of the introduction is unknown, the testimony is worthless and cannot prove the authenticity of the narrators in the text.

As mentioned earlier, any discussion on the reliability of the narrators mentioned in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* depends on the following:

1. The author of the introduction;
2. The author of the text.

If we accept that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm wrote the introduction, there would be yet another point for consideration: the authorship the text. The following section aims to discuss the second point.

1. Ibid, p. 4.

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF THE TEXT?

There has been a dispute amongst the scholars regarding the authorship of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. Some hold that the author of the text is ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm. The proponents of the second view contend that the text consists of two commentary texts: The text of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and the text of Abū al-Jārūd. These two views will be touched upon below.

‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm

Al-Majlisī,¹ Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī,² Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī³ and Ayatollah al-Khu’ī⁴ hold that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm compiled the text. This view has been criticized, and there is evidence to prove that ‘Alī Ibn Ibrāhīm himself did not compile the text. We mention some of them below.

1. It is stated in the beginning of the text,

حَدَّثَنِي أَبُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَبَّاسُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ حَمْزَةَ بْنِ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ (ع)،
 قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو الْحَسَنِ عَلِيُّ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ أَبِي
 عَمِيرٍ، عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عَيْسَى، عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع)...⁵

Abū al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās, as mentioned before, is one of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm’s direct students, and it does not make sense that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the author of the text, narrates the hadith from his student.

2. Another proof that may confirm that the text was not compiled by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm is that it is stated in several instances that

1. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 1, p. 8, Dār al-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1982.
 2. Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, p. 30, pp. 157, 202.
 3. Hāshim al-Baḥrānī, *al-Burhān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, vol. 1, p. 70, Bunyād-i Bi‘thāt, Tehran 1995.
 4. Al-Khu’ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 49.
 5. Ibn Qūlawayh, *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, p. 27.

references have been made to “the hadith of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm,”¹ “*Tafsīr of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm*”,² “‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm’s narrations”³ and “in the *riwāyah* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm.”⁴ If the compiler of the text were ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, it would not be logical to make such statements.

In summary, these two proofs imply that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm is not the author of the text or that at least part of the text was compiled by someone else.

As mentioned above, there are two views regarding the authorship of the text. The second view holds that the text consists of two parts which will be treated below.

‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū al-Jārūd

The second view holds that two dictations led to the compilation of this text:

1. The dictation of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm to his student, al-‘Abbās;
2. The dictation of Imam Bāqir (as) to his student, Abū al-Jārūd from whom al-‘Abbās narrates via three links.⁵

One of the students of al-‘Abbās later compiled those two dictations and merged it into one text. Since most of the text was composed of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm’s narrations, the name of the text became known as ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī’s *Tafsīr*.⁶

The adherents of this view hold that the commentary text consists of two different forms of the chain, and that it indicates the text consists of two dictations. The exponents of this view

1. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 344.

2. Ibid, pp. 120, 271, 272, 299.

3. Ibid, pp. 279, 313, 389.

4. Ibid, 122, 292, 294, 360; Ibid, vol. 2, pp. 29, 75.

5. Abū al-Jārūd was from the school of Zaydiyyah; see, al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 170; al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, p. 203.

6. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 316.

maintain that the text starts from the first chapter with such a chain from ‘Alī Ibn Ibrāhīm:

حدَّثني أبو الفضل العباس بن محمد بن القاسم بن حمزة بن موسى بن جعفر،
قال: حدثنا أبو الحسن علي بن إبراهيم، قال: حدثني أبي رحمه الله، عن محمد
بن أبي عمير، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن حريث، عن أبي عبد الله (ع)...¹

Nevertheless, the form of the chain changes from verse forty of the third chapter (Āl ‘Imrān) and reaches Abū al-Jārūd,

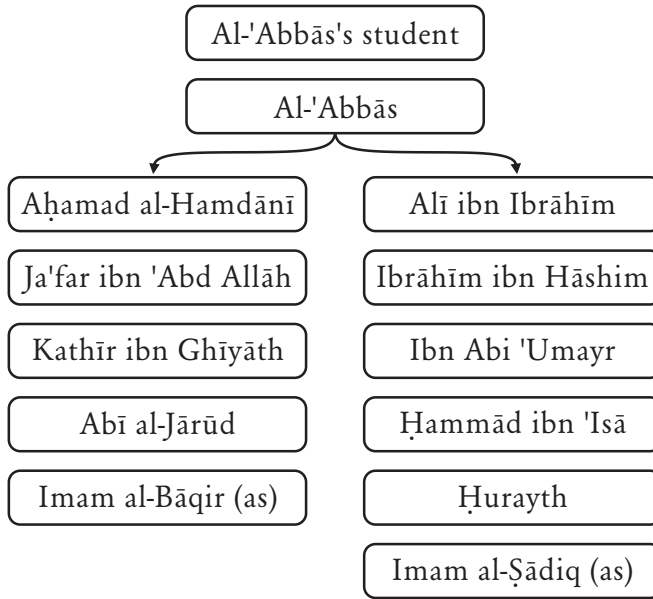
حدَّثنا أحمد الهمداني، قال: حدثني جعفر بن عبد الله، قال: حدَّثنا كثير بن
غياث، عن زياد بن المنذر أبي الجارود، عن أبي جعفر محمد بن علي (ع)...²

In these two chains, al-‘Abbās presents two different forms of chain with different narrators. In the first, he narrates directly from ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, one of the students of the Tenth and Eleventh Imams, while in the second, he quotes Abū al-Jārūd, one of the Fifth Imam’s students via three links. It shows that this text consists of the narrations of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū al-Jārūd. The author’s independent approach to both ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and Abū al-Jārūd shows that he collected two commentary texts in one book.

The following diagram may show how al-‘Abbās, via different forms of the chain with different narrators, quotes from two Imams, Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq. It may indicate that this book consists of two dictations:

1. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 27.

2. Ibid, p. 102.



Moreover, in the rest of the text, ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and elsewhere Abū al-Jārūd are being quoted in such a manner that suggests that there had been two dictations that were compiled together.¹

It is worth noting that whether the author of the whole text is ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm or not, there are two fundamental problems which need to be addressed:

1. The *rijāl* scholars have not mentioned al-‘Abbās’s name and his qualities in their *rijāl* books.² Therefore, the credibility of the text in question, due to the anonymity of al-‘Abbās, is open to question.
2. The name of al-‘Abbās’ student, who compiled these two dictations, is not clearly mentioned in *rijāl* sources.

In summary, in light of what has been mentioned, it can be concluded that:

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 313- 20.

2. Ibid, p. 312.

1. The author of the introduction is neither ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm nor al-‘Abbās but he is one of the students of al-‘Abbās. Since he is unknown, the credibility of the testimony, “I only quote from the reliable,” needs more reflection.
2. Neither ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm nor al-‘Abbās compiled the text but it was compiled by an unknown student of al-‘Abbās.
3. Whether the author of the whole text is ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm or not, this book’s credibility, due to the anonymity of al-‘Abbās, will be a matter of consideration.
4. Some part, but not the entire text was written by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm.

If we ignore these arguments and accept that the introduction and the text were written by ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, a question will arise: Can we, as mentioned in the introduction, draw a general rule that indicates the reliability of the narrators mentioned in the text?

The introduction of the book states,

نحن ذاكرون ومخبرون بما ينتهي إلينا ورواه مشايخنا وثقاتنا عن الذين فرض الله
طلعتهم

We mention and inform what has reached us and what our *mashā’ikh* and our reliable ones have quoted from those whose obedience was made incumbent upon us by God.¹

Based on this statement, two views have been held by scholars: some hold that the above statement indicates that all the narrators, whether they are direct or indirect *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, are reliable. According to the second view, it only proves the reliability of the direct *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm.² These two views will be treated below.

1. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 4.

2. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 103.

First View: The Reliability of All *Mashā'ikh*

Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī was of the view that all direct and indirect *mashā'ikh* of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm are reliable. He states that ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm “testifies to the veracity of the narrations in his *Tafsīr*, and they are narrated from reliable narrators who in turn narrated from the infallible Imams.”¹ Ayatollah al-Khuʿī also states that ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm aims to prove that all the narrations in his book were issued by the Imams and reached him by Shiʿah reliable *mashā'ikh* and narrators. Such a statement requires that we trust all the narrators in the chain, and not just his direct *mashā'ikh*.² In other words, the authenticity of any text depends on the reliability of all the narrators mentioned in the chain. Therefore, we can derive a general confirmation of reliability and maintain that all the direct and indirect *mashā'ikh* of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, whose names have been attested in this book, are reliable. If this perspective were accepted, it would require us to classify two hundred and sixty narrators as reliable.

Second View: The Reliability of Only the Direct *Mashā'ikh*

This view holds that the testimony mentioned in the introduction only indicates the reliability of the direct *mashā'ikh* of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm. There is some evidence that ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm’s main goal was to confirm the reliability of his direct *mashā'ikh* only. We mention some of them here:

1. There are some narrators in the chains of narrations which are among the leaders of the misled, such as Salamah ibn Kuhayl,³ ʿAṭā,⁴ ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jurayḥ,⁵ Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah⁶ and

1. Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Wasā'il al-Shi'ah*, vol. 30, p. 202; see also Namāzī, *Mustadrakāt Ilm Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 2, 61.

2. Al-Khuʿī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 49.

3. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 2, p. 285.

4. Ibid, p. 245.

5. Ibid, p. 303.

6. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 70.

Fuḍayl ibn ‘Iyād.¹ These people, as indirect *mashā’ikh*, cannot be classified as reliable, and it appears that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm did not aim to confirm their reliability.²

2. Some of his indirect *mashā’ikh* in the chains, like ‘Amr ibn Shīr,³ Sulayman al-Daylamī,⁴ and ‘Ā’ishah⁵ are weak and unreliable.⁶
3. There are nearly thirty *mursal* narrations in which unclear references have been made, e.g. ‘*an rajulin*,⁷ *ba‘ḍu aṣḥābinā*⁸ and *ba‘ḍu rijālih*.⁹ How could ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm know the authenticity of a certain *rajul* whose name is not mentioned in the chains? Moreover, there are many *marfū‘* narrations;¹⁰ how does ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm know that the eliminated links are trustworthy narrators?¹¹

In summary, these significations testify that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm did not intend to classify all the narrators in his text as reliable; rather, he intended to confirm the reliability of his direct *mashā’ikh*. Therefore, we can derive a general rule (*al-tawthīq al-‘āmm*) that all the direct *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm are reliable.

It should be noted that, as mentioned above, *Tafsīr al-Qummī* consists of two texts: a) The dictation of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm to al-‘Abbās; b) The dictation of Imam al-Bāqir (as) to Abū al-Jārūd.

1. Ibid, p. 200.

2. Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 315.

3. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 339.

4. Ibid, p. 128.

5. Ibid, p. 94.

6. Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 315.

7. Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, pp. 103, 313, vol. 2, pp. 50, 207, 245, 295.

8. Ibid, vol. 1, 211, vol. 2, pp. 218, 273, 301.

9. Ibid, vol. 1, pp. 152, 179, 214, 290, 306, 342, 385.

10. Ibid, pp. 43, 66, 99, 152, 290, 342, 368, 389, vol. 2, 197, 259, 297, 336.

11. Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 315-6.

This *al-tawthīq al-‘āmm* is not applicable to the entire text of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*; rather, it is only applicable to those parts of the text which are relevant to the dictation of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm to al-‘Abbās.

Having analyzed the general rules of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, the following lessons will address some of the important books in the field of *rijāl*.

SUMMARY

‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī was of one the great scholars of hadith and a prominent Shi‘ah commentator. Al-Najāshī considers him as “reliable in hadith,” “trustworthy, and having true faith”. ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, in the introduction of the book, states that he quoted the narrations that his masters and reliable sources have received from the Infallibles. Based on this statement, the scholars present two views:

1. Some hold that all his direct and indirect *mashā’ikh* are reliable;
2. Others maintain that only his direct *mashā’ikh* are reliable.

Nevertheless, this discussion depends on two points: the author of the introduction and the author of the text. It seems that if the author of the introduction were not ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, his testimony that he quoted the narrations from reliable people would lose its credibility. Regarding the text, there are two views as well. The first view maintains that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm compiled it. The second view holds that two dictations compiled this text, i.e. the dictation of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm to his student, al-‘Abbās and that of Imam al-Bāqir (as) to his student, Abū al-Jārūd, which al-‘Abbās narrates via three links from Abū al-Jārūd. Then, one of the students of al-‘Abbās merged the two dictations and compiled one single text.

Now, if we accept that the author of both the introduction and the text is ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, the important point to consider is the meaning of the testimony that he quotes the narrations narrated from his masters and reliable people from the Infallible. There are two views: the reliability of all the direct and indirect *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm; the exclusive reliability of his direct *mashā’ikh*. The majority of scholars prefer the second view for three reasons:

1. There are many weak indirect *mashā’ikh* in the chain, which cannot be classified as reliable;
2. There are some misled leaders in the chain as indirect *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm who cannot be classified as reliable;
3. There are many *mursal* narrations which make us think about the manner in which ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ascertained their reliability.

These three pieces of evidence indicate that ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm just wanted to prove the reliability of his direct *mashā’ikh*. Therefore, we can draw a general rule (*al-tawṭhīq al-‘āmm*) that all the direct *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm are reliable.

QUESTIONS

1. Some scholars point out to the testimony of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, in the introduction, in which he quotes the narrations that his masters had received from the Infallibles. Does this indicate the reliability of the direct and indirect *mashā’ikh* of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm? How do they prove this? What is your response?
2. Who is the author of the text of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*? Mention the two views in detail.
3. Who is the author of the introduction of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*? Is it essential to know who the author was? Why?

Lesson THIRTEEN

A Glance at *Rijāl* Books



Having investigated the general rules of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, it would be appropriate to get acquainted with some books in this field. As mentioned in Lesson One, a hadith mostly gains its authenticity through its narrators’ credibility which in turn depends on their specific qualities such as belief, trustworthiness and retentiveness. At this point, the question to be discussed is how we may verify the qualities of the narrators and the level of their credibility. The scholars of *‘ilm al-rijāl* attempted to record narrators’ qualities in their compilation of books on *‘ilm al-rijāl*. Therefore, in order to evaluate a narrator, a jurist needs to make use of those books. This lesson and the following ones serve as a brief introduction to some of them.

From the beginning, scholars of *rijāl* established different methods in order to determine and recognize the narrators and also to assess the level of their validity. The most common methods are:

According to the Alphabetical Order

In this way, the *rijāl* books were compiled like a lexicon or a dictionary according to the alphabetical order. Most of *rijāl* books are based on this order. The method is adopted in books like *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Ahwāl al-Rijāl* of Muḥammad al-Astarābādī and *Naqd al-Rijāl* of Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī (d. 1044/1634).

According to Category (*Ṭabaqah*)

Ṭabaqāt refers to a group of contemporary narrators who share a common *shaykh* (teacher). The Shi‘ah scholars, in the beginning, classified the narrators according to this method. In this classification, the narrators of each infallible are introduced

in a specific chapter. The names of those who did not narrate from any Imam are placed in a particular chapter. This method of classification has continued from the Prophet's time to recent centuries. *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* is an example of this method.

According to Criticizing (*Jarḥ*) and Strengthening (*Ta'dīl*)

According to this method, the author organizes his book into two sections. In the first one, he mentions the names of the narrators he deems as reliable. In the second one, he states the unreliable narrators. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī in *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*, and Ibn Dāwūd in *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd* follow this method.

According to *Fibrīst* (Catalog)

This method lists the names of the authors of *Uṣūl*¹ (principles) and *Muṣannafāt*² (compilation).³ The books *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī'ah* and *Rijāl al-Najāshī* are examples of this method.⁴

However, the first Shi'ah *rijāl* book was written by 'Abd Allāh ibn Jabalah al-Kinānī (d. 219/834), the scribe (*kātib*) of Imam 'Alī (as). In this book, he recorded the companions' names who accompanied Imam 'Alī (as) in the battles of Jamal, Ṣiffīn and Nahrawān.⁵ From the time of al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb (d. 225/839) to 460/1067, as al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī maintain, more than one hundred books had been compiled on '*ilm al-rijāl*'⁶ whose titles

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1. *Aṣl* in this sense, denotes a hadith book in which the author narrated either directly from the Imam or from a person who heard them from the Imam.
 2. *Muṣannafāt* is a hadith book in which all or most of its narrations have been taken from an earlier book.
 3. There are other methods, e.g. *Tajrīd al-Isnād* and *Mashīkhah*.
 4. As mentioned in Lesson One, this method records all the books of authors, whether or not the author is the narrator of hadith, and whether or not it is a book of hadith.
 5. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 217; Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 57.
 6. These authors included al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl (p. 36), Aḥmad

have been listed by Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī in *al-Mūṣaffā al-Maqāl fī Mūṣannifī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*.¹

It seems that some of these books were available to Ibn Dāwūd (d. 726/1325) but only al-Barqī's book has survived.² However, the *rijāl* books can be divided into three categories: early (from the 3rd/9th to the 5th/11th centuries), intermediate (from the 6th/12th to the 8th/14th centuries) and later books (from the 10th/16th century to the present). We discuss the first category:

EARLY RIJĀL BOOKS

Seven books fall into this category:

- *Rijāl al-Barqī*
- *Risālah Abī Ghālib al-Zurārī*
- *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*
- *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī'ah*
- *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*
- *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*
- *Rijāl al-Najāshī*

RIJĀL AL-BARQĪ

This book records the narrators' names in chronological order from the time of the Prophet (s) to the Eleventh Imam. The book

ibn Muḥammad Khālid al-Barqī (p. 77), Muḥammad 'Īsā ibn 'Ubayd (p. 334), 'Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl (p. 258), Ḥamīd ibn Zīyād ibn Ḥammād (p. 132), Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sa'id Ibn 'Uqdah (p. 94), Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-'Aqīqī (p. 81), Ḥamzah ibn Qāsim (p. 140), Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Nūḥ (p. 378), al-Kulaynī (p. 377), al-Ṣadūq (p. 389), and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Ayyāsh al-Jawharī (pp. 85-86); see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. ; Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 77-78.

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 41.

2. Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, pp. 3-4; Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 78.

does not deal with the classification of the narrators according to their being reliable or unreliable.¹ It is of great significance for identifying the *ṭabaqah* (category) of the narrators, which helps to a great extent in distinguishing between *musnad* and *mursal* narrations. However, there are four views about who the author of the book is. The possible authors are: a) Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī (d. 220/835); b) his son Aḥmad (d. 280/893); c) his grandson ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad. d) the son of ‘Abd Allāh, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh.² However, the author mentioned the names of 1,707 narrators.

In order to gain further acquaintance with al-Barqī’s method, we refer to an example from the book.

أصحاب أبي جعفر عليه السلام: جابر بن يزيد الجعفي، أبان بن تغلب الكندي،
سعد بن طريف، محمد بن مسلم الثقفي طائفي، محمد بن عجلان المدني، محمد
بن أبي سارة، محمد بن قيس أنصاري...³

In this statement, al-Barqī refers to some of the students of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as) who may be listed in one category.

RISĀLAH ABŪ GHĀLIB AL-ZURĀRĪ

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abī Ghālib al-Zurārī (285-368/898-978), from the ancestry of A‘yan, is the author of the book. As al-Najāshī states, he was “*Shaykh al-Ṭā’ifah* of the Shi‘ah and a well-known

1. The book only authenticates the reliability of two narrators, ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Alī a-Ḥalabī and Fuḍayl ibn Muḥammad ibn Rāshid; see al-Barqī, *Rijāl al-Barqī*, pp. 23, 34; Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 78-9.

2. The most likely author of the book is either ‘Abd Allāh ibn Aḥmad or his son, Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh, see Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 71; Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 45, Jāmi‘ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1990.

3. Al-Barqī, *Rijāl al-Barqī*, pp. 9-10.

Imāmī.”¹ Al-Zurārī, in the eyes of al-Ṭūsī, “was the shaykh and master of our companions in his time and was well trusted.”² Āl A‘yan is the most prominent Shi‘ah family in Kufa who played the most significant role in hadith and jurisprudence.³ This book is a biography of the narrators and scholars of the ancestry of the A‘yan family. Al-Zurārī also refers to more than twenty of his teachers. In the end, he mentioned the names of 122 books that he had in his library and the manner in which he received the permission (*ijāzah*) of using them.⁴

Al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghaḍā’irī, a student of Abū Ghālib, later completed the book by adding the names of those not mentioned by his master. ‘Allāmah Baḥr al-‘Ulūm further completed it later. Ayatollah Muḥammad ‘Alī Abṭāḥī (1930-2002) wrote a two-volume commentary on this *Risālah*, known as *Ta’rīkh Āl Zurārāh*.⁵

RIJĀL IBN AL-GHAḌĀ’IRĪ

Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī ⁶ is one of the most important sources of ‘ilm al-rijāl. Two aspects of this book should be discussed: a) its author, and b) the level of its credibility.

The Author of the Book

There are three views about the author of the book.

1. The author is Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn, known as Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī. He is one of the Shi‘ah scholars of the fourth/tenth and

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 84.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi‘ah*, pp. 74-5.

3. Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, *al-Fawā’id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 1, p. 222, Maktabah al-Ṣādiq, Tehran, n.d.

4. Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī, *Tarīkh al-A‘yan*, p. 45, Rabbānī, Qum 1979; Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 72-73.

5. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 73; Turābī, Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl. 83.

6. Also known as *Rijāl al-Ghaḍā’irī*, *al-Jarḥ* and *al-Ḍu‘afā’*.

fifth/eleventh century. Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn was reliable in the eyes of al-Najāshī, Ibn Ṭāwūs and ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī.⁷ Moreover, Ibn Dāwūd⁸ relied confidently on his views.⁹ Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī (d. 1356/1937), one of the great scholars of *rijāl*, introduced Aḥmad as one of the great and prominent Imāmī scholars. He added that it is not unlikely that Aḥmad is superior to al-Najāshī, who is the master of *rijāl*, as well as al-Ḥillī.¹⁰ The scholars maintain that Aḥmad has the utmost credibility. Hence, they have introduced him as a shaykh, a mystic, a man of noble qualities and a distinguished scholar. It is clear that these attributes indicate the greatness of Aḥmad from their point of view.¹¹

2. Some thinkers like Shahīd al-Thānī maintained that the author is al-Ḥusayn, Aḥmad’s father.¹² Al-Ḥusayn was one of the great Shi‘ah scholars and *mashā’ikh* to whom al-Ṭūsī referred as someone who had “heard a lot” (*kathīr al-samā’*) and was “aware of ‘ilm al-rijāl (‘*ārif bi-al-rijāl*).¹³ He is the most famous of the *mashā’ikh* (*ashḥar al-mashā’ikh*) and the most knowledgeable jurist (*afqah*) next to al-Mufīd.¹⁴ Al-Ḥusayn was a prolific author whose books include *Kitāb al-Ta’rīkh* and *Kitāb al-Ḍu‘afā’* and he was also one of the *mashā’ikh* of al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī.¹⁵

7. He was a student of Ibn Ṭāwūs.

8. He was a student of al-Ḥillī.

9. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, p. 14.

10. Al-Kalbāsī, *Samā’ al-Maqāl*, p. 29.

11. ‘Ināyah Allāh al-Quhpā’ī, *Majma’ al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 108, Ismā‘īliyyān, Qum 1987.

12. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 45-6; see also al-Khu’ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 43, 95.

13. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 425.

14. Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, *al-Fawā’id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, p. 305.

15. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, pp. 13-4.

3. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī believes that it was not written by father (al-Ḥusayn) or son (Aḥmad) but by the Shi‘ah opponents.¹

However, there are some pieces of conclusive evidence pointing to the author being Aḥmad.²

This book existed at the time of al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) and al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), but there was no trace of this book for two centuries. A copy was later accessible to Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 673/1274), and then to ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī (648-726/1250-1325) and the latter included the full text of the book in his *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*, known as *Rijāl al-‘Allāmah* and in this way, the book has reached us today.³

The Credibility of the Book

Despite the fact that the author of the book, according to the first and second views, is one of the great and prominent scholars of the Imāmiyyah school, the Shi‘ah thinkers are not unanimous about the credibility of the book. Some of their views will be touched upon below.

First, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī believes that the book is of no essential value since, as mentioned above, it was not written by the father or the son, but by opponents of the Shi‘ah intending to undermine the Shi‘ah scholars. To make the book look natural, they have partially included Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī words.⁴

Second, al-Ḥillī acknowledges the book’s credibility; however, he prefers al-Najāshī’s and al-Ṭūsī’s confirmations (*tawthīqāt*) over Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī’s weakenings (*taḍ‘īfāt*). It means that if Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī weakens someone and al-Ṭūsī (or al-Najāshī) considers him reliable, al-Ḥillī prefers the views of al-Ṭūsī (or

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1. Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shi‘ah*, vol. 10, p. 89, Dār al-Aḍwā’, Beirut 1398/1977.
 2. Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 84-9; see also Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, pp. 17-8.
 3. Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*, p. 18
 4. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘ah*, vol. 10, p. 89.

al-Najāshī). When al-Najāshī (or al-Ṭūsī) has not weakened or authenticated a narrator, and only Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī considered him weak or reliable, al-Ḥillī follows his view.¹

The third view holds the credibility of all the instances of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's weakening and *tawthīqāt*. It means that if he classifies a narrator as weak or reliable, his view is acceptable whether the other scholars consider him reliable or not. This perspective maintains that al-Najāshī, as an expert, relied on Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's assessments. Moreover, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī carefully and thoughtfully evaluated the narrators and did not weaken anyone without reason.² Therefore, his point of view precedes those of al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī.

The fourth view holds that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī has gone too far (*ifrāt*) in classifying the narrator as weak, and he only authenticates few narrators. Mīr Dāmād states that "it is rare for a narrator to escape from Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's criticism (*jarḥ*)".³ Therefore, his weakening of narrators is not credible but his confirmations are reliable.

The fifth view holds that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's confirmations and weakenings are not to be trusted. As mentioned in Lesson Four, the validity of confirmations depends on the confirmer's perception (*ḥiss*). This means that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī must have testified, based on his own perception, to the reliability (or unreliability) of a narrator. But if he, according to his *ijtihād*, classifies the narrators, it is acceptable only for him, not for other jurists. It seems that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, in the evaluation of the narrators, did not consider the qualities of the narrators, rather he paid attention to the content of their narrations. If the content of a narration does not mesh with his opinion, he classified its narrator as weak and a liar.

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1. Turābī, *Pazhūbīshī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 120-1; see also, al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 43-5, 95-6.
 2. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 55; Muḥammad al-Kalbāsī, *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, p. 419, Dār al-Ḥadīth, Qum 1991.
 3. Al-Kalbāsī, *Samā' al-Maqāl*, vol. 16, p. 366.

In other words, the confirmer should realize the qualities of the narrator either through association with the narrators or by having heard them from his teachers. It seems that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's method was not like that; rather, he realized the features of the narrators through the contents of the text itself.¹ For instance, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, in the biographical account of al-Ḥusayn ibn Shādhūyah states:

الحسين بن شاذويه أبو عبد الله، الصفار، القميّ زعم القميون: أنه كان غاليا و
رأيت له كتابا في الصلاة سديدا.²

Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī states that although the people of Qum considered al-Ḥusayn a *ghālī*, the narrations in his *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* indicate the precision (*itqān*) and credibility of al-Husayn's narrations.

This statement shows that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī confirms the reliability of al-Ḥusayn, not due to his qualities, but from the contents of the hadith. For him, the preciseness of the hadith indicates the reliability of the narrator. Therefore, his view is a kind of *ijtibād*, and it is only valid for him. To summarize, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's confirmations and weakenings are invalid since they depend on his *ijtibād*, rather than perception (*ḥiss*). Nevertheless, he evaluated 225 narrators.

FIHRIST KUTUB AL-SHĪ'AH

The author of this book is Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as Shaykh al-Tā'ifāh (385-460/995-1067). In the introduction, he explains his motivation for producing the book and says

1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 93-102.

2. Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*, p. 53. For further instances, see the biographical accounts of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Mufaḍḍal, *ibid*, p. 47; Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sayyār, *Ibid*, p. 40; Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, *Ibid*, p. 40.

that the previously catalogued (*fihrist*) books¹ were incomplete, and by writing this book, he is trying to complete the works of his predecessors. He mentions two cataloguing books by Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī which did not survive. Al-Ṭūsī hopes that his *Fihrist* restores the previous Shi'ah heritage.²

He lists alphabetically 912 Shi'ah narrators who have compiled one or more books. Alongside each book, al-Ṭūsī usually mentions three points:

- Qualities of the authors, such as reliability or unreliability
- The credibility of its narrations
- The beliefs of the authors

Al-Ṭūsī adds that mentioning the beliefs of the authors is due to the fact that many of them have false beliefs, but their books are reliable.³ For instance, al-Ṭūsī states,

أحمد بن أبي بشر السراج، كوفي، مولى، يكتفى أبا جعفر، ثقة في الحديث، واقفي
المذهب، روى عن موسى بن جعفر عليه السلام و له كتاب النوادر.

Aḥmad ibn Abī Bishr, the author of *al-Nawādir*, is from Kufa and reliable. He, moreover, refers to his belief as Wāqifi.⁴

It would be of interest to note that al-Ṭūsī, in his *Fihrist*, does not mention the beliefs of many authors while he referred to them in his *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*. For instance, he classified Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd in two instances as Wāqifi in the *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* though he did not refer to his belief in *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*.⁶

1. This is the science that records the books of authors, whether the author is the narrator of hadith or not, and whether it is a book of *hadith* or another book.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*, pp. 2-3.

3. Ibid, pp. 3-4.

4. Ibid, p. 51.

5. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, pp. 332, 351.

6. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*, 17. It would be of interest to mention that al-Kashshī also considered Ibrāhīm ibn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd as a Wāqifi;

Moreover, al-Ṭūsī did not mention the belief of Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Bakr,¹ while al-Najāshī² and al-Kashshī³ consider him as Wāqifī.⁴ Therefore, *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah* overlooked the faith of many authors.

In light of what has been mentioned, it can be concluded that al-Ṭūsī is not obliged to mention the beliefs of the authors in *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*; instead, his purpose is to list their names and books even if they had a false belief. In other words, al-Ṭūsī’s silence about a narrator’s beliefs does not imply the narrator’s Imāmī beliefs.⁵

It seems that al-Ṭūsī compiled *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* after *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, as in his *Rijāl*, he says on many occasions, “as I mentioned it in *Fibrīst*.”⁶ It indicates that he compiled *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* later.

RIJĀL AL-ṬŪSĪ

This book is the second book of al-Ṭūsī. He has two aims in this book:

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- al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 744.
1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, p. 23.
 2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 21.
 3. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 771.
 4. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 28. Moreover, al-Najāshī considered Ḥamīd ibn Ziyād as a Wāqifī although al-Ṭūsī did not say anything about his faith in *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*. For further details on al-Najāshī’s view, see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 132. For further details on al-Ṭūsī’s view, see al-Ṭūsī, *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, p. 155.
 5. Al-Khu‘ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp 96-7. For further details, see al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 28-30. However, Baḥr al-‘Ulūm maintains that all the authors in *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *al-Fibrīst li-al-Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn* and *Ma‘ālī al-‘Ulamā’* are Imāmī unless stated otherwise, since the aim of these four books was to compile the Imāmī works; see Muḥammad Mahdī Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, *al-Fawā‘id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 4, pp. 114-7, Maktabah al-Ṣādiq, Tehran, n.d.
 6. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, e.g. pp. 335, 410, 411, 414, 417, 421, 423, 425.

1. To list all the narrators from the time of the Prophet to the Twelfth Imam;
2. To list the names of companions who have not narrated from an Infallible.

Therefore, the book consists of two parts. In the first part, he alphabetically mentioned the names of 5,920 narrators narrating from the Infallibles (i.e. from the Prophet to the Twelfth Imam). In the second part, he alphabetically referred to the names of 508 *aṣḥāb* of the Prophet and the twelve infallible Imams who have not quoted from them.

In order to get more acquainted with this book, we mention an example:

أصحاب أبي عبد الله جعفر بن محمد الصادق عليهما السلام

باب الهمزة

I. أحمد بن عبد الله بن محمد بن عمر بن علي بن أبي طالب الهاشمي المدني،
أسند عنه.

2. أحمد بن بشير، أبو بكر العمري الكوفي.

3. أحمد بن بشر بن عمار الصيرفي.

4. أحمد بن عبد العزيز الكوفي، أبو شبل.

5. أحمد بن مبشر الطائي الكوفي.

6. أحمد بن ثابت الحنفي الكوفي، و يقال: الهمداني.¹

Al-Ṭūsī, as we see, mentions the students of the Sixth Imam without discussing their essential qualities such as belief, trustworthiness, truthfulness and retentiveness, all of which play a significant role in the acceptance or rejection of their narrations. Therefore, as Ayatollah al-Khu'ī states, al-Ṭūsī ignored the expression of such qualities since he aimed to compile merely

1. Ibid, p. 155.

the narrations of the companions of the Infallible regardless of their qualities.¹

To further clarify, we could say that the methods adopted by al-Ṭūsī in his *Fihrist* and *Rijāl* are different. In *Rijāl*, he attempts only to list the narrators who quoted from an Infallible regardless of their true or untrue beliefs. Nevertheless, his goal in *Fihrist* is broader and, therefore, he mostly tries to refer to their essential qualities like trustworthiness and faith. Thus, we see the names of some Caliphs and also Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ in the list of the Prophet's companions in his *Rijāl*.² Ayatollah al-Burūjirdī justifies al-Ṭūsī's method in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, stating that he had first collected the names of the narrators in a notebook and wanted to evaluate them later, but failed to carry out his plan.³

Although al-Ṭūsī does not list all the companions of the Prophet and the twelve Imams, this book is useful for *ṭabaqah*, i.e. it is, for instance, helpful to clarify that Aḥmad ibn Bishr ibn 'Ammār is amongst the *aṣḥāb* of Imam al-Ṣādiq.⁴

In light of what was mentioned above, it can be concluded that the existence of the name of anyone in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* is not a sign of his true belief unless specified by al-Ṭūsī.

IKHTIYĀR MA'RIFAH AL-RIJĀL

The author, Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Kashshī,⁵ was a student of al-'Ayyāshī (d. 320/932),⁶ and a contemporary of al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940) and thus from the same category (*ṭabaqah*).⁷ It has been narrated that he was reliable and endowed

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 96-7.

2. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 29.

3. Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 69.

4. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 45.

5. Kashsh, also pronounced al-Kushsh, is the name of a city in Samarkand region.

6. It would suffice to say that he distinguished himself by writing more than 200 books; see al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī'ah*, pp. 396-9.

7. The date of his death should be at the beginning of the 4th/10th century.

with great insight into hadith and the qualities of the narrators; however, he frequently narrated from weak sources. Al-Ṭūsī describes him as “reliable and a master in narrations with good belief (*husn al-i’tiqād*)”.¹ Al-Ṭūsī also mentioned the same view about al-Kashshī in his *Rijāl*.² Moreover, al-Najāshī introduces him as “reliable and eminent” (*‘ayn*).³ Nevertheless, al-Kashshī’s book on *‘ilm al-rijāl* suffers from two shortcomings: a) frequently narrating from weak narrators, and b) containing many mistakes.⁴

The name of this book is *Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl* or *Ma‘rifah al-Nāqilīn ‘an A’immah al-Ṣādiqīn*, and the original text was available in the times of Sayyid ibn Ṭawūs and al-Shahīd al-Thānī (911-965/1505-1557).⁵ However, al-Ṭūsī refined it and prepared an edited selection which he titled as *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*. Nevertheless, there are different views on the method of al-Ṭūsī’s selection. Some hold that seemingly the original text included Sunni and Shī‘ah narrators but al-Ṭūsī made it specific to Shī‘ah narrators. The fact that the surviving version is explicitly devoted to Shī‘ah narrators is a matter of debate since it includes many Sunni narrators in the extant version, in which they quote from the Imams.⁶ Other scholars maintain that al-Ṭūsī only rectified the inaccuracies in the original text.⁷

However, the main purpose of the book is to express the views of the Imams and the early scholars of *rijāl* based on the qualities of the narrators. The book was compiled according to *ṭabaqah*. Al-Kashshī began with Prophet Muḥammad (s) and his

1. Al-Ṭūsī, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, p. 403.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 440.

3. *‘ayn* is used to refer to the elite, best, and the most noble of a group, liking it to the eyes as the best part of body. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 149.

4. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 372.

5. Sobhani, *Kullīyyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 59.

6. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 25-6.

7. Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *Muṣaffa al-Maqāl fī Muṣannifī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 375, Rā’iḥah, Qum 1959.

followers, then Imam ‘Alī (as) and his followers to the time of the minor occultation of the Twelfth Imam. The earliest and the most authentic Shī‘ah text, it is unique for the clarification of the following:

- The relation of the Shi‘ah with the Imams
- Shi‘ah organizations
- Shi‘ah sects and groups
- False Shi‘ah claimants
- The method of the Imams on praising, criticism (*jarḥ*) and commending (*ta’dīl*)
- The attitude of some of the Shi‘ah towards the ‘Umayyad and ‘Abbasid caliphs¹

As mentioned above, al-Kashshī aims to reveal the qualities and reliability of the narrators by referring to the views of the Imams and the early scholars of *rijāl*. For instance, concerning the reliability of Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafī, he refers to the hadith of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as):

حدثني محمد بن قولويه، قال: حدثني سعد بن عبد الله بن أبي خلف القمي، قال حدثنا: أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن عبد الله بن محمد الحجال، عن العلاء بن رزين، عن عبد الله بن أبي يعفور، قال قلت لأبي عبد الله عليه السلام انه ليس كل ساعة القاك ولا يمكن القدم، ويحيي الرجل من اصحابنا فيسألني و ليس عندي كلما يسألني عنه، قال: فما يمنعك من محمد بن مسلم الثقفي، فإنه قد سمع من أبي و كان عنده وجيها.

‘Abd Allāh ibn Ya‘fūr said to the Imam, “It is difficult for me to visit you. What can I do if I have any questions?” The Imam replied, “Ask Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafī as he has

1. Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 85-6. This book is similar to Ibn Sa’d’s *Ṭabaqāt* in the Sunni tradition.

received many narrations from my father while possessing a high rank in his eyes.”¹

Moreover, in order to prove the reliability of some narrators, al-Kashshī relies on the testimony of early *rijāl* scholars. Regarding the reliability of Khālīd ibn Jarīr, for instance, he refers to the testimony of al-‘Ayyāshī:

محمد بن مسعود، قال: سألت علي بن الحسن، عن خالد بن جرير الذي يروى عنه الحسن بن محبوب؟ فقال: كان من بجلة، وكان صالح.

Al-‘Ayyāshī, as al-Kashshī narrates, questioned Khālīd ibn Jarīr’s reliability from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan (al-Faḍḍāl). He said that Khālīd ibn Jarīr is from the tribe of Bajīlah, and he is pious.²

As you can see, in order to reveal the narrators’ qualities, al-Kashshī refers to the Imams’ sayings or early *rijāl* scholars’ statements on *rijāl*.

RIJĀL AL-NAJĀSHĪ

The author of the book is Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn al-‘Abbās (372-450/982-1058), known as al-Najāshī.³ He was a contemporary of al-Ṭūsī, and both were the students of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā’irī (d. 411/1020). The loftiness of his high rank is universally accepted among the scholars. Al-Ḥillī, in the biographical account of al-Najāshī, states:

1. Al-Kashshī, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 383.

2. Ibid, vol. 2, p. 636.

3. He was a descendant of ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Najāshī, the governor of Ahwāz, who wrote a letter to Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), and the Imam replied to him. The letter is known as *Risālah ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Najāshī*; see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 101. For further details about the letter which contains the Imam’s wise counsels to governors, see Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī, *Kashf al-Raybah*, pp. 86-96, Dār al-Murtaḍawī, Qum 1970; Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 17, pp. 207-212, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988.

ثقة معتمد عليه عندي، له كتاب الرجال نقلنا منه في كتابنا هذا وغيره... و له كتب أخر ذكرناها في الكتاب الكبير.

I believe in his reliability and trustworthiness. He compiled the book of *rijāl* from which I have quoted in the present book and my other books... He also has other books that I mentioned in *al-Kabīr*.¹

Moreover, Mīr Dāmād (d. 1401/1980) describes him as:

شيخنا الثقة، الفاضل الجليل القدر، السند المعتمد عليه

This means that Al-Najāshī is “our reliable *shaykh*, knowledgeable and of great distinction whose narrations are reliable.”² More has been said in praise of al-Najāshī.³ Although he compiled many books, it is most unfortunate that only this book has survived.

Some opponents believed that the Shi‘ah school of thought did not have the right lineage and that there were no scholar or book among the Shi‘ahs. Hence, al-Najāshī wrote the book to introduce Shi‘ah scholars and their works.⁴

Considering the author’s purpose, the book needs to be taken as a catalog (*fihrist*). He mentioned the names of 1,269 writers alphabetically.⁵ In addition to the names of the books and their

1. Al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, p. 72.

2. Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshiḥ*, p. 76.

3. For further details on the views of scholars about al-Najāshī, see Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, p. 40; Muḥammad al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil fī ‘Ulamā' Jabal ‘Āmil*, vol. 2, p. 15, Maktabah al-Andulus, Baghdad, n.d.

4. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 3.

5. It should be noted that al-Najāshī usually mentions the name of the narrator, his books and his qualities such as reliability or unreliability. In the biography of nearly 40 narrators, he does not say anything about their reliability or unreliability; however, he mentions them in the biographical accounts of other people.

authors, he introduces his method of approaching those books. For instance, al-Najāshī says:

محمد بن القاسم بن زكريا المحاربي أبو عبد الله، الكوفي، المعروف بالسوداني، ثقة من أصحابنا، عمر. له كتاب الفوائد و هو نوادر. أخبرنا الحسين بن عبيد الله قال: حدثنا أبو الحسين بن تمام عنه.

Muḥammad ibn Abū al-Qāsim from Kufa, known as al-Sūdānī, is Imāmī and reliable. He had a long life. He is the author of *al-Fawā'id*, and it is [in the category of] *Nawādir*.¹

As we see, al-Najāshī mentioned the name of the book, its author and introduced him as reliable. Then, he introduced his method of approaching the book by saying that al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh informed him.²

Although the book was compiled according to the method of *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī'ah*, the author did not forget his main aim, i.e. criticizing and strengthening (*jarḥ wa ta'dīl*). He thus mentioned the reliability of more than 500 narrators and the weakness of nearly 44 narrators.³

Some scholars, e.g. Mīr Dāmād,⁴ Baḥr al-'Ulūm⁵ and Ayatollah al-Khu'ī⁶ mention that whenever al-Najāshī does not mention any narrator's belief, it shows that he is an Imāmī since the aim of al-Najāshī was to compile the works by the Shī'ah authors. For instance, he refers to the belief of Ibrāhīm ibn Ṣāliḥ as Wāqifī:

1. *Nawādir* refers to a book on hadith which has a limited number of narrations on such a wide range of themes that cannot be classified.

2. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 378; Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 89-90.

3. Turābī, *Pazhūbishī dar 'Ilm-i Rijāl*, p. 90.

4. Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshiḥ*, pp. 66-7.

5. Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 24-30.

6. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 96-7.

إبراهيم بن صالح الأنماطي الأسدي ثقة روى عن أبي الحسن ووقف¹

Nevertheless, this rule cannot be accepted generally as al-Najāshī does not mention the beliefs of some narrators such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr,² ‘Ammār al-Sābāṭī,³ ‘Amr ibn Sa‘īd,⁴ Aḥmad ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Khāqān⁵ while they are non-Imāmī.⁶

The Conflict between al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī’s Views

Sometimes the views of al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī regarding the qualities of narrators are different. The question then is: in the event of contradiction, which view should be preferred? In response, it seems that many distinguished scholars in *rijāl* and jurisprudence, like al-Ḥillī, al-Shahīd al-Thānī, al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn (al-Shahīd al-Thānī’s son) and Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī maintain that in case of conflict between the views of al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī concerning the reliability or unreliability of any narrator, the views of al-Najāshī should be preferred. The reason for the preference may be the following:

1. Al-Najāshī compiled his book later than al-Ṭūsī since he mentioned the biographical account of al-Ṭūsī in his book, and usually the later book is more in-depth.⁷
2. Al-Ṭūsī had extensive knowledge in various fields such as *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, theology and *rijāl*. In contrast, al-Najāshī exclusively was an expert in *rijāl*. The views of a scholar who has specialized only in one field may be more accurate than the one who has worked on many fields.

1. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 34, see also, pp. 72, 92, 345.

2. Ibid, p. 222. He was a Faṭaḥī.

3. Ibid, p. 290. He was a Faṭaḥī.

4. Ibid, p. 287. He was a Faṭaḥī.

5. Ibid, p. 87. He was a Nāṣibī.

6. Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazab*, p. 148; Turābī, *Pazhūhishī dar ‘Ilm-i Rijāl*, pp. 92-3.

7. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 403.

3. The majority of the narrators were from Kufa, and al-Najāshī was a Kufan hailing from a distinguished family. His book reveals his comprehensive and vastly encompassing information about tribal lineages. In the biographical accounts of some narrators, he referred to their brothers, children and ancestors as if they had been his contemporaries.
4. Companionship of distinguished masters such as Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī, his father and Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Nūḥ al-Ṣayrafī had made al-Najāshī an expert with vast knowledge.⁸ Therefore, al-Najāshī's view is more accurate.⁹

It is interesting that both al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī, as two contemporary scholars, compiled books in the same field. Ayatollah al-Burūjirdī asserts that al-Najāshī indeed compiled his book after al-Ṭūsī; nevertheless, al-Najāshī, due to his expertise, attempted to correct what al-Ṭūsī had said earlier.¹⁰

An Important Suggestion by Mīr Dāmād

It is worth noting that, in the eyes of Mīr Dāmād, al-Najāshī's method is that if someone is weak, he mentions his weakness. Therefore, his silence on the weakness of anybody implies that he is not weak in al-Najāshī's view.¹¹ However, this view is open to question, since his primary aim was collecting the works of Shi'ah authors, rather than criticizing and strengthening (*jarḥ wa ta'dīl*) them. His silence does not thus imply the narrator's trustworthiness.¹² Yes, it cannot reveal the reliability of the narrator, but it may show his merits and good qualities.

8. Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, vol. 2, pp. 46-50.

9. Zayn al-Dīn Al-Shahīd al-Thānī, *Masālik al-Afhām fī Tanqīḥ al-Sharā'ī' al-Islām*, vol. 5, p. 319, al-Ma'ārif al-Islāmī, Qum 1993.

10. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 60.

11. Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshiḥ*, pp. 67-8.

12. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 62.

As mentioned above, *rijāl* books can be divided into three categories: earlier, intermediate and later. The next lesson will touch upon intermediate *rijāl* books.

SUMMARY

This lesson had a glance at seven earlier *rijāl* books:

Rijāl al-Barqī

It tries to classify the narrators of each infallible in chronological order and each in a particular chapter from the Prophet to the Eleventh Imam. This book does not address the qualities of the narrators.

Risālah Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī

It attempts to address the biographical accounts of the narrators and scholars of the A'yan family. This book was completed by al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī and later further expanded by Baḥr al-'Ulūm. Recently Ayatollah Abṭāḥī wrote a two-volume commentary on it, entitled *Ta'rikh Āl Zurārah*.

Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī

It appears that the author is Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī. Despite his outstanding reputation and prominence among the Imāmiyyah, there is no agreement on the credibility of the book. However, al-Ghaḍā'irī's confirmation and weakening of narrators are of no essential bearing since he presents his views according to his *ijtihād* rather than perceptions.

Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah

The author alphabetically listed 912 Shi'ah authors of hadith books and also treated their qualities, e.g. reliability and belief. However, al-Ṭūsī's book is not comprehensive and did not mention the beliefs of many authors. It seems that he did not

intend to mention the beliefs of all narrators; rather, he intended to list their names and the titles of their books regardless of their false beliefs, if any. Therefore, his silence on an author's belief does not serve as proof for his being an Imāmī.

Rijāl al-Ṭūsī

It consists of two parts. In the first part, al-Ṭūsī mentions the names of five thousand nine hundred and twenty narrators from the times of the Prophet up to the Twelfth Imam. In the second part, he refers to the names of 508 *aṣḥāb* of the Prophet and Twelve infallible Imams who have not quoted from them. However, al-Ṭūsī does not mention the qualities of the companions. It is worth noting that the method of al-Ṭūsī in *Fihrist* and *Rijāl* are different. In *Rijāl*, he attempts only to list the narrators who quote from an Infallible, whether they were of true beliefs or not. Nevertheless, his goal in *Fihrist* was broader and, therefore, he mostly tried to refer to their essential qualities like trustworthiness and faith.

Ikhtiyār Maʿrifah al-Rijāl

The author was a reliable scholar endowed with great insights into hadith and quite capable of evaluating the narrators' qualities; however, the book suffers from two short comings:

1. He frequently narrated from weak people;
2. The book contained many mistakes, but al-Ṭūsī rectified them and entitled it *Ikhtiyār Maʿrifah al-Rijāl* (selected parts).

Nevertheless, there are different views on the method of al-Ṭūsī's selection and editing. Some hold that seemingly the original text included narrations by Sunni and Shi'ah narrators and al-Ṭūsī selected those narrated by the Shi'ah narrators. Other scholars maintain that al-Ṭūsī only rectified the mistakes. However, the primary purpose of this book is to express the views of the Imams and the early scholars of *rijāl*

on the narrators' qualities. The book was compiled according to *ṭabaqah*.

Rijāl al-Najāshī

The author's great distinction is quite known. To counter the criticisms of some opponents of the Shi'ah who believed that the Shi'ah did not have any scholar or book, al-Najāshī wrote this book to introduce a number of Shi'ah scholars and their works. Although it is compiled according to the method of *Fihrist* books, the author attempts to criticize (*jarb*) and strengthen (*ta'dīl*) the narrators. He thus mentions the reliability of more than 500 narrators and the weakness of nearly 44 narrators.

QUESTIONS

1. Some hold that since Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī evaluated the narrators according to his *ijtihād*, his view bears no essential value. How does he evaluate them by *ijtihād*? Explain in detail.
2. Is the method adopted by al-Ṭūsī in *Fihrist* and *Rijāl* the same? Explain in detail.
3. Why did al-Ṭūsī mention the names of some of the opponents in his *Rijāl*? What are the justifications of Ayatollah al-Burūjirdī?
4. Why did al-Ṭūsī refine *Rijāl al-Kashshī*? Mention two reasons.
5. Some suggest that when we notice a conflict between the views of al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī, we should prefer those of al-Najāshī. How do they justify such a suggestion?

Lesson FOURTEEN

Intermediate and Later *Rijāl* Books



As mentioned in the previous lesson, *rijāl* books can be divided into three categories: earlier (from the 3rd/9th to the 5th/11th centuries), intermediate (from the 6th/12th to the 8th/14th centuries), and later (from the 10th/16th century to the present). Earlier *rijāl* books can be considered as the foundation of all the *rijāl* sources since they are the first and foundational works in this field. Therefore, the intermediate *rijāl* books and those written later were dependent on earlier ones and derived certain material from them. Earlier books were touched upon in the previous lesson and this lesson will treat intermediate and later books.

INTERMEDIATE BOOKS

It appears that no book were written on *‘ilm al-rijāl* for more than a century after the demise of al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067). However, the great Shi‘ah scholars compiled outstanding books after this one-hundred-year hiatus. These books are:

- *Fihrist Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn*
- *Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’*
- *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*
- *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl fī Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*

FIHRIST SHAYKH MUNTAJAB AL-DĪN

This is the first book written after the long gap. It was compiled by Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Bābawayh al-Rāzī, a distinguished Shi‘ah scholar of the 6th/12th and 7th/13th centuries. Distinguished scholars hailed from

the Rāzī family for three centuries (from the middle of the 3rd/9th century to the 7th/13th century). Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (306-381/918-991) also hails from this family. Born in Qum, Muntajab al-Dīn attended the seminary of Rayy.¹ In order to receive hadith, he traveled to many cities and regions such as Isfahan, Baghdad and Tabaristan. His works include *al-Arbaʿīn* and the history of Rayy.

The Shiʿah and Sunni scholars have praised his astoundingly retentive memory (*ḥifẓ*), accuracy and trustworthiness in quoting the narrations. In particular, Imam al-Rāfiʿī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 623/1226) talks at length about the good qualities of Muntajab al-Dīn and his level of expertise. Al-Shafiʿī furthermore mentioned that the reason for his detailed praise is that he felt indebted to Muntajab al-Dīn.² Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, one of the great Sunni scholars and experts of *ʿilm al-rijāl*, was one of his students. He described him as “a master of hadith in hearing (*samāʿ*), preserving (*dabt*), memorizing and compiling narrations.”³ Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī described him as a man of superior qualities (*fāḍil*), knowledgeable (*ʿālim*), reliable, very truthful (*ṣadūq*), a scholar of hadith (*muḥaddith*) and memorizer [of narrations] (*ḥāfiẓ*).⁴ According to al-Majlisī, *Fihrist Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn* was quite known in scholarly circles.⁵

Describing his motivation for compiling the book, Muntajab al-Dīn explains that one day one of the great scholars was talking about *Fihrist Kutub al-Shiʿah* and maintaining that al-Ṭūsī had collected the names of the Shiʿah scholars and their books up to his own time, but his work was not continued after his death. These words encouraged Muntajab al-Dīn to complete al-Ṭūsī’s

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1. It is presently a district of the Greater Tehran.
 2. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿIsā Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿUlamāʾ wa Hiyāḍ al-Fuḍalāʾ*, vol. 4, pp. 141-2, Muʾassasah al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, Beirut 1981.
 3. ʿAlī al-Muntajab al-Dīn, *al-Fihrist li-al-Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn*, p. 8, Kitābkhana-yi Marʿashī-yi Najafī, Qum, n.d.
 4. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, vol. 2, pp. 2, 194.
 5. Al-Muntajab al-Dīn, *al-Fihrist li-al-Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn*, p. 28.

work; he thus collected the names and the books of al-Ṭūsī's contemporaries and those of later generations up to his own time.

Muntajab al-Dīn compiled the biographical accounts of 544 scholars and listed their works from the time of al-Mufīd (d. 413/1022) up to his time. He mainly attempted to mention their qualities; for instance, he introduces Abū Ya'la Sālār as follows:

الشيخ أبو يعلى سalar بن عبد العزيز الديلمي فقيه ثقة عين له كتاب المراسم
العلوية والأحكام النبوية أخبرنا به الوالد عن أبيه عنه رحمهم الله.

Abū Ya'la Sālār is a jurist (*faqīh*), reliable and distinguished (*'ayn*).¹ He compiled the book of *al-Marāsim al-'Alawiyyah fī Ahkām al-Nabawiyyah*.²

Nevertheless, al-Muntajab al-Dīn collected the names of scholars who lived in that period which lasted nearly 150 years. The book is one of the great *Rijāl* sources and has been praised by scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqlānī who, in his *Lisān al-Mizān*, cited it in many places and mentioned its title as *Rijāl al-Shī'ah* or *Rijāl al-Imāmiyyah*.³

MA'ĀLIM AL-'ULAMĀ'

This book was compiled by Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Sharāshūb al-Māzandarānī⁴ (489-588/1095-1192). He was described with the following titles "knowledgeable (*'ālim*), of superior qualities (*fāḍil*), reliable, a scholar of hadith (*muḥaddith*) and expert in *'ilm al-rijāl*." Ibn Shahrāshūb studied under the supervision of some great scholars like al-Zamakhsharī (467-538/1074-1143), 'Abd al-Wāḥid Tamīmī al-Āmidī (d. 510/1116), Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāwandī

1. *'Ayn* here implies being the elite, the best, and the most noble of a group, likening it to the eyes as the best part of the body; see Sobhani, *Durūs Mūjazah*, p. 149.
2. Al-Muntajab al-Dīn, *al-Fihrist li-al-Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn*, p. 67.
3. Ibid, pp. 12-5.
4. Māzandarān is one of the northern provinces of Iran.

(d. 537/1144), Amīn al-Islām al-Ṭabrisī (467-548/1074-1153) and Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī (470-522/1077-1128). *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, *Mathālib al-Nawāṣib*, *Mutaṣḥābih al-Qurʾān wa Mukhtalifuh* are amongst his most important books.¹

Nevertheless, Ibn Shahrāshūb's goal was to compile a list of old and new Shiʿah books and their authors. He believes that although *Fihrist Kutub al-Shiʿah* was unique in its time, *Maʿālim al-ʿUlamāʾ* completed it by adding the names of authors which al-Ṭūsī had missed. Moreover, Ibn Shahrāshūb collected the names and books of al-Ṭūsī's successors up to his own time. He mentioned in totality the names of 1,021 authors.² To become acquainted with the text of the book, let us give an example from this book. For instance, Ibn Shahrāshūb states:

عبد الله بن بكير، ثقة، إلا انه فطحي، له كتاب.

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bukayr is reliable, even though he is a Faṭaḥī. Moreover, he compiled a book.³

It seems that his aim was mainly to introduce Shiʿah authors and narrators and he rarely authenticates or weakens them. He has dedicated the final chapter of the book to the famous poets of the Ahl al-Bayt.

In summary, after nearly 150 years after the demise of al-Ṭūsī, two eminent scholars, Muntajab al-Dīn and Ibn Shahrāshūb, tried to continue al-Ṭūsī's project. Neither of them seemed to be aware of the other's work.⁴ However, it seems that Muntajab al-Dīn's book is more comprehensive than Ibn Shahrāshūb's book.

1. Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍat al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-ʿUlamāʾ al-Sādāt*, vol. 6, pp. 290-293, Ismāʿīliyyān, Qum 1970; Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 4, p. 276, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1998.

2. Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Shahrāshūb, *Maʿālim al-ʿUlamāʾ*, p. 3, al-Hiydariyyah, Qum, n.d.

3. Ibid, p. 77.

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ʿIlm al-Rijāl*, p. 111.

RIJĀL IBN DĀWŪD

The author of the book is Taqī al-Dīn Ḥasan Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī (637-707/1239-1307). He was born in the city of Hillah which at the time was one of the important Shi‘ah religious and scholarly centers. Along with ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī¹ (648-726/1250-1325), Ibn Dāwūd studied under Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (602-676/1205-1277) and Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 673/1274). Al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī paid particular attention to him and permitted him to quote from his books and narrations.² In his *‘ilm al-rijāl* studies he is indebted to Ibn Ṭāwūs and says that he took most of the material required for the compilation of his book from him.³ Ibn Dāwūd compiled nearly thirty books.⁴

His *Rijāl* consists of two main parts. The first part contains the names of 1,744 narrators, which somehow were classified as reliable, praised,⁵ and unweakened.⁶ The second part refers to the names of 565 weakened narrators.⁷

As Ibn Dawud states, this book contains the *rijāl* views of al-Ṭūsī, al-Najāshī, Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, al-Barqī, Ibn ‘Uqdah, and al-‘Aqīqī, which Ibn Dāwūd has arranged with a particular method.⁸ He made use of abbreviations to refer to each book. For example, in order to refer to al-Najāshī’s *Rijāl*, he uses the symbol

1. ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī is the nephew of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī.

2. Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, p. 83.

3. Ibid, pp. 45-7.

4. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 118.

5. That is, at least someone praised or considered him reliable even if he had been weakened by others as well.

6. ‘Unweakened,’ in the eyes of Ibn Dāwūd, is a narrator who was neither weakened nor praised; see Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, p. 9, where it reads:

في ذكر الممدوحين و من لم يضعفهم الاصحاب فيما علمته.

7. If someone is weakened, his name will appear in this category even if other people have confirmed his reliability. If someone is both weakened and confirmed, his name appears in both categories.

8. Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, pp. 2-3,

of “*Jash*” and *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* by “*Jakh*.”¹ For instance, regarding Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Ḥakam, he states:

صالح بن الحكم النيلي الأحول ق² [جش] ضعيف روى عنه ابن بكير و جميل
بن دراج

Ṣāliḥ ibn al-Ḥakam, as al-Najāshī says in his *Rijāl* is weak, Ibn Bukayr and Jamāl ibn Darrāj narrated from him.³

As you see, Ibn Dāwūd made use of abbreviations to refer to the previously mentioned books, and sometimes there are some mistakes in the presentation of the symbols, which might have been made by copyists.⁴ Such mistakes may affect the credibility of the book. However, like other books, it was scrutinized by some scholars. There are three views concerning the book which will be mentioned below:

1. The first view has entirely accepted its credibility. Shaykh al-Ḥusayn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad (d. 984/1576), the father of Shakh al-Bahā’ī, trusted it and believed that this book rendered researchers needless of other *rijāl* books.⁵
2. The second view rejects the validity of the book. ‘Abd Allāh al-Tustarī (d. 1021/1612), in his commentary on *al-Taḥdhīb*, does not consider this book to be trustworthy. Ibn Dāwūd, in the eyes of al-Tustarī, made many mistakes in quoting from the previous books and the narrators’ characteristics.

1. Ibid, p. 3.

2. The symbol of “ق” denotes that he narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq.

3. Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, p. 461.

4. ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Īsā Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-‘Ulamā’ wa Ḥiyāḍ al-Fuḍalā’*, vol. 1, vol. 258, Mu’assasah al-Ta’rikh al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1981.

5. Al-‘Āmilī, *Wuṣūl al-Akhyār*, p. 117.

He maintains that, with minimal scrutiny, these would be noticeable to anyone.¹

3. The third view accepts the existence of errors;² however, it does not imply the invalidity of the book. Instead, it requires the necessity of paying more attention to its contents. *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, like other *rijāl* books, should be examined thoroughly. Most scholars have accepted this perspective.³

As mentioned above, Ibn Dāwūd was a contemporary of ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī, and both studied under Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs. Interestingly, each of these two contemporary scholars compiled their own *rijāl* books. ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī’s *rijāl* book will be touched upon below.

KHULĀṢAH AL-AQWĀL FĪ MA‘RIFAH AL-RIJĀL

The author of the book is Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, known as ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī, (648-726/1250-1325), one of the outstanding Shi‘ah scholars in the fields of jurisprudence, theology, hadith and *rijāl*. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī describes him with the following titles “a man of superior qualities (*fāḍil*), knowledgeable (*‘ālim*), the head of the great scholars (*‘Allāmah al-‘Ulamā’*), scrutinizer, researcher, very reliable (*thiqah thiqah*), jurist, a scholar of hadith (*muḥaddith*), expert theologian, honorable (*jalīl al-qadr*), of great status (*rafī‘ al-manḥalah*) and unique in intellectual and transmitted sciences.”⁴

A number of Sunni scholars, e.g. Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, have also praised him for his expertise in theology and intellectual

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1. Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 2, p. 326, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987.
 2. Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, p. 43, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1998.
 3. Al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, vol. 2, p. 326.
 4. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, vol. 2, p. 81.

sciences.¹ His known books in jurisprudence include *Mukhtalaf al-Shi'ah*, *Tahrīr al-Aḥkām al-Shar'iyyah* and *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām*. His outstanding works devoted to theology include *Nihāyah al-Marām* and *Kashf al-Murād*. 'Allamah al-Ḥillī had a detailed book on 'ilm al-rijāl, known as *Kashf al-Maqāl fī Ma'rifah al-Rijāl*, but it is not extant and *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl fī Ma'rifah al-Rijāl* is actually a summary of it.²

Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl consists of two parts. The first part is dedicated to those who are reliable and whose narrations could be used in issuing fatwas. The second part deals with the narrators that al-Ḥillī did not trust or, due to lack of evidence of their reliability, stopped issuing fatwas based on their narrations. The mistrust may be due to the narrator's weakness, the *rijāl* scholars' disagreement about him, or his being unknown. Therefore, no fatwa may be issued on the basis of their narrations.³

At the end of the book, al-Ḥillī mentioned ten valuable topics, such as the birth of the Twelfth Imam and his four deputies. To briefly acquaint ourselves with this book, we will have a glance at it.

ابراهيم بن شعيب، من اصحاب الكاظم عليه السلام ، واقفي ، لا اعتمد على روايته⁴

احمد بن القاسم بن طرخان، قال ابن الغضائري: انه ضعيف⁵

In the first statement, al-Ḥillī states that Ibrāhīm ibn Shu'ayb, one of Imam al-Kāẓim's companions, is a Wāqifi, and his narrations are not reliable. In the second statement, in the biographical account of Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim Ṭarkhān, al-Ḥillī, referring to Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's view, says that he is weak.

1. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 2, pp. 317-8, Mu'assasah al-A'lamī, Beirut 1971.

2. Al-Ḥillī, *Tartīb Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, p. 52.

3. Ibid, pp. 51-2.

4. Ibid, p. 59.

5. Ibid, p. 74.

Differences between the Two Books

As mentioned above, Ibn Dāwūd was a contemporary of al-Ḥillī and both studied under al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs. There are some differences between the *rijāl* books of the two contemporaneous scholars which will be touched upon below.

1. Both books consist of two parts. However, al-Ḥillī has dedicated the first part to those narrators whom we can rely on even if they have a false belief. The second part is related to the narrators on whom we cannot rely even if they are reliable. Nevertheless, Ibn Dāwūd has devoted the first part to two types of narrators: a. Those who are neither praised nor censured; b. Those who have been praised and may have been censured by others. The second part deals with those who have been criticized by some scholars, but may have been classified as reliable by others.
2. When al-Ḥillī narrates a statement from *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah wa Uṣūlihī*, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* and *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*, he does not mention the names of these book. Rather, he quotes the statement itself. But when he quotes from *al-Ghaybah* of al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl Ibn ‘Uqdah* and *Rijāl al-‘Aqīqī*, he clearly states the reference. Contrary to al-Ḥillī, Ibn Dāwūd feels obliged to mention the name of the author and the book in an abbreviated form in the quotations except for the cases where he is not sure about the reference. In such a case, he does not provide any abbreviated forms.
3. Al-Ḥillī does not mention the names of neglected narrators (*muhmalīn*); unlike Ibn Dāwūd, he mentions them in the first part. It shows that he can issue fatwa according to these kinds of narrations.²

1. A *muhmal* (neglected) narrator is a narrator whose name is mentioned in the books of *rijāl*, but he is neither praised nor censured.
 2. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 120-1.

4. They have different standards for the classification of the narrators. Ibn Dāwūd classifies them according to their praising or censuring. If someone is both praised and censured, his name appears in both chapters;¹ this is the reason why sometimes he mentions one narrator in both chapters. However, al-Ḥillī classifies the narrators according to the reliability of their narrations. If their narrations are reliable, he mentioned their names in the first chapter and mentions the narrators of unreliable narrations in the second chapter.

Nevertheless, the comprehensive nature of al-Ḥillī's book has mainly won the praise of contemporary scholars. Since he was an expert in *ʿilm al-rijāl*, his book can be considered as an extract and summary of the primary *rijāl* sources and, hence, we would not need to refer to earlier sources devoted to the discipline.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RIJĀL BOOKS

From what has been stated so far, it can be concluded that there are two differences between the primary and secondary *rijāl* books:

1. The authors of primary *rijāl* books, as mentioned in Lesson Four, due to the close proximity to the era of the Imams, were often contemporary with the narrators and knew their characteristics or might have heard from truthful people.² Therefore, all the narrators' biographical accounts and reports date from that time. The authors of the secondary books, due

1. But if someone is just praised, his name only comes in the first chapter, or if he is just censured, his name only will be in the second chapter.

2. As an earlier scholar, on many occasions al-Najāshī refers to the sayings of early *rijāl* scholars. For instance, in the biographical account of Ṣāliḥ ibn Muqātil, al-Najāshī states that "Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn [known as, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī] has mentioned this..." or "the scholars of *rijāl* said this point." al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, pp. 189, 27, 113, 124, 164, 318.

to their temporal distance from the time of the Imam and the narrators of hadith, did not have such an opportunity to collect their material directly. Therefore, the contents of the books of the time were taken from earlier books. In other words, the secondary *rijāl* books are summaries of primary books.

2. The authors of the secondary books have tried to combine the contents of the primary books and present them methodically and logically. For example, reliable and unreliable narrators have been mentioned in two separate chapters. Therefore, there is no notable innovation in these books.

Having discussed the primary and secondary *rijāl* books, we now address the third group, the later *rijāl* books:

LATER RIJĀL BOOKS

The most significant *rijāl* books in the third category, emerging from the 10th/16th to the present, are the following:

- *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*
- *Naqd al-Rijāl*
- *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāb*
- *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*
- *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*
- *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*
- *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Rijāliyyah al-Muyassarah*

MANHAJ AL-MAQĀL FĪ TAḤQĪQ AḤWĀL AL-RIJĀL

The author of the book is Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Astarābādī¹ (d. 1028/1618), the teacher of Muḥammad Amīn

1. A student of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Ardabīlī, known as Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī (d. 993/1585).

al-Astarābādī (1036/1626),¹ one of the founders of the Akhbārī School. Muslim biographers highly praised him;² however, in the field of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, apart from *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, he compiled two more books: *Talkhīṣ al-Maqāl*³ and *Tawḍīḥ al-Maqāl*.⁴

Muḥammad al-Astarābādī attempted to provide a comprehensive *rijāl* book that contains the opinions of earlier books, e.g. *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, *Rijāl al-Barqī*, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, *Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’*, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, *al-Kāfī*, *Īdāḥ al-Ishtibāh* and *Fihrist al-Muntajab al-Dīn*. Moreover, he made use of two Sunni sources: a) *Taqrīb al-Tabdhīb* of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī and b) *al-Mukhtaṣar* of al-Dhahabī.⁵

Al-Astarābādī has mentioned the names of all the narrators and the earlier scholars' views about them. However, he sometimes criticized the views of some scholars such as Ibn Dāwūd and Shahīd al-Thānī. Thus, although he mostly quotes the opinions of the scholars, he has sometimes scrutinized or merged contradictory and inconsistent opinions. However, he cited the names of more than 7,000 narrators in his book. Furthermore, he discussed ten *rijāl* points, like the history of four of the Twelfth

1. The author of *Manhaj al-Maqāl* is the father-in-law of Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī. Astarābād is a city in the north of Iran, known as Jurjān (presently as Gorgān in Persian).
2. For his biographical account, see Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vol. 6, p. 293, Dār al-‘Ilm li-al-Malā’īn, Beirut 1989; al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī, *Amal al-Āmil*, vol. 2, p. 281; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Khwānsārī, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt fī Aḥwāl al-‘Ulamā’ al-Sādāt*, vol. 7, pp. 36-8, Ismā‘īliyyān, Qum 1970; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥālah, *Mu‘jam al-Mu‘allifīn*, vol. 10, p. 298, Dār al-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1957.
3. Known as *Rijāl al-Wasīṭ*.
4. Known as *Rijāl al-Wajīz*. This book has not been published yet, but its manuscript is available in the library of Astān-i Qus-i Raḍawī in Mashhad. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 128.
5. Muḥammad al-Astarābādī, *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 179-82, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2001.

Imam's representatives at the time of minor occultation, his false representatives, the method adopted by al-Ṭūsī in his *Tahdhīb al-Uṣūl* and *al-Istibṣār*, the method adopted by al-Ṣadūq in *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, etc., at the end of the book.¹

Characteristics of *Manhaj al-Maqāl*

This book has certain characteristics some of which we touch upon below:

1. Comprehensiveness. It includes all the names and biographical accounts mentioned in primary and secondary *rijāl* sources.
2. Distinguishing Namesakes (*Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt*). If two narrators had a similar name, he attempts to distinguish them as two separate individuals.²
3. Same Person with Different Names (*Tawḥīd al-Mukhtalafāt*). If a person had two different names, which seem to refer to two individuals, he tries to explain that they are the names of the same person. For instance, Ibrāhīm ibn al-Muhājir al-Azdī and Ibrāhīm ibn Muhājir are two names for one narrator.³
4. His confirmations or weakenings. He sometimes authenticates or weakens some narrators.⁴
5. Inconsistency between the sources. He tries to mention the instances of inconsistency between some sources. For instance, some manuscripts of *Rijāl al-Kashshī* introduces Ibrāhīm ibn Ziyād al-Khārifī while his name is recorded in another *Rijāl al-Kashshī's* manuscript copy as Ibrāhīm ibn Ziyād al-Mukhāriqī.⁵

1. Muḥammad Kāẓim Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshna'ī bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shī'ah*, pp. 190-1, Samt, Tehran 2006.

2. e.g. Ibrāhīm ibn 'Uthmān and Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq; see al-Astarābādī, *Manhaj al-Maqāl*, vol. 1, pp. 324, 267.

3. Ibid, p. 371.

4. Ibid, pp. 339, 328.

5. Ibid, p. 278; for further instances, see Ibid, pp. 257, 247.

6. Critique of earlier scholars. He sometimes criticizes the views of al-Ḥillī, Ibn Dāwūd and Shahīd al-Thānī.¹
7. References to the views of Sunni scholars like Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī and al-Dhahabī.²
8. References to missing and distorted parts in certain manuscripts.³

However, *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl* is one of the most comprehensive *rijāl* books in its own time, commented and glossed by many scholars. The most important of them are *Hāshiyah Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bihbahānī* (d. 1206/1791), known as *Taʿlīqah al-Bihbahāniyyah*, *Iklīl al-Manhaj fī Taḥqīq al-Maṭlab* of Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Isfahānī and *Muntaba al-Maqāl fī Aḥwāl al-Rijāl* of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Māzandarānī (d. 1216/1801).⁴

NAQD AL-RIJĀL

The author, Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī (d. 1021/1612), was a contemporary of Muḥammad al-Astarābādī and Shaykh al-Bahāʾī (953-1031/1546-1621). As the title suggests, in addition to referring to his predecessors' opinions, the author has adopted a critical method based on his own views. However, it seems that al-Tafrishī was not pleased with earlier *rijāl* books because of their disorganization, errors and incomprehensiveness, and decided to prepare a comprehensive, organized, and accurate compilation.⁵

Al-Tafrishī, as mentioned in the introduction, cited nine books as important sources for his *Naqd al-Rijāl: Khulāṣah*

1. Ibid, pp. 283, 290, 309, 328-9.

2. Ibid, pp. 324, 344-5, 395.

3. Ibid, pp. 347, 361, 364, 365, 397.

4. For the section of *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl*, I made use of the following book and have personally checked all the references. Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshnāʾi bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shīʿah*, pp. 192-3.

5. Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 34, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1988.

al-Aqwāl, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah*, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, *Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’*, *Īdāh al-Ishtibāh* and *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī*.¹ He has arranged the names of the narrators alphabetically by incorporating all the material from these nine books. He then examined and assessed them, and mentioned instances of inconsistency and error in them. He has pointed out numerous instances of inaccuracy and corrected the quotations from al-Najāshī.²

However, al-Tafrishī mentioned in total the names of 6,604 narrators. Moreover, he touches upon six *rijāl* topics at the end with which the book is further enriched.

Features of the Book

1. In addition to referring to *rijāl* scholars' views, the perspectives of jurists about narrators' qualities are also cited.
2. If a narrator has one of these two following characteristics, al-Tafrishī considers himself obliged to mention it if:
 - a) Many people narrated from, for instance, al-Bazantī.
 - b) Al-Bazantī, for instance, has narrated many narrations.

It is worth noting that in both cases, this plurality can reveal al-Bazantī's high position.

3. He also points to the inconsistencies between the versions. For instance, al-Ṭūsī in his *rijāl* states Ibrāhīm ibn al-‘Ajāmī while in *Fibrīst* he is named Ibrāhīm ibn al-A‘jamī.³
4. When al-Ḥillī and Ibn Dāwūd quote from a book, al-Tafrishī tries to verify the authenticity of quotations by consulting that very book. In certain cases, al-Tafrishī asserts that he did not find the narration that al-Ḥillī had quoted.

A case in point is when Ibn Dāwūd, citing from al-Kashshī, maintains that Ja‘far ibn ‘Amr is reliable. In response,

1. Ibid, pp. 35-6.

2. Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshnā‘ī bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shī‘ah*, pp. 196-8.

3. Al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 74; see also Ibid, pp. 85-6, 272, 376-7.

- al-Tafrishī states that he himself has four manuscript copies from al-Kashshī wherein Ja‘far’s reliability was not mentioned.¹
5. When one person had two different names, seemingly referring to two individuals, he tries to illustrate that they are the names of the same individual (*tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*). For instance, Ja‘far ibn al-Hudhayl and Ja‘far al-Hudhlī are two names for the same narrator.²
 6. When two narrators happen to be namesakes, he tries to distinguish them as two different people (*Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt*).³
 - 7- Al-Tafrishī also assesses the *rijāl* views of Ibn Dāwūd⁴ and al-Ḥillī from *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl*.⁵

This book is undoubtedly one of the great *rijāl* works, so much so that later *rijāl* books were inspired by it; for instance, more than ten scholars, e.g. Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī⁶ (d. 1070/1659), glossed on *Naqd al-Rijāl*.⁷

1. Ibid, p. 351, see also pp. 379, 389.

2. Ibid, pp. 365-6, see also pp. 344, 367.

3. Ibid, pp. 344, 363.

4. Al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-Rijāl*, vol. 2, pp. 400, 407-8, 409-410.

5. Ibid, pp. 258, 263, 265, see Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshnā’i bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shī‘ah*, pp. 198-200.

6. The gloss is published in the footnotes of *Naqd al-Rijāl* in the edition published by Āl al-Bayt.

7. Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshnā’i bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shī‘ah*, pp. 201-2.

JĀMI' AL-RUWĀH

Unfortunately little is known about the life of the author,¹ Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Ardabīlī² (b. 1101/1689).³ However, his new method for identifying the narrators and the chains of hadith is admirable.⁴ All the jurists and the *rijāl* scholars acknowledged the greatness of his innovative work. The famous Shi'ah jurist, Ayatollah al-Burūjirdī, who is unique in recognizing the characteristics of narrators and evaluating the chain of hadith, was very surprised to see *Jāmi' al-Ruwāh*. In his scholarly introduction to the book, he described the scholarly method of al-Ardabīlī. The valuable advantage of the book is that all the narrators in *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah* (*al-Kāfī*, *Man Lā Yaḥḍurhu al-Faqīh*, *Istibṣār* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*) have been included in it. Moreover, the names of all those who have narrated from a certain narrator (for instance, al-Bazantī), or from whom he has narrated, have been mentioned. Furthermore, the number of narrations from each narrator has been specified. Al-Burūjirdī maintains that in this way, al-Ardabīlī has been able to overcome some of the shortcomings and inadequacies of earlier *rijāl* books.⁵

From al-Ardabīlī's point of view, although many scholars have made great efforts to identify the narrators' characteristics, there are many narrators whose identities are not clear. He adds that such ambiguity may affect the validity of the narrations. The passage of time and the reproduction (*istinsākh*) of the hadith

1. The full title is *Jāmi' al-Ruwāh wa Izāḥah al-Ishtibāhāt 'an al-Ṭuruq wa al-Isnād*.

2. He is different from Muqaddas al-Ardabīlī. His name is Muḥammad and died in the year 933/1526. He is better known for his piety and asceticism. However, both are great Shi'ah scholars.

3. For his biographical account, see Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 442, Dār al-Ta'aruf, Beirut 1983.

4. Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, *Khātimah Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 6, p. 15, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 1987; al-Amīn, *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, vol. 9, p. 422.

5. Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi' al-Ruwāh*, vol. 1, p. 7, Dār al-Aḍwā', Beirut 1983.

sources have led to the emergence of some serious errors in the chain of hadith, some of which will be mentioned below:

- Errors in writing (*taṣḥīf*) the names of narrators, e.g. changing (*taṣḥīf*) the name of Aḥmad to Muḥammad or Ḥasan to Ḥusayn and vice versa.
- Converting (*taṣḥīf*) the word of *‘an* (from) to *ibn* (son) or *wa* (and) to *‘an* (from) and vice versa.
- Missing the names of some narrators in the chain.
- Variations in some names. For example, changing Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn to Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad or Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad and vice versa.

It goes without saying that by referring to earlier *rijāl* books, a jurist may not notice such inaccuracies and missing links. Therefore, it was felt that another method should be used to solve the problem in the chain of hadith. It seems that al-Ardabīlī was one of the first scholars to solve the problem by his innovative method in *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāḥ*.

Characteristics of the Book

In his *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāḥ*, al-Ardabīlī achieved the following results:

1. He has collected all the narrators (along with their *mashā’ikh* and students) in *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah* and specified the place of their narrations there. By such method of classification, considering the number of students of a narrator and the number of his narrations, jurists may assess his status or the level of his trustworthiness.¹
2. Narrators whose names are not mentioned in *rijāl* books have been identified by the innovative method.² For instance, Ḥasan

1. Ibid, p. 4.

2. Ibid, p. 5.

ibn ‘Āṣim narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq¹ and Imam al-Kāzim² while the scholars of *rijāl* have not noticed his name.

3. Certain narrators were only considered to be the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (as), but by al-Ardabīlī’s method, it turned out that they were also narrating from Imam al-Kāzim.³
4. Some individuals were said to have not narrated from the Imam, but al-Ardabīlī has discovered that they had.⁴ Al-Najāshī, for instance, maintains that ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muskān did not narrate from Imam al-Ṣādiq (as)⁵ but al-Ardabīlī, through his own method, discovered that he had quoted nearly 35 narrations from the Imam.⁶
5. The innovative method of al-Ardabīlī enabled him to realize some omissions in the chain. For instance, al-Ṭūsī states:

سَعْدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ جَمِيلِ بْنِ صَالِحٍ وَحَمَّادِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ يَزِيدٍ...⁷

Al-Ardabīlī maintains that Sa’d ibn ‘Abd Allāh could not have narrated from Jamāl ibn Ṣāliḥ.⁸ Accordingly, some narrations that were thought to be *musnad*, are in fact held by al-Ardabīlī as *mursal*.

6. By collecting narrators and classifying (*tabaqah*) them, he was able to find spelling mistakes in writing (*taṣḥīf*). The point may be clarified by comparing one hadith from two books, *al-Kāfī* and *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*. For instance:

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 494.

2. Ibid, p. 489.

3. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāḥ*, vol. 1., p. 4. See, in the biographical account of Ḥurayz ibn ‘Abd Allāh, ibid, p. 186.

4. Ibid, p. 4.

5. Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, p. 214.

6. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāḥ*, vol. 1, p. 510.

7. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 123.

8. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāḥ*, vol. 1, p. 167.

...عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ أَبِي الصَّبَّاحِ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع قَالَ:
سَأَلْتُهُ عَنِ التَّوْبِ أَذْفَعُهُ إِلَى الْقَصَّارِ فَيُحْرِقُهُ قَالَ أَعْرِمُهُ فَإِنَّكَ إِنَّمَا دَفَعْتَهُ إِلَيْهِ
لِيُصْلِحَهُ وَ لَمْ تَدْفَعْهُ إِلَيْهِ لِيُفْسِدَهُ.¹

...عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ الصَّبَّاحِ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع عَنِ
الْقَصَّارِ يُسَلِّمُ إِلَيْهِ الْمَتَاعَ فَيُحْرِقُهُ أَوْ عَرَقَهُ أَيْعَرِمُهُ قَالَ نَعَمْ عَرِمَهُ مَا جَنَتْ يَدَاهُ
فَإِنَّكَ إِنَّمَا أَعْطَيْتَهُ لِيُصْلِحَ لَمْ تُعْطِ لِيُفْسِدَ.²

Al-Kāfī, as you see, narrates from Ismā'il ibn Abī al-Ṣabbāḥ, while al-Ṭūsī quotes the same hadith with a slightly different chain from Ismā'il ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ. Having mentioned the difference, al-Ardabīlī holds that both are wrong, and the correct name is Ismā'il 'an (from) Abī al-Ṣabbāḥ.³ The form is thus is the following:

...عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ إِسْمَاعِيلَ عَنْ أَبِي الصَّبَّاحِ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
ع عَنِ الْقَصَّارِ ...

As you see, there are two errors here:

- A. The preposition 'an (from) has been replaced by the noun *ibn* (son) in both books;
 - B. The word *Abī* is missing in *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*.
7. One of the problems in the chain is the existence of similarity of the names of narrators (*ishtirāk al-lafẓī*). It is essential to identify such narrators, especially if one is trustworthy and the other is weak.⁴ For instance, there are two 'Abd Allāh

1. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 242.

2. Al-Ṭūsī, *Tabdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 7, p. 221.

3. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi' al-Ruwāb*, vol. 1, p. 37.

4. Aḥmad is homonymous between three people: a. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Isā al-Ash'arī; b. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Khālid al-Barqī; c. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī.

ibn Muḥammad al-Shāmī's; one of them is the teacher of al-Bazanī (d. 221/835), and the other is the teacher of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yahyā (d. 290/902), the author of *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah*. Moreover, there is more than a sixty-year gap between the two namesakes. The first one is reliable and the second one is weak.¹ Nevertheless, it was through their *mashā'ikh* and students that al-Ardabīlī succeeded in distinguishing them.²

8. Sometimes due to the passage of time, there is a shift in some chains of narration, like changing Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad.³ Al-Ardabīlī, by his scholarly method, tried to identify some of these inversions in the chains.⁴

Al-Ardabīlī spent twenty years compiling his book through which many narrations that had been known as *majhūl* (unknown, unidentified) came to be considered as *ṣaḥīḥ*.⁵

The next lesson will address the rest of the later *rijāl* books: *Tanqīḥ al-Maḡāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* and *al-Mawṣū'ah al-Rijāliyyah al-Muyassarah*.

SUMMARY

This lesson looked at these secondary and later *rijāl* books:

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1. Sobhani, *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, pp. 261-2.
 2. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi' al-Ruwāḥ*, vol. 1, p. 5.
 3. For the hadith, see al-Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 7, p. 58.
 4. Al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi' al-Ruwāḥ*, vol. 1, p. 98.
 5. For the section of *Jāmi' al-Ruwāḥ*, I have made use of the following article and have also personally checked all the references: Abū Ṭālib 'Alīnizhād, "Naw Āvarīhā-yi Rijālī-yi Muḥaqqiq-i Ardabīlī dar *Jāmi' al-Ruwāḥ*," *Ḥadīth Pazhūbī*, no. 23 (2020).

The Secondary Books

Fibrist Shaykh Muntajab al-Dīn

The first book, compiled after more than one century after the demise of al-Ṭūsī, was the *Fibrist* of *Muntajab al-Dīn* in which the author follows and completes the *Fibrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*. The author collected five hundred and forty-four scholars and books from al-Ṭūsī's time to his own time. Moreover, he mainly tried to mention their qualities.

Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'

The author of the book, Ibn Sharāshūb, like Muntajab al-Dīn, attempted to complete al-Ṭūsī's *Fibrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*. His major contributions include adding the authors' names missed by al-Ṭūsī and collecting the names and books of al-Ṭūsī's successors to the author's time. He mentioned in total the names of 1,021 authors. His aim mostly was to introduce Shi'ah authors and narrators and rarely authenticated or weakened them.

Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd

The author, Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, divided his book into two main parts. The first part contains the names of 1,744 narrators, who had been classified as reliable, praised, and unweakened. The second part refers to the names of 565 weakened narrators. The credibility of this book has been questioned due to some of its drawbacks.

Kbulāṣah al-Aqwāl fī Ma'rifah al-Rijāl

ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, the author of the book, divided the book into two parts. The first part treats the reliable, based on whose narration fatwas could be issued. The second part deals with those whose narrations are not authentic (even if the narrators are considered as reliable). The invalidity of their narrations may be due to the narrator's weakness, the *rijāl* scholars' disagreement

about him or his unknown nature. However, there are some differences between al-Ḥillī and Ibn Dāwūd. For instance, Ibn Dāwūd classifies the narrators according to their characteristics such as having been praised or censured, and al-Ḥillī classifies them according to the reliability of their narrations.

Manhaj al-Maqāl fī Taḥqīq Aḥwāl al-Rijāl

The author of this later *rijāl* book, Muḥammad al-Asatarābādī, has mentioned the names of all the narrators and the views of the previous scholars about them. However, the author sometimes rejects their views and presents his own. Moreover, he has made many efforts on the *Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt* and *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*. Highlighting the inconsistency between some of the sources is another important feature of this book.

Naqd al-Rijāl

The author, al-Tafrishī, in addition to referring to his predecessors' opinions, has adopted a critical method based on his views. He, like al-Astarābādī, paid more attention to *Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt*, *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt* and the underlying discrepancy between the *rijāl* sources. Moreover, al-Tafrishī presented the background of a narrator if many people had narrated from him or if the same narrator had received many narrations.

Jāmi' al-Ruwāb

In this work Al-Ardabīlī has collected all the narrators, highlighting their *mashā'ikh* and students in *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah* and specified the place of their narrations. His method of classification, whereby he takes into account a narrator's number of students and his narrations, helps jurists to assess the narrator's status and the level of his trustworthiness.

QUESTIONS

1. Briefly mention the names and the features of two books written more than one century after al-Ṭūsī's demise in which their authors attempted to follow *Fihrist Kutub al-Shi'ah*? Which one is more comprehensive?
2. How many main sections are in *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*? Explain them. What do you know about the credibility of this book? Explain.
3. What are the differences between *Khulāṣah al-Aqwāl* and *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*? Explain in detail.
4. Who is the author of *Manhaj al-Maqāl*? The author worked hard on *Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt* and *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*. What do these terms mean? Provide an example for each.
5. Who is the author of *Jāmi' al-Ruwāb*? Mention three qualities of the book.

Lesson FIFTEEN

Later Rijāl Books



As mentioned in Lesson Thirteen, *rijāl* books were classified into three categories: earlier (from the 3rd/9th to the 5th/11th), intermediate (from the 6th/12th to the 8th/14th centuries), and later (from the 10th/16th century to the present). Early *rijāl* books can be considered as the foundation of all the *rijāl* books written and compiled later. In other words, intermediate and later *rijāl* books are the fruits of earlier *rijāl* books. The previous lesson introduced three important books from the last category. This lesson is intended to address the following significant books from this period:

- *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*
- *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*
- *Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*
- *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Rijāliyyah al-Muyassarah*

TANQĪḤ AL-MAQĀL FĪ ‘ILM AL-RIJĀL

The author, ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī (1290-1351/1873-1932) is one of the great Shi‘ah scholars in the field of jurisprudence and *rijāl*.¹ The book², according to al-Ṭihrānī, is one of the most

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1. For his biographical account, see Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Ṭabaqāt A‘lām al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 15, pp. 1196-9, Dār al-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut 2009; idem, *al-Dharī‘ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī‘ah*, vol. 4, pp. 566-7, Dār al-Aḍwā’, Beirut 1398/1977; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥālāh, *Mu‘jam al-Mu‘allifīn*, vol. 6, p. 116, Dār al-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1957.
 2. He owes the authorship of the book to the grace of God. He states that: “it was by appealing to the Prophet and his *Ahl al-Bayt* that his mercy

extensive books in Shi‘ah *rijāl* that comprises all the companions (*aṣḥāb*), followers (*tābi‘īn*) and all the narrators up to the 14th/20th century. The research period and refinement of this three-volume book only took three years, a feat which no other scholar of *rijāl* could have ever achieved.¹

The book consists of three parts, the introduction, the main part and the epilogue (*khātimah*). In the introduction, al-Māmaqānī addresses four issues: definition of ‘ilm al-*rijāl*, its subject matter, its goal and forty *rijāl* points (*fawā'id al-rijāliyyah*).² In

showered on me, and I exactly saw His grace and divine endorsement. By seeing it, my enthusiasm and inclination increased, and my physical strength reached the highest level, so much so that for about a year, I was content with the minimum necessary amount of food and sleep. Even on long nights, I often slept less than four hours. One of God’s graces was that whenever I wanted to find something in a book, I would find it as soon as I opened it. It rarely happened that I needed to flip through that book in search of something. On a long night, about three hours before dawn, al-Māmaqānī says that I needed the book of *Tabdhīb al-Uṣūl* for al-Ṭūsī, which I had to spend many hours to get. I did not want to stop writing in the middle of the night, and I also could not write without referring to that book. So, I paid attention to Imam al-Zamān and, in a state of weeping, asked him to help me in finding a copy. It occurred to my mind at this time to have a glance at the old books (the subjects of which were literature and commentary) that had been stored in the storehouse. In the meantime, I went to them, although I knew for sure that the book was not among them. Nevertheless, I picked one of them and saw that it was a copy of the same book that had been excellently copied. I wrote down what I needed from that book and put it in a corner. I went looking for it the next day but saw no trace of it. I recognized this was from the special grace of the Imam. This incident increased my enthusiasm for writing and completing the book even more. ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl (Muqaddimah)*, vol. 2, pp. 33-46, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010.

1. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihirānī, *al-Dharī‘ah*, vol. 4, p. 467.
2. The most important of them are as follows: 1. The authenticity of the authors of *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*; 2. The history of classification of

the main section of the book, the names of the narrators are arranged alphabetically. In the epilogue, al-Māmqānī addresses ten important *rijāl* points which include the methods of great scholars in the field, such as those of al-Kulaynī, al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṣadūq. He also enumerates teachers of al-Ṣadūq, al-Mufīd and al-Najāshī.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

1. The author first mentions, with the term *al-dabt*, the correct pronunciation of the narrators, places and the like. Then with the term *al-tarjamah*, he presents their biographical accounts. Al-Māmaqānī, for instance, in the biographical account of Ibrāhīm ibn Mahruwayh states:

إبراهيم بن مهرويه

hadith into *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *muwaththaq*, and *ḍaʿīf*; 3. Eleven signs that indicate the narrator's reliability; 4. Critique of views concerning the trustworthiness of all the companions of the Prophet; 5. The absence of some narrators in Karbala is not a sign of their untrustworthiness when the reason for their absence is unknown; 6. Inaccuracy of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) about some narrators; 7. The meaning of *yu'raf ḥadīthuhū wa yunkar* (some of his narrations are recognized and some rejected) in the *Rijāl* of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī; 8. Lack of trust in jurisprudential books in rejecting (*jarḥ*) and validating (*ta'dīl*) narrators; 9. Authentication of a narrator when he was a companion of the Imam, and weakening him when he was a companion of another Imam; 10. The meaning of *thiqah*; 11. Validity (*ḥujjiyyah*) of a reliable narrator with false beliefs; 12. Criterion for the invalidity of a hadith due to its chain; 13. The method of al-Ṭūsī in rejecting (*jarḥ*) and validating (*ta'dīl*) of narrators; 14. The method of al-Ḥillī and Ibn Dāwūd in their *rijāl* books; 15. Al-Māmaqānī's view of narrators who deviated for part of their lives. See al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1, p. 163 up to vol. 2, p. 409, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010.

الضبط: مهرويه: بفتح الميم، و سكون الهاء، و ضمّ الراء المهملة، ثمّ الواو المفتوحة، ثمّ الياء الساكنة، ثمّ الهاء. و ضبطه في توضيح الاشتباه: بضمّ الميم، و فتح الراء.
 الترجمة: عدّه الشيخ رحمه الله بهذا العنوان من أصحاب الجواد عليه السلام و ظاهره كونه إماميًا، إلّا أنّ حاله مجهول.¹

As we see, under the term of *al-dabt*, the correct pronunciation of the narrator's name is presented. However, he also refers to a different pronunciation by the author of *Tawḍīḥ al-Ishtibāḥ*. Then under the term of *al-tarjamah*, al-Māmaqānī addresses the qualities of the narrators by referring to *rijāl* books.

2. One of al-Māmaqānī's praiseworthy initiatives is that before entering the main part of the book, in a chapter entitled *Natā'ij al-Tanqīḥ fī Tamīz al-Saqīm min al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, he includes a comprehensive list of 13,365 narrators he had found in the the compilations of hadith and expressed his views on their authenticity or unreliability.
3. He accords more attention to *tamīz al-mushtarakāt*. It means that if two narrators had a similar name, he would attempt to separate them. He also tries to address the issue of *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*. This means that if, for instance, a narrator had two different names which appear to refer to two separate individuals, al-Māmaqānī tries to explain that the two names refer to one and the same person. He refers to *Jāmi' al-Maqāl*,² *Hidāyah al-Muḥaddithīn*³ and *Jāmi' al-Ruwāḥ*⁴ to solve these

1. 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 5, pp. 9-10, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010.

2. By Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī.

3. By Muḥammad Amīn al-Kaẓīmī.

4. By Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī.

ambiguities. He usually raises these issues with the term *al-tamīz*.¹

4. It appears that al-Māmaqānī has utilised more *rijāl* sources than other authors for the completion of this book. Moreover, he also refers to some Sunni *rijāl* sources.²

His book is one of the most extensive books on Shi‘ah *rijāl*. He includes the biographical accounts of 13,000 narrators. This book has been already published in three volumes and it is being published with more footnotes and explanations by the author’s son, Muḥyy al-Dīn, and grandson, Muḥammad Riḍā. Thirty-six volumes have been published so far and the total number will seemingly run to 50 volumes.

Although some scholars have praised the book,³ it has also been critiqued.⁴ For instance, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, in addition to praising it, has considered it to be in need of revision.⁵ Likewise, Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī has criticized it more than others even though he considered it to be the best and most comprehensive source of *rijāl* in terms of presenting the perspectives of scholars.⁶

1. ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 3, pp. 64-71, 282-8, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010.

2. Raḥmān Sitāyish, *Āshnā’ī bā Kutub-i Rijālī-yi Shi‘ah*, pp. 216-8.

3. Muḥammad Ḥirz al-Dīn, *Ma‘ārif al-Rijāl fī Tarājim al-‘Ulamā’ wa al-‘Uḍabā’*, vol. 2, pp. 21-2, Kitābkhānah-yi Mar‘ashī-yi Najafī, Qum 1985; Ja‘far Āl Maḥbūbah, *Māḍī al-Najaf wa Ḥādīrūhā*, vol. 3, pp. 257-8, Dār al-Aḍwā’, Beirut 2009.

4. Muḥsin al-Amīn, *A’yān al-Shi‘ah*, vol. 1, p. 211, Dār al-Ta‘āruf, Beirut 1983.

5. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī‘ah*, vol. 4, p. 446.

6. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 9-12.

QĀMŪS AL-RIJĀL

This is one of the scholarly books compiled by Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī,¹ a contemporary diligent researcher. Born in Najaf in 1320/1902, he went to Shushtar, a city in southwest of Iran, at the age of seven with his father who was a known scholar in Najaf. Muḥammad Taqī began his education in Shushtar and thereafter emigrated to Iraq at the age of thirty-five. He studied under Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭihirānī and obtained the permission of narration (*ijāzah al-riwāyah*) from him. Six years later, he returned to Shushtar and authored many works.² He died in 1414/1993.³

Qāmūs al-Rijāl is a comprehensive scholarly work in which the author reflects upon the views of former *rijāl* scholars and seeks a comprehensive investigation of the narrators' biographical accounts and their degrees of reliability. The important question is about al-Tustarī's motivation for the compilation of the book. He considered *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* as one of the most reliable and comprehensive books in 'ilm al-*rijāl* because it had encompassed all the material and opinions included in earlier *rijāl* books. However, the question remains: Why did he even decide to undertake his own compilation? In response, he states that *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* suffers from inaccuracies, and his goal is to rectify them. He first noted down his critiques and comments in the margins of a copy of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* and later published his marginal notes independently in a book entitled *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*.

Qāmūs al-Rijāl consists of three sections, introduction, text, and *rijāl* points (*fawā'id al-rijāliyyah*). In the introduction, the author has presented the *rijāl* rules of al-Māmaqānī in *Tanqīḥ*

1. This is the Arabic version of 'Shushtari' in Persian, which refers to the Iranian city of Shushtar, the birthplace of his forefathers.

2. He compiled nearly sixty books. *Bahj al-Ṣabāghah fī Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* (thematic commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*) and *al-Akhhbār al-Dakhīlah* (about the types of distortion and falsification of narrations) are his the most important books.

3. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 5-8.

al-Maqāl and has explained, to some extent, his disagreements with him. Moreover, al-Tustarī refers to the general views of some other scholars of *rijāl*.¹ This part of the book is organized into 28 chapters.² The second section, which encompasses all 12 volumes of the book, comprises detailed critical comments of al-Tustarī on the views of al-Māmaqānī. He usually quotes al-Māmaqānī's opinion³ then he presents his own critique.⁴ The third section of *Qāmūs al-Rijāl* consists of 33 *rijāl* points.⁵

FEATURES OF THE BOOK

As noted earlier, al-Tustarī attempts to extract the errors and weaknesses of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* critically. We point out some of these cases, which are, in fact, a feature of this book:

1. Al-Tustarī believes that although *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* is a comprehensive book, it does not include the names of all the narrators. He attempted to rectify this shortcoming and included the names of all the narrators.
2. The other weaknesses of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* is that it sometimes mentions several names, such as Abū al-Raḥmān ibn Sa'd and Mundhir ibn Sa'd,⁶ which refer to a single person. Al-Tustarī holds that al-Māmaqānī should have mentioned that both names refer to a single narrator, i.e. Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā'idī.⁷

1. For instance, see Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 11, pp. 390, 394, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1990.

2. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 9-83.

3. By saying *qāl al-muṣannif* (the writer, i.e. al-Māmaqānī, says) al-Tustarī quotes the views of al-Māmaqānī.

4. By saying *qultu* or *aqūlu* (I say) al-Tustarī presents his views and critiques.

5. Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 12, pp. 351-75, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1990.

6. 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 17, p. 13, Āl al-Bayt, Qum 2010.

7. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 11-2.

3. Al-Tustarī maintains that, in some cases, al-Māmaqānī relied on distorted and unreliable manuscripts. For instance, in the biographical account of Ibrāhīm ibn Bishr, al-Māmaqānī¹ referred to the unreliable copy of *Rijāl al-Najāshī* and considered the name of the mentioned narrator as Ibrāhīm ibn Bashīr.² Moreover, al-Māmaqānī, in the biographical account of Ibrāhīm ibn Rajā³ relied upon an unreliable copy of al-Najāshī's *Rijāl*.⁴ However, al-Tustarī tries to make clear the existing errors with his sharp-sightedness, which is one of the merits of his book.
4. Al-Tustarī maintains that al-Māmaqānī has sometimes made mistakes in attributing the views of earlier scholars (*mutaqaddimīn*). For example, he attributed what earlier scholars stated to the later scholars (*muta'akhkhirīn*). Further, he has mistakenly attributed what one of the great scholars of *rijāl* had mentioned to another scholar. Al-Tustarī claims that such errors are scattered throughout the book, which he aims to highlight.⁵
5. Al-Tustarī sometimes criticizes the *rijāl* views of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* and tries to prove his own opinions. For instance, al-Māmaqānī considers four things as a sign of the narrator's trustworthiness: a. If the narrator has a mission to deliver a letter from the Imam to a person; b. If the Imam selects a narrator as the ruler of a city; c. If someone is a servant or scribe of the Imam; d. If the Imam says "May God have mercy on him" to someone. In the eyes of al-Māmaqānī, these are all signs of narrators' reliability.⁶ However, al-Tustarī has not considered any of these pieces of evidence to be the cause of

1. Al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 3, pp. 343-44.

2. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1., pp. 164-65.

3. Al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, vol. 3, p. 416.

4. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 11.

5. Ibid, p. 12.

6. Al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 2, p. 278-83.

credibility or trustworthiness. He has argued against these principles in detail.¹ Al-Tustarī also highlights some of his other differences of opinion with al-Māmaqānī and discusses them in detail in chapter 25 of the introduction.²

A glance at the book provides us with further familiarity with it. In the biographical account of Khārijah ibn Jabalah, the author states:

خارجة بن جبلة: قال: عدّه أبو عمر و ابن مندّة و أبو نعيم في أصحاب رسول
الله - صلى الله عليه و آله - و لم أقف على حاله.
أقول: بل لم يعلم أصله، فقال الأول بعد عنوانه: «و يقال: جبلة بن خارجة»
بل قال الأخيران: العنوان و هم و الصواب جبلة بن خارجة

Al-Tustarī quotes from al-Māmaqānī that Khārijah ibn Jabalah, according to Abū ‘Amr, Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu‘aym, is among the Prophet’s companions. It seems that although al-Māmaqānī could not find the biographical account of Khārijah ibn Jabalah, he still believed that Khārijah was one of the Prophet’s companions. Criticizing al-Māmaqānī, al-Tustarī asserts that unfortunately the biographical account of Khārijah is not clear and that we do not know whether he was one of the Prophet’s companions. Therefore, al-Māmaqānī should have conducted further research on the subject.

It seems that since such view has been derived from Sunni sources, al-Tustarī expected that *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* should have done further investigation on the biographical account of Khārijah ibn Jabalah. Furthermore, there is disagreement about his name.³ While Abū ‘Amr maintained that his name was probably Jabalah ibn Khārijah, Ibn Mandah and Abū Nu‘aym were sure that his

1. Al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, pp. 70-1.

2. Ibid, pp. 68-77.

3. As you see, there are two possibilities: a. Khārijah ibn Jabalah; b. Jabalah ibn Khārijah.

name was Jabalah ibn Khārijah. This disagreement necessitates that al-Māmaqānī should have further investigated the matter.¹

Qāmūs al-Rijāl is a great scholarly *rijāl* work, which has been compiled to rectify the inaccuracies of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*. Therefore, the author aimed to entitle his book *Taṣḥīḥ Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* (*The Correction of Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*); however, due to the suggestion of some of his friends, it was eventually titled *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*.² Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī has referred to it as *Ta'liqāt Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*³ and *Hawāshī Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*.⁴

Although al-Tustarī worked hard for four years to compile the book in twelve volumes, it also has minor drawbacks such as using abbreviated forms for the names of books and Imams.⁵ He also does not mention the page numbers of his resources.

MU'JAM RIJĀL AL-ḤADĪTH

The author of the book is Ayatollah Abū al-Qāsim al-Khu'ī (1317-1413/1899-1992), one of the greatest *marāji'* in recent decades. In addition to extensive mastery of jurisprudence and its principles, he was also an expert in *'ilm al-rijāl*. However, he encountered some problems in his constant references to *rijāl* sources while examining the authenticity of the narrators and this led him to compile *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* with the help of some of his prominent students.

Regarding his motivation for producing the book, al-Khu'ī states that earlier scholars accorded further significance to *'ilm al-rijāl*; however, in his opinion this discipline had been neglected

1. Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 4, p. 92, Jāmi'ah al-Mudarrisīn, Qum 1990.

2. Ibid, vol. 1, p. 12.

3. Muḥammad Muḥsin Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, vol. 7, p. 96, Dār al-Aḍwā', Beirut 1398/1977, Ibid, vol. 4, p. 446.

4. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, vol. 7, p. 96.

5. Readers are not at home with abbreviated forms.

in recent centuries. As far as it seems, *ijtihād* and deduction of religious rulings, which is the essential duty of the jurists in the age of the Occultation of the Twelfth Imam, does not depend on *rijāl*. Therefore, this issue motivated him to compile a comprehensive book that addresses this issue from different angles.¹

The book consists of two parts: the introduction and the text. In the introduction, he discusses his *rijāl* views in detail in six sections as follows:

1. The necessity of *‘ilm al-rijāl*, the critique of the arguments of its opponents and uncertainty of the issuance (*‘adam qaṭ’i al-ṣudūr*) of *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*;
2. Methods of ascertaining narrators’ reliability;
3. General confirmations of reliability;
4. Some criticisms on general confirmations of reliability, e.g. “the people of consensus” and *mashā’ikh al-thiqāt*;
5. The need to evaluate the authenticity of *al-Kutub al-Arba‘ah*;
6. Assessment of some *rijāl* books, e.g. *Rijāl al-Barqī*, *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifah al-Rijāl*, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, *Fibrīst Kutub al-Shī‘ah* and *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī*.

The central part of the book is the text, which runs to 23 volumes. Since the author has an accurate awareness of the previous *rijāl* books, he has tried to compile it so that the reader becomes needless of other *rijāl* books. Now we touch upon the qualities of the book.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK

1. Due to the increasing credibility of the book, he quoted all the material from the main sources and did not pay attention to the statements of other scholars.

1. Al-Khu’ī, *Mu‘jam Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 11.

2. He has alphabetically arranged the hadith narrators' names and included the biographical accounts and important material under each narrator's name.
3. For each narrator, there is a precise and scholarly discussion wherein his validity or invalidity has been determined.
4. Along with each narrator's name, the author has mentioned all his *mashā'ikh* and students. It is clear that if we know the teachers and students, it will be easier to find the level (*ṭabaqah*) of the narrator. This book, moreover, shows the addresses of the narrations in hadith sources. For instance, al-Khu'ī states in Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qalānisi's biographical account:

أحمد بن محمد القلانسي: روى عن علي بن حسان، و روى عنه سهل بن زياد.
الكافي: الجزء 4، كتاب الحج 3، باب حج آدم ع 4، الحديث 2.

As you see, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad had one *shaykh*: 'Alī ibn Hassān, as he had one student and he was Sahl ibn Zīyād.¹ Moreover, it makes a reference to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad's narration in *al-Kāfī*.²

5. All the narrations of each narrator are mentioned from the hadith sources by referring to their addresses. This method can distinguish the narrators with many narrations from the narrators with few narrations.
6. As noted earlier, one of the things that cause damage to the credibility of a narration is distortion (*taḥrīf*) and misspelling (*taṣḥīf*). Therefore, this book has paid more attention to this vital matter. Under the title of *Ikhtilāf al-Kutub*, and *Ikhtilāf al-Nusakh* it has pointed out such cases and corrected them. For instance, al-Khu'ī states in the biographical accounts of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀṣimī:

1. Ibid, vol. 3, p. 128.

2. Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, pp. 191-4.

أحمد بن محمد بن أحمد بن طلحة العاصمي. من مشايخ الكليني، فقد وقع في أسناد جملة من الروايات، تبلغ ثلاثين موردا: فقد روى عن علي بن الحسن، و علي بن الحسن بن فضال، و علي بن الحسن التيملي، و علي بن الحسن التيمي، و علي بن الحسن السلمي، و علي بن الحسن الميثمي، و جميع هذه العناوين منطبقة على شخص واحد...

اختلاف الكتب: روى الشيخ الصدوق بإسناده، عن محمد بن يعقوب، عن أحمد بن محمد العاصمي، عن علي بن الحسين الميثمي. الفقيه: الجزء 4، باب الرجل يوصي إلى رجل بولده، الحديث 590. و لكن الموجود في الكافي: الجزء 7، كتاب الوصايا I، باب النوادر من كتاب الوصايا 37، الحديث 19: «أحمد بن محمد، عن علي بن الحسن»، و التهذيب: الجزء 9، باب من الزيادات من كتاب الوصية، الحديث 921، و هو الصحيح، الموافق للوافي و الوسائل أيضا.

He maintains that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad is one of al-Kulaynī's *mashā'ikh*, and 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan is one of his teachers. Then, al-Khu'ī points to the inconsistency of the chains of hadith between *Man Lā Yaḥḍurhu al-Faqīh* with *al-Kāfī* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*. In other words, while Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, in *Man Lā Yaḥḍurhu al-Faqīh*, quoted from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, he, in *al-Kāfī* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, narrated from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan. Sayyid al-Khu'ī prefers *al-Kāfī* and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkam*'s chain since it is in accordance with *al-Wāfī* and *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*. Moreover, al-Khu'ī points out the rule of *tarwīḥ al-mukhtalafāt* and states that 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Faḍḍāl, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Taymulī (Taymalī), 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Taymī, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Sulamī and 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Maythamī are different names for one and the same person.¹

Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth is one of the most comprehensive *rijāl* sources which was published in 1970 in 23 volumes. It was

1. Al-Khu'ī, *Mu'jam Rijāl*, vol. 3, p. 127.

later edited by the author and published in 24 volumes. Some researchers have compiled lists and indices for *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* to make it more user-friendly, the most important of which are the following:

- *Dalīl Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* by Muḥamamd Saʿīd al-Ṭurayhī;
- *al-Muʿīn ʿalā Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* by Muḥammad Jawād al-Ḥusaynī al-Baghdādī;
- *al-Mufīd min Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* by Muḥammad al-Jawharī.¹

AL-MAWSŪʿAH AL-RIJĀLIYYAH AL-MUYASSARAH

Compiled by the late ʿAlī Akbar Turābī, this book appeared in one volume under the supervision of Ayatollah Jaʿfar Sobhani. It contains all the narrators' names in the chains of narration in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* and *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah*. The author then cites the narrators' biographical accounts and what is involved in their authentication or lack of authenticity from the *rijāl* sources of the early (*mutaqaddimīn*) and later (*mut'akbkhirīn*) scholars. However, references have not been made to the narrators' reliability or unreliability since it has been left to scholars to make further inquiries.

One of the advantages of the book is that narrators who happen to be namesakes in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* have been identified by their levels (*ṭabaqāt*), *mashā'ikh* and students. In terms of narrators' authenticity and weakening, in addition to providing references to *rijāl* scholars, some general confirmations of reliability have been mentioned, instances of which include the reliable *mashā'ikh*

1. This book is very useful for quick access to the contents of *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*.

(*mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*),¹ *aṣḥāb al-ijmā'*² and the direct *mashā'ikh* of Ibn Qūlawayh in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*.³ Moreover, in many cases, the number of narrations of narrators whose names appear in the chains of *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah* have been specified.

Having acquainted ourselves with the secondary and later *rijāl* books, it is appropriate to point out their similarities and differences. From what has been mentioned above, the similarities and dissimilarities between the secondary and later *rijāl* books can be understood. There are two similarities:

1. The earlier *rijāl* books, as mentioned above, can be considered the foundation of *rijāl* books for the secondary and later books since they are the first and foundational works in the field of *rijāl*. Therefore, the secondary and later *rijāl* books are taken from the earlier *rijāl* books.
2. Both secondary and later books attempt to categorize the contents of earlier books. However, the difference between them is that some qualities in later books did not exist in secondary books. In other words, in addition to describing narrators, the authors have also developed new innovative contents, e.g. *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*, *Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt*, removing the inconsistency between two chains, establishing the *ṭabaqāt* of the narrators and expressing the number of narrations of each narrator. These innovative points can open new vistas before the researchers and they can deduce more easily the narrators' reliability or unreliability.

1. For further details about *mashā'ikh al-thiqāt*, see Lesson Nine. They are three well-known scholars: Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā Bayyā' al-Sāburī, and Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī who do not narrate or mention a discontinued hadith unless from a reliable person.

2. For further details, see Lesson Seven and Lesson Eight.

3. See Lesson Eleven.

SUMMARY

Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl

The last lesson of this book tried to look at four later *rijāl* books. The first one was *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl* compiled by ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī. It is one of the most extensive books in the discipline of Shi‘ah *rijāl* wherein the author collected all the companions (*aṣḥāb*), followers (*tābi‘īn*) and all the narrators up to the 14th/20th century. He paid special attention to *Tamīz al-Mushtarakāt* and *tawḥīd al-mukhtalafāt*. In other words, when two narrators happen to be namesakes, or one narrator has two different names, he clarifies whether they are two names for one narrator or there are two namesakes. Moreover, the author has surpassed his predecessors in making references to sources.

Qāmūs al-Rijāl

The author, Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, compiled it in order to rectify the inaccuracies in *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*. For instance, he maintains that in some cases, al-Māmaqānī referred to distorted and unreliable manuscripts and also misquoted certain statements. For instance, he attributes what early scholars mentioned to later scholars. He also believes that al-Māmaqānī did not pay enough attention to the authenticity of some of the narrators. The most important theme of the book is al-Tustarī’s critique of al-Māmaqānī’s views.

Mu‘jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth

The author of the book, Ayatollah al-Khu‘ī, was one of the greatest *marāji‘* in recent decades. He viewed *‘ilm al-rijāl* as a neglected discipline. He says in the introduction that he wrote the book to draw attention to its importance. He has arranged the narrators’ names in alphabetical order and has included their important material under each narrator’s name. He mentioned the narrators’ *mashā’ikh* and students whilst mentioning that

this would be beneficial to find each narrator's level (*ṭabaqah*). Al-Khu'ī also paid more attention to the issues of *taḥrīf* and *taṣḥīf* in narrations and attempted to clarify them.

al-Mawsū'ah al-Rijāliyyah al-Muyassarah

The late scholar, Turābī, compiled this user-friendly book that includes all the narrators in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* and *al-Kutub al-Arba'ah*. The author then cites their biographical accounts and what is involved in their authentication or lack of authenticity from major *rijāl* sources. However, the author does not comment on the narrators' reliability or unreliability and left it to the researchers. One of the advantages of the book is that narrators with identical names in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* have been identified by their levels (*ṭabaqāt*), *mashā'ikh* and students.

QUESTIONS

1. Who is the author of *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*? What does he mean by the term *al-ḍabṭ*? Mention one characteristic of the book. Who has criticized it more than others?
2. Who is the author of *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*? What was his motivation in writing the book? Mention three goals of his.
3. Who is the author of *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*? What was his motivation for the compilation of the book? Why did he mention each narrator's *mashā'ikh* and students?
4. Why did the author of *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* mention the number of each narrator's narrations?
5. Who is the author of *al-Mawsū'ah al-Rijāliyyah al-Muyassarah*? Did the author present his view on the reliability or unreliability of the narrator? Why?
6. How would you classify the *rijāl* books? Discuss in detail.

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