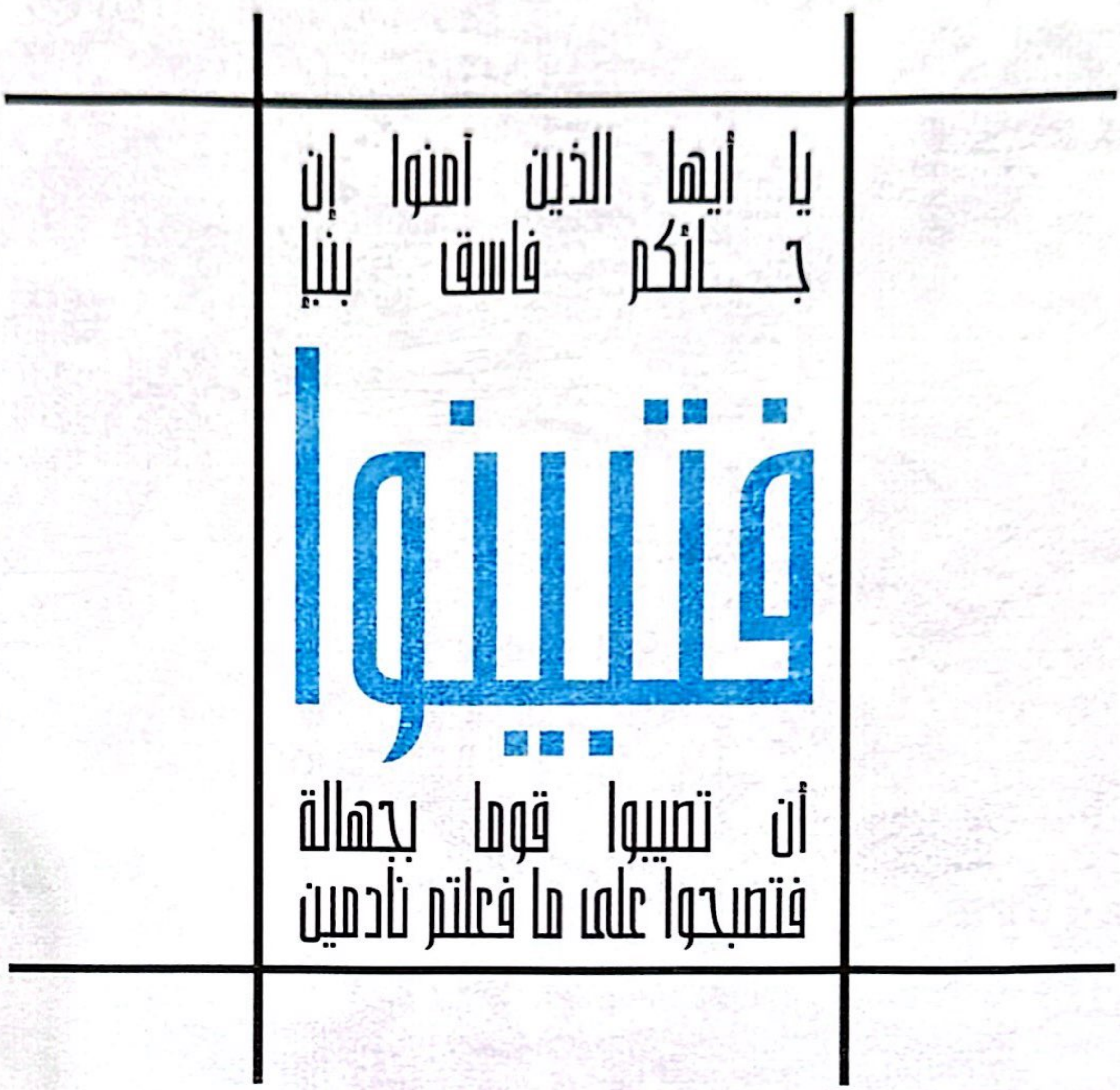
INTRODUCTION TO

RIJAL STUDIES



Baqir al-Irawani

Translated by Zaid Alsalami

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Translator's Note

The study of hadith transmitters (*'ilm al-rijāl*) is just as important as all the other classical transmitted (*naqlī*) sciences, such as jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, and Qur'anic exegesis. *'Ilm al-rijāl* literally means 'the science of men'; it focuses on evaluating the reliability of people who transmitted hadith narrations, and it aims to categorise traditions into graded levels of authenticity and reliability. The science of narrators is also referred to as *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* (discrediting and accrediting), which criticises or accepts narrators of traditions.

From early on, there was a problem of narrations falling into the hands of unqualified people, or cases where statements were falsely attributed to the Prophet or the Imams. Our noble scholars devoted their efforts to scrutinise not only the context of a narration, but the whole chain of narrators attached to it. In doing so, they produced general principles of how to distinguish true narrations from false ones, and standards were introduced to scrutinise the chain of transmitters.

This method of scrutinising the biography and reliability of narrators gradually turned into an independent science, in which the specifications of narrators are studied. It deals with investigating their ideological affiliation, their historical background, and their moral character.

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About the Author

Shaykh Bāqir al-Īrawānī, son of Ayatollah Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī al-Īrawānī, was born in Najaf al-Ashraf in 1949. He comes from a well-known scholarly family who trace their roots back to the famous grand jurist, al-Fāḍil al-Īrawānī (1232/1816-1306/1889), who was a direct student of al-Shaykh al-Aʿẓam Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (1214/1799-1298/1880).

Al-Fāḍil al-Īrawānī migrated from Yerevan (in present-day Armenia) to Karbala al-Muqaddasah, where he did his initial seminary studies. He then moved to Najaf al-Ashraf where he resided and continued his path of knowledge, mastering many sciences and becoming a famous *marjaʿ taqlīd*. He passed away in Najaf and was buried in Madrasah al-Īrawānī,[1] the same school which he supervised.[2]

Shaykh Bāqir completed his tertiary studies, and at a young age joined the *ḥawzah* — Islamic seminary — where he studied under various scholars until he reached the advanced levels and became an outstanding student of the late Grand Ayatollah Sayyid al-Khūʾī and the Grand Ayatollah al-Shahīd Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr.

In a short period of time Shaykh Bāqir became a teacher of the advanced Islamic studies in Najaf, but due to the difficult circumstances of Iraq during the Baathist regime, he was forced to migrate to Qum al-Muqaddasah, where he continued to pursue his scholarly work. Some years later, he returned to Najaf al-Ashraf, and currently continues to be a benefit to the *ḥawzah* seminaries in different countries, and to Muslims all around the world.

One of the highly commendable efforts of this great scholar is his focus to prepare reformed textbooks for various *ḥawzah* studies. These books are concise and simple, but still carry the depth and detail for which the *ḥawzah* books are famously known.

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[1] This *madrasah* was founded by Ḥājj Mahdī al-Īrawānī in the year 1305 AH, and is in the suburb of al-Ḥuwaysh.

[2] Al-Amīn, Sayyid Muḥsin. *Aʿyān al-Shīʿah*, ed. Sayyid Ḥasan al-Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf, 1983), vol. 9, pp. 180-181.

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The Translation

In the years I have taught different introductory subjects in the *ḥawzah* programme at Nabi Akram Islamic Centre in Sydney, Australia, I had the privilege of translating this text, along with teaching it.[3] The project was difficult and challenging at times, due to the inaccessibility of any other English text on this subject, but by the grace of the Almighty I was able to successfully complete the course and the translation. This book is of course a textbook, which means it needs to be taught by a qualified teacher who is well-versed in this subject.

I would like to firstly thank all my dear students who eagerly participated in this course. They passionately engaged in the topic with fruitful discussions and continuously shared their valuable feedback. Some of my students were also involved in the initial reviewing of the text, after which Alexander Khaleeli and Amina Inloes edited the translation. Shaykh Abbas Mohamed Husein Ismail also made an important contribution with his insightful observations. I am grateful to them all. I would also like to thank Shaykh Mohammad Ali Shomali for his support, and the Islamic College, particularly Shaykh Isa Jahangir and Shaykh Mohammed Ali Ismail, for taking the manuscript through to production.

Wa min Allāh al-tawfīq
Zaid Alsalami
September 2016

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[3] The text used for this translation is the second edition, published in 2001 by Nashr Saʿīd ibn Jubayr, Qum.

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Foreword

When, in the beloved *madrasah* of Najaf al-Ashraf, I cast my gaze across the fields of *fiqh* and *uṣūl*, I saw that there was no comparable field for *ʿilm al-rijāl* and its principles. I would read biographies of scholars – so-and-so studied *rijāl* under so-and-so – without having seen this in practice.

I finished my intermediary levels (*suṭūḥ*) and entered the advanced level (*baḥth al-khārij*), and I had no knowledge, brief or extensive, in *rijālī* issues, especially after having studied *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah fi Sharḥ al-Lumʿah al-Dimashqiyyah*[4] and *Kitāb al-Makāsib*,[5] and both of these are completely far away from this.

I used to hear some *rijālī* concepts from certain scholars while attending *baḥth al-khārij*. This made me keenly aware of a gap in my knowledge.

I sensed this gap in three situations, and I will mention them so that hopefully those who say it is impossible would find ways to solve them:

In the *uṣūl* books which I studied in the *suṭūḥ* levels, I did not find the ideas of the three great scholars: al-Nāʾīnī,[6] al-ʿIrāqī,[7] and al-Iṣfahānī.[8] Instead, I encountered the old theories, studying Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī's *al-Fuṣūl*,[9] Mīrzā al-Qummī's[10] *Qawānīn al-Uṣūl*, al-

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[4] Written by Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī (911/1506-966/1559), also known as al-Shahīd al-Thānī.

[5] By Shaykh al-Aʿẓam Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (1214/1781-1281/1864).

[6] Shaykh Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Nāʾīnī (1273/1856-1355/1936). One of the teachers of Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī (1317/1899-1413/1992).

[7] Shaykh Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (1278/1861-1361/1942). One of the teachers of Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūʾī and Sayyid Muḥsin al-Ḥakīm (1306/1889-1390/1970).

[8] Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Gharawī al-Iṣfahānī (1296/1879-1361/1942), known as Shaykh al-Kumpānī. One of the teachers of Sayyid al-Khūʾī, Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī Bahjat (1334/1915-1430/2009) and ʿAllamah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (1321/1904-1402/1981).

[9] Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥāʾirī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1254/1838 or 1261/1845) *al-Fuṣūl al-Gharawiyyah fī al-Uṣūl al-Fiqhiyyah.*

[10] Shaykh Mīrzā Abū al-Qāsim ibn Ḥasan al-Qummī (1151/1738- 1231/1815).

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Rashti's[11] *Badā'iʿ al-Afkār*, al-Anṣārī's *Rasā'il*,[12] and al-Ākhund's[13] *Kifāyat al-Uṣūl*.

I do not mean to belittle the views of those schools – far be it from me to conceive of such a thing! – but what I mean is that the views of any school exist within the framework of a particular era, and they are subject to the law of evolution (*taṭawwur*). If the law of evolution had any exception, then that would be in the case of the theories presented by the Holy Qur'an and the views of the Ahl al-Bayt.

Even if the law of evolution is put to one side, then at least there would be a need for becoming acquainted with new *uṣūlī* ideas.

I am very fond of the ideas of those three scholars, which I grew up with throughout my studies in *baḥth al-khārij* of *'ilm al-uṣūl*. I am also an admirer of Shahīd al-Ṣadr's *Ḥalaqāt*,[14] whose vast thoughts nurtured us and which enabled us to overcome those gaps in our knowledge.

During my studies of *suṭūḥ* I did not read the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt, whether in the chapters of *ṣawm*, *ṣalāh*, or *ṭahārah*, let alone in *diyāt*, *ḥudūd*, or *taʿzīrāt*. I also did not read the methods of argument that the jurist uses in the process of deriving rulings. I would hear that *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah* is a course in analytical jurisprudence that teaches jurisprudence through analysis, and I would accept this submissively. However, I have now opened my eyes somewhat and found that this was not the case at all. If anything, *al-Rawḍah al-Bahiyyah* teaches us how to use complex words and how to solve textual puzzles and riddles.

I continued to solve these riddles for a while, but in the process I lost sight of the purpose of the puzzles; I learnt that this is not a condition for the principle, or that this is obligatory for the narration. I understood this much, but no more; I did not learn the traditions that were related to those issues in jurisprudence so that they would not be foreign to me when I hear them now.

I had not heard how they conflict with one another (*mutaʿāriḍ*), or how we solve conflicting traditions, or what we refer to when we come across a difficult case of conflicting evidence. I did not see this in *al-Rawḍah al-*

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[11] Shaykh Ḥabībullah al-Rashti (1234/1818-1312/1894).

[12] Also known as *Farā'id al-Uṣūl*, by Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī.

[13] Shaykh Muḥammad Kāẓumal-Khurāsānī, also known as al-Ākhund al-Khurāsānī (1255/1839-1329/1911).

[14] Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (1353/1935-1400/1980). His book is called *Durūs fī 'Ilm al-Uṣūl*, also known as *al-Ḥalaqāt*, as it was written in three volumes at three levels: introduction, intermediary, and advanced. [Translator's note]

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Bahiyyah. Yes, I did find this in *al-Makāsib,* but the boundaries of *al-Makāsib* are limited to transactions (*al-bayʿ*) and their options (*al-khiyārāt*), but what about *ṣalāh,* or *ṣawm,* or hajj, or *khums,* or the rest?

In the level of *suṭūḥ* we are in need of a book on jurisprudence that at least encompasses most jurisprudence subjects, where we hear the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt, and what is to be done when we come across conflicting evidence, and what is the contemporary methodology of deducing arguments followed by our esteemed scholars, with brief reference to some *rijālī* issues.

With this we would not be in any need of semantic riddles and puzzles. Are our scientific concepts or methods of arguments so deficient that we need to 'improve' them by making them complex?

I speak from experience: I did not come to know the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt in the different chapters of jurisprudence until I started to attend *baḥth al-khārij,* which is when I encountered the second gap in my knowledge.

We are in dire need of compiling a book that is a complete jurisprudence course or something like that, which includes a large amount of traditions from Ahl al-Bayt and also a large amount of contemporary methodologies or arguments, filling the gap for the transfer to the level of *khārij.*

We are not able to move this suggestion from the realm of potentiality to the realm of actuality unless we make our intentions sincere to Almighty Allah, the same kind of sincerity of al-Shahīd al-Thānī, Shaykh al-Aʿẓam, al-Ākhund al-Khurāsānī, and others, whose books are taught till this very day. That kind of sincere intention is able to move the most difficult of mountains. We ask the Almighty to grant us all such sincerity to be able to overcome the difficult problems of studying that we are living through.

The third gap in my knowledge I encountered was in the case of *al-rijāl* and the chain of reporters (*isnād*) in traditions. What are the methods of establishing reliability, and how can we know whether a particular narrator is reliable (*thiqah*) or not? What is the criterion for the validity (*ḥujjiyyah*) of a tradition? What are the general ways of establishing reliability (*tawthīq*)? I did not know any of these things while I was in *suṭūḥ,* and I continued to benefit from teachers about certain points, and followed up to learn the rest.

I used to love issues related to *al-rijāl* and loved the teacher or the book that explained to me with clarity points about *al-rijāl,* with which I could quench my thirst.

I put together a series of those points and continued to develop them through discussions, including with with my noble teachers. After a while, I realized that they had all been mentioned by our scholars, but that we needed a pen to write down with clarity these lofty concepts that deal with the views of our distinguished scholars.

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Foreword

When I migrated to the holy city of Qum ten years ago, I started to write a course on *ʿilm al-rijāl* that might solve part of the problem, but I was determined not to publish it because I thought that it was not worthy of being published. After ten years, I looked at it again to see if it could be of use to the *ḥawzah ʿilmiyyah*, wanting to clarify the words of our great scholars in simple language rather than producing anything new or original from myself. I then divided what I wrote into two parts: one part introduces the student to the subject, and the second part is not different to the first, but it slightly expands on it. I called the book *Durūs Tamhīdiyyah fī al-Qawāʿid al-Rijāliyyah*, hoping that those who are greater than me in knowledge and thought would write another book larger and more detailed than what I have written.

I published it in the hope that whoever refers to what I have written will not encounter a gap in their knowledge at the level of *baḥth al-khārij* as I did when I reached that level, or, at the very least, might find the gap greatly reduced. Despite my best efforts to keep it simple, I also assume that what I have written will still require a teacher to assist in explaining the subject so that concepts are completely understood and benefited from.

I believe that reading this book without being adjoined with applying it practically, which is what I attempted to encourage in numerous parts of this book, would not bear complete results.

Distinguishing theory from practice has bad outcomes in grammar, so if someone were to study Arabic grammar without applying the rules, he would not benefit at all. Or in *fiqh* – whoever reads *uṣūl al-fiqh* without himself practicing the process of legal deduction himself would not benefit from his studies. As for this book, whoever reads it and does not apply it would not benefit from it.

In conclusion, I only wrote this to serve the students of our seminaries and the school of Ahl al-Bayt. If I was successful in doing so, then this was my ultimate goal; and if not, then I am grateful only to suffer from simple, and not compound, ignorance.

I ask the Almighty, by the right of our master and the Imam of our time, may my soul and the souls of the worlds be sacrificed for him, to support me with his noble prayers, which solves every difficulty, and gives success to every weak person. My success is but from Allah. I seek forgiveness from Him and I repent to Him.

Bāqir al-Īrawānī
25 Rajab 1416 AH / 18 December 1995

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Introduction

If a jurist comes across a tradition and wants to deduce a particular ruling from it, he must perform the following tasks:

- Establish that the signification (*dalālah*) of a particular narration is relevant to the specified ruling. This is done by observing its apparent meaning. Therefore, whenever the apparent meaning signifies the desired ruling, this objective is satisfied. The process of ascertaining the apparent meaning (*ʿamaliyyat al-istiẓhār*) is largely intuitive (*wijdānī*) and, therefore, in most cases does not fall under a specific criterion. The jurist usually deals with the claim of an apparent meaning and proving it in jurisprudence while following the process of deducing a ruling.
- Establish the validity of the signification, or what is called the validity of the apparent meaning (*ḥujjiyyat al-ẓuhūr*). This is what the *uṣūlī* deals with in the discussions of *ḥujaj* in *ʿilm al-uṣūl*.
- Establish the validity of a narration reported by a reliable person (*ḥujjiyyat khabar al-thiqah*), or else it is not possible to assume the provenance of the narration while one is ignorant of this. This is what the *uṣūlī* deals with in the discussion of *ḥujjiyyat khabar al-thiqah*.
- Establish that the report is the report of a reliable person in order to affirm its validity, based on the principle of 'the validity of a report narrated by a reliable person'.
- Establishing this requires studying the narrators of the chain (*sanad*), in order to know which narrators are reliable and which are not.

In reality, the first thing that must be done is to examine whether validity (*ḥujjiyyah*) is restricted to a reliable narration (*thiqah*) or whether it is more general; whether it should be extended to 'good' narrations (*ḥasan*), or whether it even includes weak narrations (*ḍaʿīf*) that have been rehabilitated because they are widely-acted upon (*ʿamal al-mashhūr*), and so on and so forth.

If this validity only extends to reliable narrations – i.e. those narrations whose narrators are all deemed reliable – then what is the method of establishing the reliability of these narrators? Is the method confined to the

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testimony of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī[15] and Shaykh al-Najāshī,[16] or are there other ways, like the presence of the narrator in the chains of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*,[17] or *Tafsīr al-Qummī*,[18] or the narrating of the eminent scholars from them, or is it existing in the chain of a tradition that includes someone from Banī Faḍḍāl, or is there yet some other criterion?

If the chain of the narration is weak, is it possible to resort to the theory of replacement (*al-taʿwīḍ*) to authenticate it?

We are going to try and answer these questions and others similar to them in this book so that when the student reaches the level of deducing rulings and tries to enter this area, he can overcome these kinds of obstacles.

When the student studies the topics we will be presenting here, he must think and investigate himself, and ponder on whether what he reads is correct or incorrect; he must not rely on what I or anyone else claims to be correct. This area is not an area of *taqlīd*, but rather an area of *ijtihād*, as the realm of *taqlīd* is in *fiqh* and jurisprudential rulings, not in *rijālī* concepts.

Practical Exercise

We have realised that presenting *rijālī* precepts without giving the student the opportunity to apply these would render the lesson ineffective, as the student would live purely in the theoretical realm, which would become tiring for him. More importantly, the student will not know how to extract traditions from *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*[19] and will not know how to familiarise themselves with the authenticity of a chain. Therefore, at times we will present some traditions from *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* and analyse them in a practical way by studying their chains.

Exercise 1

We will present the following types of examples to emphasise to the student the necessity of getting to know what we will be performing in issues related to *ʿilm al-rijāl*, and how we can benefit from it in a practical way.

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[15] Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (385/995-460/1243). [Translator's note]

[16] Abū al-ʿAbbas Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Najāshī (372/893-450/1058). [Translator's note]

[17] Shaykh Jaʿfar ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978). [Translator's note]

[18] Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 329/941). [Translator's note]

[19] The complete title is *Tafṣīl Wasā'il al-Shīʿah ilā Taḥṣīl Masā'il al-Sharīʿah* (*The Detailed Links of the Shiʿa to Attain Issues of the Sharia*), by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī al-Mashgharī (1033/1624-1104/1693), who was a famous *muḥaddith* and prominent scholar. It took the author eighteen years to compile this book. [Translator's note]

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Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī mentions the following tradition in *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*:

> محمد بن يعقوب، عن محمد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن علي بن النعمان، عن أبي أسامة، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) أنه قال ـ في حديث ـ: كونوا دعاة إلى أنفسكم بغير ألسنتكم، وكونوا زينا ولا تكونوا شينا.
>
> Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān, from Abū Usāmah, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A), who said in a tradition: 'Become propagators to yourselves without [using] your tongues. Be adornments, and do not be [a source of] disgrace.'[20]

Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī mentions this tradition from Shaykh al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, and the signification for this is that al-Ḥurr mentions in the beginning of the chain the name Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb, who is Shaykh al-Kulaynī.

To become acquainted with this chain we must study it in the following way:

As for **Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb**, he is so famous as to be needless of an introduction, and we do not doubt his reliability. He is one of our pillars that the Jaʿfarī school of thought is honoured with and proud of. Al-Najāshī has said in his favour:

> He [Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb] is the master of our companions in his time in al-Rayy, and the eminent among them. He was the most reliable of people in narrations and the most upright of them.[21]

To classify someone as reliable, it is sufficient for either al-Najāshī by himself or Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to classify (*tawthīq*) someone as reliable, without the need of combining both of them to classify someone as reliable.

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā is the teacher [Shaykh] of al-Kulaynī, and al-Kulaynī narrated abundantly from him in al-*Kāfī*. He is one of the great reliable narrators. Al-Najāshī says the following about him: 'The teacher of our companions in his time, who is reliable, famous, and narrated abundantly.'[22]

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[20] Al-ʿĀmilī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr. *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, 3rd ed. (n.p.: Mu'ssasah Āl al-Bayt (A) Li Iḥyā' al-Turāth, 2008), vol. 1, ch. 17 – Preliminaries of Acts of Worship, p. 76, h. 1. [Translator's note]

[21] Al-Khū'ī, Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim. *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth wa Ṭabaqāt al-Ruwāt*, vol. 18, p. 50. This reference is used out of ease, instead of the original text.

[22] Ibid. vol. 18, p. 30.

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As previously mentioned, al-Najāshī by himself classifying him as reliable, or Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, is sufficient, and there is no need to combine both of them to consider him as reliable.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā is al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, who was known to have a high status. Al-Najāshī said about him: ʿAbū Jaʿfar, the Shaykh of Qummīs and pre-eminent amongst them; a jurist without equal. He was also a governor who would meet the Sultan. He also met with [Imam] al-Riḍā (A).'[23]

As for ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān, al-Najāshī has said: "Alī was reliable, a notable and established person who was authentic and clear in his path.'[24]

Abū Usāmah is Zayd al-Shaḥām. We know this through our experience in *ʿilm al-rijāl.* It is possible for those who do not have sufficient experience to refer to *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth,* in the particular volume that gives the teknonym (*kunyah*) to find the name. It is mentioned in this book that Abū Usāmah is Abū Usāmah al-Shaḥām, who is the same Zayd al-Shaḥām.[25] If we refer to the biography of Zayd al-Shaḥām we find that al-Najāshī does not classify him as reliable, but Shaykh al-Ṭūsī does, saying: 'Zayd al-Shaḥām, who has the teknonym of Abū Usāmah, is reliable.'[26] And that is sufficient.

Through this, it becomes clear that the tradition has an authentic chain, as all the narrators in the chain have been classified as reliable.

An Incorrect Assumption

Some might assume through this previous exercise that knowing the authenticity or inauthenticity of a tradition is a simple matter that does not require much study, or in other words: the chain of a tradition is authentic whenever all the narrators in the chain have been considered as reliable by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī, or else it is weak.

This is an incorrect assumption, because the method of classifying someone as reliable (*withāqah*) is not restricted to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī. Rather, there are many other aspects that need to be researched to find the scope of someone's validity, and there are other discussions as well (that will be explained in the coming chapters) without which the student cannot suffice.

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[23] Ibid. vol. 2, p. 296.

[24] Ibid. vol. 12, p. 215.

[25] Ibid. vol. 21, p. 13.

[26] Ibid. vol. 7, p. 361.

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One glance at the methodology of the research that we will be performing, God-willing, and the contents of the information in this book clearly indicate what we are saying.

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Our Research Methodology

After having explained the aforementioned introduction, we will now present the research methodology that will be in the following four chapters:

Chapter One: The Study on Reliability

Chapter Two: A Study on the Categories of Traditions

Chapter Three: A Review of Some Hadith Books

Chapter Four: A Review of Some *Rijāl* Books

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Chapter One

This chapter will be discussed in the following three points:

Point One: A Study of the Ways of Establishing the Reliability of a Narrator

Point Two: A Study of the General Methods of Verifying Reliability

Point Three: A Study of the Evidence for the Validity of the view of a *Rijālī* Scholar

Point One: The Methods of Establishing the Reliability of a Narrator

There are a few ways of establishing the reliability (*wathāqah*) of a narrator, and we will mention some of them here.

The Testimony of a *Maʿṣūm*

If a *maʿṣūm* testifies to the reliability of a person, there is no doubt that this establishes their reliability as a narrator. An example for this is what has been mentioned in favour of Zurārah.[27] In an authentic chain that goes back to Jamīl ibn Darrāj, Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A) said:

> بشّر المخبتين بالجنّة: بُريد بن معاوية العجلي، وأبا بصير ليث بن البختري المرادي، ومحمّد بن مسلم، وزرارة بن أعين، أربعة نجباء، أُمناء الله على حلاله وحرامه، ولولا هؤلاء لانقطعت آثار النبوّة واندرست
>
> Give glad tidings to those who will forever be in heaven: Burayd ibn Muʿāwiyah al-ʿAjalī, Abū Baṣīr Layth ibn al-Bakhtarī al-Murādī, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, and Zurārah ibn Aʿyan – four excellent ones. They are the custodians of Allah over His permissible and prohibited. If it was not for them the traces of prophecy would have been cut off and buried.[28]

Of course, it is necessary that the narrator of the reliability from the Imam should not be the same person that is referred to in establishing their

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[27] His full name is Zurārah ibn Aʿyan al-Shaybānī al-Kūfī (80/699-150/767), and he was a companion of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A) and Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A). [Translator's note]

[28] *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, vol. 1, p. 398, h. 286; *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 7, p. 222.

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reliability by the testimony of the Imam, or else this would become akin to a circular argument.

The Testimony of Reliability by a Great Scholar

Shaykh Abū al-ʿAbbas Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbas, known better as 'al-Najāshī', a contemporary of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and his associate in some of his classes, wrote a book called *Fihrist Muṣannifī al-Shīʿah* (An Index of Shiʿa Authors). In this book he compiled information about narrators who had compiled books, with a reference in most cases as to whether the author was reliable or weak.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī also wrote two books in this field. One of them is called *al-Fihrist*, and the other is known as *al-Abwāb*, or *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī*. In some cases, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions the reliability or the weakness of some narrators in these books.

Another eminent scholar, Shaykh Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, known as al-Kashshī (d. circa 350/961) – who is considered to be in the same grade as Shaykh al-Kulaynī – wrote a book called *Maʿrifat al-Nāqilīn ʿan al-Aʾimmah al-Ṣādiqīn*, or *Rijāl al-Kashshī*. In this book, he collected the traditions that speak about some of the narrators, without dealing directly with, in most cases, classifying the narrators as reliable or weak. In this book he collected the traditions that are in reference to some narrators, and in most cases he himself did not make reference to the weakness or the reliability of the narrators.

The testimony of any of these three scholars for the reliability of a particular narrator is an approved means of establishing their reliability. The evidence for this is the established conduct of the rational people (*al-sīrah al-ʿuqalāʾiyyah*), who collectively act upon the reports of a reliable person in all situations, including when classifying the reliability of a narrator. Seeing that this kind of conduct has not been censured, it is legislatively established.[29]

A single testimony (from any of these scholars) is sufficient, and there is no need to have numerous testimonies because, as previously mentioned, there is a collective conduct (amongst the rational) that single testimony suffices.

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[29] Other aspects will be mentioned in Point Three, when explaining the evidence of the validity of the statement of a *rijālī* scholar.

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Is the testimony for reliability accepted if given by later scholars (*al-muta'akhkhirīn*) – such as ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī,[30] Ibn Ṭāwūs,[31] al-Shahīd al-Thānī,[32] and Ibn Dāwūd?[33] There is a difference of opinion regarding this, and we will discuss it in Part Two, God-willing.

Consensus on Reliability

There are some narrators that al-Najāshī and other scholars did not classify as reliable, but they are from those whom al-Kashshī claimed there is a consensus among the Shiʿa in accepting their narrations.

For example, al-Najāshī and other scholars did not testify to the reliability of Ābān ibn ʿUthmān, who is known as Ābān al-Aḥmar, but he is one of the six narrators from the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) about whom al-Kashshī claims there is consensus in trusting him. He says:

> The group [i.e. of Twelver Shʿia] has united in authenticating what has been authenticated from these people, and trusting them in what they say, and confessing that they understand: Jamīl ibn Darrāj, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bukayr, Ḥammād ibn ʿUthmān, Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā, and Ābān ibn ʿUthmān.[34]

The validity of the mentioned consensus in establishing reliability is justified as follows: if al-Kashshī is correct in his claim of consensus, and there truly was consensus in the reliability, then this would be the desired result. However, if he was not correct and in reality there is no consensus achieved, then it is sufficient for us to establish the reliability by the implicit and implied testimony of al-Kashshī. His claim of consensus implies that he testifies to the reliability of the six narrators, and that in itself is enough to establish reliability.

Being a Representative of the Imam

Being a representative of the Imam (*wikālah*) could be a sign of reliability at a general level in all circumstances, or restricted to particular issues.

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[30] Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥillī (648/1250-726/1325). [Translator's note]

[31] Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Ṭāwūs al-ʿAlawī al-Ḥasanī (589/1193-664/1266). [Translator's note]

[32] Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn ibn ʿAlī al-Jubʿī al-ʿĀmilī (911/1506-965/1558). [Translator's note]

[33] Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥilli (647/1249-707/1308), author of *Kitāb al-Rijāl*, famously known as *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*. [Translator's note]

[34] *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, no. 705.

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The first kind is called deputyship (*safārah*), and there is no doubt that it indicates reliability. Actually, it indicates a status even higher than reliability in terms of rank and status.

The question is whether the second kind indicates reliability. Some scholars like Sayyid al-Khū'ī have rejected it, based on the argument that there are many representatives that the Imams have criticised. In addition, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī dedicated a whole chapter in his book *al-Ghaybah* to the criticised representatives.[35]

The correct view is that *wikālah* does indicate reliability, based on the collective conduct of rational people that dictates 'a rational person does not entrust any of their affairs to an unreliable person', especially when that is the Imam. An unreliable person might attribute something to the Imams while they are innocent of it, and this could create certain dangers for the Imams.

Question: How do we then interpret the censuring of some of the representatives by the Imams?

Answer: That would have happened after they were delegated as their representatives, and not before.

It is clear if we accept that representation indicates reliability, it would mean that we can consider a number of narrators that have been classified as unknown (*majhūl*) or weak (*ḍa'īf*) as being reliable. Among them would be 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā'inī who was one of the representatives of Imam al-Kāẓim (A) and the custodian over his money. There is disagreement amongst the scholars concerning 'Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā'inī's status; consequently, if we go by the view that representation indicates reliability, we are able to confirm his reliability, and also authenticate a large amount of traditions that contain al-Baṭā'inī in their chains, as he has been mentioned in the chains of many traditions.

Narration of a Reliable Person

The author of *Mustadrak Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (1245/1838-1320/1902),[36] held the view that a reliable person narrating from another person signifies the other person's reliability. However, the correct view is that it does not signify any such thing. There are many narrators who have narrated from unreliable sources. If the narration of a reliable person from another person indicated that person's reliability, this would necessitate that the majority if not all narrators to be reliable. For instance, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is reliable; therefore, if he was to narrate from someone, then

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[35] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 75.

[36] Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, also known as al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī. [Translator's note]

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that person would be reliable, and if that person was to narrate from a third person he would be reliable as well, and so on.

Of course, if the great and eminent reliable narrators were to abundantly narrate from a person, then it could be taken as an affirmation of their reliability, as it would not be possible for a rational person to excessively narrate from another person whom he does not view as reliable. Such an act would be considered an unjustifiable waste of time as there is no benefit in gathering narrations from weak sources.

If we accept this view then this would have some important results. For example, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl would be classed as reliable. Shaykh al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfī* has frequently narrated from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān. There is a view that states Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl is unknown, and therefore his many narrations are disregarded. However, based on what has been said it is possible to consider him as reliable, even though we may not able to identify him specifically, and by doing so a large amount of traditions would be elevated to the level of validity (*ḥujjiyyah*).

'Mastership of Permit'

There are numerous forms of taking a narration from a person. Sometimes a student hears the narration from the teacher, at other times the teacher dictates the narration to the student, and a third form is when the teacher permits the student to receive the book that he recorded and compiled the narrations in, and he says to the student: 'I permit you to narrate from me the narrations that exist in this book.'

Terminologically, a person that receives narrations in the third form is referred to as receiving the narrations in the form of permission (*ijāzah*). Also, the term for the author of the book that issued the permit is referred to as the 'master of the permit' (*shaykh al-ijāzah*).

There is a difference in opinion as to whether the 'mastership of permit' (*shaykhūkhat al-ijāzah*) suffices to establish reliability or not.

It is important to study this point, because the books of *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Istibṣār*, and *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh* were compiled from many of the fundamental sources of hadith.[37] These fundamental sources of hadith

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[37] The fundamental sources are also referred to as the Four Hundred *Uṣūl*, (*al-uṣūl al-arbaʿ miʾah*). The four hundred fundamental sources of hadith are books of hadith compiled by the companions of the Imams. Whenever the companions of the Imams heard a narration from the Imams, they would record it in their books. These books became known as *al-uṣūl al-arbaʿamiʾah*, and they held a high level of authenticity because the chain between the authors and the Imam was either directly from the Imam or through only one narrator. [Translator's note]

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reached Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī through some people whose reliability has not been specifically confirmed. However, the most that can be said about them is that they were among the 'masters of permits', like Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, and so on.

Perhaps the well-known view of the early classical scholars (*al-qudamā'*) is that the mastership of permit is sufficient to establish reliability, as opposed to the view of some later contemporaries (*al-muta'akhkhirīn*), like Sayyid al-Khū'ī who believed that it was insufficient.

Those that believe the master of permit is insufficient to establish a narrator's reliability could argue against it by saying that the only benefit that results from it is that someone like Shaykh al-Mufīd [336/948-413/1022], who has received a permit, will be permitted to say: 'Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd reported to me the traditions in this book and has permitted me to narrate them.' In other words, it is as if Shaykh al-Mufīd is saying he has heard these narrations from him. On this basis, a reliable person merely hearing a narration and transmitting it from another person does not indicate that he is reliable. Therefore, mastership of permit cannot be considered as evidence for reliability.

Practical Exercises – Exercise 2

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī has said in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*:

> محمد بن الحسن بإسناده عن الحسين بن سعيد، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن حريز، عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) قال: لَا صَلاة إِلَّا بِطهور.

> Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan narrates through his chain from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from Ḥammād ibn 'Īsā, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah, from Abū Ja'far (A) who said: 'There is no prayer without purity.'[38]

In order to become acquainted with this chain we must first refer back to the chain of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, and this is done by observing Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's masters (*mashyakhah*) of permits in *al-Tahdhīb*, where he said:

> What I mention in this book from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, has been transmitted to me from Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-

[38] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, ch. 1, p. 365, h. 1. [Translator's note]

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Nu'mān,[39] al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh[40] and Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn.[41] All of them narrate from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from his father Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

He also transmitted [it] to me from Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Jīd al-Qummī, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd.[42]

This statement shows that there are two paths to al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd and both of them end with Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, and they are:

Al-Mufīd, from Aḥmad, from his father Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

Ibn Abī Jīd al-Qummī, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

[Both of which] are from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, who narrates from al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd.

And both paths can be disputed.

First Path: As far as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd is concerned, there is no specific mentioning of his reliability.

Yes, if we were to accept the sufficiency of the master of permit in establishing reliability we can accordingly deduce his reliability.

Second Path: As far as Ibn Abī Jīd, there is also no specific mention of his reliability.

Yes, he is one of the masters of permit, and he is the master (*shaykh*) of al-Najāshī, and based on the reliability of all of the masters of permit, or the reliability of all of the masters of al-Najāshī – which will be discussed later – his reliability can be established.

Furthermore, if we overlook all these issues, al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān's reliability remains problematic, as it has not been established.

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[39] Shaykh al-Mufīd. [Translator's note]

[40] Also known as al-Ghaḍā'irī, who was reliable and eminent, and the teacher of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. [Translator's note]

[41] There is no specific mentioning of Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn's reliability. Of course, it is possible to classify him as reliable either by him being among the masters of permit, or by him being a master of al-Najāshī, based on the reliability of all of the masters of al-Najāshī, which will be mentioned, God-willing. However, the case is simple regarding him, because the classifying of one of the three is sufficient for us.

[42] *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, vol. 1, p. 63.

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In general, if the validity of both paths are established, or one of them, then that is the desired result, and if not we must turn to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*, as in this book he has mentioned more paths. He mentions a new path, saying:

> A few of our companions have informed us, from Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father and from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan and Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn al-Mutawakkil, from Saʻd ibn ʻAbd Allāh and al-Ḥimyarī, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻĪsā, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd.[43]

This mentioned path is authentic, because the expression ʻa few of our companions' (*ʻiddah min aṣḥābinā*) represents nothing less than three narrators, and we cannot assume that three of the masters of al-Ṭūsī would unite in lying.

Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn is the reliable and eminent Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

He narrates from three people, who are: his father, **Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan** and **Muḥammad ibn Mūsā ibn al-Mutawakkil**, and it is sufficient to consider the reliability of one of them. Coincidently both of them are among the great reliable narrators, being his father and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

Regarding **Saʻd** and **al-Ḥimyarī**, both of them are reliable eminent narrators, even though it is enough to consider one of them as reliable.

As for **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻĪsā**, he has been previously mentioned, being from al-Ashʻarī and reliable.

The conclusion we reach is that the path of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd can be authenticated.

What is left is to review are the individuals of the chain from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd to the Imam.

Regarding **al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʻīd**, al-Ahwāzī, the author of many books. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī classifies him in *al-Fihrist* as reliable.[44]

As for **Ḥammād ibn ʻĪsā**, al-Najāshī says about him: 'He is reliable in his narrations and trustworthy.'[45]

With **Ḥurayz**, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has said about him: 'He is reliable, from Kufa.'[46]

As for **Zurārah**, it is enough for us to consider the statement of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) about him, saying:

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[43] *Al-Fihrist*, p. 58.

[44] Ibid.

[45] *Muʻjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 6, p. 224.

[46] Ibid. vol. 4, p. 249.

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Give glad tidings to those who will forever be in heaven: Burayd ibn Muʿāwiyah al-ʿAjalī, Abū Baṣīr Layth ibn al-Bakhtarī al-Murādī, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, and Zurārah ibn Aʿyan. They are the custodians of Allah over His permissible and prohibited. If it was not for them the traces of prophecy would have been cut off and buried.[47]

Questions

1. In order for the jurist to derive a ruling from a particular tradition, he is required to establish four factors/aspects. Mention them and explain the reason for the need of each one.

2. Is it permissible to do *taqlīd* in issues related to *rijāl*, and why?

3. If it is said that we do not need to study a science called *ʿilm al-rijāl* or principles of *rijāl*, but rather it is enough that in order to get to know the chains of the traditions that we observe the statements of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī, and based on their classifying of reliability of the narrators of the chain it can be considered as valid, and if not then not. How can we refute such a view?

4. Give an example of the testimony of a *maʿṣūm* that can be evidence for the reliability of a narrator.

5. The testimony of a *maʿṣūm* is proof in the establishment of reliability, with a condition. Mention the condition and explain the reason for this condition.

6. Mention three notable scholars in *al-rijāl* that can be relied upon in their testimony for reliability.

7. Mention the reasoning that validates the testimony for reliability by *al-rijāl* scholars.

8. Why is it sufficient to have the testimony of one scholar for reliability, without the need for numerous testimonies?

9. Consensus on reliability is a way to establish reliability. Mention an example that depicts this.

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[47] Ibid. vol. 7, p. 222.

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10. We mentioned the reasoning behind the validity of consensus in establishing reliability. Explain this reason.

11. There are two types of representation of the Imam. Explain the difference between them.

12. Which of the two types of representation have been debated regarding its signification for reliability?

13. In your view does the Imam's appointing of a person as a representative indicate their reliability? Why?

14. If representation was evidence for reliability, how can we interpret the censuring that was issued by the Imams regarding certain narrators?

15. Given that representation indicates reliability, some narrators will therefore be classified as reliable. Give an example of this.

16. In your view if a reliable person narrates from another person, is this indicative of their reliability? Why?

17. In your view if a great reliable person excessively narrates from another person, is this indicative of their reliability? Why?

18. Based on the signification of excessive narrating from a person indicating their reliability we will come up with important conclusions. Give an example of this. We can arrive at significant conclusions based on the view that states: excessive narrating from another person indicates their reliability. Give an example of this.

19. What is meant by receiving a tradition in the form of a permit? What is meant by 'master of permit'?

20. Why is the discussion of the sufficiency of the mastership of permit in establishing reliability, important? Why is the discussion about mastership of permit being sufficient to establish reliability so important?

21. Do early scholars hold the view that mastership of permit is sufficient in establishing reliability?

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22. How can the sufficiency of the mastership of permit in establishing reliability be rebutted?

23. Is the chain of the tradition authentic mentioned by al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī in *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, Chapter Six, under the chapter of ablution, tradition number one? Provide an explanation for your answer.

Point Two: General Reliability Judgements

When reliability judgements are being made, if the judgement is in reference to a particular person, then it is regarded as a 'specific reliability judgement'. However, if it is in reference to a universal title, then it is regarded as a 'general reliability judgement'.

The specific reliability judgements are obvious, as the classifications of reliability made by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī are usually of the specific form.

An example of general reliability judgement is when al-Qummī classifies every narrator he mentions in his book as reliable, as will be explained later.

There are many examples of general reliability judgements, and we will mention some of them here.

Classifying the Narrators of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* as Reliable

Tafsīr al-Qummī is an exegesis of the Holy Qur'an that is based on traditions and has recently been published in Najaf in two volumes.[48] The author is Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 329/941), and he is one of the *mashāyikh* of Shaykh al-Kulaynī who himself has mentioned from him frequently in *al-Kāfī*.

The following statement was mentioned in the long introduction the author wrote for his exegesis:

> We will mention and transmit what has reached us and what our masters and reliable people have narrated from those to whom Allah has commanded obedience, and has made following them obligatory [i.e. the Imams].[49]

Based on this statement, numerous scholars understood that all the individuals in the chain of the narrations of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* are reliable.

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[48] Edited by Sayyid Ṭayyib al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī, (1386/1966). There are numerous editions and prints of this book today.

[49] Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. introduced by Sayyid Ṭayyib al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī (Qum: Mu'assasah Dār al-Kitāb lil-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 1404/1983), vol. 1, p. 4. [Translator's note]

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Among these scholars is Sayyid al-Khū'ī. He dismisses the possibility that al-Qummī's intent was only to affirm the reliability of his immediate sources as he is trying to prove the validity of his exegesis, and this depends on the reliability of all those who are mentioned in it, and not just those whom he narrates from directly. Based on this, Sayyid al-Khū'ī considered anyone that has been mentioned in this book as reliable as long as they have not been weakened by al-Najāshī or other scholars, in which case the reliability will be discarded. This is because the condition of accepting reliability is that it is not opposed by a criticism (*jarḥ*), which is obvious.

Moreover, based on the benefits of the general reliability judgements, two hundred and sixty narrators can be categorized amongst the reliable narrators, after having previously been categorized as 'unknown' (*al-majāhīl*).

However, we do not have access to the original text of this book, nor do we have certainty that the published book is the entirety of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. Rather, there is some evidence that points to it being a mixture of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and other books, because the following phrases are repeatedly mentioned in numerous places in the published book: 'referring to *Tafsīr 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm*'[50] or 'in reference to the narration of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm'[51] or 'the tradition goes back to 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm'[52], and so on.

As a result of this one acquires general knowledge that this book is a mixture of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and other books. Therefore, since it is not possible to distinguish what is from *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and what is not, the validity the book as a whole must be set aside.

The Narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*

The book *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*[53] is a compilation of visitations written by the eminent and reliable scholar, Shaykh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978), who is one of our early scholars.

This great scholar begins his book with a brief introduction in which he says:

> We acknowledge that we cannot encompass everything which has been narrated from them about this topic (*ziyārah*) or about any other topic (for that matter). Furthermore, I have only narrated that which was reported to me by the trustworthy ones from among our companions – may Allah's mercy be upon them – and I did not

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[50] An example for this can be seen in *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 120. [Translator's note]

[51] Ibid. vol. 1, p. 279. [Translator's note]

[52] Ibid. vol. 1, p. 286. [Translator's note]

[53] It is also referred to as *Kāmil al-Ziyārat*. [Translator's note]

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> include anything which has been reported by unknown or unreliable sources, who are not well-known for their knowledge and narrations.[54]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī understood from this statement that Ibn Qūlawayh wanted to confirm the reliability of all his direct and indirect masters. Sayyid al-Khūʾī was also inclined to this opinion previously,[55] when he held the view that any narrator mentioned in this book is reliable, unless his reliability was opposed by being classified as weak by other scholars. As per the universal principle, every reliability judgement is considered with the condition that it is not opposed by a weak classification elsewhere. Based on this view, the reliability of 388 narrators will be established.

However, as far as the aforementioned statement is concerned, we can only be certain that Ibn Qūlawayh is only referring to those whom he directly narrates from, and not all the narrators in his chains. Sayyid al-Khūʾī himself acknowledged this, after changing his opinion about it towards the end of his noble life.

The Masters of al-Najāshī

A group of scholars chose the view that all the masters of al-Najāshī are reliable, due to the observations made from the biographical entries of more than one narrator that indicate that al-Najāshī strictly adhered to not narrating from unreliable narrators.

In the biography written by al-Jawharī (d. 401/1010),[56] he says: 'I met this shaykh and he was my friend and my father's friend. I heard many things from him and I saw our masters weaken him, so I did not narrate anything from him and avoided him.'

In the biography of Ibn al-Bahlūl,[57] al-Najāshī wrote: 'In his [al-Bahlūl's] first stages he was well-established, but then he became confused. I then saw most of our companions discrediting and weakening him ... I saw this shaykh

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[54] Shaykh Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh Al-Qummī, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, ed. Behrād al-Jaʿfarī, introduced by ʿAlī Akbar al-Ghaffārī (Qum: Nashr Ṣadūq, 1417/1996), p. 15. [Translator's note]

[55] Sayyid al-Khūʾī held the view that all the narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* are reliable, however, later on his life he changed his opinion and concluded that only the direct narrators of Ibn Qūlawayh are reliable. [Translator's note]

[56] His full name is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-Jawharī. [Translator's note]

[57] His full name is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-Bahlūl. [Translator's note]

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and I heard a lot from him, then I stopped narrating from him except if there was a link between me and him.'

Question: What is the benefit of establishing the reliability of the masters of al-Najāshī if he does not have a book of traditions?

Answer: The benefit appears when observing the traditions in *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār*, where Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions that an amount of traditions have reached him from the 'companions' through Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdūn or from Ibn Abī Jīd. There is no specific mention of their reliability, but they are amongst the masters of al-Najāshī. Therefore, based on establishing the reliability of the masters of al-Najāshī, their reliability can be established and the traditions that have been narrated through them are valid.

Banī Faḍḍāl Appearing in the Chain

Banī Faḍḍāl are a group from the Faṭḥiyyah, and they are al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl, and ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl. Al-Faṭḥiyyah were a sect who believed in the *imāmah* of ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ [d. 149/766], another son of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A).[58]

Due to the large amount of narrations from them and their unorthodox beliefs, some Shiʿa directed a question to Imam al-ʿAskarī (A) asking what position they must take towards these traditions, and he replied:

خذوا ما رووا وذروا ما رأوا.

Take what they narrate and leave their views.[59]

Because of this tradition some scholars like Shaykh al-Anṣārī held that whenever there is a tradition and in its chain there is someone from Banī Faḍḍāl, then it is valid and is acted upon, even if it includes some weak narrators between Banī Faḍḍāl and the Imam.

This view has been rejected by many other scholars, arguing that the meaning of the tradition is to explain that even if certain narrators have corrupt beliefs, it does not prevent us from taking their narrations. Thus the whole purpose of the tradition was to outline that there is no problem in taking traditions from Banī Faḍḍāl, and nothing more.

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[58] He was the eldest son of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), and following the Imam's death many of his followers accepted ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ as their imam. He died childless about seventy days after the death of his father. [Translator's note]

[59] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 27, ch. 11 - The Features of a Judge, p. 142, h. 13.

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The Narrations of One of the Three Narrators

It is said that if any of the following three narrators narrate from someone, then that would be evidence of their reliability:

> Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr (d. 217/832).
>
> Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā al-Bajalī (d. 210/825).
>
> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī (d. 221/836).

The evidence mentioned for this is the statement mentioned by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his book *ʿUddat al-Uṣūl*:

> Scholars of this creed (*al-ṭā'ifah*) have equally agreed that whatever Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr, and other reliable narrators about whom it is known that they only narrate from reliable people and those whom others support.[60]

This is why most scholars have said that the *marāsīl* (pl. of *mursal*) of Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, Ṣafwān, and al-Bazanṭī are like their *masānīd.*

Sayyid al-Khū'ī rejected this view, even though it is the dominant position (*mashhūr*). He argued that these three narrators not narrating except from reliable narrators is something that cannot be verified except from these three people themselves, and they did not mention such a thing. If that were the case, they would have said that 'we only narrate from reliable narrators'.

Therefore, this means that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's claim of there being an equal agreement among the companions is based on his conjecture and *ijtihād*, and not based on something he tangibly observed.

Furthermore, what supports this argument is that this claim of al-Ṭūsī is not known among the predecessors of the companions except by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and it has no reference or trace in their writings.

Other General Classifications of Reliability

General classifications of reliability are not limited to what we have mentioned, as there are other examples we have not mentioned here, out of fear of becoming too elaborate.

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[60] Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, *ʿUddat al-Uṣūl*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Anṣārī al-Qummī (Qum: Setareh, 1417/1996), vol. 1, p. 154. [Translator's note]

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Point Three: Evidence of the Validity of the View of an Expert in *Rijāl*

From what has been mentioned we have come to know that there are numerous ways of establishing reliability, and one main way is the mentioning of reliability from an expert in *rijāl* (*tawthīq al-rijālī*).

In this discussion we would like to become acquainted with the evidence of the validity (*ḥujjiyyah*) of the view of an expert in *rijāl*. The following are some of the justifications offered in this regard:

> That it is done in the form of a testimony. For example: just as stating in front of a judge that a certain house belongs to Zayd constitutes a valid kind of testimony, so too is the opinion of an expert in *rijāl* concerning the reliability of a narrator a valid kind of testimony.

However, this would entail us rejecting the testimony of reliability from the likes of al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, because the condition of accepting the testimony of a witness is that they are alive and not dead.

It would also cause us to reject the testimony of either of these two scholars taken separately from the other, because the condition of accepting a testimony is that there are to be two witnesses, not just one.

Another thing is that it would necessitate rejecting the classifying of reliability of a non-Twelver Shiʿi, because the condition of accepting a testimony of a witness is them being just (*ʿādil*), and considering them as reliable would not be enough. This would therefore necessitate rejecting the classifying of the reliability of Banī Faḍḍāl from whom al-Kashshī narrates, because they are from the Faṭḥiyyah sect, and this is unlikely to be accepted.

That it is based on the premise of the validity of the opinions of specialists (*ahl al-khibrah*) in their respective fields of expertise. Just as the opinion of a broker is valid when ascertaining the value of merchandise because he is a specialist in that field, so too is the opinion given by al-Najāshī, who assesses the reliability of narrators, according to this method. It is based on the premise of the validity of the information of a reliable person (*ḥujjiyyat khabar al-thiqah*). The conduct of rational people is commonly based on accepting the information of a reliable person in all aspects. This would be valid as long as there is no precedent established against it in a particular case, like in the case of adultery, where there is evidence that indicates the information is not established unless there are four witnesses. Or in theft, where there is evidence that indicates that information is not established unless there are two witnesses.

Based on this view, it is not a condition for a reliable person to be 'just' (*ʿādil*); it is enough for him to be reliable and someone who abstains from lying. It is also not a condition for there to be numerous narrators, and one

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informer would suffice. The narrator being alive would also not be a condition, and it would be enough for them to have informed something while alive, because their validity would remain even after their death. All of this comes from the establishing of the conduct of rational people that accepts the information of a reliable person in all the mentioned aspects.

Practical Exercises – Exercise 3

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī has quoted in *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*:

وعنه، عن حماد، عن حريز، عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام - في حديث -
قال: يا زرارة الوضوء فريضة.

> From him, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah, from Abū Jaʿfar (A) who said in a tradition: 'O Zurārah, ablution is obligatory.'[61]

Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates this tradition from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and the evidence for this is the tradition mentioned prior to this one, starting the narration by mentioning the name of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī. Al-Ḥurr did not start this tradition by mentioning the name of al-Kulaynī or someone else, because he is still mentioning it from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

The pronoun (*ḍamīr*) in 'from him' (*'anhu*) refers to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd and not Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan. This means that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan is also narrating this tradition from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd.

To determine whether or not the chain of this tradition is authentic, we must review the chain from the Shaykh to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd and review the rest of the individuals in the chain from al-Ḥusayn all the way to the Imam. This has all been done in Exercise 2.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates this tradition:

وبالاسناد عن زرارة، قال: سألت أبا جعفر عليه السلام عن الفرض في الصلاة،
فقال: الوقت، والطهور، والقبلة، والتوجه، والركوع، والسجود، والدعاء.

> With its chain, narrating from Zurārah, who said: 'I asked Abū Jaʿfar (A) about what is obligatory in prayer, and he said: "Time, purity, qibla, direction, bowing, prostration, and supplication."'[62]

Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates this tradition from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī as well, because he also did not start the tradition with someone else's name.

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[61] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, ch. 1, p. 365, h. 2.

[62] Ibid. pp. 365-366, h. 3.

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Saying 'with its chain' (*bil-isnād*) means with the chain of the previous traditions. This means that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates this tradition from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah.

Questions

1. Reliability judgements are of two types: specific and general. Explain the difference between them with an example.

2. Who is the author of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*?

3. Explain the view of Sayyid al-Khū'ī regarding the narrators of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and his evidence for it.

4. There is a possibility that al-Qummī meant to classify his direct masters that he narrates from. How can this be refuted?

5. How can we argue the view that says that all the narrators of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* are reliable?

6. Who is the author of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*? Why is it called that? What is the view regarding it?

7. What is the evidence that rules for the reliability of the narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*?

8. How can you argue the view that all the narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* are reliable?

9. There is a view that is related to the masters of al-Najāshī. Explain it with its evidence.

10. What is the benefit in the claim that all the masters of al-Najāshī are reliable, although we know that he does not have a book of traditions?

11. Who are the Banī Faḍḍāl?

12. There is a view that says that if someone from Banī Faḍḍāl is mentioned in the chain of a tradition it becomes accepted. Explain this view with its evidence.

13. How can you argue this previous view regarding Banī Faḍḍāl?

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14. What is meant by 'narrating from one of the "three narrators"'? What is the view regarding this?

15. Why did Sayyid al-Khū'ī reject the view regarding the 'three narrators'?

16. Mention the evidence for the validity of the view of an expert in *rijāl.*

17. What can be mentioned in refuting the first evidence for the validity of the view of an expert in *rijāl*?

18. In your view, is the chain of tradition 1 in chapter 12 (ablution) in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* authentic? Explain.

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Chapter Two: The Study of the Divisions of Traditions

Traditions are divided into four types:

- Authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*): A tradition where all narrators in the chain are just (*ʿādil*) and Twelver Shiʿa.
- Reliable (*muwaththaq*): A tradition where all or some of the narrators in the chain are non-Twelver Shiʿa, but they are reliable.
- Good (*ḥasan*): A tradition where all or some of the narrators in the chain are Twelver Shiʿa, but they have not been mentioned as just and have only been praised.
- Weak (*ḍaʿīf*): A tradition that is none of the three types mentioned above, and where its narrators are either unknown or classified as weak.

The Akhbārīs criticised this fourfold division and denied that it was ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī[63] (648/1250-726/1325) who had founded this division, as has been attributed to him.

The reason Akhbārīs rejected this division is because they believed all the narrations in the four books (*al-kutub al-arbaʿah*) were authentic, and, according to them, it is obligatory to act upon these traditions. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī in his book, *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, gathered evidence to support this view, i.e. that all that is in the four books is authentic, and he mentioned twenty-two arguments for it.[64] He says:

> This proves the weakness of the newfangled terminology which divides traditions into authentic, good, reliable, and weak, which was concocted in the era of al-ʿAllāmah and his shaykh, Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs.[65]

A brief note will be given in Chapter Three about this claim.

There are a few discussions related to the four divisions of traditions, which will be mentioned in the following points:

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[63] Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn ʿAlī ibn Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī. [Translator's note]

[64] Refer to *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 30, ninth *fā'idah*, pp. 251-265.

[65] Ibid. p. 251.

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Precedent (*Shuhrah*) that Opposes an Authentic Tradition

If a narration has an authentic chain it is known to be valid (*ḥujjah*). However, there is a debate as to whether a well-known legal precedent (*al-shuhrah al-fatwā'iyyah*)[66] can discredit an apparently authentic tradition that goes against it.

The common view is that it does discredit it. However, Sayyid al-Khū'ī, after having agreed with the majority that it does discredit it, changed his view. His mature view was that legal precedent does not discredit such a narration.[67]

We can justify discrediting a narration in this way by saying that when the early scholars rejected a narration, it indicates that they found fault in some aspect of it, or else they would not have put it aside. Of course, this rejection should not be based on their own personal opinion or *ijtihād*, because their *ijtihād* is only *ḥujjah* for themselves and not for us. Even then, the question arises: how can we determine whether or not the early scholars rejected a narration when we do not have access to the bulk of their statements?

Information Related by a Reliable or Just Person

It is known amongst the scholars that validity is not restricted to information related by a just person; it also encompasses information related by any reliable person.

The evidence for the validity of the information related by a reliable person without justness being a necessary condition is the conduct of rational people (*al-sīrah al-'uqalā'iyyah*), which is established on acting upon information of a reliable person in the same way as they would act upon the information of a just person. Seeing that the mentioned conduct has not been denounced (by the Lawgiver) it is therefore valid.

Imagine someone were to argue: the 'verse of verification'[68] cautions against acting upon the information of a reliable person if they are not just

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[66] Meaning the verdict of the majority (*mashhūr*) and a famous verdict could indicate that the ruling was popular during the era of the Imams. It could be that this widespread verdict might not have a known source, but it would be so well established that there would be no need to ask about it. When the term *mashhūr* or *aṣḥāb* is used it usually refers to being close to the era of the *ma'ṣūm*. [Translator's note]

[67] *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 203.

[68] يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَإٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

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and says: *O you who have faith! If a profligate [person] should bring you some news, verify it,* and if a reliable person is not just then they are profligate and it becomes obligatory to verify their information, which means that their testimony by itself is not valid.

We would respond: the meaning of profligate (*fāsiq*) in this holy verse is someone who does not refrain from lying, not the opposite of just. This is for two reasons:

(a) The suitability of the ruling and the subject, as it is suitable for the ruling in not being valid is the information of someone who does not refrain from lying, and not someone who refrains from lying, while they might commit other sinful acts.

(b) The rationale behind being regretful, which is mentioned at the end of the holy verse. This would happen when taking information from someone who does not refrain from lying, and it would not include someone who does refrain from lying.

Information of a Reliable Person or Someone Considered as Reliable

Based on the validity of information related by a reliable person, is this validity absolute or is it conditional to its engendering trust (*wuthūq*) and conviction (*iṭmi'nān*)?

One might say that the validity of a report depends upon its engendering trust by virtue of the information related in it. This is because the fear of falling into regret that is mentioned at the end of the verse will remain so long as we go by reports that do not engender trust.

The correct view is not to consider whether or not the narration itself engenders trust. We can say this based on the tradition narrated by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn al-Muhtadī and al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn who narrates the following from Imam al-Riḍā (A):

قلت: لا أكاد أصل إليك أسألك عن كل ما أحتاج إليه من معالم ديني أفيونس بن عبد الرحمن ثقة آخذ عنه ما أحتاج إليه من معالم ديني؟ فقال (عليه السلام): نعم.

I asked: 'I almost want to come to you and ask about everything I need with regards to the issues of my religion. Is Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-

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O you who have faith! If a profligate [person] should bring you some news, verify it, lest you should visit [harm] on some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done. (Qur'an 49:6) [Translator's note]

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> Raḥmān reliable so I can take from him what I need in issues of my religion?' He (A) said: 'Yes.'[69]

This tradition indicates that what exists in the mind of the person asking is the sufficiency of the reliability of the narrator, and the Imam acknowledged that.

A Good (*Ḥasan*) Narration

Is a narration that is good (*ḥasan*) valid? Shaykh al-Nā'īnī and Sayyid al-Khū'ī believed that it is valid.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī mentions in his book, *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, that the evidence for this is the conduct of rational people; this rests on the fact that if a master's command is delivered to his servant by a praised *imāmī* (Shi'i) who is neither known to be profligate nor just, this command will be acted upon. The same is true with regards to acting upon information delivered by a just *imāmī* person. Therefore, seeing that there is no censuring of such a conduct, this demonstrates that it is approved by the Lawgiver.[70]

Some notes on this will be mentioned in Part Two, God-willing.

A Weak Narration

The common position amongst contemporary scholars is that a weak narration is invalid. However, there is a question regarding a weak narration: is it possible for it to elevate to the level of validity when it accords with legal precedent (*al-shuhrah al-fatwā'iyyah*)? In other words, can the weakness of a chain be compensated through a corroborating legal precedent?

The common position is that this rehabilitates the narration, because its accordance with established legal precedent is a kind of verification, which in turn suffices to establish its validity. This is because the 'verse of verification' did not absolutely reject the validity of the information that comes from a profligate person, but made it obligatory to verify it before acting upon it. Therefore, if the information is verified and shown to be correct, it will be obligatory to act upon it. An established legal precedent is one way in which a weak narration can be verified.

Furthermore, the majority (*mashhūr*) acting upon the narration indicates that they considered its narrators to be reliable, or else they would not have acted upon it. Rather, the majority from the predecessors acting upon a narration would engender confidence regarding its provenance and authenticity.

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[69] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 27, ch. 11, p. 147, h. 33.

[70] *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 200.

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However, the problem of how we can ascertain this remains in force. We do not have access to the reasoning of the early scholars in order for us to know what evidence they had for their verdict about the tradition or their acting upon it. It might be that there was an agreement between established legal precedent and the tradition without them referring to this particular tradition.

A Concealed Narration

A concealed (*muḍmar*) narration is a narration where the person responsible for it is not mentioned, whether it be the Imam or someone else. This is like the case of the authentic tradition narrated by Zurārah which Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in his book *al-Tahdhīb*, with its chain to al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd from Ḥammād from Ḥurayz from Zurārah who said:

قلت له: الرجل ينام وهو على وضوء، أتوجب الخفقة والخفقتان عليه الوضوء؟

قال

> I asked him: 'A man sleeps while in the state of ablution. Would one or two movements necessitate ablution [anew]?' He said...[71]

Zurārah did not say, for example, 'I asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A)'; rather, he said 'I asked him', meaning that the pronoun could be referring to the Imam or to someone else. From this it could be seen that concealed traditions are not valid because there is no certainty that the person responsible for what is said is the Imam.

There are two views in opposition to this:

The **first** view argues that all concealed narrations are valid by claiming that the origin of this phenomenon is that the narrator would sometimes ask the Imam numerous questions, but that when he narrated the questions he began by mentioning the name of the Imam, saying 'I asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) about so and so, and he replied so and so. I then asked him about so and so, and he replied. I asked him...' and so on.

So, at the beginning of the tradition, the narrator states the name of the Imam; thereafter, he suffices by referring to it with a pronoun without stating his name again. Afterwards, and because of separation of the traditions, each part came to be included in a particular chapter of a hadith book that was relevant to its topic, and as it is without announcing the name of the person saying it and whether it is the Imam. This is how the phenomenon of concealed narrations appeared.

If we were to know the reason for this concealment then without doubt, we would rule in favour of the validity of all concealed traditions because

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[71] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, ch. 1, p. 245, h. 1.

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the person responsible for the statement in the beginning is no one other than the Imam.

This view could be argued, because it is based on assuming that the person saying the statement in the beginning is the Imam. But how can we be certain about this? We could equally assume that the person responsible for the statement could be someone other than the Imam.

The **second** view, which has been adopted by a number of scholars, distinguishes between the different narrators of a concealed tradition; for example, the great and noble from amongst the companions, whose status would mean they only narrated from the Imam such as Zurārah, and others. If the narrator belongs to the first class, the concealed narration would be valid because their lofty status counts as evidence that the person responsible for the utterance is the Imam. If the narrator belongs to the second, it would not be valid due to absence of this evidence.

In our opinion the correct view is the validity of all concealed traditions, and this is based on a subtle explanation that will come in Part Two of this book, God-willing.

A Discontinued Narration

A discontinued (*mursal*) narration is a narration in whose chain some of the narrators are not mentioned, like the case of the narration from Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, from his father, from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Ayyūb ibn Nūḥ, from Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr, from another person, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A)....[72]

Ibn Abī 'Umayr did not state whom he is narrating from, but rather he just said 'from others' (*'an ghayri wāḥid*), and in such a case the tradition would be considered as discontinued.

There is a disagreement amongst the scholars, who hold various views regarding the validity of discontinued traditions; the following are some of them:

- A discontinued narration is absolutely invalid, because there is no ascertaining of the reliability of the unknown link.
- There is a distinction made as to whether the discontinued tradition is narrated from Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān, and al-Bazanṭī, in which case the tradition would be valid; or whether it is from someone else, in which it would not be valid.

The reason for this is what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in *al-'Uddah* – that the Shi'a sect (*al-ṭā'ifah*) have acted upon the discontinued traditions of Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān, and al-Bazanṭī because they never narrated or mentioned a discontinued chain unless it was from a reliable source.

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[72] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, ch. 18, p. 334, h. 4.

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Therefore, if the gap in the discontinued narration occurred prior to one of these three, their narration would be valid as they only narrate from reliable sources. However, if the discontinued narration was from someone else, their narration would be rejected because the reliability of the missing narrator cannot be ascertained.

A distinction regarding the discontinued narrations of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, namely as to whether he introduces them with 'Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) said' or 'it is narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A)' is that the first is considered valid, and the second is not. This is because expressing with the word 'said' (*qāl*) indicates Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's certainty of the tradition being mentioned from the Imam and the validity of its chain as well. If Shaykh al-Ṣadūq was not certain of the soundness of the narration then it would be impermissible for him to attribute it to the Imam with absolute certainty. It would be different if he were to say 'it is mentioned from' (*ruwiya*), as this would not indicate certainty of the correct attributing, and therefore the transmission would not be valid.

Practical Exercises – Exercise 4

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī has narrated in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*:

محمد بن الحسن، عن المفيد، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن أبيه، عن أحمد بن إدريس وسعد بن عبد الله، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن الحسين بن سعيد، عن حماد، عن حريز، عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) ...

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, from al-Mufīd, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah, from Abū Ja'far (A)....[73]

At the end of the tradition al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī then mentions the following:

ورواه الكليني، عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، وعن محمد بن إسماعيل، عن الفضل بن شاذان جميعا، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن حريز...

Al-Kulaynī narrates this, from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father – as well as from Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān – all from Ḥammād ibn 'Īsā, from Ḥurayz ....

The expression al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī uses indicates that the tradition has been narrated by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in one of his two books (i.e. *al-Tahdhīb*) and also

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[73] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, ch. 42, p. 469, h. 1.

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by Shaykh al-Kulaynī. Each one of their paths differs from the other. It suffices to establish the validity of one of them to judge the tradition to be valid. So, if it is supposed that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path was weak from a certain aspect, then the valid path of Shaykh al-Kulaynī would be sufficient for us.

The following is the research of these two paths:

With the first path, there is no problem in it as far as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad from whom Shaykh al-Mufīd narrates, because his name was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, who was the master of al-Mufīd. Many sources of hadith have reached us from him, due to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrating many of these traditions through his teacher al-Mufīd, who in turn narrated them through the aforementioned Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. Unfortunately, there is no mention of this person's reliability. Of course, if we accept the mastership of permission (*shaykhūkhat al-ijāzah*) as a benchmark, this would establish this narrator's reliability. However, if we were to reject this then because of it the first path it would be considered weak. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Mufīd are so well-known that they need no introduction.

As for Aḥmad's father, he is **Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd al-Qummī**, a reliable noble person, and he was the teacher of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

Aḥmad ibn Idrīs is Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, reliable and noble, as has been mentioned by al-Najāshī and al-Shaykh.[74] He is the master of al-Kulaynī and narrated a lot from him.

Saʿd ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī is reliable and noble as mentioned by al-Najāshī and al-Shaykh.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī, reliable and noble by evidence of Saʿd ibn ʿAbd Allāh who narrated abundantly from Ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī.[75]

As for **al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd** and those before him until the Imam, they are all reliable and noble, and they have been mentioned in previous exercises.

Therefore, the first path is problematic as far as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, based on the insufficiency of mastership of permit in establishing reliability.

That which brings relief to this issue is the validity of the second path.

The reason for this is that the second path in reality goes back to two paths, in the following way:

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[74] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 2, p. 41.

[75] He has been mentioned in Exercise 1.

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Al-Kulaynī, from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz.

Al-Kulaynī, from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz.

The word 'all' (*jamīʿan*) that is mentioned in al-Kulaynī's path means that Ibrāhīm and al-Faḍl both narrate the tradition from Ḥammād. Therefore, 'all' means both of them.

Path A is authentic because of the reliability of all its narrators, as **ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm** is the author of the famous *tafsīr* and is among the reliable and noble. Almost one third of the traditions that al-Kulaynī mentions in *al-Kāfī* are narrated from him.

As for **Ibrāhīm**, it is possible to categorise him as reliable in a way that will be explained in Part Two of this book.

In regards to **Ḥammād** and **Ḥurayz**, they have been mentioned in previous exercises as reliable.

As long as path A is authentic then there is no need to investigate path B, and this would establish the authenticity of the tradition.

Questions

1. What are the four types of hadith? Mention them and explain their meanings.

2. Why did Akhbārīs criticise this fourfold division of traditions?

3. It has been said that an authentic tradition is no longer valid if it opposes a verdict by fame (*al-shuhrah al-fatwā'iyyah*). Explain what this means.

4. How can we justify the discarding of an authentic tradition from being valid by the famous (*al-mashhūr*) opposing it?

5. Based on discarding the authentic tradition from its validity with the famous (*al-mashhūr*) opposing it there remains a problem in how we can ascertain _____.

6. What is the difference between narration of a reliable person and narration of a just person? Which one of them is known to be valid?

7. How can we argue the validity of the narration of a reliable person and there not being a condition of justness?

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8. If it is said that the 'conduct of rational people' claims that acting upon information from a reliable person cannot be used as evidence for its validity because it has been censured in the verse of verification, how can we refute this?

9. Why do we need to adhere to the 'conduct of rational people' to establish that religion has not censured it?

10. What is the difference between narration of a reliable person and a reliable narration?

11. How can it be proven that if a narrator is reliable, then this leads to establishing a narration's validity?

12. How can we prove there not being the consideration of reliability in the validity of a narration?

13. Who believes in the validity of a good (*ḥasan*) narration?

14. How can the validity of a good narration be proven?

15. It is known that a weak narration is invalid. What is the important point regarding this?

16. A view says that a weak narration is valid in a certain situation. What is it?

17. How can we argue for the validity of a weak narration which matches commonly agreed-upon verdicts?

18. Are there any problems that would remain? Explain.

19. What is a *muḍmar* narration?

20. Give an example of a *muḍmar* narration.

21. It could initially be said that *muḍmar* narrations are invalid. What is the reason for this?

22. It has been said that all *muḍmar* narrations are valid. Why?

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23. The majority have given details in the validity of *muḍmar* narrations. Explain this.

24. What is a *mursal* narration? Give an example.

25. There are three views regarding the validity of *mursal* narrations. What are they?

26. How can we justify the first view of the validity of *mursal* narrations?

27. How can we justify the second view of the validity of *mursal* narrations?

28. How can we justify the third view?

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Chapter Three: A Brief Glance at Some Hadith Books

Before giving an account of some of our hadith books, we must discuss the claim attributed to the Akhbārīs that says that everything contained in the Four Books – i.e. *al-Kāfī*, *al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār* – is valid (*ḥujjah*). They say that everything that is mentioned in these books is authentic and there is no need to make any investigations in their chains. The evidence they sometimes use for this is some statements mentioned in the introduction of these books.

We will investigate this claim when these books are discussed.

At other times, they give some qualities shared by all the Four Books, without restricting these to any one of them. This is like the qualities invoked by Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī in some of the points he mentions at the end of his book, *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*. He mentions twenty-two factors and reasons to prove this.

The evidence that could be considered the strongest is the first evidence that says: the companions of the Imams expended a great deal of effort to record traditions and preserve them until the era of the Three Muḥammads.[76] They, in turn, compiled these traditions and presented them in new books by the names of *al-Kāfī*, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb*, and *al-Istibṣār*.

According to them, this concern naturally engenders certainty regarding the provenances of the traditions that are mentioned in these books.

There are numerous examples that can be given to illustrate this concern, which will be mentioned in Part Two of this book.

However, we strongly reject the claim of the authenticity of all of the traditions in the Four Books for numerous reasons, and here are some of them.

- The emphasised concern the companions had in the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt does not form certainty in the validity of all the traditions that they narrate. The most that it would necessitate is knowledge that not all of them are invalid, because strong concern would not correspond with it all being invalid.

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[76] Al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq, al-Ṭūsī. Their first names are all Muḥammad. [Translator's note]

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- The authors of the Four Books themselves did not have certainty in the authenticity of all the traditions compiled in their own books, so how can we have certainty about it?

What indicates them not having certainty is that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī critiques some of the traditions that he mentions in his two books. We have presented some examples for this in Part Two of this book.

If everything mentioned in the Four Books were certain, there would be no need for Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or Shaykh al-Ṣadūq to mention their masters at the end of their books and mention their paths to the sources from which they narrate the traditions. We see that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī declares in the masters of *al-Tahdhīb* that he mentions them so that the traditions in the book are not considered as discontinued in their chains.

A Glance at *Al-Kāfī*

Al-Kāfī (The Sufficient) was written by the eminent scholar Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (250/864-329/941). It took him twenty years to compile his masterpiece, as has been mentioned in his biography written by al-Najāshī. This great shaykh lived during the Minor Occultation and lived at the same time as the deputies of the Awaited Imam, who were:

Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Saʿīd al-Asadī (d. 264/876).

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān (d. 305/918).

Shaykh Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī (d. 326/937).

Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Samarī (d. 329/941).

Al-Kāfī consists of three parts: *al-Uṣūl*, *al-Furūʿ*, and *al-Rawḍah*.

Al-Uṣūl: This is divided into two parts. One of them discusses what is related to the intellect, ignorance, the virtue of knowledge, monotheism, and the *maʿṣūmīn*. The second part is about issues related to faith, disbelief, supplication, merits of the Qur'an, and Islamic behavioural etiquette.

Al-Furūʿ: This is divided into five parts and includes traditions about jurisprudential rulings, in prayer, fasting, etc.

Al-Rawḍah: This is one part, and it has some instructions, advice, and sermons from Ahl al-Bayt, and some historical matters related to them.

There are a few topics related to *al-Kāfī* and we will refer to two of these topics within the following two points. It has been said that all of the traditions in *al-Kāfī* are authentic and reliable. Shaykh al-Nūrī gives evidence for this through four arguments; two of them are: al-Kulaynī was contemporary to the four distinguished deputies. It would be very unlikely for him not to have presented his book to one of them, especially when al-Kulaynī had compiled his book in order for it to be a reference for the Shiʿa,

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as he himself mentions in the introduction to his book. Presenting books to the deputies was also something common.

By this, we do not mean to accept the view that has commonly been mentioned that the Imam had said: '*Al-Kāfī* is sufficient (*kāfī*) for our Shi'a.' This statement has not been established. What is meant is the claim of acquiring assurance for some of the book under one of the noble deputies.

This can be argued by saying that the claim of acquiring assurance is difficult, because even though some books were presented to the noble deputies – like a book by al-Shalmaghānī[77] who had a good reputation in the beginning of his life, and he wrote a book called *Kitāb al-Taklīf*. He then deviated towards the end of his life because of his envy towards Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ al-Nawbakhtī who became a deputy, while al-Shalmaghānī did not. After his deviation, his books were presented to al-Nawbakhtī and he was asked what people should do with al-Shalmaghānī's books as their houses were full of them. He said:

> I say about it what Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (A) said about it when he was asked about the books of Banī Faḍḍāl. They asked: 'What should we do with their books and our houses are full of them?' He said: 'Take what they narrated and leave what they interpreted.'[78]

However, this was at the time of the deviation of the author of this book, and it is supposed that those responsible for presenting the book were people other than the author. How far this is from what is supposed regarding al-Kulaynī who was at the peak of the right path and there was no need for others to present his book after assuming his righteousness.

Irrespective of this, it is possible to say that presenting it twice or even three times to the deputies would not necessarily give us certainty in the universal positive sense, in that every person who writes a book must present their book for evaluation.

Referring to what al-Kulaynī mentions in the introduction to *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, namely that some had requested from him to author a book that they could refer back to, he says:

> You have said you wish to have a book that is sufficient (*kāfī*) and compiled in it are all the types of sciences of religion that a learner would suffice with; a book which one wanting guidance can refer to and can take issues of their religion from. People can act upon

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[77] Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Abī al-'Azāqir al-Shalmaghānī (d. 323/935). [Translator's note]

[78] *Kitāb al-Ghaybah*, by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, p. 239.

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> the authentic narrations from the truthful Imams. Allah has made me able to compile what you have asked for, praise be to Him ....

He was asked to compose a book that includes authentic narrations that can be acted upon, and he replied to that saying 'and Allah has made me able to ...' which indicates his commitment that anything he mentions in his book is authentic.

This can be debated by saying that an authentic narration (*al-khabar al-ṣaḥīḥ*) in the terminology of the predecessors does not refer to a narration that has just narrators. It refers to a narration that must be acted upon because it contains evidence that necessitates its truthfulness, even in the view of al-Kulaynī. It is obvious that 'authentic' in this meaning does not necessitate that the narration is authentic according to us as well, because it is likely that if we were to see that evidence, we would not consider it to lead to knowledge or certainty in its truthfulness.

Of course, if 'authentic narration' meant what is commonly referred to in today's usage, meaning that its narrators are all Shi'a and just, then the testimony of al-Kulaynī of his book including authentic narrations would mean his testimony that the narrators of the traditions are all just, and this would meet the purpose. However, this is not what is meant, because the term 'authentic narration' in the meaning referred to now is something that came into usage from the time of 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī.

There is a phenomena exclusive to al-Kulaynī in his book *al-Kāfī*, and it is that he often narrates from 'some of the companions' (*'iddah min al-aṣḥāb*), where he says the following: 'Some of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād' or 'Some of our companions from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā' or 'Some of our companions from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī'.

It could be said: with the phrase 'some', seeing that its meaning is not known and to whom it refers, the narrated tradition would be discarded and invalid.

Different answers can be given to this, and here are a few of them:

'Allāmah al-Ḥillī at the end of his book *al-Khulāṣah*, in point three, mentions from Shaykh al-Kulaynī himself as saying:

> When I say 'some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Kamandānī, Dāwūd ibn Kūrah, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, and 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm', and when I say 'some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī: 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, and ...'

Based on this, the problem of 'some' would be solved and its validity would be established. This is because as long as the individuals that are the 'some'

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are reliable, like Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā in the first 'some' and 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm in the second 'some', then this would be sufficient for its validity.

The word 'some' refers to three or more people, and it is unlikely that three of the masters of al-Kulaynī would all be lying.

Al-Kulaynī mentions in the first tradition in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*:

> Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb has narrated to us, saying: 'I have been informed by some of our companions, among them are Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār, from ...'

This statement indicates that one of the individuals of the 'some' is Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār, and seeing that he is reliable, the validity of the 'some' in this case would be established, and in the rest of the cases as well because this mentioned explanation is not exclusively specific to this particular case.

A Glance at *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*

The book *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh* (*The Jurist for Him Without a Jurist*) was authored by the eminent Shaykh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 381/991), known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

The reason behind the compilation of this book, as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq himself has mentioned in the introduction, is that when fate led him to live in a foreign land,[79] he met Sayyid Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Sharīf Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, known as Ni'mah.[80] This sayyid had requested Shaykh al-Ṣadūq to write a book by the name of *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, in the same way that the physician al-Rāzī (250/865-311/925)[81] wrote a book called *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Ṭabīb* (*The Physician for Him Without a Physician*).

There are two points that need to be discussed here.

There is a famous opinion that says all the traditions in *al-Faqīh* are valid and there is no need to analyse their chains. There are two arguments used as evidence for this:

Al-Ṣadūq has said the following in his introduction to *al-Faqīh*:

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[79] Balkh – a city located in present-day Northern Afghanistan. [Translator's note]

[80] His full name is Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Isḥāq ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Isḥāq ibn Mūsā al-Kāẓim. He was a great scholar and jurist who lived in the fourth century AH (tenth century AD), and he was one of the masters of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq. [Translator's note]

[81] Muḥammad ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī, the famous Persian polymath. [Translator's note]

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> My intention was not, like other authors, to include everything that they have narrated, but rather my intention was to mention what I give as a verdict and I regard as correct and believe in as being valid between me and my Lord, may His name be sanctified.

It is clear from this statement that he only mentions in his book what he regards as authentic and believes to be valid between him and his Lord. Therefore, all the traditions in *al-Faqīh* must be relied upon, based on this testimony.

Al-Ṣadūq has another statement in his book where he says:

> Everything that is in it [al-Faqīh] is extracted from famous books that are reliable and are main references, like *Kitāb Ḥurayz ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Sijistānī, Kitāb ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥalabī*, etc.

As long as the traditions mentioned in *al-Faqīh* are taken from famous books relied upon by the companions, then there is no need to analyse their chains. These two arguments will be discussed in detail in Part Two of this book.

The book *al-Faqīh* has many *mursal* traditions, exceeding one-third of its total material. This is why there arose a need to think about a way of authenticating these *mursal* traditions.

If the two arguments previously mentioned are considered as valid then they can also be used here.

There is a view adopted by a few scholars that distinguish between what al-Ṣadūq has expressed as *mursal* by saying 'Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) has said' or saying 'It has been narrated by Imam al-Ṣādiq (A)'. The first would be considered as valid, but not the second.

This distinction regarding a *mursal* narration has already been explained and it will be further discussed in Part Two of this book.

A Glance at *al-Tahdhībayn*

Al-Tahdhīb and *al-Istibṣār* are two books compiled by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (R).

Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām is a book he wrote as a commentary on a work by his teacher, Shaykh al-Mufīd, called *al-Muqniʿah.*

As for *al-Istibṣār*, he wrote this when some non-Shiʿa mocked the Shiʿa saying that Shiʿa hadith books are discrepant and conflicting, so he compiled this book as an attempt to resolve the supposed conflicts between narrations.

The approach Shaykh al-Ṭūsī took in these two books is different to Shaykh al-Kulaynī's approach in *al-Kāfī.* Whereas al-Kulaynī usually mentions the complete chain of the tradition and does not remove parts of it, al-Ṭūsī rarely mentions the complete chain and usually only starts with the name of the author of the *aṣl* from which he narrates the tradition. If it is a tradition that he has taken from the *aṣl* of ʿAmmār ibn Mūsā al-Sābāṭī, he would start the chain with ʿAmmār, saying: "ʿAmmār ibn Mūsā, from ...'

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As for his chain to ʿAmmār, he does not mention it when he narrates the tradition; rather, he only mentions it when mentioning his masters (*mashyakhah*). He wrote a treatise that he added to the end of *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār* where he mentions the paths he uses to the authors of the *uṣūl* that he narrates traditions from, and he named them *al-mashyakhah.*

If we want to know his chain to ʿAmmār we must refer to *al-mashyakhah*, and if it was authentic we consider the tradition as valid, assuming that the link between ʿAmmār and the Imam is also authentic.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī usually narrates the traditions in both of his books from the authors of the *uṣūl* and he starts the chain with the name of the author of the *aṣl.* Therefore, in order to establish the authenticity of the tradition, two things must be established:

1. The authenticity of the chain from the shaykh to the author of the *aṣl.*
2. The authenticity of the chain between the author of the *aṣl* to the Imam.

The path between the shaykh and the author of the *aṣl* can be known through referring to *al-mashyakhah* or *al-Fihrist*, because he also mentions in his book *al-Fihrist* his path to the authors of the *uṣūl.* The number of paths he mentions in *al-Fihrist* is more than what he has mentioned in *al-mashyakhah*, because *al-Fihrist* was written to research the authors of the *uṣūl* and the paths to them.

In addition to this, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī might mention in *al-mashyakhah* or *al-Fihrist* numerous paths to the author of the *aṣl* and he would not suffice with one path.

With this in mind, one might ask: is it necessary for all these paths to be correct or is one of them enough?

It should be clear that it is sufficient for only one of them to be correct, and there is nothing that necessitates that all of them must be correct.

The reason for this is obvious; the authenticity of a tradition is not based on the authenticity of all its paths, but only on one.

Questions

1. Akhbārīs have a certain view about the narrations in the Four Books. What is this view?

2. There are two proofs used as evidence for the validity of everything in the Four Books. What are they?

3. Mention the first argument al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī uses regarding the validity of everything in the Four Books.

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4. Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī mentions some arguments in his book *al-Wasā'il* regarding the validity of everything in the Four Books. How many arguments are there, and which one is the strongest?

5. There are a few arguments that refute the validity of everything in the Four Books. What is the first argument?

6. What is the second argument?

7. What is the third argument?

8. When did Shaykh al-Kulaynī live?

9. Who are the four noble deputies? What does deputyship (*safārah*) mean?

10. What are the different parts of *al-Kāfī*?

11. Shaykh al-Nūrī has a view about the traditions in *al-Kāfī* and gives four arguments about it. What is this view?

12. What is the argument Shaykh al-Nūrī refers to in establishing the authenticity of all the traditions in *al-Kāfī*?

13. How can this be argued?

14. What is another of the four arguments Shaykh al-Nūrī refers to?

15. How can this be argued?

16. There is a certain phenomenon specific to al-Kulaynī in traditions narrated from 'some'. What does this mean?

17. What is the first meaning mentioned about 'some'?

18. What is the second meaning mentioned about 'some'?

19. What is the third meaning mentioned about 'some'?

20. What is the name of the hadith book that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq wrote? Explain why it was given that title.

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21. There is a famous view regarding the traditions of *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*. What is this view?

22. Mention the first argument that establishes the validity of the traditions in *al-Faqīh*.

23. What is the second argument?

24. 'The book *al-Faqīh* has _____ exceeding one-third of the whole book'. Complete the sentence with the appropriate reply and explain what this means.

25. What is the reason for thinking about a way to authenticate the *mursal* traditions in *al-Faqīh*?

26. What can be referred to in authenticating the *mursal* traditions in *al-Faqīh*?

27. There is a view that distinguishes the *mursal* traditions of al-Ṣadūq. Explain this in detail.

28. *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* is a book Shaykh al-Ṭūsī wrote for _____.

29. What was the purpose of writing *al-Istibṣār*?

30. What is the difference between Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's method and Shaykh al-Kulaynī's method when mentioning a tradition?

31. What does *al-mashyakhah* mean? Why was it compiled?

32. If we want to know the path between Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to the author of the *aṣl* that he narrates from what should we do?

33. If we want to know the path between Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to the author of the *aṣl*, we refer to either _____ or _____.

34. There is a difference between the paths mentioned in *al-mashyakhah* and the paths mentioned in *al-Fihrist*. What is this difference?

35. If we find the path in *al-mashyakhah* to be weak, what should we do?

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36. If Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions numerous paths in *al-mashyakhah*, is it necessary to consider all of them as correct. Why?

37. If we want to take a tradition narrated by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in one of his two books we must first establish two things. What are they and explain the necessary point about this?

38. What is your view about the chain in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, chapter 3, in the preliminaries of acts of worship, tradition 1? Give evidence for your view.

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Chapter Four: A Brief Glance at Some *Rijāl* Books

1. *Rijāl al-Kashshī*

Rijāl al-Kashshī is written by the venerable shaykh, Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kashshī (d. around 350/961), whose teknonym (*kunyah*) was Abū ʿAmr. This great shaykh was a contemporary of Shaykh al-Kulaynī and belongs to that same generation. In his favour it has been said that he is reliable and discerning in narrations and narrators, although he occasionally narrates from weak sources. He was one of the students of Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd al-ʿAyyāshī and studied under him in his house that was used as a centre for Shiʿa and people of knowledge.

Shaykh al-Kashshī compiled a book that mentions the narrations that praise or dispraise the narrators. He usually does not explicitly state if they were reliable or weak, but he first mentions the narrator and then whatever narrations have been said in their favour. Based on this he does not mention all narrators, only those narrators that have narrations regarding them. It has been said that he mentions 520 narrators.

It is said that the original *Rijāl al-Kashshī* which is called *Maʿrifat al-Rijāl* is different to the book we have with us today. The original book had many mistakes and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī attended to it and refined it from these errors. This is why the book that is available today is called *Ikhtiyār Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*, which means what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī chose from the book *Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*.

This book does not regularly deal with categorising the narrators and classifying them as weak. It mentions the narrations that have been mentioned about them. The status of this book does not have the same status as *Rijāl al-Najāshī* or Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*; rather, it has a lesser status.

2-3. *Rijāl* and *Al-Fihrist* of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has two books in the science of *rijāl*.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's famous *Rijāl* book is known as the *Rijāl of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī*. In this book he does not usually deal with the reliability of the narrators or grading them as weak, and if he does at times do that, it is rare. What he has done is mention the companions of the Prophet and the companions of every Imam from Ahl al-Bayt. He firstly mentions the names of the companions of the Prophet, then the companions of the Commander of the Faithful, then the companions of the rest of the Imams. At the end he gives an index of the names of those who do not narrate from them.

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The benefit of this book is it helps us to ascertain the generation (*ṭabaqah*) to which a particular narrator belongs, where he lived, at what time, and which Imam(s) he was a companion of.

There are two points that are relevant to this particular book.

First: He mentions the name of some of the narrators twice; for example, al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Jawharī in one case is among the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) and in another case he is mentioned in the chapter of those who do not narrate from them. The author repeats this with other narrators. This means that there is a clear incoherence, because if the person was among the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) and among those who narrate from him, then how can he be mentioned in the chapter of individuals who do not narrate from them? This appears contradictory; how can one individual simultaneously narrate from them and not narrate from them?

God-willing, we will discuss some ways to resolve this incoherence in Part Two of this book.

Second: In the chapter of the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), Shaykh al-Ṭūsī repeatedly uses the expression 'transmitted from him' (*usnida ʿanhū*). This method is exclusive to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and there are different views about what this phrase implies. A few possible explanations have been given, and they will be mentioned in Part Two of this book.

Al-Fihrist: This is a book he wrote to investigate the authors of the books and *uṣūl* amongst the Shiʿa. He does not mention every single narrator, only those who have authored a book. After he mentions the name of the narrator and their book he explains the path to that book.

He does not classify the reliability or weakness of every narrator he mentions, although he does this in some instances.

4. *Rijāl al-Najāshī*

The author of *Rijāl al-Najāshī* is the noble shaykh Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Najāshī (372/893-450/1058), and his teknonym was Abū al-ʿAbbās.

This great shaykh was a contemporary to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and shared a common teacher with him, namely al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā'irī (d. 411/1021).

Shaykh al-Najāshī wrote this book to record only the authors of books, so it is like Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*, as he only mentions those companions who have a book.

The difference between this book and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* in general is that when he states a name he classifies their reliability or weakness.

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Al-Najāshī wrote this book in response to those who were against the Shi'a and who mocked the Shi'a saying they have no predecessors (*salaf*) or books.

Questions

1. Who is the author of *Rijāl al-Kashshī*?

2. Shaykh al-Kashshī was contemporary to _____.

3. It has been said in favour of Shaykh al-Kashshī that _____.

4. Shaykh al-Kashshī studied under _____.

5. What is the method of Shaykh al-Kashshī in his book?

6. Why was Shaykh al-Kashshī's book called *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*?

7. What Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's two books?

8. What is Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's method in his *Rijāl* book, and does it differ from his method in *al-Fihrist*?

9. There are two issues related to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *Rijāl*. What is the first issue?

10. What is the second?

11. Is there a significant point distinguishing Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* from *Rijāl al-Najāshī*?

12. Who is the author of Rijāl al-Najāshī?

13. Shaykh al-Najāshī was contemporary to _____.

14. What is the reason why Shaykh al-Najāshī wrote his book?

15. Did Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* and *Rijāl al-Najāshī* deal with the non-Shi'a narrators?

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16. In the following quotation, 'Shaykh al-Ḥurr said in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, chapter 4 on congregational prayer, tradition 4', clarify who the first 'said' is referring to, and if the chain is correct.

This is the end of what we wanted to discuss in Part One of this book. This part was finished on the day of *mab'ath*, 27 Rajab 1416 (12 February 1991), in the holy city of Qum, written by one who beseeches the All-generous to forgive his sins.

Bāqir al-Īrawānī

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Introduction to the Principles of Biographical Studies: Part Two

If a jurist wants to deduce a particular ruling, he refers to the four sources of legislation. For example, if the jurist wants to know the ruling regarding showing off (*riyā'*), he refers to *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* and finds that Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates the following tradition in this form:

أحمد بن محمد بن خالد البرقي في (المحاسن) عن أبيه، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن هشام بن سالم، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) قال: يقول الله عزّوجلّ: أنا خيرشريك، فمن عمل لي ولغيري، فهولمن عمله غيري.

> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī in *al-Maḥāsin*[82] from his father from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A), who said: ʿAllah the Exalted the Sublime has said: "I am the best partner, so whoever works for Me and for other than Me, it belongs to other than Me."'[83]

This noble tradition indicates the invalidity of the act one performs while showing off. While this is apparent, however, the question remains if it is permissible to take any tradition, or it is not permissible unless under certain conditions.[84]

Different replies have been given to this answer, and here are some of them.

Views Regarding the Issue of the Validity of a Narration

If a tradition is successively-narrated (*mutawātir*) or accompanied by conclusive indications of its authenticity, it is permissible to act upon it, or else it is not permissible. This view is attributed to Sharīf al-Murtaḍā[85] and some others.

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[82] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī (d. 274/887 or 290/902). [Translator's note]

[83] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 72, h. 7. [Translator's note]

[84] The nature of deducing a ruling from a tradition is in need of three things as discussed in Part One of this book: establishing the apparent meaning, its validity, and the validity of the chain. [Translator's note]

[85] Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (355/965-436/1044), also known as ʿAlam al-Hudā (the Banner of Guidance), a student of Shaykh al-

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If the majority of scholars (*mashhūr*) have acted upon the tradition then it is valid, even if its chain was weak and has been narrated by unreliable narrators. If the majority have not acted upon it then it is not valid even if its chain was authentic and the narrators were reliable. This view is attributed to al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī.[86]

If the tradition exists in the Four Books (*al-kutub al-arbaʿah*),[87] it is taken without investigating its chain because everything that exists in the Four Books is certain in its provenance from the Imams. This view is attributed to some Akhbārīs.

If the tradition exists in the Four Books, it is acted upon without looking into its chain, not because all that is in the Four Books is definite in its provenance, but because everything in it is credible and certain in its validity. This could be the common view generally held by the Akhbārīs, or rather even apparently accepted by some Uṣūlī scholars. For example, Sayyid al-Khūʾī mentions that his teacher Shaykh al-Nāʾīnī would say in his class: 'Discussing the chains of the traditions of *al-Kāfī* is a skill of the incompetent.'[88]

If the narrators in the chain of a narration are just then it is valid, and if they are not just then it is not valid, even if they were reliable. This view is attributed to the author of *al-Madārik*,[89] and it could also apparently be understood in some of the writings of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥilli.

If the narrators in the chain of the tradition are reliable then it is valid, even if they are not all just. However, if they are not reliable then it is not valid. This view is the common view held by our contemporary scholars.

Of course, there is a difference between the followers of this view, in that if the narrators of the chain of the tradition were not reliable but the majority

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Mufīd and the foremost scholar of his generation; he wrote works of jurisprudence, theology, exegesis, and other fields. [Translator's note]

[86] Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Jaʿfar ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Saʿīd al-Ḥillī (602/1205-676/1277). [Translator's note]

[87] Meaning *al-Kāfī* by Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Istibṣār* and *al-Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, famously known as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh* by Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq. [Translator's note]

[88] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 87.

[89] Sayyid Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-ʿĀmilī al-Jubaʿī (946/1539-1009/1600), the author of *Kitāb Madārik al-Aḥkām fī Sharḥ Sharāʾiʿ al-Islām*. [Translator's note]

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used it, then would their usage of it compensate the weakness of the chain or not?

The common view among scholars prior to the era of Sayyid al-Khūʾī was to accept the general premise of rehabilitation (*al-injibār*), however from his era onward the common view is that it is rejected.

Research into the Correct View

The topic of the validity of a narration in *ʿilm al-uṣūl* deals with discussing these views and explaining the correct view from among them after presenting their arguments.

In general, we can say: the correct view is the last one, which is the validity of a reliable narration on the basis of the conduct of rational people who act upon the information of reliable people and there not being any censuring from the Legislator on this which reveals its approval.

The Need for *ʿIlm al-Rijāl*

There is a difference of opinion among the scholars regarding *ʿilm al-rijāl* and the grading of Shaykh al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to distinguish if a certain person is reliable or weak. Is it something necessary that the jurist strongly needs, or is it something that can be dispensed with?

Some have said that there is no need for *ʿilm al-rijāl*, and others have prohibited it under the pretense that it reveals the concealed faults of the believers, like a particular person being weak and hence narrations cannot be taken from them, or someone being a liar.

It is possible to relate this disagreement to the need or lack of need for *ʿilm al-rijāl* with the aforementioned views on the permissibility of acting in accordance with a tradition. For example, if it is established that if the majority accepted a tradition it would be valid even if its narrators were not reliable, then based on this there would be no need for *ʿilm al-rijāl*. The criteria would be the acceptance of the majority, and not the reliability of the narrator for there to be a need to distinguish their reliability.

Furthermore, the need for *ʿilm al-rijāl* weakens with the establishing of the major premise of rehabilitation of an otherwise weak narration by virtue of the majority acting upon it. Based on this view there would be no need for researching the reliability of narrators as long as we have assumed the majority accepting a tradition. The need for *ʿilm al-rijāl* would become limited only in the area of a narration that the majority did not act upon.

As previously stated the correct opinion in our view is the validity of the narration of a reliable person and the insufficiency of compensation if it does not reach a level of assurance in the truthfulness. Therefore, this establishes the need for *ʿilm al-rijāl* and this need is certainly strong.

Another misconception is that it is prohibited because it reveals the concealed faults of believers.

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However, as long as there is a more important aim – which is to identify the narration of a reliable person and distinguish it from others – then there is nothing wrong with this. The same is in the case of arbitration, as rejecting a witness and exposing their corruption is something undisputedly permissible as there is something more important dependant on it.

The Argument

Returning to the previous discussion, we mentioned the traditions that Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrated in the following way:

> Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī in *al-Maḥāsin* from his father from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A), who said ....

If we wanted to know about the chain of this tradition – whether it is credible or not – we must scrutinize two points:

One: Examining the chain between al-Barqī and the Imam; if it is established that all the individuals in the chain are reliable then there is no problem as far as this is concerned.

However, how can we establish the reliability of the individuals in this mentioned chain? This is possible through applying one of the ways of establishing reliability that we will soon speak about.

Two: Examining the chain between Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī and al-Barqī; as not only are they not contemporaries, but there is actually a vast amount of time between them. If the reliability of all the individuals in the mentioned chain is established, then there is also no problem from this aspect.

However, how can we ascertain the chain of narrators from Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī to al-Barqī, or in other words how can we get to know the names of the narrators that al-Ḥurr narrates from in reference to al-Barqī's book?

This can be done in the following explanation: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has a path that goes to al-Barqī's *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin* that he refers to in the beginning of his book *al-Fihrist* when giving the biography of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī. Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī has paths to all the books that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates from, and these paths are mentioned at the end of *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*. If we were to add this to the others it would establish for us the path from al-Ḥurr to al-Barqī.

Questions

1. If a jurist wants to deduce a ruling from a tradition, he will need to establish three things. Explain what they are and what the need is for each one of them.

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2. A narration is either successively-transmitted (*mutawātir*) or solitary (*wāḥid*). What is the difference between them? Which one is agreed upon as valid?

3. What is the view of Sharīf al-Murtaḍā regarding the validity of a narration?

4. What is the view of al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī regarding the validity of a narration?

5. Mention the view attributed to the Akhbārīs on the issue of narrations.

6. What is the view of the author of *al-Madārik* on the issue of narrations?

7. What is the known view among contemporaries regarding the validity of a narration?

8. What does it mean by major premise of compensating the weakness of a chain through *shuhrah*?

9. What is the view of Shaykh al-Nā'īnī about the traditions of *Kitāb al-Kāfī*?

10. How can we argue the view of the contemporaries regarding the validity of a narration?

11. Is there a need for *'ilm al-rijāl*?

12. Why have some prohibited *'ilm al-rijāl*? How can this be refuted?

13. It is possible to connect the need for *'ilm al-rijāl* to the views on the issue of the validity of a narration. Explain this.

14. If we want to know whether the chain of a narration is authentic or not, what is the path that we must follow?

15. Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī mentions in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, volume 1, chapter 3 (Preliminaries for Acts of Worship, hadith 1) a particular tradition that is related to explaining the importance of the intellect and its role in establishing duties. Is the chain of this mentioned tradition correct? Explain the reason.

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16. Is it possible to do *taqlīd* in the principles of *'ilm al-rijāl*? Why?

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Research Methodology

The research methodology for this part of the *rijāl* studies will be divided in the following four chapters:

Chapter One: Discussions Related to Reliability
Chapter Two: Discussions Related to the Types of Traditions
Chapter Three: Views Regarding Some Hadith Books
Chapter Four: Views Regarding Some of Our *Rijāl* Books

Chapter One: Discussions Related to Reliability

This chapter will be discussed in the following three points:

Point One: A discussion on the ways of establishing the reliability of a narrator
Point Two: Discussions regarding general classifications of reliability
Point Three: Discussions regarding the evidence for the validity of the view of a *rijāl* scholar

Point One: Methods of Establishing the Reliability of a Narrator

Our discussion on the first point is based on the premise that there are numerous ways mentioned to establish the reliability of a narrator.[90] Shaykh al-Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī (1118/1706-1206/1791) concluded that there were as many as thirty-nine different methods, of which we only will mention the important ones.

A Statement from One of the Infallibles

If an Infallible gives a statement about the reliability of a particular narrator, then there is no problem to establish reliability through this way.

Al-Kashshī compiled in his famous book many of the traditions that refer to narrators. In fact, his book is completely devoted to such traditions.

An example: Al-Kashshī mentions in the biography of Muḥammad ibn Sinān (number 965 in his book) with his chain that ends with Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl Bazīʿ who said:

> Abū Jaʿfar (A) would curse Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā and Muḥammad ibn Sinān because they opposed my commands. He said: "After one year passed Abū Jaʿfar (A) told Muḥammad ibn Sahl al-Baḥrānī: 'Deal

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[90] It will be explained that some of these ways are incomplete, like the third, the sixth, and the eighth.

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> with Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā and Muḥammad ibn Sinān as I am content with them.'

The jurist could understand from the Imam being content with Ṣafwān and Muḥammad ibn Sinān that they may be considered reliable, and this is not far-fetched.

It must be noted that in regards to a tradition that refers to mentioning someone as reliable, the narrator narrating from the Infallible cannot be the same person that is being established as reliable, or else this would resemble a circular argument.

An example: Al-Kashshī mentions in his book (number 758 in his book) in the biography of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭāʾinī – whose reliability has been extremely controversial – that Abū al-Ḥasan (al-Riḍā) (A) has said: 'I have asked Allah to forgive you.'

This tradition cannot be relied upon to establish the reliability of al-Baṭāʾinī because it is the person himself who is narrating from the Imam.

An unusual thing is that some scholars have said such a report is sufficient to establish reliability, either claiming that a Shiʿi does not lie about their Imam nor attribute a false narration to them. Or another claim is that the tradition similar to the one mentioned results in probable knowledge (*ẓann*), and probable knowledge is valid when establishing reliability (*tawthīqāt*).

Al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī has apparently adopted this view when giving the biography of ʿImrān ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Qummī who said something along the lines of:

> Al-Kashshī mentions two narrations praising them highly, and the weakness of their chain has no effect after probable knowledge has been acquired from them.

An answer to the first claim is that a non-religious Shiʿi who does not adhere to the path of shariʿah has nothing that prevents them from lying about their Imam, and the most that could be acquired is probable knowledge of it not being a lie, and pure probability proves nothing.

Likewise, the second claim that states reliability can be established through speculation can be rejected because it requires evidence, and the evidence is not forthcoming.

The Statement of Some of the Early *Rijālī* Scholars

A *rijāl* scholar who may classify a narrator as reliable or weak could be among the early scholars, like al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, or from among the later scholars, like ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs.

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What we refer to here are the statements of the early *rijāl* scholars in regards to the reliability of a person. The value of statements from later scholars will be discussed later.

The reason for the validity of the opinions of the early scholars in this regard – as has been said – is that the likes of al-Najāshī are reliable. The likes of al-Najāshī are valid because the information of a reliable person is valid, based on the conduct of rational people that has been endorsed by the religion, as long as there has been no censure.

Providing information about the reliability of a particular person is information about a particular subject[91] and not a *shar'ī* ruling. Still, the evidence for the validity of the information provided by a reliable person – which is the conduct of rational people – is inclusive to providing information about a subject, which is different to the view of some who chose validity to be specific when informing about a particular ruling.

It cannot be said that the information provided by a reliable person, even though it is valid through the conduct of rational people, is only reliable when the information they provide is based on their own direct experiences rather than conjecture (*ḥads*) or personal understanding (*ijtihād*). For example, it is clear that when al-Najāshī considers the likes of Zurārah to be reliable, then seeing that they do not live in the same time, this information about Zurārah's reliability is based on conjecture and not on direct experience.

Because we mean that even though al-Najāshī was not a contemporary of Zurārah, there is still a possibility that the information he has about his reliability is based on direct experience, and with this possibility in mind, it is necessary to base the information he provides on direct experience. The reason for this is the presumption that a rational person is speaking from direct experience when there is doubt between their information being based on experience or conjecture.

Therefore, there are two claims that we must prove here:

1. Al-Najāshī's information about the reliability of Zurārah could come from direct experience.
2. It is necessary to presume such information comes from his direct experience when it could be from either this or conjecture.

Regarding the first claim, one can prove it by saying that al-Najāshī and Zurārah not being contemporaries does not necessitate that his information about Zurārah's reliability is based on conjecture. For instance, we make judgements about the reliability of earlier scholars such as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī,

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[91] The reliability of a narrator is the subject of a ruling for the *shar'ī* obligation of believing in it, because the *shar'ī* ruling is the obligation of believing and reliability is its subject.

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al-Anṣārī, and Ākhund al-Khurāsānī, even though we are not their contemporaries, but does this mean that our information is based on conjecture? No; it is information based on direct experience, because the reliability of these scholars for us today is as clear as the midday sun. The same thing can be said for al-Najāshī's classifying of Zurārah as reliable. Many *rijālī* books that were written to classify reliability or weakness existed during the time al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī lived, and things were clear as a result of these books.

The first to have authored in this field might have been al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb (d. 224/838) who was an eminent narrator. He wrote his famous book *Mashyakhah*, and other books on the same accord came after this.

Shaykh Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭehrānī (1293/1876-1389/1970) gathered in a book all those who wrote in this field and he called it *Maṣfā al-Maqāl*, where he mentions over one hundred books.

Something that confirms what we say is Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's statement in his *al-'Uddah* where he said: 'We found that the sect distinguished the narrators that transmit these narrations, and they confirmed the reliable ones among them and identified the weak ones [...] and they compiled books in this regard.'

Al-Najāshī in the biography of some of the narrators sometimes uses the following expression: 'The experts on *rijāl* have mentioned him.'

As for the second claim, it can be proven by saying that when a reliable person gives rational people information, they would not interrogate him if his information was based on direct experience or conjecture. Rather, as long as there is a possibility of it originating from direct experience, rational people would accept it.

This has been said in justifying the classifying of reliability of the early scholars.[92]

A Misconception and its Response

From what we have mentioned, the following two misconceptions can be refuted.

Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī (979/1571-1085/1674) has said in his book[93] in distinguishing the shared elements that he believed the judgements of the early scholars about narrators was based on conjecture rather than direct experience and that, therefore, it is problematic to rely on it.

To this we would respond that there is an equal likelihood of it having been based on experience, based on the previous explanation. Adding to this

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[92] Refer to *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 41.

[93] *Jāmi' al-Maqāl fī mā Yata'allaq bi Aḥwāl al-Dirāyah wa al-Rijāl.* [Translator's note]

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the assumption that a rational person speaks from experience, this means we can judge it as originating from experience.

In many statements regarding the reliability of narrators from the early scholars, it has been pointed out that even if we accept their judgements as originating from experience and being in the form of transmission from reliable sources or from eminent individuals, when, for example, al-Najāshī considers a person reliable, he does not mention the names of the chain that he depends on in transmitting the reliability. With him not mentioning their names, his informing on reliability is similar to a discontinued (*mursal*) narration, and therefore it is not valid.

In other words: if al-Najāshī was to have mentioned a *shar'ī* ruling from the Imam through a chain of reliable individuals without referring to their names then would his account of this statement be accepted? No, it would not; we would discount his report and deny its validity due to the possibility that one of the narrators in his chain could be dubious.

Therefore, if the information given by al-Najāshī is not accepted in the area of rulings if it was given without a chain of narrators, then this would also mean that it would not be accepted when transmitting reliability if it is discontinued, as there would be no difference.

This argument is very precise and powerful, so much that some have said whoever solves it will be given a reward and it would be very highly lauded.[94]

The answer to this, based on what we have already said, is that the reliability of such people is as clear as the reliability of our impressions about Shaykh al-Anṣārī and al-Ākhund al-Khurāsānī. With this clarity, the testimony of al-Najāshī in the reliability of Zurārah is not mere conjecture to be rejected on that basis; it is also not the same as relating information from one individual to another in order to be treated like a discontinued narration where one or more links are missing, but rather it is a third type of knowledge, whose own clarity would refute the misconception.

If one was to argue that such clarity cannot be the origin of the information, then how can we interpret the difference of views between Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī in certain issues, where Shaykh al-Ṭūsī considers a person reliable and al-Najāshī regards that same person as weak?

We would respond that such a difference does not prove a lack of clarity. In our time we could hold different opinions regarding a particular person contemporary to us, where one of us considers that person reliable whereas the other considers the person corrupt, and each one of us sees what we claim as clear.

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[94] Refer to Muḥammad Āṣif al-Muḥsinī, *Buḥūth fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 45.

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This is what has been said in relation to refuting this mentioned misconception, and it will be spoken about again in Point Three that deals with the evidence of the validity of a *rijāl* scholar.

The Statement of a Later Scholar

There is a disagreement among scholars regarding the classifying of reliability given by later scholars, like ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, Ibn Ṭāwūs, Ibn Dāwūd, and al-Shahīd al-Thānī,[95] as to whether their classification is accepted or not. The popular view is that it is accepted, but some scholars like Sayyid al-Khūʾī and others have chosen the view that it is not accepted. Each one of these views has its own particular justification.

The Justification for the Classifying of Reliability of Later Scholars Being Invalid

Those who rejected the judgements of later scholars about the reliability of narrators argue that the opinions of scholars such as ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī are based on either one of two things; either they are based on the views of the early scholars if they have a view on a particular narrator, or they are based on the later scholar's own conjecture and *ijtihād* if the early scholars did not have a reliability judgement, which means that it does not come from direct experience or it was found in some *rijālī* books to which the early scholars did not have access.

It could not have come from direct experience because the chain of narration stopped after Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and anyone after Shaykh al-Ṭūsī who transfers something about reliability or weakness is relying on the shaykh himself.

This is demonstrated by the fact that if the later scholars had a path or a chain that does not go through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, they would have mentioned it. However, we see that any path they have goes through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. For example, in ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's large permit (*ijāzah*) to Banī Zuhrah,[96] he mentions his paths to all the books that he transmits from, and all of them end with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

This is evidence that ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī does not have an independent path that is different from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that there exists an independent path of later scholars that does not go through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and if there were, then the shaykh himself would have known about it.

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[95] Zayn al-Dīn al-Jubāʾī al-ʿĀmilī (911/1506-965/1558). [Translator's note]

[96] Al-Majlisī quotes it in *Biḥār al-Anwār* in the volume of *ijāzāt.*

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The Justification for Accepting the Judgements of Later Scholars

Opposed to the aforementioned view are those who adopted the opposite position and argued that it is eminently possible for the likes of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī to have come across some books that speak about the reliability of certain narrators and that these books were not at the disposal of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī. There are many cases of where later scholars came across something early scholars did not find.

For example, Ibn Idrīs found parts of *al-uṣūl al-arbaʿami'ah* and extracted from them some traditions and from it he compiled the last part of his book which he called *Mustaṭrafāt al-Sarā'ir* (*The Exquisites of al-Sarā'ir*).

Sayyid Raḍī al-Dīn ibn Ṭāwūs found another part of this book and recorded some of them in his book called *Kashf al-Maḥajjah.*

In our contemporary time, Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ḥujjah, known as Sayyid al-Kūhkamarī (1310/1892-1372/1952), found sixteen *uṣūl* and published them under the title of *al-Uṣūl al-Sittat ʿAshar.*

Shaykh al-Nā'īnī narrates in *Ajwad al-Taqrīrāt*[97] that al-Muḥaddith Shaykh Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī had approximately fifty *uṣūl.*

If this is confirmed in regards to *al-uṣūl al-arbaʿami'ah,* then it is possible to also have the same thing in regards to *rijālī* books, where some later scholars could have found something that early scholars did not.

As for the claim that if there was a path the later scholars had to such information that does not go through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, then the shaykh himself would have known about it, this is refuted because it means that there would be a problem with the shaykh's own judgements of some narrators. He had classified as reliable certain narrators that al-Najāshī did not, and also the opposite, so if there was a path that one of them had then by necessity the other would have known about it.

The Correct View

In our opinion the correct view is the view that rejects the validity of the judgement of later scholars when determining the reliability of narrators.

We will concentrate our discussion on the judgements of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī, who is the most important of the later scholars in this regard, and this will clarify the classifying of reliability of other later scholars.

We must firstly pay attention to the fact that it was very rare for there to be cases specific to ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī regarding the reliability of narrators which were not shared by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī.

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[97] *Ajwad al-Taqrīrāt*, vol. 2, p. 93.

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Therefore, the value of this discussion would be exclusive to these rare cases, because the cases that are shared are going to be ruled as reliable based on the testimony of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī without a need to refer to ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's classifying of reliability.

The reason for ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī's judgements regarding a narrator's reliability not being valid is that relying on his testimony is based either on assuming his direct experience or based on him being an expert in this field.

Both of these cases are problematic.

In the first instance, this is because we have no certainty that there is a case for relying on the assumption that he speaks from direct experience, as there are many cases in his writings where he alludes to relying on conjecture in his classifications of reliability.

For example, we can see when he gives the biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim he says:

> I did not find any views of our companions in the criticisms or praise of him. His narrations are abundant, and the best view is to accept his statements.

The expression of 'the best view is to accept his statements'[98] after he acknowledged there being no mentioning in *rijālī* books about reliability, proves that it was based on conjecture and his *ijtihād.*

He says in the biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd Allāh:

> Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī weakened him.... Al-Najāshī like Shaykh al-Ṭūsī classified him as reliable, which strengthens for me acting upon what he narrates.

The expression 'strengthens' after he acknowledges the disagreement in the criticism and the praising (*al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl*) proves that he acted according to his conjecture and *ijtihād.*

He says in the biography of Ismāʿīl ibn Mahrān:

> According to me, the strongest view is accepting his narrations, based on the testimony of Shaykh Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī in him being reliable.

In the biography of Idrīs ibn Ziyād he says:

> The best view according to me is to accept his narration based on al-Najāshī praising him. The view held by Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī does not clash with it because he himself did not criticise him nor did he object to his justness.

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In the biography of Aḥmad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Samakah he says:

> Our scholars have not said anything in praise of him, nor has there been any mentioning of criticising him. The correct view is to accept his narration with its absence of any opposition.

There are other examples similar to these that clearly indicate he had acted based upon his *ijtihād* and his opinion the same way as we do in the classifying of reliability of some narrators.

In the second, namely relying on him because he is an expert (*ahl al-khibrah*) in the field, we reject this because we do not accept that ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī was more informed than us to a sufficient level to warrant treating him as an expert. This title is applied to someone who delves into the books and libraries and discovers things that we have not discovered. However, if their observations of the books was limited then they would not have reached any more than what we have. Of course, ultimately that person acted upon their view the same way as we do sometimes, which means this title would not be applicable to them. Is it correct for us to consider the expertise of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī when he relies on Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim when he says: 'I have not found anyone ... and the best is to accept his statement,' or when he relies on Ibrāhīm ibn Salāmah when he said: 'He is a representative and among the companions of Imam al-Kāẓim (A). Shaykh said nothing more than this about him, and the view that I have is to accept his narrations.'

In most cases – perhaps as much as ninety percent of the time – ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī accepts the judgements given by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī. In other cases, he relies and acts upon his own conjectures. Therefore, in such a case the title of expertise would not be applicable to him because we also have this ability without any difference.

If it is said that ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī had *rijāl* books that we do not have with us now, like *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*, *Rijāl al-ʿAqīqī*, or *Rijāl Ibn ʿUqdah*, and therefore his views should be given more weight than ours, the answer to this is that ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī having access to these books is not important, because we are not certain that an authentic and reliable copy of *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī* had reached him. How could this be when Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says in the introduction to *al-Fihrist*:

> Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī wrote two books, in one of them he compiled the names of books and in the other he mentioned the *uṣūl*. He wrote in them things he had not seen in other places and he was successful in that; however none of our companions copied these books. He passed

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> away, and some of his heirs wanted to destroy these books and his other books, as it has been said about him.[99]

As for the *Rijāl* of Sayyid ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAqīqī (d. 282/895), his era is before that of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and therefore it is incorrect to rely on it because ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī mentions Sayyid al-ʿAqīqī in the second part of his book that he dedicated to mentioning those that he does not rely upon.

Rijāl Ibn ʿUqdah existed with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī and they benefitted from everything in it, not leaving anything out for ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī to be able to acquire the title of expertise and make him distinctive for us.

The Presumption of Justness in the Words of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī

It has been said that it is problematic to accept the judgements of ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī because in some of his *tawthīqāt* he relies on the 'presumption of justness' (*aṣālat al-ʿadālah*). This means that the general rule for every Shiʿi transmitter who has not been identified as weak or reliable is that they are considered just (*ʿādil*). We do not accept this principle and, therefore, we cannot rely on his *tawthīqāt.*

He mentioned evidence for relying on the presumption (*aṣālah*) of justness in some of his writings such as what he mentioned in the biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim[100] where he said:

> I did not find any views of our companions in the criticising of him or in specifying his praise. His narrations are abundant and the best view is to accept his statements.

'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's ruling of considering this narrator's statements cannot be valid unless based on the 'presumption of justness' and establishing it in regards to one who has not been mentioned as being weak or reliable.

What he mentioned in the biography of Aḥmad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Samakah,[101] saying:

> Our scholars have not said anything in praise of him, nor has there been any mentioning of criticising him. The correct view is to accept his narration with its absence of any opposition.

I say: It might be that the first person known to have adopted the presumption of justness was Ibn Junayd. Shaykh al-Anṣārī has said in *Risālat al-ʿAdālah*, which comes at the end of *al-Makāsib*, that one of the meanings

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[99] *Al-Fihrist*, p. 2.

[100] Ibid. p. 4.

[101] Ibid. p. 17.

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of justness is that it means being a Muslim and there not being any apparent corruption in a person's character. He says:

> This view is attributed to Ibn Junayd and al-Mufīd in Kitāb al-Ashrāf, and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions this in al-Khilāf, claiming there is consensus on this.[102]

Furthermore, 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī is not explicit in referring to the 'presumption of justness' in the two references mentioned above.

Moreover, his statement in the biography of Ismā'īl ibn al-Khaṭṭāb[103] suggests otherwise. After mentioning a tradition in which the Imam praises Ismā'īl by saying 'may the mercy of Allah be upon Ismā'īl ibn al-Khaṭṭāb', he says:

> I do not view this narration to be authentic nor invalid, so the best is to avoid his narration.

If 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī was to have adopted the presumption of justness why is he refraining from accepting this narrator's narrations?

See also his statement in the biography of Aḥad ibn Ḥamzah:[104]

> Al-Kashshī narrates from Ḥamdawayh, from his masters, who said he was among the ministers, and this does not prove his justness in my view.

His statement in the biography of Bashīr al-Nibāl:[105]

> Al-Kashshī narrated a tradition.... There is no explicit reference in praising him, so I avoid (*mutawaqqif*) his narrations.

His statement in the biography of Thuwayr ibn Abī Fākhitah[106] after narrating a tradition in his favour:

> And this does not necessitate praise or criticism, so we are among those who avoid his narrations.

There are numerous more cases that can be found throughout his statements.

Moreover, the methodology visible in his books demonstrates that he does not believe in the presumption of justness. He divided his book into two parts; in the first part he mentions those narrators whose narrations he relied upon and in the second part he mentions those whose narrations he does not

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[102] Ibid. p. 326.

[103] Ibid. p. 10.

[104] Ibid. p. 18.

[105] Ibid. p. 25.

[106] Ibid. p. 30.

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rely upon, either because he considers them weak, or because their reliability or weakness is disputed, or because they are anonymous according to him.

Therefore, if he believed in the 'presumption of justness' there would be no meaning for him to mention those who are unknown in the second part that he dedicated to those whose narrations he rejects, otherwise they should have been mentioned in the first part of the book.

Questions

1. The paths of establishing reliability are of two types; some can be explained in a particular criterion and some cannot. Mention some examples of each of the two types with explanation of the point of how the criterion works and how it does not work.

2. Does the phrase "the paths of establishing reliability" necessitate it being valid?

3. The statement of an Infallible on the reliability of a person is a way to establish reliability, but not in all cases and there is a condition. What is this condition?

4. Some have disregarded this condition; explain their argument for this.

5. The statement of one of the early *rijāl* scholars is a signification for reliability, opposite to the statement of later scholars. Mention what is meant by early and later.

6. What is the reason for the validity of the statement of one of the early scholars for reliability?

7. The report of a reliable person is sometimes on subjects and in other times on rulings. Explain what this means.

8. Is informing about reliability informing about a ruling or about a subject? Why?

9. What does the presumption of conjecture mean?

10. Is information from a reliable person that comes from conjecture valid? Why?

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11. If al-Najāshī was not contemporary to Zurārah, then how can we accept his judgement of the latter's reliability when the condition of accepting it is that it comes from direct experience, and this does not exist because they are not contemporaries?

12. What is the criticism Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī has in regards to the judgements of early scholars regarding the reliability of narrators?

13. A criticism directed at the judgements of early scholars is that they are discontinued (*mursal*). Explain this and how it is refuted.

14. What is the justification for the invalidity of the reliability judgements of contemporary scholars?

15. What is the evidence for the validity of the reliability judgements of contemporary scholars? How can this be argued?

16. Why cannot the presumption of direct experience be applied in the reliability judgements of 'Allāmah?

17. If 'Allāmah's classification of reliability is valid due to him being an expert, how can this be refuted?

18. Can 'Allāmah's referencing of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī's book be relied upon?

19. Can 'Allāmah's referencing of Sayyid al-'Aqīqī's book be relied upon? Why?

20. Why is there no benefit in 'Allāmah's referencing from *Rijāl Ibn 'Uqdah*?

21. What does 'presumption of justness' mean? How can 'Allāmah's referencing it be justified?

22. How can this view of 'Allāmah be refuted?

23. Is the chain of the following tradition authentic? *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, chapter 18, preliminaries of acts of worship, hadith 1.

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Practical Applications

Exercise 1

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī in his book *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* mentions the following text in the beginning of a tradition he narrates after an introduction:

محمد بن يعقوب الكليني رضي الله عنه، عن أبي علي الأشعري، عن الحسن بن علي الكوفي، عن عباس بن عامر، عن أبان بن عثمان، عن الفضيل بن يسار، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) قال: بُني الإسلام على خمس: على الصلاة، والزكاة، والحج، والصوم، والولاية.

Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (may Allah be pleased with him), narrating from Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Kūfī, from ʿAbbās ibn ʿĀmir, from Ābān ibn ʿUthmān, from al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār, from Abū Jaʿfar (A), who said: 'Islam is founded on five things: prayer, zakat, hajj, fasting, and *wilāyah*.'[107]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates this tradition from *al-Kāfī*, seeing that he mentions the name Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī. In order to know the validity of the mentioned chain we must study its narrators.

Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī does not need introduction as he is like the sun in the middle of the day; however, for extra information we will mention what al-Najāshī has said in his favour:

> During his time, he was the master, and of our companions, in his opinions. He was the most reliable and precise of people in narrating traditions. Known as al-Kulaynī, he compiled a great book in twenty years, which he called *al-Kāfī* ...[108] I would frequent the mosque and a group of our companions would read *al-Kāfī* with the scribe Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Kūfī....[109]

Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī was a teknonym for Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, whom Shaykh al-Kulaynī frequently narrates from in *al-Kāfī*. Al-Najāshī said of him: 'He was reliable, and he was a jurist from among our companions. He narrated

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[107] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 13, h. 1.

[108] This sentence appears in the book *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, and it seems that there is a fault in it.

[109] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 18, p. 50.

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abundantly and his narrations were authentic.' Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions something similar about him.[110]

Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Kūfī is al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mughīrah al-Bajalī. Al-Najāshī has said that he is: 'Reliable, reliable.'[111]

Al-Najāshī has said in favour of **ʿAbbās ibn ʿĀmir**: 'A trustworthy shaykh, reliable and abundant in his narrations.'[112]

With regard to **Ābān ibn ʿUthmān**, al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī have both mentioned him, but have not described him as reliable. However, it is possible to establish his reliability through the claim al-Kashshī makes that the sect has a consensus on the reliability of six people from among the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), and one of them is Ābān ibn ʿUthmān. In one of the chapters of al-Kashshī's book titled 'Naming the scholars (*al-fuqahā'*) from among the companions of Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A)', he says:

> The sect have united in authenticating anything that has been established to have come from these people and to believe what they have said and confirm their statements in jurisprudence: Jamīl ibn Darrāj, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maskān, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bukayr, Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā, and Ābān ibn ʿUthmān.[113]

Explaining the validity of this consensus: If this mentioned consensus was true and it existed in reality, then it is evidence for the reliability of these individuals; and if it is not established in reality then it can be said that the very claim al-Kashshī has of this consensus is essentially an implicit testimony from himself for the reliability of the six mentioned.

If it is said that the presence of a consensus of authenticating the narrations of these six people does not necessitate reliability, because authenticating a narration is accepting it, and accepting a narration from a person does not mean classifying that person as reliable, as it might be accepted because there is specific evidence surrounding it that lead to knowledge in accepting the narration, then the answer to this is: it would be

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[110] Ibid. vol. 2, p. 41. An important note to make is that it is sufficient to take the categorising of reliability from one of these two scholars: al-Najāshī or al-Ṭūsī, and it is not necessary to establish reliability from both of them, based on the presence of the conduct of rational people in sufficing the categorising of reliability of one of them in establishing reliability. Of course, the categorising of reliability of one of these two scholars is sufficient on the condition that the other had not weakened it, or else it would be discarded.

[111] Ibid. vol. 5, p. 41.

[112] Ibid. vol. 9, p. 227.

[113] Ibid. vol. 1, p. 157.

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necessary if the consensus existed regarding accepting the narrations of a particular person, but if the consensus exists on accepting all his narrations, then that would be equal to classifying the person as reliable.

As for **al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār**, al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī have considered him to be reliable. Al-Kashshī narrates several traditions in his favour. Among them is one which says that when Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) would see al-Fuḍayl, he would say: 'Give tidings to the humble ones! Whoever wants to look at a man from the people of heaven should look at this person.' In another tradition when he would see al-Fuḍayl he would say: 'Welcome to one whom the earth is delighted to have.'

It is narrated that the person who was in charge of washing the body of al-Fuḍayl when he died had said: 'While I was washing al-Fuḍayl, his hand hastened to cover his private parts. I informed Abū 'Abd Allāh (A) about this and he said to me: "May Allah have mercy on al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār, as he is from among us, the Ahl al-Bayt."'[114]

All this explains that all the narrators in this chain are reliable and the tradition is valid.

Exercise 2

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī narrates the second tradition in the following way:

> وعن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه وعبد الله بن الصلت جميعاً، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن حريز بن عبد الله، عن زرارة، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: بُني الإسلام ...
>
> And from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father and 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ṣalt, all of them, from Ḥammād ibn 'Īsā, from Ḥurayz ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Zurārah, from Abū Ja'far (A), who said: 'Islam is founded on ....'[115]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī narrates this tradition from *al-Kāfī*, seeing that in the beginning of the chain the name 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm is mentioned, because it was al-Kulaynī who narrated from 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm in *al-Kāfī*.

'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm is the well-known author of the famous book *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. Al-Najāshī has said in his favour: 'He is reliable in his narrations, fixed, dependable, who followed the legitimate sect....'[116]

It is sufficient in establishing his reliability that al-Kulaynī narrates close to one-third of the traditions of *al-Kāfī* from him, and it is not possible for

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[114] Ibid. vol. 13, p. 335.

[115] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, p. 13, h. 2.

[116] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 11, p. 193.

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us to suppose that al-Kulaynī would narrate one-third of the traditions of his book from a person he did not believe to be reliable. A rational person would not do this.

As for ʿAlī's father who was known as **Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim**, ʿAlī narrated excessively from him. Al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī have both mentioned him without classifying his reliability. The most that they have said regarding him is that he was from Kufa and he moved to Qum, and that our companions say he was the first to spread the traditions of the Kufans in Qum.

This statement has been used in praising him, but not in classifying him as reliable, which is why the tradition that has his name in its chain is considered as 'good' (*ḥasan*), and not 'authentic' (*ṣaḥīḥ*).[117]

Sayyid al-Khūʾī demonstrated his belief in his reliability by relying on the evidence of his son narrating from him in ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm's *Tafsīr*, where he said in his introduction to the book that he narrates his *Tafsīr* from reliable people. Sayyid al-Khūʾī also in establishing his reliability refers to his name being mentioned in the book *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, where its author Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh in the introduction mentions the reliability of all those whose names have been mentioned in it.

This path is good for those who believe in this principle, however this issue will be debated when we discuss the general classifications of reliability.

In our view the appropriate way to prove his reliability is to say:

> Spreading the tradition of the Kufans in the school of Qum, which is known for its strictness, is something we cannot assume to have occurred unless through someone who was appropriate in having their narrations accepted. This can only be from a person who is reliable, or rather at the highest level of reliability. Is it possible to accept traditions in the environment of those strict schools from someone whose reliability has not been established?

His son narrated abundantly from him, and we cannot suppose that this abundant narrating occurred even though there was no belief in his reliability.

With **ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṣalt**, al-Najāshī said about him: 'He is reliable and his narrations are accepted.'[118]

It is important to note that the classifying of reliability mentioned by any of the two, Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim or ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṣalt is sufficient, and it

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[117] A *ḥasan* tradition is when all or some of the narrators in its chain are Shiʿa and praised.

[118] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 10, p. 222.

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is not necessary to establish their reliability together, even though they are both coincidently reliable.

Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā is al-Juhannī who drowned in al-Juḥfah. Al-Najāshī said about him: 'He was reliable in his traditions and trustworthy.'[119] He had requested from Imam al-Kāẓim (A) to pray that Almighty God grants him a house, a spouse, a child, a servant, and hajj pilgrimage every year, and the Imam said:

اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد وارزقه داراً وزوجةً وولداً وخادماً والحج خمسين سنة.

O Allah, send prayers unto Muḥammad and the progeny of Muḥammad, and grant him a house, a wife, a child, a servant, and hajj for fifty years.

Ḥammād said: 'When he put the condition of fifty years I knew that I would not be performing hajj pilgrimage for more than the fifty years. I performed my forty-eighth hajj, and this is my house that I have been blessed with, and my wife is behind the curtain listening to what I say. This is my son, and here is my servant, and I have been granted all of them.'

He performed two more hajj pilgrimages, completing fifty. After the fiftieth hajj, he headed towards hajj to perform pilgrimage again. When he arrived in the place for performing *iḥrām* he entered the water to do *ghusl* and a strong current took him away, drowning him, may Allah have mercy on him.[120]

Ḥurayz ibn ʿAbd Allāh is al-Sijistānī. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has said: 'He is reliable, from Kufa.'[121]

It has been said that the reason for Ḥurayz's death is he lived in Sijistān with some friends, and in that area the majority of the inhabitants were among the Shurāt (i.e. the Khawārij). These friends would hear from the Khawārij the slandering of Imam ʿAlī (A), and they would ask Ḥurayz to allow them to kill those who did so, and he would permit them. The Shurāt were getting killed one after the other, and they did not believe that the Shiʿa were responsible for this because of how small in number they were, so they accused the Murji'ah and fought them. When they realised who really was responsible they started attacking the Shiʿa, so Ḥurayz and his companions

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[119] Ibid. vol. 6, p. 224.

[120] Ibid. vol. 6, p. 227.

[121] Ibid. vol. 4, p. 249.

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gathered in the mosque, and the Shurāt detained them in the mosque and demolished it with them in it. May Almighty Allah have mercy on them.[122]

Ḥurayz had a book that was called *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*, and it was one of the famous books that was relied upon, as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has mentioned in the introduction to *al-Faqīh*.[123]

Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā once visited Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) and the Imam asked him: 'O Ḥammād, have you mastered how to pray?' Ḥammād said to him: 'O Master, I have memorised Ḥurayz's book on prayer.' He said: 'Then there is nothing else for you to do, stand up and pray.' So when Ḥurayz started to pray in a way that was different from the followers of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A), he said: 'How bad is it for a man among you to reach an age of sixty or seventy years, and they are not able to perform one prayer with all its complete conditions.'[124]

This tradition indicates the importance of Ḥurayz's book, so much that Ḥammād memorised it.

As for **Zurārah**, he is beyond introduction, and it suffices us in introducing him with what Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) had said to Jamīl ibn Darrāj:

> Give tidings to those who will enter heaven: Burayd ibn Muʿāwiyah al-ʿAjalī, Abū Baṣīr Layth ibn al-Bakhtarī al-Murādī, Muḥammad ibn Muslim, and Zurārah; these are four noble people who are Allah's guardians over His permissible and impermissible. Without them the traces of prophecy would have discontinued and become effaced.[125]

Important Note

After mentioning this tradition, the author of *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah* mentions the following:

ورواه أحمد بن أبي عبد الله البرقي في المحاسن، عن عبد الله بن الصلت بالأسناد المذكور

This is also narrated by Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿAbd Allāh al-Barqī in *al-Maḥāsin*,[126] from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṣalt, with the mentioned chain.[127]

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[122] Ibid. vol. 4, p. 252.

[123] Vol. 1, p. 3.

[124] *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 5, p. 459, h. 1.

[125] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 7, p. 222.

[126] *Al-Maḥāsin*, p. 286.

[127] *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 14.

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Al-Barqī narrates it from ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ṣalt, from Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā, from Ḥurayz, from Zurārah, which is the same chain as in the narration of al-Kulaynī.

It is noteworthy to say that after we have established the validity of the previous path of al-Kulaynī, we do not need after that to establish a second path by al-Barqī. However, if we were to suppose that the previous path was invalid, how can we establish the validity of this path?

First we must find out the path from Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī to al-Barqī, then we have to know the path of al-Barqī to the Imam.

In regards to the path from Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī to al-Barqī, it is authentic, because it is mentioned at the end of *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* that all the books the author narrates from, like *al-Maḥāsin* and others, have reached the author in various paths all returning back to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

If we were to look at Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* at the biography of al-Barqī we would see that the author has a valid path to him.

This is how the validity of al-Ḥurr's path to al-Barqī is established.

As for al-Barqī's path to the Imam, it has been previously said when explaining al-Kulaynī's path that it was authentic.

Another thing that is also left for us to do is to find out about al-Barqī himself, and so if he is reliable there will be no problem in this path from this aspect as well.

Exercise 3

The author of *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* mentions the third tradition in the following way:

وعن محمد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن علي بن النعمان، عن ابن مسكان، عن سليمان بن خالد، عن أبي جعفر عليه السلام قال: ألا ...

And from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān, from Ibn Maskān, from Sulaymān ibn Khālid, from Abū Jaʿfar (A) who said: 'Shall I ...'[128]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr also narrates this tradition from *al-Kāfī*, by the evidence that he starts the chain with Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā who is al-Kulaynī's shaykh from whom he narrates abundantly.

Furthermore, he mentions this after the previous two traditions narrated from al-Kulaynī, so if he wanted to narrate from, for example, al-Ṭūsī, he would have started the chain with Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī.

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[128] Ibid. h. 3.

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However, as long as he is continuously narrating from al-Kulaynī, there is no need to repeat the name of al-Kulaynī every time.

In order to become acquainted with the state of this chain we must say:

Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā is Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār al-Qummī al-Ashʿarī, who was the shaykh of al-Kulaynī, from whom he frequently narrates in *al-Kāfī*. Al-Najāshī has said about him: 'He is the shaykh of our companions in his time. He is reliable, trustworthy, and has narrated abundantly.'[129]

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī, the great man who is famous for his large amount of traditions and for his reliability.

Even though this name is shared with numerous people, however we are certain that it is Ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī in Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā's narration, because Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā narrates from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā and he is also his student and associate.

Al-Najāshī has said about him:

> Abū Jaʿfar, the shaykh of the Qummīs and their distinguished one and their jurist without peer. He was also a leader who would meet with the ruler. He had also met Imam al-Riḍā (A).[130]

ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān is as al-Najāshī has said: "ʿAlī was reliable, noble, strong, correct, and his path [belief] was clear.'[131]

It has been said that three people were gathered in a mosque, and they were Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jundub, and ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān. They had all pledged to one another that if one of them was to die the one still alive would pray their prayers, fast, perform hajj, and pay their zakat for as long as they lived. ʿAlī and ʿAbd Allāh passed away and Ṣafwān was left after them, and he did fulfil his pledge to them.[132]

As for **Ibn Maskān**, he is ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maskān. Al-Najāshī has said about him: 'Reliable and trustworthy.' He is one of the members of the group of six people from the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A).

It is said that he would never visit Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) out of fear of not giving the deserving status of *imāmah* due reverence and exaltation.

As for Sulaymān ibn Khālid, he has been described by al-Najāshī as: 'He was a reciter, a jurist and well known.... He came out with Zayd, and nobody

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[129] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 18, p. 30.

[130] Ibid. vol. 2, p. 296.

[131] Ibid. vol. 12, p. 215.

[132] Ibid. vol. 9, p. 124.

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else from among the companions of Abū Ja'far (A) came out except him. His hands were cut off, and it was Yūsuf ibn 'Umar himself who cut off his hands. He died during the time of Abū 'Abd Allāh (A), who was hurt from his loss. The Imam invited his son and advised his companions to take care of him....'[133]

Other Chains

After the author of *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* mentions the third tradition he says:

ورواه البرقي في (المحاسن) عن أبيه، عن علي بن النعمان. ورواه الشيخ بإسناده عن الحسن بن محمد بن سماعة، عن ابن رباط، عن ابن مسكان، عن سليمان بن خالد، عن أبي عبد الله عليه السلام، عن رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) نحوه. ورواه الحسين بن سعيد في كتاب (الزهد) عن علي بن النعمان، مثله، إلى قوله: الجهاد. وعن محمد بن يحيى، عن أحمد بن محمد بن عيسى، عن ابن فضال، عن ثعلبة، عن علي بن عبد العزيز، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام)، نحوه. ورواه الشيخ بإسناده عن محمد بن يعقوب، عن محمد بن يحيى. ورواه الصدوق بإسناده عن علي بن عبد العزيز. ورواه البرقي في (المحاسن) عن الحسن بن علي بن فضال، مثله.

Al-Barqī also narrates this in *al-Maḥāsin*, from his father, from 'Alī ibn al-Nu'mān. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates similar to it, through his chain, from al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Samā'ah, from Ibn Ribāṭ, from Ibn Maskān, from Sulaymān ibn Khālid, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A), from the Messenger of Allah (ṣ). Al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd narrates it in *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, from 'Alī ibn al-Nu'mān, in the same way until the word 'jihad'. It is also narrated by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, from Ibn Faḍḍāl, from Tha'labah, from 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A). Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates it through his chain, from Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā. Al-Ṣadūq narrates with his chain from 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz. Al-Barqī narrates similar to this in *al-Maḥāsin*, from al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Faḍḍāl.[134]

What Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī means in this statement is to refer to there being other chains and paths to this mentioned tradition. If we want to explain this in a more elaborate way we can say the following points:

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[133] Ibid. vol. 8, p. 245.

[134] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, pp. 14-15.

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One: Al-Barqī narrates this mentioned tradition in *al-Maḥāsin*, from his father, from ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān, from Ibn Maskān, from Sulaymān ibn Khālid, from Abū Jaʿfar (A)....

Shaykh al-Ḥurr did not mention this path with the links between ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān and the Imam due to there being similarity between this path and the previous path that was established in *al-Kāfī*. So, for the sake of brevity, Shaykh al-Ḥurr removed the links that are shared between the two paths.

This path is also correct because the chain of al-Ḥurr to al-Barqī is correct, as previously mentioned at the end of the second tradition.

Al-Barqī himself is reliable, and so is his father. The remaining narrators from ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān to the Imam are all reliable as well, as previously mentioned.

Two: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī also narrates this tradition in *al-Tahdhīb* with his chain to al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Samāʿah, from Ibn Ribāṭ, from Ibn Maskān, from Sulaymān ibn Khālid, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A).

In order to become acquainted with this path it is necessary to get to know the chain from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn Samāʿah, and this is done by referring to the *shuyūkh* of *al-Tahdhīb*,[135] where he mentions his path to the mentioned narrator.

Three: This tradition has also been narrated by al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, the author of *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, narrating from ʿAlī ibn al-Nuʿmān, from Ibn Maskān, from Sulaymān ibn Khālid.

We must also study the chain of Shaykh al-Ḥurr to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, and it is authentic, as has been mentioned in the end of *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, because it goes to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and he has a reliable path to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, as has been mentioned in *al-Fihrist*.

What is left is for us to know is the chain from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd to the Imam, and it is also correct.

Four: Al-Kulaynī also narrates this tradition from another source, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Ibn Faḍḍāl, from Thaʿlabah, from ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

Five: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates this tradition as well in *al-Tahdhīb*, from al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfī*, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā. As for Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, he narrated the tradition from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Ibn Faḍḍāl, from Thaʿlabah, from ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Shaykh al-Ḥurr removed these names relying on what was previously established.

Six: Shaykh al-Ṣadūq also mentions this tradition in *al-Faqīh*, narrating from ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, from the Imam.

As for al-Ṣadūq's chain to ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, one must refer to the *shuyūkh* (*mashyakhah*) of *al-Faqīh*.

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[135] *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 10, p. 75.

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Seven: al-Barqī narrates this tradition also a second time in *al-Maḥāsin*, from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl. As for Ibn Faḍḍāl, he narrated it from Thaʿlabah, from ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, from the Imam. Shaykh al-Ḥurr did not mention the names, relying on the previous information.

Exercise 4

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates:

وعن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، وعن أبي علي الأشعري، عن محمد بن عبد الجبار جميعاً، عن صفوان، عن عمرو بن حريث أنه قال لأبي عبد الله (عليه السلام): ألا أقص عليك ديني ...

> And from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father and from Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār all together, from Ṣafwān, from ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth, who said: ʿI said to Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A): "Can I inform you what my religion constitutes?...."'[136]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr mentions this tradition from *al-Kāfī*, and this is known by the previous evidence mentioned in the second tradition.

Shaykh al-Kulaynī narrates this tradition from Ṣafwān, from ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth by two paths, and they are:

> ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from Ṣafwān, from ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth.
>
> Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār, from Ṣafwān, from ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth.

This can be understood from the statement ʿand from Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbārʾ which is an adjunction to ʿand from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his fatherʾ.

The word ʿall togetherʾ (*jamīʿan*) means that Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim and Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār both narrated from Ṣafwān.

It also becomes clear that it is sufficient to authenticate the tradition to use only one path, and there is no need to validate both paths.

In researching the state of the two paths we say: in regards to the first path, mention has already been made of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm and his father, who are both reliable, as established in the second tradition.

Regarding **Ṣafwān**, even though this name is shared by numerous narrators, however the famous among them and the one who is commonly known with the name of Ṣafwān that is generally used is either Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā (d. 210/825) the cloth merchant (*bayyāʿ al-sābirī*), or Ṣafwān ibn

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136 *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 15, h. 4.

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Mahrān the camel guide (*al-jammāl*). Both of them are reliable by the testimony of al-Najāshī,[137] and therefore there is no benefit in researching to specify if it is this person or the other.

ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth is Abū Aḥmad al-Ṣayrafī al-Asadī al-Kūfī, who is reliable as has been mentioned by al-Najāshī.[138]

This establishes the authenticity of this path.

As for the second path, it is also authentic because in the first tradition **Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī** has already been discussed, and he is Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, who was reliable and he was the shaykh of al-Kulaynī.

With **Ṣafwān** and **ʿAmr ibn Ḥurayth**, they have already been discussed and both of them are reliable.

The only narrator left is **Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār**, and he is Muḥammad ibn Abū al-Ṣahbān, and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has said about him that he is: 'A Qummī, and reliable.'[139]

Exercise 5

In the sixth tradition Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī narrates the following:

وعن محمد بن يحيى ، عن أحمد بن محمد ، وعن عدة من أصحابنا ، عن سهل بن زياد جميعا ، عن الحسن بن محبوب ، عن هشام بن سالم ، عن عبد الحميد بن أبي العلاء ، عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام في جملة حديث

And from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. And from a few of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād, all together from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī al-ʿUlā, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A), who said within a tradition....[140]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr narrates this tradition from al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*, based on the evidence previously explained.

In this statement al-Kulaynī explains that he has two paths in the tradition he is narrating. Both paths go to al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī al-ʿUlā.

Therefore, the different paths are specific to the links between al-Kulaynī and al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, but as for the path between al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb to the Imam, there are no multiple paths in it.

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[137] Ibid. vol. 13, p. 85.

[138] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 9, pp. 121, 123.

[139] Ibid. vol. 14, p. 263.

[140] *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 16, h. 6.

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Based on this the two paths of the tradition can be explained in the following way:

> Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī al-ʿUlā.
>
> A few of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from Hishām ibn Sālim, from ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd.

The first path is authentic, because Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad have already been discussed in tradition number three, in them being reliable and noble.

As for **al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb**, he is the author of *Kitāb al-Mashyakhah*, and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has said that he is: 'A Kufan and reliable.'[141]

Hishām ibn Sālim has been mentioned by al-Najāshī as being: 'Reliable, reliable.'[142]

Regarding **ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī al-ʿUlā**, he is al-Azdī, and is reliable as mentioned by al-Najāshī.[143]

In regards to the second path, it starts with saying 'a few of our companions', and this term was frequently mentioned by al-Kulaynī and no other scholars have said it. So, whenever the term 'a few of our companions' is mentioned we know that the tradition is narrated by al-Kulaynī.

Explanations have been given in what the meaning of 'a few' is and how its reliability can be established, and we will discuss this when dealing with studying the book *al-Kāfī*.

What we can briefly say here is: There is no objection by anyone in validating the 'few', but the dispute is how to technically justify this. Therefore, our study regarding the 'few' does not mean doubting its validity, but it only means that there is a difference in view about how to justify the technicality of its validity that is agreed upon.

As for **Sahl ibn Ziyād**, there have been ongoing debates between the scholars about him. We advise the student to write a research paper about him so this could become a key to expanding one's *rijālī* information.

As for the rest of the individuals in the chain, their reliability has already been mentioned.

Therefore, the second path is disputable as far as Sahl is concerned, but this is not significant after establishing the authenticity of the first path.

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[141] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 5, p. 89.

[142] Ibid. vol. 19, p. 297.

[143] Ibid. vol. 9, p. 271.

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Important Note

Shaykh al-Ḥurr narrates the above traditions from al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfī*. We will now examine other chapters in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* to deal with traditions narrated from sources other than *al-Kāfī*.

One:

Shaykh al-Ḥurr mentions the following in Chapter 1 of the chapters dealing with types of water for ritual ablution:

محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن بابويه «رضي الله عنه» بأسانيده، عن محمد بن حمران وجميل بن دراج، عن أبي عبدالله (عليه السلام) ...

> Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh (R), with his chains,[144] from Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān and Jamīl ibn Darrāj, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A) ....[145]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr narrates this tradition from *al-Faqīh*, by evidence of mentioning Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn, who is Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

In order to become acquainted with the authenticity of this tradition it is necessary to review the chain from al-Ṣadūq to Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān and Jamīl.

If we were to refer to the *mashyakhah* of *al-Faqīh*,[146] we would see that he says:

> Any chain that has Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān and Jamīl ibn Darrāj, then I have narrated it from my father (R), from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Ya'qūb ibn Yazīd, from Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr, from Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān and Jamīl ibn Darrāj.

The chain is authentic because al-Ṣadūq's father whose name is 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh needs no introduction, along with what al-Najāshī has said that he is: 'The master of Qummīs in his time, and the highest of them. He was their jurist and their reliable source.'[147]

As for **Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh**, he is al-Ash'arī al-Qummī. Al-Najāshī said about him: 'He is the shaykh of this sect, its jurist, and its representative.'[148] He has been frequently mentioned in narrations.

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[144] The correct chain is as has been quoted in chapter 23 of Chapters of *Tayammum*, h. 1.

[145] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, p. 133, h. 1.

[146] *Al-Faqīh*, vol. 4, p. 17.

[147] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 11, p. 368.

[148] Ibid. vol. 8, p. 74.

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Ya'qūb ibn Yazīd is the reliable source of al-Ṣadūq, as mentioned by al-Najāshī.[149]

Regarding **Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr**, he does not need to be introduced, as he has a great noble status with us and with other sects also.[150] It has been said that the Caliph Hārūn imprisoned him in order to extract information about the whereabouts of the Shi'a, and so his sister buried his books out of fear, and they decayed. Another view is the books were in a room and it rained over them and destroyed them. It is from here that he started to narrate from what he memorised, which is why many of his narrations are *mursal.*

With **Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān**, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions him under the name of Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān ibn A'yan and he does not classify him as reliable, whereas al-Najāshī mentions him as Muḥammad ibn Ḥamrān al-Nahdī, and regards him as reliable.

There is a dispute as to whether these two authorities are referring to one and the same person or more than one, but this is not significant in this case after classifying Jamīl ibn Darrāj as reliable.

Two:

Shaykh al-Ḥurr says:

قال: وقال الصادق (عليه السلام): كل ماء طاهر إلا ما علمت أنه قذر.

> He said: 'And al-Ṣādiq (A) said: "All water is pure, unless you know [are certain] that it is filthy."'[151]

This means: al-Ṣadūq said: 'And al-Ṣādiq (A) said ....'

The tradition is *mursal*, and there is a large amount of *mursal* traditions narrated by al-Ṣadūq in his book *al-Faqīh*, for reasons specific to him, which is why there is a debate about the validity of his *mursal* traditions.

One view gives distinction between if al-Ṣadūq narrates the *mursal* tradition from the Imam by saying 'The Imam said' or if the *mursal* is introduced with his saying 'It is narrated from the Imam'. It is said that the first is valid, and the second is not valid, by the claim that if it is *mursal* from the Imam with the expression 'He said' then this indicates the narrator's certainty of the tradition's provenance from the Imam. With this we say: this certainty mentioned is either based on his direct experience (*ḥiss*) or conjecture (*ḥads*), and through the presumption that rational persons speak from experience (*al-ḥiss al-'uqalā'iyyah*), we are able to establish that his

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[149] Ibid. vol. 20, p. 147.

[150] Ibid. vol. 14, p. 279.

[151] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 1, p. 133, h. 2.

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certainty about these traditions derives from experience, and will therefore be valid.

By the will of Almighty God when discussing the book *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, we will discuss this issue in detail.

Three:

Shaykh al-Ḥurr says:

قال: وقال (عليه السلام) ...

He said: 'And he (A) said ....[152]

This does not indicate anything new.

Four:

Shaykh al-Ḥurr says:

محمد بن الحسن الطوسي «رضي الله عنه» بإسناده، عن محمد ابن أحمد بن يحيى، عن يعقوب بن يزيد، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن داود بن فرقد، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) ...

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (R), with his chain, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, from Ya'qūb ibn Yazīd, from Ibn Abī 'Umayr, from Dāwūd ibn Farqad, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A) ....[153]

The important point here is that when Shaykh al-Ḥurr wanted to narrate from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, he started the chain by saying Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, as a sign of changing from the previous chain which was from al-Ṣadūq.

It is also necessary to refer back to the *mashyakhah* of *al-Tahdhīb*[154] to get to know the path of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.

He (R) mentions that there are four paths, and it is sufficient for us to establish the authenticity of one of them, which is: Shaykh Abū 'Abd Allāh and al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh and Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn, all of them from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamzah al-'Alawī and Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bazūfarī, all of them from Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.

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[152] Ibid. h. 3.

[153] Ibid. pp. 133-134, h. 4

[154] *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 10, p. 71. It is also possible to refer to *al-Fihrist* for this as well.

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Shaykh Abū ʿAbd Allāh is Shaykh al-Mufīd, and his reliability frees us from the need to research the reliability of al-Ḥusayn and Aḥmad.

Al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamzah al-ʿAlawī is famously known as al-Marʿash, or al-Marʿashī. He was one of the great noble scholars and jurists of this sect, as al-Najāshī has said.[155]

As for **al-Bazūfarī**, he has not been mentioned by al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī,[156] however this would not affect it after establishing the reliability of al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamzah.

Aḥmad ibn Idrīs has been mentioned before, and he is Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, who was reliable, noble, and the shaykh of al-Kulaynī.

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā is reliable in the tradition, as has been mentioned by al-Najāshī. He has narrated abundantly and he also has a book called *Nawādir al-Ḥikmah* which was known by the Qummīs as *Dabbah Shabīb*. Shabīb was the name of a man in Qum who had a container that had boxes that would produce oil, so they made the resemblance between the book and this.[157]

Yaʿqūb ibn Yazīd and Ibn Abī ʿUmayr have both previously been mentioned as being reliable.

Dāwūd ibn Farqad is a Kufan and reliable as mentioned by al-Najāshī.[158]

In conclusion, the tradition's chain is authentic.

Five:

Shaykh al-Ḥurr says:

> محمد بن يعقوب الكليني «رضي الله عنه»، عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن النوفلي، عن السكوني، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) ...
>
> Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (may Allah be pleased with him), from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from al-Nawfalī, from al-Sakūnī, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) ....[159]

Regarding ʿAlī and his father, they have both been previously mentioned, and they are reliable.

As for **al-Sakūnī**, there is no path to classify him as reliable except for the statement given by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in *al-ʿUddah*, that the creed has

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155 *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 4, p. 290.

156 Ibid. vol. 15, p. 290.

157 Ibid. vol. 15, p. 44.

158 Ibid. vol. 7, p. 114.

159 *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 1, p. 134, h. 6.

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accepted (i.e. acted upon) his narrations, and this is another expression for classifying reliability.

Al-Nawfalī was usually connected to al-Sakūnī and narrated from him. No specific testimony to his reliability has been mentioned.

Yes, his name appears in the chains of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* and *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, so those who believe in the reliability of anyone who has been mentioned in any of these two books will believe in the reliability of this person. However, in our opinion this mentioned view is rejected.

There is another path that we can use to establish the reliability of al-Nawfalī, which is that the sect unanimously accepting the narrations of al-Sakūnī would necessitate establishing the reliability of al-Nawfalī, or else it would not be possible to accept al-Sakūnī's narrations.

Returning to the Main Topic

Prior to these exercises we were discussing the ways of establishing reliability, and we are now going to return back to this issue.

Four: The Claim of Consensus of Trusting or Classifying of Reliability

Among the ways that have been presented to establish reliability, is the claim of consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of trusting (*taṣdīq*) a narrator or classifying their reliability (*tawthīq*). Al-Kashshī has claimed that there is a consensus in the sect about trusting eighteen narrators from the companions of the Imams.

Six of them are from the companions of Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A), and they are: Zurārah, Maʿrūf ibn Kharrabūdh, Burayd, Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī, al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār, and Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Ṭāʾifī.[160]

Six are from the companions of Imam Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (A), and they are: Jamīl ibn Darrāj, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Maskān, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Bukayr, Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā, Ḥammād ibn ʿUthmān, and Ābān ibn ʿUthmān.[161]

Six are from the companions of Imam al-Kāẓim (A) and Imam al-Riḍā (A), and they are: Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā al-Sābirī, Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Mughīrah, al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr.[162]

Explaining the validity of this consensus: if al-Kashshī was correct in his claim of there being a consensus and that the sect has truly agreed upon this, then that is the required result. On the other hand, if he was incorrect and there was no consensus, then al-Kashshī's testimony is itself sufficient to be used within the argument through his claim of such a consensus existing, as

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[160] *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, no. 431.

[161] Ibid. no. 705.

[162] Ibid. no. 1050.

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this implies his testimony to the truthfulness of the content of what he narrates.

However, this would be complete if the person claiming the existence of a consensus were from among the early scholars, but if he were from among the later scholars, like Ibn Ṭāwūs claiming a consensus about the reliability of Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim, then this would not be complete. This is based on the invalidity of the judgements of later scholars about the reliability of early narrators, as has previously been explained.

That being said, Sayyid al-Khū'ī had tried to argue its validity by saying that the claim of Ibn Ṭāwūs suggests he was aware of the testimony of one of the early scholars about the reliability of that person, and this is enough in establishing reliability.[163]

However, with the claim of Ibn Ṭāwūs, if it does not reveal the existence of a consensus about the reliability in reality then it is possible that it does not even reveal the testimony of one of the early scholars about this person's reliability. For example, if we were to suppose that Ibn Ṭāwūs claimed such a consensus based on seeing the name of Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim in the chains of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* – due to the statement that exists in the introduction to the *Tafsīr* that anyone whose name is mentioned in this book is reliable – and this was agreed upon in the time where there might have been Ibn Ṭāwūs's specific *ijtihād* view and not what others viewed as well.

Five: Representation from the Imam

Another way that could be used to demonstrate the reliability of a narrator is if the Imam appointed the narrator as an agent to represent them in one of their affairs. The Imams had two types of agents: agents who had general representation of the Imam, as is the case of the four deputies of the Twelfth Imam, and agents who had specific representation in a particular area.

There is no doubt that representation (*wikālah*) of the first type indicates the elevated and noble status of the agent. The problem is with representation of the second type, as the Imams had many agents of this type and they have been mentioned in *rijālī* books.

Some scholars insist that representation does not just prove reliability but also justness (*'adālah*), and their argument is that if the agent was not just then delegating them to become an agent would be prohibited because it is a form of relying on a wrongdoer, which has been censured in the verse:

وَلَا تَرْكَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا فَتَمَسَّكُمُ النَّارُ

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[163] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 46.

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> And do not incline toward those who do wrong, lest you be touched by the Fire.[164]

Others have rejected representation as indicating reliability, arguing that we find many of the agents of the Imams have been criticised.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has dedicated in his book *al-Ghaybah* a special chapter on the agents who have been criticised.

He speaks about this when he discusses the Wāqifī sect, in that the first to adopt this belief were ʿAlī ibn Ḥamzah al-Baṭāʾinī, Ziyād ibn Marwān al-Qandī, and ʿUthmān ibn ʿĪsā al-Rawāsī. They were enticed by this world and ensnared by its vanities by following a group who offered to pay them what they chose of wealth.

It is narrated from Imam al-Riḍā (A) that al-Baṭāʾinī was questioned in his grave and he was asked about the Imams, 'And he named all of them until he got to my name, so he was asked but he stopped, and he was struck on his head with a strike that filled his grave with fire.'[165]

This being said, the correct view is that representation does indicate reliability, because the conduct of rational people is usually not to delegate someone to become an agent in a particular thing if their complete reliability is not assured, as well as their truthfulness, and not being used to lying. Try this on yourself and you will see the truthfulness of what we say.

If it is then said that: how can you interpret the criticisms directed at many of the agents? Our answer is that deviation did happen to them after they were given representation, as how many a person do we trust and delegate to become our agent and they then deviate afterwards?!

If it is said that: delegating someone to become an agent in a particular area means their reliability in that area and not other areas. For example, delegating someone to become an agent in selling a house necessitates his reliability and him not lying in selling a house, and not in other affairs, like in narrating traditions, which is what we are discussing here. The answer to this is that if a rational person does not see absolute reliability in an agent, they would not delegate them to be one, because as long as there is a possibility of them lying in other areas, then it might transfer into that specific area for which that person was an agent.

Furthermore, the least is that it is not appropriate for the Imam to delegate some of his important affairs to someone who might be a traitor in some areas.

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[164] Qurʾan, 11:113.

[165] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 11, p. 217.

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Six: Narrating from a Reliable Person

Does a reliable person narrating from another person indicate the reliability of that person? No, because a reliable person narrates from reliable people and may also narrate from unreliable people. There are plenty of cases where reliable sources narrate from unreliable sources, as can be observed by studying the narrations.

If it was the case that the narration of a reliable person from another person counted as evidence for that person being reliable, this would mean that most, if not all, narrators are reliable. For instance, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī is reliable, therefore if Shaykh al-Ṭūsī were to narrate from a person, that person would also be reliable, and the narration of this person would indicate the reliability of the third person, and this would continue until the end of the chain.

This clarifies the stance taken by Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī, the author of *al-Mustadrak*, where he said that it is problematic to accept that the narrating of a reliable person from another person indicates that person's reliability.

Of course, if the great and reputable reliable narrators narrate from a person then it is not unlikely that this testifies to their reliability – unlike what Sayyid al-Khū'ī and other scholars have said in rejecting this – because a rational person does not knowingly narrate from a weak source. Such an act is foolish and unjustifiable.

This is an important point that needs to be further explained and clarified. If we were to accept that the abundant narrating of a reliable person is evidence that the person they are narrating from is reliable, then this establishes the reliability of many narrators, and it would also change the state of them being unknown to becoming reliable.

We can mention for example Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, where al-Kulaynī has narrated from him abundantly, who in turn narrates from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān. There is a dispute regarding who Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl is, in that it cannot be Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl Bazīʿ, the reliable noble narrator, because he was from the companions of Imam al-Riḍā (A). It is not possible for al-Kulaynī to have narrated from him, so it must be someone else, and seeing that this other person has not been proven to be reliable, therefore the narrations that al-Kulaynī mentions from him are removed of any credit even though there are many of them.

However, if we were to accept the previous view and say that it would not be appropriate for al-Kulaynī to frequently mention from someone he believes is weak, especially when he is citing these traditions in his book that generations will be using, and a rational person would not accept placement of weak traditions in his book, so how would the case be if from the beginning he wanted his book to become a reference for future generations?!

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If we were to accept the previous view then it would establish the reliability of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl.

In support of what we say is if we were to refer to *rijālī* books, we would see that for them narrating from weak sources is something that would vilify that person. We see that when they refer to the biographies of some narrators they warn that this particular person narrates from weak sources, as has been mentioned in the biography of al-ʿAyyāshī, al-Kashshī, and others.

If we were to read the biography of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī, we see that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā had expelled him from Qum because he narrated from weak sources.

What if one were to say that we accept that a reliable person would not knowingly narrate frequently from weak sources, but there is no problem with narrating from someone whose state is unknown (*majhūl al-ḥāl*)? Based on this it is possible to suppose that the state of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl was unknown according to al-Kulaynī, and therefore his reliability cannot be established.

We would respond: insofar as the rule for an unknown narrator is similar to that of a weak one in rejecting their narrations, it would be just as absurd for a rational person to narrate abundantly from a narrator who was unknown to them.

Furthermore, when we study the books of *rijāl*, we see that narrating from unknown narrators is seen as equal to narrating from weak ones, and there is no distinction drawn between the two. If we look at what al-Najāshī says in the biography of Muḥammad ibn Mālik, we find he says: ʿAḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn would fabricate traditions and also narrated from unknown narrators; I have also heard some say that his creed was corrupt and so were his narrations; I do not know how our noble shaykh, the reliable Abū ʿAlī ibn Humām and our great and reliable Shaykh Abū Ghālib al-Rāzī (R) narrated from him.'

In addition to this, frequently narrating from the same person might suggest that there was a long companionship, which means we cannot assume this person was unknown.

If one were to argue: if abundantly narrating from someone points to their reliability, then why do we see that great scholars have abundantly narrated from some weak narrators like Muḥammad ibn Sinān, Sahl ibn Ziyād, al-Baṭāʾinī, and others?

We would respond: what is the problem with believing that these people were reliable according to those great scholars, and therefore they abundantly narrated from them, and this would be a case of conflicting opinions amongst scholars, and would not be recorded as a fault for these scholars?

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Of course, these scholars can be considered at fault if the person was regarded as weak according to all scholars but they narrated from him in spite of this, but if he was not weak according the specific view of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī, then from whence do we identify the weakness in this form?

If it is said: a reliable scholar like al-Kulaynī narrates abundantly from, for example, Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, this might not be because al-Kulaynī sees him as reliable, but because he is confident about the veracity of the traditions he is narrating from this person. This confidence makes it easy to narrate from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl and to do so abundantly.

If we were to assume that al-Kulaynī was relying on his own conviction about the material rather than about Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl's reliability, we would also add another premise, which is that the assurance (*iṭmi'nān*) of any person is valid for themselves only and not valid for others. It might be that these related issues that he relied on to acquire assurance does not necessitate assurance for us, even if we were to study them.

We would respond: the most important contextual issues that can be relied on in acquiring assurance is the presence of a tradition in an *aṣl* that is relied upon by the masters, and it is clear that the existence of a tradition in an *aṣl* depends on gaining certainty of the reliability of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, or else it would be possible that he is lying and fabricating in recording this tradition in the *aṣl*.

The possibility of there being other related issues that al-Kulaynī relies on is irrelevant in being applied with acquiring previous certainty about the reliability of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, even though it exists but it is still a theoretical possibility that is not valid. The important related issue for them is the presence of a tradition in a reliable book, and nothing else. This is why we see al-Ṣadūq say in the introduction to his book: 'And everything that is in this book is extracted from famous and reliable books.' If there existed another contextual issue stronger or equal to this he would have mentioned it.

If may be said that al-Kulaynī's abundant narrating from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl might be based on the presumption of justness (*aṣālat al-ʿadālah*) rather than his being certain of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl's reliability. However, as we reject the presumption of justness, it is not possible to rely on his abundant narrating from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl to indicate his reliability.

The answer: we cannot assume that al-Kulaynī relied on the presumption of justness because the meaning of relying on it would be that al-Kulaynī found someone he knows nothing about who gave him traditions and al-Kulaynī recorded them from him in his book *al-Kāfī*, which he wanted to be a legitimate reference for the Shiʿa for the rulings of their religion. Al-

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Kulaynī did all this because he did not know that Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl was corrupt, and that is why he related from him and he relied on the principality of his justness.

Such a view is not possible in regards to Shaykh al-Kulaynī.

Seven: Mastership in Permit

There are numerous forms of receiving a narration from another person. It could be that a student hears the narration from the teacher, or it could be that the teacher dictates the narration to the student. A third way is when the teacher gives authority to the student by giving him a book that has the narrations recorded and compiled and says to the student: 'I permit you to narrate from me the traditions mentioned in this book.'

The term used for this third form of receiving a narration is called having a permit (*ijāzah*), and the author of the book who issued the permit is called the master of the permit (*shaykh al-ijāzah*).

There have been discussions here on whether being among the masters of permit is sufficient to establish a person's reliability. Studying this discussion is very important because Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had received many *uṣūl* containing hadiths which were included in his two books *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār*. This was through individuals who have not been specifically classified as reliable, but they were masters of permit and nothing more. An example for this is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd whom Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates some of the *uṣūl* from, through Shaykh al-Mufīd. There are others, like Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid who was known as Ibn 'Abdūn or Ibn al-Ḥāshir, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr al-Qarashī, Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Jīd, and so on.

If mastership in permit (*shaykhūkhat al-ijāzah*) is not sufficient to establish reliability then there will be a problem in many traditions because of this, which is why thought was given into creating a new way to overcome the problem. We will present some of these paths at the end of this book.

Among those who believed in the sufficiency of mastership in permit in establishing reliability is Shaykh al-Baḥrānī in his book *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāẓirah*,[166] Shaykh Āgha Riḍā al-Hamadānī (d. 1322 AH) in his book *Miṣbāḥ al-Faqīh*,[167] and others, or rather most scholars, as this was the famous and prevailing opinion.

However, some contemporaries like Sayyid al-Khū'ī and Shahīd al-Ṣadr rejected this and say that mastership in permit does not indicate reliability. Sayyid al-Khū'ī explained this, saying that the benefit of the permit is for

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[166] *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāẓirah*, vol. 6, p. 48.

[167] *Al-Ṣalāt*, p. 12.

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nothing other than to say, for example, that Shaykh al-Mufīd is authorised to say that 'Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd narrated these traditions to me and they are in this book which he has permitted me to narrate' like as if he had heard the tradition from that person.

Seeing that the reliable person hearing a narration from another person does not indicate that person's reliability – as previously explained that the narrating of a reliable person from another person does not necessarily indicate that person's reliability – then it is not possible for mastership in permit to indicate reliability.[168]

We can say in arguing this point that if the master in permit is someone who is known due to many people taking permits from them, then this would be sufficient in indicating reliability. The reason for this is that it is farfetched for great, reliable scholars to go to someone and receive a permit to narrate a book when they are not sure of that person's reliability. Would you go to a person and take a permit from them to narrate traditions in a book or two books while you are not certain of their reliability?

Question: What is mentioned as being farfetched contradicts what is mentioned by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in his book *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (A)*[169] that one of his *shuyūkh* by the name of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Abīd al-Naysābūrī al-Mawrānī was a *nāṣibī* and al-Ṣadūq had never met someone more *nāṣibī* than him. His extreme hatred towards Ahl al-Bayt was so much that he would say: 'O God, send Your salutations to Muḥammad,' and refuse to give salutations to the pure progeny.

Answer: This indicates having a corrupt belief, but it does not conflict with reliability.

What we mentioned in being farfetched is specific to masters of permit who are from the *imāmī* sect, and not if they were from other sects. The great scholars can take permits from those of other sects for specific purposes, as is attributed to Shahīd al-Awwal,[170] where it is said that he has many permits from non-Shi'a scholars.

Question: If mastership was sufficient to prove reliability, then why has Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or al-Najāshī not mentioned the reliability of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd and his likes? Not mentioning their reliability proves that they did not consider these narrators to be reliable.

Answer: Sayyid al-Burūjurdī has replied to this, saying that the following are the main *rijāl* books: *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, and *Rijāl al-Shaykh*.

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168 *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 77.

169 *'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (A)*, vol. 2, p. 279.

170 Muḥammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī al-'Āmilī. [Translator's note]

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With *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, it was compiled to mention the authors of books, and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad and those similar to him might not have had books.

In regards to *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, it was compiled on the basis of mentioning only those who have a tradition mentioned about them, and these narrators do not have any tradition about them.

As for *Rijāl al-Shaykh*, it was apparently a draft copy and the intention Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had was to revise it a second time to edit and organise it, and explain the state of some of the people mentioned in it. This is supported by the fact that he mentions in brief some narrators, by just mentioning their name and their father's name, without explaining anything about them. He also repeats the mentioning of some of the narrators, and there are other things as well that would necessitate speculation of the book not being completed to its desired requirement. A reason for this is due to the shaykh being excessively occupied with a lot of writing and authoring, so much so that if the time of his life was divided according to his writings, his *rijāl* book would only take up a few hours.[171]

The Theory of Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm and Some Others

In order to overcome the criticisms directed at masters in permit – based on the insufficiency of mastership in establishing reliability - Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm and some scholars chose another theory. Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm when discussing Sahl ibn Ziyād in his *rijāl* book[172] mentions the following:

> The narration whose chain contains one of the masters in permit is authentic and valid, but not because mastership in permit reveals reliability, but because the books that the tradition is taken from are known and widely transmitted, like the Four Books in our time. The same way as the Four Books in our time are known in their attribution to their authors and there is no need to consider a valid path just to take a tradition from them. The only reason why one would do so is out of blessings and respect, and so the same is the case for the *uṣūl* that are used in taking traditions from in that time. They would be obviously known in who the author was and there would be no need to look for an authentic path to take the tradition from it. Therefore, it does not affect the presence of one of the masters of permit or anyone else who has not been classified as reliable in a path as long as the reference to the path is just mentioned for blessings.

Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm further added:

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[171] *Ajwad al-Taqrīr*, vol. 2, p. 270.

[172] Vol. 3, p. 25.

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The path of the shaykh, may his soul rest in peace, points to this, because at times he would mention the complete chain, which was the norm for early scholars, and at times he would omit the masters and limit to mentioning the tradition only. This is only because there would be no difference in the chain by mentioning the masters or omitting them.

Shaykh al-Nūrī has mentioned this method in his *Mustadrak Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*,[173] at the beginning of the third *fā'idah*, and he attributes it to al-Shahīd al-Thānī and others.

It could be that Shaykh al-Tustarī has also said this in his *rijāl* encyclopaedia.

God-willing we will study this method in another more appropriate place and how to discuss it, but we will say here for the meanwhile that: when Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm himself discusses in his book[174] in some of the *fawā'id* he says that those books were not widely transmitted. He gives some evidence for this, and therefore the need still stands for there to be a valid chain on its own.

Eight: Being Mentioned in a Chain that is Ruled as Authentic

If we had a chain to a book or a certain narrator and some scholars whose reliability judgements are accepted had ruled that chain to be authentic, and it is supposed that one of the narrators mentioned in the chain has not been mentioned as reliable or weak, then is this narrator ruled as reliable because of the ruling of the validity of the chain in which he is mentioned?

Some have accepted this view, in that it reveals the reliability of the person when it is ruled that the chain in which he is mentioned is authentic.

For example, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd – who is the teacher of al-Ṣadūq and one of the greatest and most noble of scholars – had ruled the authenticity of narrations transmitted from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā – who was also great and noble – with any chain, except for some of the specific traditions that had been mentioned in certain chains.

Based on this view that accepts the revealing of reliability through the ruling of the authenticity of a chain, it would necessitate the ruling of reliability of all the individuals mentioned in the chain of the narrations transmitted from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā as long as they are not among those exempted.

This can be refuted by saying that, according to the view of early scholars, to rule the authenticity of a narration means to act upon it, and it is clear that acting upon a certain narration as it should be because its

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[173] *Mustadrak Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 3, p. 373.

[174] Vol. 4, p. 47.

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narrators are reliable. It also could be because the person acting upon it believes in it due to it having special surrounding evidence. It is possible that if we were to look into this evidence, it would not be valid in our view.

The correct view is that this refutation is incomplete – based on the example given, even though it could be valid in other examples – by the evidence that Ibn al-Walīd had not exempted certain chains, but had exempted certain individuals. He did not say that he acted on all the narrations of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, except for this narration or that narration. He said 'except for the narrations of so and so person'. Therefore, if he acted on narrations that he had not exempted its narrators from because of evidence, then it would be appropriate to exempt the narrations because they are what carry the evidence and not the individuals.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī criticises this approach, saying that the opinion of Ibn al-Walīd in the authenticity of a chain does not indicate the reliability of its narrators, because he might have relied on the presumption of justness and believe in the validity of every narrator he narrates as being a believer and has no reference of being corrupt.[175]

This criticism can be refuted by saying that if this possibility existed in the statements of Ibn al-Walīd, it does not exist in the statement of Ibn Nūḥ.

Explanation: Al-Najāshī has said in his *al-Fihrist* in the biography of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā:

> And Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd exempted from the narration of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā what Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Hamadānī narrated, and also what he narrated from a man or when he says 'some of our companions', or from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ma'ādhī ... or from Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Abīd.

He then added the following:

> Abū 'Abbās ibn Nūḥ[176] has said: 'Our Shaykh Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd is correct in all of this, and Abū Ja'far Ibn Bābawayh has followed him in this, except with Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā ibn 'Abīd whom I do not know what his view is about him, because he believed in the apparent view of justness and reliability.'

The statement of Ibn Nūḥ indicates his testimony for the justness of all who Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā narrates from, including Muḥammad ibn

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[175] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 74.

[176] Al-Najāshī has said about him: 'He is Aḥmad ibn Nūḥ ibn 'Alī ibn al-'Abbās ibn Nūḥ al-Sayrāfī, who resided in Basra. He was reliable in his narrations and precise in what he narrated. He was a jurist and insightful in traditions and narrations. He is our teacher and our shaykh whom we benefitted from.'

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ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbīd, as he says 'because he was apparently just and reliable'. So, if the criteria for Ibn Nūḥ was the presumption of justness then it would be appropriate for him to say that he had not established his weakness, and there was no need to justify by saying 'because he ...'.

In addition to this, if he relied on the presumption of justness it would be appropriate to rule the justness of the rest as well, because them not apparently being just would not prevent ruling their justness based on the presumption of justness.

The correct view is the invalidity of both explanations.

In regards to the first, this is because as it can be justified that their weakness has not been established it is also correct based on the apparent justness, so with the presence of a stronger justification there is no need to refer to the weaker justification.

As for the second, because the claim that Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā was apparently just does not indicate that other individuals who were exempted were not apparently corrupt, but it might be that they were also apparently corrupt, and therefore the presumption of justness was not applied to them.

Other Ways to Establish Reliability

These were eight ways claimed to establish reliability, and it has been explained that the third, the sixth, and the eighth are incomplete.

There are other ways, like the mentioning of a path to a person in the *mashyakhah* of al-Ṣadūq, or sending mercy to the person by saying 'may Allah have mercy on him', or being a companion of an Infallible, or authoring a book or an *aṣl*, and so on. We avoided mentioning them because of their invalidity and out of fear of prolonging.

Something worth mentioning is that there are other paths that cannot be confined to a certain criteria, like using the classifying of reliability of Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim through his spreading of the narration of the Kufans. This is because traditions cannot be accepted from a person who is not known to be reliable, and therefore it is not possible to transfer traditions of one school to another school.

Or like the classifying of reliability of al-Sakūnī through the claim Shaykh al-Ṭūsī makes in *al-ʿUddah* that the creed acted upon his narrations. He mentions in the chapter of the validity of a narration that the deviation a narrator has from his belief does not affect taking traditions from him. He gives evidence for this by saying: 'And based on what we said the creed acted upon what Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyāth, Ghiyāth ibn Kalūb, Nūḥ ibn Darrāj al-Sakūnī, and other non-Shiʿa had narrated from our Imams (A).'[177]

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[177] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 3, p. 106.

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Also, similar to the classifying of al-Nawfalī – who was usually associated with al-Sakūnī in his narrations – as it is known among scholars to reject his narrations because his reliability has not been established, except through *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* and *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. However, it is possible to establish their reliability from other paths, like saying: 'The creed acting upon the narrations of al-Sakūnī necessitates acting upon the narrations of al-Nawfalī, because the transmitter of the narrations of al-Sakūnī is usually al-Nawfalī, so if al-Nawfalī's narrations are not accepted this would mean the rejection of the narrations of al-Sakūnī.'

There are other paths that can be acquired through research and investigation.

Questions

1. Who are the people of consensus? How does the consensus indicate their reliability?

2. Sayyid al-Khū'ī accepted the validity of consensus, even if its claim comes from later scholars. Mention the evidence he uses for this and how to argue it.

3. There are two types of representation from the Infallible; mention them and explain what type has various views in regards to its signification of reliability.

4. What is the evidence for representation indicating reliability, and what is the evidence given by those who reject it?

5. What is your view on representation, and does it indicate reliability? Give evidence to your argument.

6. If representation indicated reliability, how can we explain the censuring issued against some representatives?

7. Does the narrating of a reliable person from another person indicate that person's reliability? Give evidence for your answer.

8. Who chose the view that narrating of a reliable person from another person indicates their reliability?

9. In your view does the abundant narrating of a reliable person from another person indicate their reliability? Why?

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10. Mention an example which supports the view that the abundant narrating of a reliable person from another person indicates their reliability.

11. If it is said that with a reliable person, even if they do not narrate from weak narrators, they could narrate from someone unknown. How can this be refuted?

12. If it is said that the abundant narrating of a reliable person does not indicate reliability, because the great scholars had abundantly narrated from some weak narrators, how can this be refuted?

13. If it is said that al-Kulaynī's abundant narrating from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl could be from his assurance in the truthfulness of his narrations, and not from being sure of his reliability – how can this be refuted?

14. If it is said that al-Kulaynī's abundant narrating from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl might be based on the presumption of justness and not from being sure of his reliability, how can this be refuted?

15. There are three ways of taking a tradition and receiving it. What are they?

16. What does 'masters in permit' mean?

17. Why is the discussion of the sufficiency of mastership in permit in establishing reliability important?

18. Give some examples for masters in permit whose reliability has not been established.

19. What is the argument that Sayyid al-Khūʾī used in disproving the signification of mastership in permit to indicate reliability, and how can this be refuted?

20. It could be argued in disproving mastership in permit indicating reliability that one of the masters of al-Ṣadūq was a *nāṣibī*. How can this argument be refuted?

21. What is the path used by Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm and others in overcoming the problem of masters in permit?

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22. It is said that the narrator being in a chain that is ruled as authentic indicates his reliability. Explain what this means, with an example.

23. It could be said that the ruling of Ibn al-Walīd in the authenticity of the narrations of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā might be from him believing in the authenticity of those narrations based on some evidence and not based on the reliability of who Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā narrates from. How can this be refuted?

24. Sayyid al-Khū'ī mentions that the ruling of Ibn al-Walīd in the authenticity of the narrations of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā does not indicate the reliability of the narrators. Explain his evidence.

25. It could be possible to use the testimony of Ibn Nūḥ for the reliability of all the masters of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. Explain the argument.

26. There are many ways of establishing reliability. Mention them and explain the complete ones and the incomplete ones.

27. Mention some of the other ways of establishing reliability that cannot fall under any certain criteria.

Point Two: General Classifications of Reliability

At times reliability judgements could be related to one person or specific individuals, and at other times they could be linked to a general rule.

An example of the first: a statement given by al-Najāshī, for example, in favour of Ḥammād, saying: 'He is reliable in his narrations.'

An example of the second: the claim regarding ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm that he classified everyone mentioned in the chains of the narrations he mentions in his *Tafsīr al-Qummī* as being reliable.

There are many general classifications of reliability, and we will mention some of them here:

One: The Narrators in *Tafsīr al-Qummī*

Tafsīr al-Qummī is a hadith-based exegesis compiled by ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (d. 329/941), a great scholar who lived during the era of Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (A).

The second edition of this book which was printed in Najaf has a long introduction where al-Qummī mentions something that scholars have understood to mean that he has classified all of the narrators mentioned in his *Tafsīr* as reliable.

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The statement he mentions is as follows:

> We are mentioning and informing what we have received, and it is what our masters and reliable sources have mentioned from those whose obedience and following Allah has made incumbent [i.e. the Infallibles].

Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī has used this statement to classify as reliable anyone mentioned in this *Tafsīr*, on the condition that its chain ends in an Infallible.

He said in *al-Wasā'il*:

> ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm also testifies to the veracity of the traditions in his *Tafsīr* and that they are narrated from reliable narrators from the Imams (A).[178]

Sayyid al-Khū'ī has also chosen this view.[179]

If this view were valid, it has been said that it would classify two hundred and sixty men as reliable. It is here that we understand how important this discussion is.

There is another possibility to this mentioned statement, and that is al-Qummī wanted to classify as reliable his direct masters specifically and not everyone mentioned in the chain of the traditions.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī rejected this possibility, saying that al-Qummī intended to establish the authenticity of his *Tafsīr*, and this relies on classifying everyone mentioned in it, and not specifically those whom he directly narrates from.

Based on this, Sayyid al-Khū'ī concluded that anyone mentioned in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* is reliable so long as they have not been declared weak by al-Najāshī or anyone else, in which case their reliability would be dismissed, because the condition of accepting reliability is it not being opposed by a criticism, as is clearly obvious.

This is a summary of what has been said in justifying the validity of the narrators in *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. The following are arguments that criticise this view:

> The narrator of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* is Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Ḥamzah ibn Imam Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar (A), as can be seen when reviewing the book itself. This mentioned person is unknown (*majhūl al-ḥāl*) and nothing is known of him, which

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[178] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 30, p. 202.

[179] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 49.

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means the book loses its recognition due to its narrator being unknown.

Comment: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his book *al-Fihrist* mentions an authentic path to all the books of ʻAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, and among them is his *Tafsīr.* This path reaches directly to al-Qummī himself.

Assuming that al-Qummī has himself given a permit through links to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in narrating his *Tafsīr* from him, after this there would be no harm in Abū al-Faḍl being unknown.

In the long introduction to this book, it has not been proven that it was written by al-Qummī himself, as in it there is the following phrase: ʻAbū al-Ḥasan ibn ʻAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Hāshimī al-Qummī has said that the Qur'an has abrogating and abrogated verses.'

This gives a possibility that the introduction in its beginning was not written by al-Qummī, but what he says starts from 'the Qur'an has abrogating ...'

The phrase that is used as the evidence which says 'We are mentioning and informing what we have received' is mentioned before the statement mentioning Abū al-Ḥasan as saying, and therefore it cannot be used in the argument due to absence of certainty that it is from the words of al-Qummī.

Comment: This sentence used in the argument has been mentioned by Shaykh al-Ḥurr in *Wasā'il al-Shīʻah,* and he has an authentic path to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and therefore a path to al-Qummī himself. The conclusion is that al-Qummī has mentioned this sentence and it has reached Shaykh al-Ḥurr through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

As long as there have been some who are mentioned in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* as being weak by al-Najāshī or by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī then this indicates that al-Qummī did not intend to classify as reliable everyone mentioned in his *Tafsīr.*

Comment: It might be that those who have been weakened were reliable according to al-Qummī, and this would be a case of conflict between praising and criticism, and therefore weakening would not be a sign that al-Qummī did not want to classify as reliable everyone mentioned in his *Tafsīr.*

Of course, if the weakening was clear and accepted by all scholars, it would be possible to use this argument, but where does this exist?

Therefore, these arguments are not applicable.

The important issue is that:

Even though al-Qummī had a book by the name of *Tafsīr*, and it is not possible to doubt that because al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī have verified the existence of this *Tafsīr* and they have mentioned an authentic path to it, we doubt as to whether the *Tafsīr* that exists with us today is the *Tafsīr* of al-Qummī itself. We cannot at all assume

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> that it is al-Qummī's, or at least some of it is his and the rest of has been added to it.

The following statements confirm what we say: 'In reference to the *Tafsīr* of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm' or 'Referring to the narration of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm' or 'the tradition is attributed to 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm,' or 'in the narration of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm'.[180]

The *Tafsīr* has some significations that testify that al-Qummī did not intend to classify all the narrators in his book as reliable. He says: 'Abū Raf' narrated to me that Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) has said'[181] and 'Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Baghdādī mentions a disconnected tradition [*raf'*] from the Commander of the Faithful (A)'.[182] In another place he says: 'My father narrates from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from some of his men, from Abū 'Abd Allāh (A)' and other examples that cannot be used to classify reliability due to the narrators in the chain not being specified.

Moreover, in some cases there are names of people who cannot be considered as among the reliable, like, for example, Yaḥyā ibn Aktam.[183]

Two: The Narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*

Kāmil al-Ziyārah is a compilation of visitations. Its author is the reliable and noble Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978), who was among our early scholars.

This great scholar mentions in the short introduction to his book the following statement:

> We know that we are not aware of everything that has been narrated from them [i.e. the Infallibles] in this regard [in visitations] or in other areas. However, we mention only from what we have come across from among the reliable of our companions, may Allah with His mercy have mercy upon them, and we have not mentioned here any tradition narrated from irregular [*al-shidhādh*] narrators.[184]

In his book *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* Shaykh al-Nūrī understood that Ibn Qūlawayh wanted to classify specifically those whom he directly narrates

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[180] These phrases can be seen in the following pages of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, pp. 271, 272, 292, 294, 299, 313, 389.

[181] *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, vol. 1, p. 66.

[182] Ibid. p. 99.

[183] Ibid. p. 356.

[184] *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, p. 4.

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from as reliable.[185] It is mentioned that the number of these *shuyūkh* as being thirty-one.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr understood from this that the author intended to classify all of his *shuyūkh* as reliable.[186]

Sayyid al-Khū'ī is also among those who chose this view.[187] He believes that anyone mentioned in the chains of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* is reliable unless they have been opposed by being weakened by others. This is based on the general principle for the classifying of anyone as reliable taken on the condition that there is no specific statement classifying them as weak elsewhere.

According to this view, it would establish the reliability of three hundred and eighty-eight narrators, as it has been said.[188]

Comment: Accepting the classifying of the reliability of all these narrators is very problematic. The appropriate view would be to accept the reliability of the direct narrators only, because the previous statement is general in this regard, and the certain part of it is to refer specifically to the reliability of the direct narrators.

What confirms our view is that Ibn Qūlawayh mentions narrators that even he himself does not know. Like, for example, in a narration he says: 'From who mentioned it, from Muḥammad ibn Sinān, from Muḥammad ibn 'Alī who narrates it disconnected.'[189]

In another place he says: 'From some of our companions who narrate it disconnected.'[190] And: 'From those who narrate it.'[191]

There are many more cases similar to these.

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[185] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, p. 522.

[186] *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 20, *fā'idah* no. 6.

[187] *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 1, p. 50.

[188] An important note to mention here is that Sayyid al-Khū'ī initially did not believe in the reliability of the narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, even those directly mentioned, discussing this in *Fiqh al-Shī'ah*, vol. 3, p. 27. After this, during the time I attended his lectures he adopted the view of the reliability of all of them, even the non-direct narrators. Towards the end of his life he chose the detailed view and believed specifically in the reliability of the direct narrators.

[189] *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, Part One, h. 3.

[190] Ibid. h. 4.

[191] Ibid. Part Four, h. 2.

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Furthermore, it could be taken one step further[192] and to reject the understanding of the classifying of reliability of the direct narrators as well, as it is possible that the statement he made meant: 'We are not aware of all the traditions, but we narrate the traditions that have been recorded specifically by those who have expertise in narrations and are considered as its critiques.'

Therefore, what he meant by reliable is in reference to this, i.e. critiques of tradition. He did not want to say: 'I am recording traditions that I have received from my reliable *shuyūkh*.' He wanted to say: 'I am mentioning the traditions that have been recorded in books of critiques of traditions who at times could be direct *shuyūkh*, and at other times could be *shuyūkh* of my *shuyūkh*.'

Why did Sayyid al-Khū'ī alter his view about *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*?

Sayyid al-Khū'ī retracted his view about using the statement to classify the reliability of all the narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*, and he changed it to specifying the reliability of the direct narrators only. However, he did not change his view about the narrators of *Tafsīr al-Qummī*.

A question arises here on the reason for changing his view about *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*.

Answer: this is because al-Qummī said in the previously mentioned statement in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* where he said 'our reliable' after saying 'mentioned from those whose obedience and following Allah has made incumbent', and this indicates that the narrators are reliable all the way to the Imams whose obedience Allah has made incumbent. However, such an expression was not mentioned in the statement given by Ibn Qūlawayh.

Three: The *Shuyūkh* of Al-Najāshī

In the biography of some narrators al-Najāshī mentions something that could be understood is that he did not narrate from the weak. For example, in the biography of Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan al-Jawharī he says:

> I saw this shaykh and he was my friend and my father's friend. I heard a lot [of narrations] from him and I saw our *shuyūkh* weaken him, so I did not narrate anything from him and I avoided him.

He mentions in the biography of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Ubayd Allāh ibn al-Bahlūl:

> At first he was on the right path, and then he got confused. I noticed that most of our companions ignored and weakened him ... I had met

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[192] This is the view of Sayyid al-Sīstānī (may Allah prolong his life) in *Qā'idah Lā Ḍarar*, p. 21.

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> this shaykh and heard a lot [of narrations] from him, but I stopped narrating from him unless there was a link between him and I.

He mentions in the biography of Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn Mālik:

> He was weak in narrating. Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn had said: 'He would fabricate narrations and he would narrate from unknown narrators.' I had also heard someone say: 'He was corrupt in his creed and in his narrating.' I do not know how our shaykh, the noble reliable Abū 'Alī ibn Humām and our shaykh the noble reliable Abū Ghālib al-Zarārī, narrated from him.

Some scholars have concluded from these cases that al-Najāshī classified all his *shuyūkh* as reliable and he narrated only from those whom he classified as reliable.

This view has been attributed to Shaykh al-Bahā'ī and Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm.[193]

Sayyid al-Khū'ī is among the contemporary scholars who chose this view as well.

The criticism directed at this view is that the most that could be understood from al-Najāshī's statement is his hesitation towards the weak narrators when he saw that the companions had weakened them, and not someone who for him was unknown.

This can be refuted with the following points:

> Al-Najāshī's hesitation from narrating from those who have been weakened is not due to his blind devotion (*ta'abbudī*), but it is because narrating from a weak narrator has no validity. It is also clear that an unknown narrator is similar to a weak narrator, which is why they include the unknown with the weak in the necessity of being hesitant in narrating from them.

It is not possible that after al-Najāshī interacted with his *shuyūkh* that for him their state would stay unknown. It would either be that according to him they are weak, which is invalid, or that they are reliable, which is the desired result.

It is possible through this way to classify as reliable some of the masters of permit who through them have handed down some of the *uṣūl* to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, like Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn and Abū ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Jīd. Both of them were from the *shuyūkh* of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and they were not specifically classified as reliable, but considering they were also the *shuyūkh* of al-Najāshī it is possible in this way to regard them as reliable.

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193 *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl*, vol. 1, p.58.

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Four: Being Mentioned in the Chain of the People of Consensus

Al-Kashshī says in his famous *rijāl* book that the sect has unanimously agreed on authenticating what is narrated from a certain group. Six of this group are the companions of Imam al-Bāqir (A), six are from the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), and six are from the companions of Imam al-Kāẓim (A).

He says:

> The sect has united in believing these predecessors from the companions of Abū Ja'far (A), Abū 'Abd Allāh (A), and the sect submitted to them in jurisprudence, saying the most knowledgeable of the predecessors are six: Zurārah, Ma'rūf ibn Kharrabūdh, Burayd, Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī, al-Fuḍayl ibn Yasār, and Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Ṭā'ifī.[194]

And:

> The sect has united in authenticating what has been verified and confirmed by these people in what they say, and they are acknowledged for their understanding (*fiqh*), besides the other six whom we have mentioned are the following six: Jamīl ibn Darrāj, 'Abd Allāh ibn Maskān, 'Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr, Ḥammād ibn 'Īsā, Ḥammād ibn 'Uthmān, and Ābān ibn 'Uthmān.[195]

And:

> Our companions have united in authenticating and believing what has been authenticated from these people, and confirming their understanding and knowledge. They are another six other than the six we have mentioned from the companions of Abū 'Abd Allāh (A), and they are: Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā al-Sābirī, Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr, 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Mughīrah, al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr.[196]

Scholars have differed in understanding these statements. One view adopted is that whenever one of these narrators are mentioned in a chain and if the chain is through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī who happens to narrate the chain and it is reliable, then the links between him and the Imam would not impair the reliability.

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194 *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, (Danishgāh Edition), p. 238.

195 Ibid. p. 375.

196 Ibid. p. 556.

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This view is attributed to al-Shahīd al-Thānī, Shaykh al-Majlisī, Shaykh al-Bahā'ī, and others.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr took this further and said that along with there being no harm in the links mentioned being unknown, there is also no harm in them being weakened.[197]

The correct view is that the most that could be understood from these statements is there being a consensus on the greatness of these mentioned people and their credibility. It is like al-Kashshī wants to say that whenever one of these individuals are mentioned in a chain then as far as he is concerned there is no problem in the narration, but as for those before him or after him there is no opinion about it.

Five: Banī Faḍḍāl Being Mentioned in a Chain

Banī Faḍḍāl is a group from the Faṭḥiyyah sect,[198] and they are al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl, Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl, and ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl.

The Faṭḥiyyah is a sect that believed in the *imāmah* of ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ, who was the son of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A).

Banī Faḍḍāl were famously known for their reliability and piety and narrated many traditions.

Due to the abundance of their narrations and their belief being corrupt, some Shiʿa directed a question to Imam al-ʿAskarī (A) about what position they should take towards these narrations.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions a narration in *Kitāb al-Ghaybah*, narrating from ʿAbd Allāh al-Kūfī, the servant of Shaykh al-Nawbakhtī (R) where he says:

> The shaykh [i.e. al-Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ] was asked about the books of Ibn Abī al-ʿAzāqir after he was condemned and cursed. The question was: how should we deal with his books and our houses are full of them? He said: 'I will reply the same way as Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (A) had said when he was asked about the books of Banī Faḍḍāl.' They asked him: 'What do we do with their books as

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[197] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 20, p. 80-81.

[198] The Faṭḥiyyah sect believed in the *imāmah* of ʿAbd Allāh al-Afṭaḥ, who was the eldest son of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A). After the martyrdom of his father he claimed *imāmah*, but he survived his father for only two months, bringing this sect to an abrupt end. See al-Nawbakhtī, al-Ḥasan ibn Mūsā, *Shiʿa Sects*, trans. Abbas Kahdim (London: ICAS Press, 2007), p. 132. [Translator's note]

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> our houses are full of them?' He (A) replied: 'Take what they narrate and leave what they saw [interpreted].'[199]

Based on this tradition some scholars like Shaykh al-Anṣārī in *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*[200] chose the view that any narration that has anyone from Banī Faḍḍāl in its chain is considered valid and it is acted upon, even though it might include weak narrators between Banī Faḍḍāl and the Imam.

Shaykh al-Anṣārī says in the beginning of *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt* when mentioning a narration from Dāwūd ibn Farqad, from some of our companions:

> Even though this tradition is discontinued (*mursalah*), however its chain to al-Ḥasan ibn Faḍḍāl is authentic.[201] We have been commanded to accept the books of Banī Faḍḍāl and take their narrations.

Comment: This mentioned tradition can be criticised as far as its chain and signification is concerned. Regarding its chain, al-Kūfī, the servant of Shaykh al-Nawbakhtī is unknown, as nothing is known about him. Furthermore, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions it from Abū al-Ḥusayn ibn Tamām, from ʿAbd Allāh al-Kūfī, and ibn Tamām is also unknown.

As for its signification, there are two possibilities to what this statement might mean:

> A testimony to the authenticity of all the narrations of Banī Faḍḍāl, similar to the testimony of Imam al-ʿAskarī (A) to the authenticity of everything mentioned in the book *Yawm wa Laylah*, by Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān when Abū Hāshim al-Jaʿfarī brought it to Imam al-ʿAskarī (A) and he went through it and noted on it that: 'This is my religion and the religion of my forefathers. Everything in it is true.'[202]

Based on this supposition it would support the view adopted by Shaykh al-Anṣārī in that after the testimony of the Imam to the authenticity of all the narrations of Banī Faḍḍāl there is no place to scrutinise its chain.

Explaining that the corruption of the narrator's belief does not prevent from taking their narrations would not support Shaykh al-Anṣārī's view, because it is not referring to the testimony of the validity of all the narrations

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[199] *Kitāb al-Ghaybah*, p. 239.

[200] *Kitāb al-Ṣalāt*, p. 2.

[201] Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates this tradition with his reliable chain from al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Faḍḍāl, from Dāwūd ibn Farqad, from some of our companions, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A). *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, Part 4 of Mawaqīt, h. 7.

[202] *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, p. 484, no. 915.

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of Banī Faḍḍāl, but rather what can be said at most is that he was explaining that there is no supposed reason to be hesitant towards Banī Faḍḍāl.

If we do make the claim that the second possibility is more likely, it would suffice us to say that it is possible, and with there being a possibility it is enough to invalidate the argument of such a case.

Six: The Narration of Any of the Three *Shuyūkh*

It has been said that any of the three *shuyūkh*, i.e. Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Bazanṭī, if they were to narrate from a person, it would be a sign of their reliability.

The evidence for this is based on a statement given by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his book *ʿUddat al-Uṣūl*, where he said:

> If one of two narrators is linked (*musnid*) and the other is discontinued (*mursal*), the discontinued is looked into. If it is known that the discontinued narrator only discontinues from trustworthy reliable sources, then there is no preference of another of his narrations. This is why the sect equally believes in what Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUmayr, Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr and other reliable narrators narrate, as it is known that they do not narrate or mention a discontinued narration unless it is from someone they trust or it has been verified in its chain by someone else.

It might be that the validity of the *mursal* narrations of these three is the famous view based on the statement mentioned in *al-ʿUddah*.

That being said, Sayyid al-Khūʾī rejected this view based on a few reasons, like the attribution of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī believing equally between the companions was based on his conjecture (*ḥads*) and his *ijtihād*, and not his own experience. The evidence for this is that if it was correct and known by the companions it would have been mentioned in the words of early scholars other than the shaykh, but there is no mention of it at all.

Or that they did not narrate except from the reliable is something that cannot be verified except by them. They did not explicitly state this, or else it would have been mentioned from them, for example, Ibn Abī ʿUmayr would have announced that he strictly narrates only from the reliable.

These and other objections can be refuted by saying that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī stating the unanimity of the sect in justifying them not narrating except from the reliable implies within it the testimony of the shaykh himself to the reliability of all the three *shuyūkh*.

Comment: It could be said that the shaykh's testimony is based on conjecture and therefore it is not valid.

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Answer: the possibility of attributing it to conjecture does exist, and in this case it is to be based on the presumption of direct experience, but not because of their explicit announcement for it to be said that if they had announced it would have been mentioned. But it is because of knowing it through their state and through interacting with them. One is able to know what certain people adhere to in their beliefs by interacting with them. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī acquired this belief and its clarity hand by hand, and because of this he gave his implied testimony.

Comment: If it is said 'how could this have been concealed from al-Najāshī'?

Answer: This is similar to other cases where one of them gives a testimony of reliability and not the other.

An important point to mention here is with, for example, Ibn Abī 'Umayr, there are three types of his narrations:

> That he states the name of whom he is narrating from, and in this case they would be regarded as reliable, based on Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's implied testimony, on the condition there is no opposition to it.
>
> That he says 'from some of our companions'. In this case it is not regarded as reliable, because some of the *shuyūkh* of Ibn Abī 'Umayr were not among the reliable, and it could be that these 'some' be from those weak narrators.
>
> That he says 'from a numerous amount of our companions'.[203] In this case the tradition can be accepted, because if we were to count the *shuyūkh* of Ibn Abī 'Umayr we would find that there would be up to 400 narrators, where the weak among them were five and the rest reliable. If we were to add another issue, which is that the phrase 'a numerous amount of our companions' would commonly indicate no less than three. This establishes that the possibility of the three being from the five weak and not from the rest of the 395 is a very weak possibility.

If we wanted to calculate the value of this probability, we can say:

> The probability that each one of three were from the five = 5/400 = 1 (2) / 80;
>
> The probability of all the three being from the five and none of them from the rest = 1/80 × 1/80 × 1/80 = 1/512000;

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[203] غير واحد من اصحابنا

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Therefore, the possibility of the whole three being from the five and none of them from the rest equals the possibility of one in 512000. This is very weak and rational people would not consider it.

In conclusion, if Ibn Abī 'Umayr was to mention the name of his shaykh it is regarded as reliable as long as there is no opposition.

If he uses the expression 'some of our companions', it is not regarded as reliable.

If he uses the expression 'from numerous' the chain is taken as credible.

Other Forms of General Classifications of Reliability

General classifications of reliability – and we have come to know that some and not all are valid – are not limited to what has been mentioned here. There are many more cases that can be given which we have not added here for the sake of brevity.

Questions

1. What does 'general reliability judgements' mean? Give examples for this.

2. What is the statement mentioned in the introduction to *Tafsīr al-Qummī* that is taken as indicating the reliability of everyone mentioned in it?

3. Mention some of the scholars who have chosen the view that all the narrators in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* are reliable.

4. It could be said that what al-Qummī meant was to classify as reliable only those from whom he directly narrates. Mention the argument given by Sayyid al-Khū'ī about this possibility.

5. There are three incomplete arguments about *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. Mention them and explain why they are incomplete.

6. What are the two complete arguments regarding *Tafsīr al-Qummī*?

7. Why has it been said that all the narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* are reliable?

8. How can the view that all the narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* are reliable be refuted?

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9. Why did Sayyid al-Khū'ī change his view about the narrators in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* and not *Tafsīr al-Qummī*?

10. It has been said that all the *shuyūkh* of al-Najāshī are reliable. Give the evidence for this.

11. A criticism has been mentioned about the reliability of the *shuyūkh* of al-Najāshī. Mention the argument and its reply.

12. What is the statement given by al-Kashshī about the people of consensus?

13. Scholars have differed about understanding the claimed consensus in the statement of al-Kashshī. Explain this dispute.

14. The mentioning of the people of consensus has been repeated twice. Once in the specific reliability judgements, and the other in the general reliability judgements. Is there any repetition or confusion here? Explain.

15. Who are Banī Faḍḍāl?

16. Why has it been said that everyone in the chain that includes Banī Faḍḍāl is considered as reliable?

17. How can this view be argued?

18. It is said that all the *shuyūkh* of the three *shuyūkh* are reliable. Explain the evidence for this.

19. Sayyid al-Khū'ī has a few arguments about the view that all the *shuyūkh* of the three are reliable. Give one of these arguments.

20. How can Sayyid al-Khū'ī's argument be refuted?

21. Apply the calculation of the probability for the *mursal* narrations of Ibn Abī 'Umayr.

22. Explain the mathematical way of extracting the value of probability of all the three being from the five weak.

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Point Three: The Evidence for the Validity of the View of a *Rijālī* Scholar

From what we have studied so far, we have learnt the various ways of establishing the reliability of a narrator, and the main way was the classification of a *rijāl* scholar.

In this point we would like to discuss some of the reasons for the validity of a *rijāl* scholar's opinion. These are as follows:

> It is a kind of testimony. Just as the information available to a judge in a case (for example, 'such and such house belongs to Zayd') is a form testimony and is counted as valid because it falls under the validity of testimony, the information of a *rijāl* scholar about reliability is also a testimony and is therefore valid as it is in the form of the validity of a testimony.

Some scholars have preferred this view. Amongst them is Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, the son of al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 1011 AH), in his book *Ma'ālim al-Dīn wa Malādh al-Mujtahidīn*.[204]

This has been criticised in that it necessitates the rejection of the testimony of reliability given from the likes of al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, because the condition of accepting the testimony of a witness is that they are alive and not dead.

This would also reject the testimony of each of the two if they were on their own; because the condition of accepting a testimony is that there are two or more witnesses.

Furthermore, it would necessitate the rejection of the classifying of reliability made by a non-Shi'i [non-Imāmī], because the condition of accepting the testimony of a witness is them being 'just' (*'ādil*) and not only reliable. This would result in rejecting the classifications of reliability made by Banī Faḍḍāl who al-Kashshī narrates from, because they were from the Faṭḥiyyah sect, and this conclusion is farfetched.

It falls under the category of the validity of the view of an expert (*ahl al-khibrah*). The same way the broker's pricing of something is valid because he is an expert, so is the information given by, for example, al-Najāshī, for the reliability of narrators is valid based on this reason.

Comment: This is not a case of the testimony of an expert, unless there was need for practicing *ijtihād* and observation, and it is clear that al-Najāshī informing of reliability is not bound to this, because reliability is something based on experience, or approximate to this.

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[204] Old Print, p. 194.

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In other words: *rijāl* books were available since the time of al-Najāshī, and through them he would rule the reliability of this or that person, and this by itself does not make him an expert, because he is similar to someone being in an elevated place and overseeing every person coming and going and informing us of that. Would we accept what he says due to him being an expert? No.

It is like acquiring conviction (*iṭmi'nān*) from the view of a *rijāl* scholar, and as conviction is a valid basis for the conduct of rational people and has not been censured by the religion, therefore this establishes the validity of the view of a *rijāl* scholar.

Comment: Gaining assurance from the view given by a *rijāl* scholar is very rare.

An unusual view attributed to some scholars from the Najaf school is that one can acquire certainty in reliability of whoever Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has classified as reliable.

It is like the validity of acting on information from a reliable person, in the sense that the conduct of rational people is to accept information from reliable persons in all circumstances. This would also be valid because the religion has not objected to this in any specific cases, as would be the case of adultery, because there is evidence that adultery is not established unless through four witnesses, or with theft where evidence points to it being established only by two witnesses.

Based on this view, there is no condition that the reliable persons need also be just, but it is sufficient for the narrator to be reliable and someone who avoids lying. Furthermore, there is no condition of there being multiple narrators; information from a solitary narrator is sufficient. There would also be no condition of this narrator having to be alive.

All of this is based on the occurrence of the conduct of rational people who accept the information of a reliable person without the condition of being more than one, being just, or being alive.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī is among the later scholars who adopted this view.

The Problem of *Irsāl* in Classifications of Reliability

As previously mentioned, there is a very precise criticism directed at this specific point of view, which can be stated as follows:

> When al-Najāshī informs us about the reliability of a particular person, he informs [us] about this based on what has been handed down to him from a series of reliable individuals. This means that his information about a narrator's reliability itself has come through a chain of reliable people.

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Based on this it is said: if al-Najāshī informed us about the ruling given by Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) about a certain matter, we would not accept his informing unless he provides details of the chain of narrators he relied on in narrating it. It would not be enough for him to say as a reply that all the people in the chain are reliable. We would reject this because it is possible that some who testify to him their reliability are criticised and regarded as weak, and if the names in the chain are not specified this possibility would prevent taking his testimony of reliability.

It is for this reason that *mursal* traditions in the area of *shar'ī* rulings are rejected, based on this particular point.

But this also applies to al-Najāshī's classifications of reliability. When he informs us that a particular narrator is reliable, this information has come through a chain of reliable narrators. However, as he does not mention the names of the people in the chain we suppose the possibility of there being a criticism against some of them.

In summary: if al-Najāshī was to say Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) has said that wine is impure without providing a chain of narrators for this, we would not accept his information because it is *mursal*. Therefore, the same would be the case of his informing of reliability, as it is *mursal* it is therefore not accepted.

As we have said, this objection – in particular the last opinion above all others – is rejected because, unlike these other opinions, it treats the statement of a *rijāl* scholar as a legal report (*khabar*) and treats it as analogous with disconnected reports (*akhbār mursalah*).

We have already replied to this misconception by saying that there were many books of *rijāl* during the era of al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī which gave them evidence about the reliability of this narrator or that narrator. They relied on the evidence that was accessible to them in their own time, and have not narrated this from their predecessors so that it could be said that there is a need to establish the reliability of every person in the chain without there being an opposition, and this is not possible if the links were not known.

If this reply is sufficient, then that is good. If not, we can furnish two further replies:

> We acknowledge that the basis of the validity of the view of a *rijāl* scholar is its presence in the major premise of 'information from a reliable person'. According to this, *irsāl* would not harm the reliability, based on an explanation composed of two premises:
>
> It is accepted by the conduct of rational people that if a reliable person was to say 'a reliable person informed me ...' it would be

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> taken and he is not asked 'who is the reliable person that informed you, you might be wrong and he might be criticised?'

When a reliable person tells us about the reliability of another person then he is adhering to narrating reliability from the reliable, or else what would be the benefit of informing about the reliability of a person from unreliable individuals?

Adding both premises together establishes that when Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions reliability from a person he is observing and testifying to that person's reliability, and this second reliability testifies that he is narrating from a reliable person, and so on.

It is possible to present a new argument, which is based on a testimony, saying that we have two issues: testimony of a reliable person and information from a reliable person. The conduct of rational people accepts the testimony of a reliable person without the need to investigate their source and with no difference if the testifier is alive or not, just or reliable, one or more. As this mentioned conduct has not been censured by the religion it therefore becomes valid.

Of course, it must be emphasised that rational people accept the testimony of a reliable person on the condition that they are relying on direct experience to a high degree of probability.

This probability is established in regards to al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī because of the excessive amount of *rijāl* books during their era.

If you were to ask the difference between this reply and the first of the four previous replies, the answer is that the other replies were looking at testimony in its religious meaning, defined as there being multiple witnesses, being alive and being just. However, this reply is looking at testimony in a second meaning that is based on the conduct of rational people, in that if one reliable person was to testify about something their testimony would be accepted, even if they were not alive or just.

If one were to ask what is the difference between informing others of someone's reliability and testifying to it, we would answer that in the former case he is repeating information without considering his own personal judgment about it. Whereas in the case of testimony he is not only relaying something, he has also verified it and included his own opinion about it in the form of his testimony. A reliable person could either narrate reliability without accepting it, or he could narrate or mention it and accept it and judge according to it. The first belongs under the title of informing of reliability and the second is the testimony of reliability.

Practical Exercises

Shaykh al-Ḥurr mentions the following in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*:

One:

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محمد بن الحسن، عن محمد بن محمد بن النعمان المفيد، عن ابي القاسم جعفر بن محمد بن قولويه، عن أبيه، عن سعد بن عبدالله، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن الحسين بن سعيد وعبد الرحمن بن أبي نجران، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن حريز بن عبدالله، عن أبي عبدالله (عليه السلام) ...

> Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, from Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nuʿmān al-Mufīd, from Abū al-Qāsim Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn Qūlawayh, from his father, from Saʿd ibn ʿAbd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Najrān, from Ḥammād ibn ʿĪsā, from Ḥurayz ibn ʿAbd Allāh, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) ....[205]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr narrates this tradition from one of the two books written by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and the evidence for this is him stating the name Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan who is Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

The chain of this tradition is authentic because of the reliability of all the narrators in the chain, and they have all been previously discussed.

What is noteworthy is that even though this tradition is authentic through Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, it cannot be relied on because after it Shaykh al-Ḥurr says:

ورواه الكليني، عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، وعن محمد بن إسماعيل، عن الفضل بن شاذان، جميعاً، عن حماد، عن حريز، عَمّن أخبره، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام)، مثله.

> Al-Kulaynī has narrated it, from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, all from Ḥammād, from Ḥurayz, from those who informed him, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) similar to it.

This shows that there is an unknown link between Ḥurayz and the Imam, and as we cannot assume the possibility of the tradition being more than one, it therefore has no validity because of the possibility of there being an unknown link.

Two:

وبإسناده، عن علي بن إبراهيم، عن أبيه، عن ابن أبي عمير، عن حماد - يعني ابن عثمان - عن الحلبي، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) ...

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[205] *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, vol. 3, p. 137, h. 1.

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> And with his chain, from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, from his father, from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from Ḥammād, who was Ibn ʿUthmān, from al-Ḥalabī, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) ....

Meaning, with the chain of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm.

The chain of this tradition is authentic because the chain from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm is authentic, as explained in *al-mashyakhah*. The rest of the people in the chain are reliable.

ʿAlī, his **father** and **Ibn Abī ʿUmayr** have already been mentioned.

With **Ḥammād**, he is from the people of consensus.

As for **al-Ḥalabī**, he is ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Shuʿbah al-Ḥalabī. Al-Najāshī said:

> He, his father and his brothers would travel to Ḥalab [Aleppo], and it was because of this that he gained the title. The Abū Shuʿbah tribe were from Kufa and have been mentioned as being from 'our companions'. They were all reliable and were referred to in what they say. ʿUbayd Allāh was their elder and chief. He wrote the book that is attributed to him, which he presented to Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) who edited it and said while reading it: 'Do you see from the likes of them the likes of such a work?'[206]

Questions

1. There are a few reasons to treat the view of a *rijāl* scholar as valid. Mention the first evidence along with its argument.

2. In your view is the second evidence for the validity of the view of a *rijāl* scholar valid?

3. Explain the fourth evidence with its justification.

4. Explain the problem of *irsāl* in classifications of reliability.

5. Why is the problem of *irsāl* in classifications of reliability specific to the fourth evidence?

6. Mention the previous answer that we have mentioned about the problem of *irsāl* in classifications of reliability.

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[206] *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, vol. 11, p. 77.

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7. Explain the first answer that we had mentioned about the problem of *irsāl* in classifications of reliability.

8. Explain the second reply.

9. What is the difference between the second reply and the first reply from the four replies given?

10. What is the difference between the informing of a reliable person and the testimony of a reliable person?

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Chapter Two: Types of Traditions

Traditions have been divided into four categories:

1. Authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*): a tradition where all its narrators are just and Twelver Shi'a.
2. Reliable (*muwaththaq*): a tradition where all its narrators or some of them are non-Twelver Shi'a but reliable.
3. Good (*ḥasan*): a tradition where all its narrators or some of them are Twelver Shi'a, but they have not been mentioned as reliable, only praised.
4. Weak (*ḍa'īf*): a tradition that is none of the other three types, and all its narrators are unknown or they have been deemed weak.

These four types are further divided into other types, which are not necessary to mention at this present moment.

It is said that this fourfold division was not common amongst the early scholars, and at that time they had a twofold division; they divided traditions into just two classes: authentic and weak. The authentic tradition, according to their terminology, was a narration that must be acted upon as a result of it having surrounding factors that lead to certainty or assurance of its provenance, and a weak narration is something that is not.

The Akhbārīs, like the author of *al-Ḥadā'iq*, Shaykh al-Ḥurr, and al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, condemned this four-type division and rejected that it was first attributed to 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī.[207]

The evidence the Akhbārīs have for this is that the compilations of our traditions are widely transmitted (*mutawātir*) and there are proofs given for their validity. Shaykh al-Ḥurr believed that there were twenty-two proofs that indicate their validity, as has been mentioned in the ninth *fā'idah* in the last volume of *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*.

From among what he says is the following:

> This proves the weakness of the new term of dividing traditions into authentic, good, reliable and weak, which was revived in the era of al-'Allāmah and his shaykh, Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs.[208]

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[207] It is also said that it was Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs, the shaykh of 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī, and it has been said that this division existed among the early scholars before 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs.

[208] Ibid. p. 251.

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God-willing in the following discussions this claim of everything in our books of hadith being authentic will be refuted in detail, and after refuting it the fourfold division will be proven to be valid.

There are a few discussions that are related to this fourfold division of traditions, and they will be mentioned in the following points:

When Legal Precedent runs Contrary to an Authentic Narration

If a narration has an authentic chain, then the common view is that it is valid (*ḥujjah*). However a known theory questions this, saying that if a well-known legal precedent set by jurists (*al-shuhrah al-fatwā'iyyah*) is contrary to the content of the authentic narration, would this invalidate it or not? The known view is that it does become invalid.[209]

To support this it can be said that if early scholars like al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq and others rejected a tradition then this would reveal the presence of a fault somewhere in it, or else why would they reject it?

It might be that the conduct of rational people agrees with this, because if a reliable person was to inform about something and a group of experts were to reject its contents, then the rest would refrain from using it.

Another argument that can be added to support the justification of a narration whose validity is dismissed is that the most important evidence for validity of a narration is the conduct of rational people. Seeing that this is an implied non-verbal proof (*dalīl lubbī*), then we stick to what we have certainty of, and that is information of a reliable person that has not been opposed by a group of experts contemporary to it.

From another perspective we can say: the scholars' opposition of a narration makes it lose its validity on two conditions:

> This opposition is established among the early scholars who lived close to the era of the Minor Occultation, like Shaykh al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq, and not by later scholars. The opposition of early scholars due to their closeness to the era of the provenance of the tradition reveals a problem in some aspect of the tradition, and not the opposition of later scholars.

The opposition that is established among early scholars comes from their opinion and *ijtihād*, as their *ijtihād* is valid for themselves and not for us.

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[209] This is opposite to the view taken by Sayyid al-Khū'ī who believed that it stays valid because if the narration itself was valid then there is no meaning for it to no longer be valid just because the well-known view opposes it. (See: *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 3).

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It is from here that we say that the stronger a narration gets in its authenticity the weaker the opposition of the majority gets, because the increase of its authenticity weakens the possibility of the opposition being based on *ijtihād*.

Of course, even though the early scholars' rejection of a narration would lead to it losing its recognition, but acquiring this opposition is difficult in most cases.

Narration of a Reliable Person or Narration of a Just Person?

The common view among scholars is that not only does the narration of a just person (*'ādil*) carry validity, but so does the narration of a reliable person. The author of *Madārik al-Aḥkām*[210] had a different view, as he believed in the validity of a just person only.

The proof that the narration of a reliable person is valid and that validity is not limited to the condition of being just, is the conduct of rational people that is established in acting upon it. This is also confirmed by religion because there is nothing that has censured it.

If it is said that the verse of verification (*āyat al-naba'*) indicates in its literal meaning (*manṭūq*) the invalidity of the information of a corrupt person, as it says '*if a corrupt person comes to you with any information, verify*'[211] and the title of 'corrupt' is applicable to a reliable person who is not just.

We would respond: the meaning of a corrupt person in this verse is someone who could lie, and this comes from two significations:

> The agreement of the ruling and the subject, as the appropriate relation of the ruling for invalidity is the information of someone who cannot be assured that they refrain from lying, contrary to someone who could lie, as they might commit other sins.
>
> The justification of regret that is mentioned in the end of the verse,[212] as regret occurs when information is taken from someone who could lie, and not from someone who certainly refrains from lying, but might commit a sin with their senses.

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[210] Sayyid Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Mūsawī al-'Āmilī al-Juba'ī (d. 1009 AH). [Translator's note]

[211] '*O you who have faith! If a profligate [person] should bring you some news, verify it, lest you should visit [harm] on some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done.*' Qur'an, 49:6. [Translator's note]

[212] '*lest you should visit [harm] on some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done.*' [Translator's note]

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A Report from a Reliable Source or a Reliable Report?

Is validity unconditional to any information related by a reliable person or is there a condition that the information itself is reliable (*mawthūq*) and engenders confidence (*iṭmi'nān*)?

Shaykh al-Anṣārī in his book *al-Rasā'il*, after discussing the verse of verification and before discussing the narrations, inclined in his view towards considering the reliability of the material itself. His explanation for this was the reason given in the verse of verification, as there is a fear of falling into regret when the information in the report does not inspire confidence.

However, the correct opinion is that the content of the narration is not considered and the trustworthiness of the narrator is sufficient, and this is based on the authentic tradition of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Muhtadī and al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaqṭīn, who said to Imam al-Riḍā (A):

> It is difficult for me to get to you and ask you about what I need from the teachings of my religion. Is Yūnus ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān reliable for me to take from him what I need from issues of my religion?' He (A) said: 'Yes.'[213]

This indicates that what exists in the mind of the inquirer is the sufficiency of the reliability of the narrator, and the Imam endorsed this.

Furthermore, another authentic tradition from Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq can be used to support this. Al-Kulaynī narrates from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimyarī and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā who all narrate from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī, from Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq from Abū al-Ḥasan (A):

> I asked him: 'Whom do I deal with, whom do I take from, and whose view do I accept?' He (A) said: 'Al-ʿAmrī is my reliable person, so anything he gives to you from me then it is from me, and anything he says to you that it is from me then it is, so listen to him, and obey, for he is reliable and trustworthy.'[214]

The explanation that he gives when he says 'for he is reliable and trustworthy' implies that the criterion is reliability of the person and their trustworthiness, and not reliance on their information.

The Validity of 'Good' Narrations

Is a good (*ḥasan*) narration valid? Al-Mīrzā al-Nā'īnī and Sayyid al-Khū'ī have preferred its validity.

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[213] *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, Features of a Judge, part 11, h. 33.

[214] Ibid. h. 4.

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Sayyid al-Khū'ī argued in *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*[215] that the evidence for this was the conduct of rational people, saying that it is established, because if the command of the Master directed at His servant reaches the servant through a praised Shi'i person who has not been proven to be corrupt or just then it is acted upon. This is done in the same way of how the conduct of rational people confirms that acting upon a narration that is received through being narrated by a just Shi'i person.

Comment: Just because a person is praised, this neither indicates their reliability or lack thereof.

In the first instance, the narration would fall under that of a reliable person, removing it from being graded as good.

In the second case, even though it does not come under narration of a reliable person, it is difficult to be certain that the conduct of rational people would be to act upon it. If praising does not imply reliability, there remains the possibility of someone intentionally lying, and how can one claim that rational people act upon the information of a person who might intentionally lie?

The Validity of 'Weak' Narrations

The popular view amongst later scholars is that a weak narration is not valid. However, this has been questioned. Can a weak narration be elevated to the level of validity if it accords with a well-established legal precedent? This means that if the narration was weak in its chain but the majority of jurists have issued a verdict in accordance with it, does their verdict compensate the weakness of its chain? The common view is that it does.

Before mentioning arguments that can be used to support this, there is an important point that must be addressed. If we accept that an established legal precedent (*shuhrah*) can rehabilitate weak narrations, a large amount of narrations will enter into the realm of validity having been excluded, as per the view that states legal precedent does not strengthen a weak narration. Furthermore, relying on the major term 'established legal precedent' will reduce our reliance on *'ilm al-rijāl* because even if the narration had a weak chain it could be considered valid if the majority (of the scholars) had issued a verdict in its favour, without a need for studying the reliability of the narrators.

There are numerous pieces of evidence that establish legal precedent that can compensate for the weakness of a chain, and they are:

> A legal precedent agreeing with the content a narration is a way of demonstrating its veracity, and it is something which suffices for establishing reliability; the verse says: '*If a corrupt person comes with*

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[215] *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 200.

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> *information verify*' and the implied meaning for this is that after verifying the information of a profligate person and clarifying his truthfulness, it becomes valid and it is necessary to accept.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī argued against this in *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*[216] saying that if a legal precedent in itself is not valid, then adding a narration to it does not necessarily validate it because something unknown can only be validated by something else whose validity is already known.

The majority acting upon a narration reveals their reliance on its narrators, or else they would not act upon it, and it is only valid insofar as they rely on narrators for it.

Comment: Just because the majority act upon a narration, this does not necessarily entail that they classify its narrators as reliable, because them acting upon it could be based on contextual factors they observed, and if we were to review these we would reject them.

The precedent of acting upon a narration leads to assurance of its provenance and authenticity. This would be correct if the precedent of acting upon a narration was established among the early scholars who lived during or close to the era of the Minor Occultation. However, the problem is how to ascertain their reliance upon it, because if the early scholars referenced the narration it would be possible to acquire assurance; so how can this be ascertained?

Their verdict corresponding with the narration does not in itself indicate they relied on it, but it could be that they have another reference that we are not aware of. We do not have access to their reasoning to know what their reference for every ruling was, whether it was a narration or something else. For example, al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAqīl who was known as al-ʿUmānī had an analytical jurisprudence book which was called *al-Mustamsak bi Ḥabl Āl al-Rasūl (S)*. Al-Najāshī said about it: 'It is a book famous within the sect. It is said that any pilgrim who came for hajj from Khurāsān would order and purchase copies.'

This book is now lost and therefore it is not possible to know the references of this mentioned jurist.

It is said that Ibn al-Junayd has a large book called *Tahdhīb al-Shīʿah li Aḥkām al-Sharīʿah*, and he then summarised it and called it *al-Aḥmadī ilā al-Fiqh al-Muḥammadī*.

It is also said that the first book of jurisprudence that has reached us including the reasoning of its author is *al-Mabsūṭ* by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

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[216] Ibid. p. 201.

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The Validity of 'Concealed' Narrations

There are numerous examples for a weak narration, and one of them is a concealed (*muḍmar*) narration. There is a discussion as to whether it is valid or invalid.

A concealed narration is a narration that does not specify in it that the source person responsible for it is the Imam. It mentions a pronoun (*ḍamīr*) that could refer to the Imam or to someone else. For example, Sumā'ah says: 'I asked him about grape juice and he said...' He did not declare that the person saying this was the Imam, and it is possible that someone else had said it. It is from here that traditions that are concealed could be ruled as being invalid due to the possibility that the person saying it is someone other than the Imam.

Most scholars have taken the view of distinguishing between narrations. If the concealed narration is from among the great companions for whom it would not be befitting for them to narrate from someone other than the Imam, like for example Zurārah and Muḥammad ibn Muslim, and that of others then it would be valid. Other than this, it would not.

The reason for the distinguishing is clear, because with the likes of Zurārah it would not be befitting for him to narrate from anyone other than the Imam, which makes the statement having come from the Imam. This would be different to if the concealed was commonly mentioned by someone, in which case they would not specifically be narrating from the Imam and therefore their narration would not be valid.

Furthermore, it is possible for us to present an explanation that proves the validity of all concealed narrations without there being a distinction.

Explanation: Mentioning the pronoun without a referent is something irregular in the Arabic language, and it would not be appropriate for someone who knows the method of Arabic language to join a group of people and say 'I asked him' and not mention the reference.

Therefore, in the cases where there is a pronoun and no reference there must be an understanding between the two sides about the referent of the pronoun that they rely on in defining the referent, and it is for this that they mention the pronoun.

Another premise that can be added to this is that there is no person that would be befitting to be the agreed upon pronoun except for the Imam, as he is the designated person in the Shi'a circles to whom questions are directed. This can prove that the person referred to is the Imam, without a need to specify it.

Someone might argue that there might be someone other than the Imam that is referred to and this is agreed upon by both sides with them relying on it for their agreement in mentioning the pronoun, and it does not assign their reference to be the Imam. We would respond that the person

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mentioning the pronoun, like Sumā'ah, is not keeping the tradition to himself but narrating it to someone else or he is recording it in his book, which indicates that he wanted to transfer it to all generations. Seeing that that there is no person that all generations would refer to other than the Imam, this would mean that the pronoun refers back to the Imam.

The Origin of Concealed Narrations

It could be said that knowing how concealed narrations came about would help ascertain the validity of all concealed narrations without distinction between them.

The origin of this phenomenon is that the companions would sometimes ask the Imams numerous questions on different issues. When they wanted after that to transmit these questions and answers they would suffice with mentioning the Imam in the beginning of the questions and then use the pronoun to refer back to him. For example, Zurārah would say: 'I asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) about the ruling of doubt in prayer, and he would say so and so, then I asked him about the ruling of juice and he would say so and so, then I asked him about the ruling of beer ...'

After some time, the content of the traditions was divided and categorised, with each part being inserted into the appropriate category of a collection. So, there would be a category dealing with questions pertaining to beer and in it the following would be placed: 'Zurārah said: "I asked him about the ruling of beer, and he said so and so ..."' without explicitly mentioning that the person who was answering the full set of questions was the Imam.

This explanation of the origin of concealed narrations could imply the ruling of the validity of all concealed traditions without distinguishing. Criticism could be directed at this, saying that it is possible that the person at the beginning of the questions was someone other than the Imam.

The Validity of 'Discontinued' Narrations

A 'discontinued' (*mursal*) narration is a narration where in its chain some of the narrators are not mentioned, like if it is said within the chain 'from a man' or 'from some of our companions' or 'from a few people', and so on.

There is a debate here about whether or not discontinued narrations are generally valid, and here are the views on this:

> Discontinued narrations are not valid, because the link is unknown and we cannot ascertain their reliability, and with assuming their reliability it is also a possibility that there is a criticism as well. The presumption of the absence of any criticism of this unknown narrator is, of course, baseless.

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> Discontinued narrations are valid if their chain includes some of the eighteen companions of consensus. This is because al-Kashshī claimed there was a consensus among the scholars to authenticate anything that has been approved by the companions of consensus.

Comment: What has been mentioned about what is meant regarding the consensus is there being a consensus about the eighteen companions and their great status, and that the sect has united in considering them great and reliable, without a need to look into the state of others.

The validity of a discontinued narration if the discontinued was from the likes of Ibn Abī 'Umayr, Ṣafwān and al-Bazanṭī, as previously explained, and it is was also explained that the appropriate view is to distinguish in this.

To distinguish between if al-Ṣadūq mentions the discontinued narration from the Imam, like saying: 'Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) said', and if he was to say 'It is narrated that Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) has said'. The first is valid and the second is not.

The reason for this is that the expression of saying 'Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) said' indicates certainty in the provenance of the narration from the Imam, or else it would not be permissible to attribute the tradition to him.

Assuming that al-Ṣadūq was certain we can say that this certainty is either based on direct experience or on conjecture, and with the presumption that rational persons speak from experience, it is therefore established that it came from his own experience, which means that the transmitted content can be safely attributed to the Imam, repeatedly and frequently. With this in mind, the transmission of 'discontinued' material would be valid for us.

The case would be different if al-Ṣadūq were to say: 'It is narrated that Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) has said' where in such an expression it does not indicate that al-Ṣadūq is certain in order to apply the presumption of direct experience.

Through this explanation, it becomes clear that this distinction is not exclusive to al-Ṣadūq, but he was specifically mentioned because of the volume of discontinued narrations he presented in his book *al-Faqīh*, sometimes saying 'He said' and other times saying 'It is narrated'.

Comment: If we were to accept that the expression 'He said' indicates al-Ṣadūq's certainty, this does not mean that this is from the repeated transmission from the Imam, but rather this is weak. If there was a repeated transmission then al-Ṣadūq would have mentioned it himself, or someone else would have mentioned parts of those traditions. It is possible that the certainty al-Ṣadūq had is from special surrounding factors that are in the content, and if we were to study them it may not give us certainty and we would rule its invalidity.

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Questions

1. What are the four types of traditions? Mention them with complete explanations.

2. What is the difference between the division of traditions done by the early scholars and that by al-'Allāmah?

3. Why did the Akhbārīs condemn the fourfold division?

4. It is said that a legal precedent (*al-shuhrah al-fatwā'iyyah*) that runs contrary to authentic traditions would deprive them of their validity. What does this mean?

5. How can we argue the validity of an authentic tradition being removed by legal precedent opposing it?

6. There are two conditions for a tradition losing its validity by the famous scholars going against it; mention them.

7. Why is it that the more the narration increases in its authenticity the weaker it becomes if the majority oppose it?

8. The opposition of the early scholars to a tradition leads to it losing recognition, however _____. (Complete the sentence.)

9. What is the difference between the narration of a just person and the narration of a reliable person?

10. Who said that only the narration of a just person is valid?

11. What is the evidence for the validity of the narration of a reliable person, and there not being the condition of justness?

12. It could be said that the verse of verification indicates the invalidity of the narration of a reliable person who is not just. How can this be refuted?

13. Does the verse of verification indicate the invalidity of the narration of a reliable person who is not just in its literal meaning or its implied meaning?

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14. What is the difference between narration of a reliable person and narration of a relied upon person?

15. Did Shaykh al-Ansari believe in the validity of the narration of a reliable person and narration of a relied upon person?

16. What is the evidence for the validity of the narration of a reliable person without the condition of there being what is relied?

17. How did Sayyid al-Khū'ī argue the validity of a good narration? How can this be argued?

18. What does the compensation of a weak narration through legal precedent mean?

19. Why is the discussion on the issue of compensation of the weak tradition through fame so important?

20. How could the issue of compensation affect the need for *'ilm al-rijāl*?

21. Explain the first piece of evidence for compensating the weak narration through fame, and how did Sayyid al-Khū'ī argue this?

22. Explain the second piece of evidence.

23. Explain the third piece of evidence and the problem it has.

24. What does a 'concealed tradition' mean?

25. Explain the detailed view that most scholars accepted for the validity of concealed traditions.

26. What is the reason for concealing in narrations?

27. What is a discontinued narration?

28. Explain the first view about the validity of discontinued traditions.

29. Explain the second, third and fourth views.

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Chapter Three: A Glance at some Hadith Books

Before discussing each of the hadith books in turn, we would like to address an important argument attributed to the Akhbārīs, which some Uṣūlī scholars have also partially adopted.

The argument is: all the traditions in the Four Books are certainly authentic and valid, and there is no need to investigate their chains of narrators. Every tradition mentioned in these collections must be taken as valid without hesitation.

In order to prove the veracity of this claim, sometimes certain statements from the introduction of these books are employed, as they could be construed to the effect that the authors of the books classified all the narrators mentioned in the book as reliable. This will be explained when each of these books are independently discussed.

At other times, certain justifications have been offered that apply equally to all of the Four Books, rather than being specific to some of them but not others, such as the twenty-two justifications that Shaykh al-Ḥurr gave in the last section of his book *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*.

Perhaps the strongest of these justifications is the first one, which says that the companions of the Imams themselves had endeavoured to record, compile and preserve the traditions until the era of the Three Muḥammads,[217] and in their turn they compiled these traditions into the Four Books. The concern they demonstrated will naturally engender regarding the provenance of the traditions mentioned in these books.

There are numerous examples of this concern. For example, when al-Shalmaghānī wrote the book *al-Taklīf*, the great shaykh and representative of Imam al-Mahdī (A), al-Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ (R) had said: 'Bring this book to me so I can review it.' He read it from beginning to end and then said: 'Everything in this book has been narrated from the Imams (A), except for two or three places in which he falsely attributed to them.'

When the great Shaykh himself wrote his famous book called *Kitāb al-Ta'dīb*, and he sent it to the school of Qum asking their jurists to review it,

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[217] Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, the author of *al-Kāfī*, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, the author of *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkāb* and *al-Istibṣār*, and Muḥammad ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (Shaykh al-Ṣadūq), the author of *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*. [Translator's note]

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and they approved everything in it except what he mentioned about *zakāt al-fiṭrah* being half a *ṣā*[218] of food, as the correct verdict is one *ṣā'* of food.

The book *Yawm wa Laylah* which was written by Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān was presented to Imam Ḥasan al-'Askarī (A) and he complemented the book by saying: 'May Allah give him a light on Judgement Day for every letter he wrote.'

These are some examples that indicate the concern the companions had towards traditions.

In *al-Rasā'il* on the topic of the validity of narrations Shaykh al-Anṣārī mentions a large amount of examples of this sort which one should refer to.

The most important of these explanations that Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī mentions is this particular explanation, and the others are clearly questionable.

For example, in the third justification he says:

> The purpose of divine wisdom and the affection Ahl al-Bayt (A) had towards the Shi'a is to present principles they can rely on and use during the era of occultation, and these can only be the sources that were depended on and from them books and treatises were compiled.

In the seventh justification, he says that if the traditions in his book were not authentic this would lead to the Shi'a going astray until Judgement Day, and this is naturally rejected because the Imams would have never allowed that.

The twelfth argument is that the fourfold division of traditions is taken from Sunni books, and we have been commanded to stay away from their methods.

In the sixteenth argument he says that the fourfold division of traditions was contrived by 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs, and it does not exceed the level of *ijtihād* and speculation (*ẓann*), and we have been ordered to stay away from speculation. They have said that: 'The worst of things are those that are made up, and you must stay with what has been handed down to us.'[219] This is in relation to *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*.

As for other sources, Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm and others have made another claim in that the Four Hundred *Uṣūl* that the Three Muḥammads narrate from are widely transmitted and are clearly known in their attribution to their authors the same way the Four Books are attributed to their authors.

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[218] A *ṣā'* (صاع) is a measurement that is equal to close to three kilogrammes. [Translator's note]

[219] شرُّ الأمور محدثاتها، و عليكم بالتلاد (*Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 30, p. 260).

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From this they concluded that there is no need to find an authentic path between the Three Muḥammads and the authors of those *uṣūl*, and therefore some of the masters of permit in the chain whose reliability has not been established would not prevent one from using the tradition, like Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, ʻAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr al-Qarashī, al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Jīd, Aḥmad ibn ʻAbdūn, and so on.

Not Everything in the Four Books is Authentic

After understanding the arguments made by Shaykh al-Ḥurr al-ʻĀmilī and his supporters, who claimed that everything in the Four Books is authentic, we now turn to discussing this in the following points:

> The concern the companions had over traditions does not engender certainty about the authenticity of everything they narrated. At most, this would lead us to believe that many of the narrations are authentic. This is because it is naturally not possible for all their efforts to go to waste and there not being any fruitful benefit in it.

The Three Muḥammads themselves did not have certainty about the authenticity of all the traditions they mentioned in their books, so how can this certainty be established by others? We know they did not have complete certainty about their traditions because they questioned some of the traditions they themselves narrated in the Four Books. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says in *al-Istibṣār*:

> The narrator of these two traditions is ʻUmrān al-Zaʻfarānī and he is unknown, and along with this there are weak people in the chains of these two traditions.[220]

He also says:

> The first comment about these narrations is that two of these narrations, and they are the last two, are discontinued, and discontinued narrations cannot be used to object to a chained (*musnad*) narration, as has been explained in more than one place. As for the first tradition, it is narrated from Abū Saʻīd al-Ādamī – Sahl ibn Ziyād – and critiques of traditions classify him as very weak.[221]

Furthermore, Shaykh al-Mufīd discusses the narrations that say the month of Ramadan never decreases, which are recorded in *al-Kāfī* and *al-Faqīh*, and disputes their validity as far as their chain is concerned.

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[220] *Al-Istibṣār*, vol. 2, h. 230, 231.

[221] Ibid. vol. 3, h. 933, 935.

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Shaykh al-Ṣadūq says in the chapter of 'the guardian prevents the heir': I did not find this tradition except in Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb, and I only narrated it through his path.

What Shaykh al-Ṣadūq is saying would have no meaning unless he felt that not everything in the Four Books were certain, or else there would be no value in wanting to narrate it from numerous paths or specifically from al-Kulaynī.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in *al-Tahdhīb* a narration from *al-Kāfī* that ends with Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, and he then comments on it, saying:

> This tradition alludes to the prohibition of donkey meat which is in line with Sunni law. Most of the narrators who narrated this narration are Sunni, and anything that they exclusively narrate should be disregarded.[222]

If we were to accept that all the traditions that are narrated from the *uṣūl* and mentioned in the Four Books are certain in their providence or widely-transmitted by their authors, then this does not mean there is no need to find a reliable path. The certainty of the book itself and its successive transmission by its authors does not necessitate the authenticity of all its copies. For example, it is certain that *al-Kāfī* is related to al-Kulaynī, but this does not mean that every manuscript of *al-Kāfī* is certain and it has no difference with the original copy written by al-Kulaynī. It might be that some copies have additions, or missing parts, or it could have been distorted, so we therefore need to have a reliable path to the author of the book in order to be safe from these problems.

In other words, the successive transmission (*tawātur*) of books does not in itself mean the successive transmission of its copies.

This shows the benefit of the permit the author of the book gives to narrate the book. If the author of the book was to give a copy of his book to his student and say to him 'I permit you to narrate this copy from me', and the student in turn hands it over to his student and permits him to narrate from him, and the third to the fourth, and so on, where each was to hand down the book to the other and permit the next to narrate from them, then this could be how a copy of the author's book could reach us safe from any fault. If copies along with permits were not transmitted from one to the other, we would not achieve this safety.

Based on the view of the certainty of everything that is in the Four Books there will be no need for Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Ṣadūq to record their *shuyūkh* at the end of their books, or for them to mention the paths they have to the *uṣūl* that they transmitted the traditions from. There would also

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[222] *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 9, p. 40.

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be no meaning for what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had mentioned in the introduction to *al-mashyakhah*, that: 'I mention this *mashyakhah* to move my traditions from *irsāl* to *isnād*.'

If it is said that the purpose of them mentioning the paths is for blessings and for the sake of connecting the chain to the Imam, we would answer by saying that based on this there would be no need to have numerous paths or to mention more than one all the way to the author of the *aṣl*. It would be enough to just mention one path to the author of the *aṣl* without a need to mention a second path. The blessing of being connected to the Infallible would be achieved if one path was mentioned. However, this is not the case, for example, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions more than one path to some of the *uṣūl*.

In addition to this we can say that based on the idea of gaining blessings there is no need to record the paths in the book and calling it *al-mashyakhah* and presenting it to people. It would suffice to get the blessings by just recording the paths on a paper and for Shaykh al-Ṭūsī or Shaykh al-Ṣadūq to keep it with them. There would even be no need for them to record it on a paper, as it would be sufficient to keep it in their hearts.

Seeking blessings by relating the chain to the Imam could be achieved in this way, and recording it in a book under the title of *al-mashyakhah* is an unjustifiable waste of paper and ink.

To further explain what we have said, look at how we live today. If it was supposed that a person wanted to seek blessings by relating his chain to the Imam, would it be correct for him to write a book where he mentions his paths to, for example Shaykh Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭehrānī or Sayyid al-Marʿashī al-Najafī? Then after that to mention the paths of these two scholars to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī? Rational people would certainly laugh at this and say that they should keep these paths in their heart or on a paper for themselves.

Al-Najāshī was hesitant in narrating from weak sources, according to what he said in certain places in his book,[223] and this would be meaningless if it was supposed that the books he narrates from are widely-transmitted.

According to what al-Najāshī mentions, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā requested al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Washā to duplicate Ābān ibn Aḥmar's book and then read it to him. He censured al-Ḥasan for hastening and said to him: 'Go and duplicate it and listen to it from me. I do not trust the events that occur [in the future].'

The need to hear it and giving the explanation of 'I do not trust the events that occur' has no justification if the books were widely-transmitted.

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[223] Refer back to the discussion of general forms of classification of reliability.

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There are some traditions in the Four Books whose provenance cannot be accepted. For example what has been mentioned in *al-Kāfī* that Imam ʿAlī (A) ascended the pulpit and said:

لا تزوجّوا ولدي الحسن (عليه السلام)، فإنه مطلاق

Do not allow anyone to marry to my son Ḥasan (A), as he excessively divorces.[224]

We do not approve the sanctification of *al-Kāfī* at the cost of degrading the noble status of our Imam al-Ḥasan (A).

It is also mentioned in *al-Kāfī*, from Abū Baṣīr, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) in reference to the verse from the Almighty: '*And indeed, it is a remembrance for you and your people, and you [all] are going to be questioned.*' He (A) said: 'The Messenger of Allah (S) is the remembrance and his progeny are the questioned, as they are the people of the remembrance.'[225]

The mentioning of the tradition in this form makes it certain that it was not issued, due to the discrepancy in its structure.

If it is said that the likes of these traditions must not be looked at in their apparent meaning and they should be interpreted in a particular way, for example in regards to the first example there were some of the Kufan families who tried to marry Imam al-Ḥasan (A) to some of their daughters, and so Imam ʿAlī (A) warned his son about those girls and went up on the pulpit and said: 'Do not marry anyone to my son al-Ḥasan (A), because he excessively divorces' that this was said out of fear for his son, we would respond: what is the benefit in preserving the provenance and cancelling the apparent meaning?! Sanctifying Ahl al-Bayt and their traditions must make us preserve them in their provenance and in their apparent meaning. As for accepting the provenance and not acting upon its apparent meaning is in fact rejecting the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt and therefore not acting upon it.

Specific Arguments

These were some general arguments against the claim that everything in the Four Books is certain. We will now discuss each of the Four Books and the specific arguments related to each one of them.

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[224] *Al-Kāfī*, vol. 6, p. 56.

[225] Ibid. vol. 1, p. 211, h. 4.

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Rejected References

In order to authenticate the claim of certainty of everything in the Four Books it is possible to refer to some traditions, like the tradition of ʻAlī ibn Ḥanẓalah, from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) who said:

اعرفوا منازل الرجال منا على قدر رواياتهم عنّا

> Know the status of men among us according to the amount they narrate from us.[226]

And the tradition of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Abī Khālid who said: 'I asked Abū Ja'far al-Thānī [al-Jawād] (A):

جعلت فداك، إنّ مشايخنا رووا عن أبي جعفر وأبي عبدالله عليهما السلام، وكانت التقية شديدة، فكتموا كتبهم، فلم ترو عنهم، فلما ماتوا صارت الكتب إلينا، فقال عليه السلام: حدّثوا بها، فإنّها حقّ.

> May I be sacrificed for you. Our *shuyūkh* narrated from Abū Ja'far and Abū 'Abd Allāh (A), and dissimilation was extreme [at that time], so they concealed their books and nothing was narrated from them. When they died the books reached us. He (A) said: 'Narrate them, as they are the truth.'[227]

Such traditions are clearly questionable, even though they could indicate the validity of the narration of traditions and the necessary general acceptance of them. Otherwise, there is no meaning for placing the status of a man according to the amount of how much he narrates, and there would not be any meaning in emphasising on transferring them by saying 'narrate them as they are the truth'. However, none of this indicates the validity of every narration. It is possible that Ahl al-Bayt would command us to follow every tradition including a narration from a profligate person, and the Qur'an says: '*If a profligate person comes to you with information then verify.*'[228]

If it is said that the Imam's statement of 'Narrate them, as they are the truth' indicates the veracity of all the traditions that exist in the books of the early companions, we would respond: the tradition implies that everything issued by the two Imams and put in the books are truthful. This is correct and we accept that. Is it possible for there to be a Shi'i that does not agree with the truthfulness of what comes from our Imams?

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[226] Ibid. vol. 1, p. 50.

[227] Ibid. p. 53.

[228] Qur'an, 49:6.

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However, the problem is how to prove that everything that exists in the Four Books was issued by the Imams and that it is all true and must be narrated? This previous tradition says that what is issued by them is true, but not everything in the Four Books is true and was issued by them.

A Counter Claim

However, the opposite could also be claimed; namely that the material Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Ṣadūq had included in their books is invalid because the chains of narration mentioned in each *mashyakhah* are chains leading to the authors of books. In other words, they refer to the original book and not the copy that existed with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, from which they are narrating. With this in mind, the traditions they mention would be classified as disconnected and this closes off the possibility of gaining any knowledge or understanding from them.

Refutation

This claim renders the shaykh's record of chains mentioned in his *mashyakhah* meaningless, a waste of time, ink, and paper. The thought of seeking blessings is also invalid because seeking blessings does not need all the various paths he mentions.

The expression the shaykh himself uses is 'I mention the chains to move the traditions from *irsāl* to *isnād*' refutes what has been mentioned.

Shaykh mentions in *al-Fihrist* in the biography of al-'Alā' ibn Zarīn that he has four copies of his book and each copy has its own path. He then mentions the path to each copy. This indicates that the paths he mentions were for the copy he had in his possession and not the original book.

The Shaykh says in *al-Fihrist* when mentioning Shaykh al-Mufīd and discussing his books: 'We heard all of these books from him. Some of them we read from him and some we read to him numerous times while he listened.' This indicates the concentrated effort on one particular copy that is read or heard.

In the biography of Ibn Mahziyār, the shaykh mentions his path to him and then says: 'Except for *Kitāb al-Mathālib*, as al-'Abbās narrated half of it from 'Alī ibn Mahzayār.'

In the biography of al-Shalmaghānī he says: 'Some people informed us about *Kitāb al-Taklīf*, except for one tradition in the chapter of witnessing.'

And other cases where he exempts a tradition or a book.

This exemption again indicates that the chain that the shaykh mentions is for a copy of the book in his possession and not the original book, or else it would be meaningless to exempt one or two traditions.

This shows that the permit, or reading or hearing was related to a particular copy, so all the traditions of that copy were read out, or heard, or permitted except for one or two traditions.

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According to this there would be no meaning to exempt one whole book because if the shaykh's path is to the original copy then this means that his path will therefore be to the author. As long as the shaykh's path is to the author of the book, like Ibn Mahziyār, then there is no basis to exempt some of it.

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Questions

1. It has been said that there is certainty in the validity of all the traditions in the Four Books. What does this claim mean and how can it be proven?

2. Explain the third justification Shaykh al-Ḥurr uses to prove the validity of all the traditions of the Four Books.

3. Mention the seventh justification.

4. Mention the sixteenth justification.

5. What is the claim made by Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm in relation to the *uṣūl*?

6. What is the connection between the claim made by Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm and Shaykh al-Ḥurr?

7. Mention the first argument that claims the authenticity of everything that is in the Four Books.

8. What is the second argument?

9. Mention the third argument.

10. Mention the fourth and fifth arguments.

11. There are references that are rejected in which they have been used to establish the authenticity of everything that is in the Four Books.

12. There might be a misconception that says that what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Ṣadūq had mentioned in their three books are invalid. Explain this misconception.

A Glance at the Book *Al-Kāfī*

The book *al-Kāfī* was written by the great Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (250/864-328-9/941), and his teknonym (*kunyah*) was Abū Jaʿfar al-Aʿwar.

Al-Najāshī mentioned in the biography of Shaykh al-Kulaynī that he compiled this work over a period of twenty years.

This great and noble shaykh lived during the Minor Occultation and was a contemporary of the four great deputies of Imam al-Mahdī (A). He passed

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away before the passing away of the fourth deputy, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Samrī who died in the year 329 AH (941), whereas al-Kulaynī died in the year 328 AH. Another view is that he passed away in the year 329 AH, accordingly, both would have died in the same year.

Shaykh Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī (1107/1695-1186/1772) mentions from Sayyid Hāshim al-Baḥrānī (1050/1640-1107/1696 or 1109/1698), from some reliable people that some rulers in Baghdad had seen a monument built over the grave of al-Kulaynī and asked about it. They were told it belonged to the Shiʿa, and they gave an order to demolish it. They exhumed the body and saw that the shroud had not been affected by decay, and along with it was another body with its shroud intact. The grave was later rebuilt and a dome erected above it.

It has also been reported that an extremist ruler in Baghdad gave the order to dig up the grave of Imam al-Kāẓim (A). However, some people suggested to him it would be enough to just dig the grave of one of the Shiʿa scholars by the name of al-Kulaynī. When they dug his grave they found his body intact as if it had been buried that very hour, so an order was given to build a great dome over it and it became a famous place of pilgrimage.

The book *al-Kāfī* is made up of three parts: *al-Uṣūl, al-Furūʿ* and *Kitāb al-Rawḍah.*

Kitāb al-Rawḍah was published in one volume, and it comprises some of the sermons, advice, and historical issues of the Imams, related to them and others.

Some scholars[229] have said that when al-Kulaynī finished his book and wanted to place everything in their designated chapters there were a lot of additional things from the sermons of Ahl al-Bayt and their treatises, certain etiquettes of righteous people, and wise commendations that should not be left out. Therefore, he composed a book that included all of this and called it *al-Rawḍah,* because a *rawḍah* is a garden which is a source of all types of dates.

A debate does exist as to whether *Kitāb al-Rawḍah* was written by al-Kulaynī or not, as some have said that it is the work of Ibn Idrīs al-Ḥillī (543/1148-598/1202).

Shaykh al-Nūrī has mentioned in *al-Mustadrak,*[230] mentioning from *Riyāḍ al-ʿUlamā'* that Mullā Khalīl al-Qazwīnī (1001/1593-1089/1678) believed that *al-Rawḍah* was written by Ibn Idrīs, and this view could also be attributed to al-Shahīd al-Thānī.

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[229] This was said by Dr. Huṣayn ʿAlī Maḥfūẓ (1926-2009) in his introduction to *al-Kāfī.*

[230] *Al-Mustdarak,* vol. 3, p. 546.

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Shaykh al-Nūrī refuted this view after presenting the clear stance given by scholars that *al-Rawḍah* belongs to al-Kulaynī because it flows in the same sequenced style as the rest of *al-Kāfī*.

What he may have meant by 'scholars' are the likes of al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, both of whom mention that *al-Rawḍah* was authored by al-Kulaynī; therefore, how could it have been written by Ibn Idrīs who came a while after them?

In regards to *al-Uṣūl*, it was printed in two parts, and each part had four chapters. Chapter one is called the Chapter of Reason and Ignorance (*Kitāb al-ʿAql wa al-Jahl*), and it is about the intellect and ignorance. The second is the Chapter of Knowledge and its Merits (*Kitāb al-ʿIlm wa Faḍluh*), then the third is the Chapter of Monotheism (*Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*), and the last chapter is the Chapter of Divine Guidance (*Kitāb al-Ḥujjah*), and it deals with issues related to the Infallibles, like their knowledge, their lives, and so on.

Part two includes the Chapter of Faith and Disbelief (*Kitāb al-Īmān wa al-Kufr*), the Chapter of Supplication (*Kitāb al-Duʿā'*), the Chapter of Merits of the Qur'an (*Kitāb Faḍl al-Qur'ān*) and the Chapter of Social Relations (*Kitāb al-ʿUshrah*).

Al-Furūʿ is in five parts and each part deals with traditions related to jurisprudential issues.

The Shiʿa have historically held *al-Kāfī* in high esteem and, both then and now, much effort has been devoted to researching, studying and reading it.

Al-Najāshī has said: 'I would frequently go to a mosque which was known as Masjid al-Lu'lu'ī [in Baghdad] and it was called Masjid Nafṭawayh al-Naḥwī. I would recite the Qur'an to the owner of the mosque, and a group of my companions would read *Kitāb al-Kāfī* under Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Kūfī who wrote from Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī. I also saw Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿAqrā'ī narrate from him.

The complete amount of traditions in *al-Kāfī* is more than the complete amount of the six Sunni *ṣiḥāḥ*. There are 16199 traditions in *al-Kāfī*, whereas in the six *ṣiḥāḥ* there are 9483 traditions.

This reveals the greatness of this book and the extent of effort put in by the author. May Almighty Allah reward him in the best of ways for his endeavour!

Four Points

There are a few discussions related to *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, in which we have chosen four of them:

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Al-Kulaynī's Method

Some of the companions of the Imams recorded traditions they heard from them in booklets which exceed four hundred, and they were then called the Four Hundred *Uṣūl* (*al-uṣūl al-arbaʿami'ah*).

Al-Kulaynī, al-Ṣadūq and al-Ṭūsī undertook to classify these *uṣūl* into different categories, placing each tradition in its appropriate chapter. They put invaluable effort in what they did. The result of their labours was the compilation of the Four Books that are popularly known among us, and have become prominent today, being: *al-Kāfī*, *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb*, and *al-Istibṣār*.

These great scholars made it easy for us, and they prepared for us the grounds for *ijtihād* and deducing rulings, because if a jurist wants to deduce a ruling and needs to find a tradition related to it he refers to these books and looks up the particular chapter related to that ruling.

The approach each of the authors of these books had is different. When al-Kulaynī wanted to narrate traditions from the *uṣūl* in most cases he would do so with mentioning the whole chain. For example, he would say: "ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to me, from his father, from Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, from the Imam (A)." Infrequently, he would omit some of the chain.

This omitting of some of the chain could be because he is depending on the previous chain, and this is termed as an addendum (*al-taʿlīq*), which he frequently uses.

In order to explain this we will give the following examples that are from *Furūʿ al-Kāfī*:[231]

1)

عدة من أصحابنا، عن سهل بن زياد، عن الحسن بن محبوب، عن عمر بن يزيد، قال: قلت لأبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) ...

From some of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād, from al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, from ʿUmar ibn Yazīd who said: "I asked Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) ...."

2)

سهل بن زياد، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن داود بن سرحان، عن أبي عبدالله (عليه السلام) ...

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[231] *Furūʿ al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, p. 176.

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> From Sahl ibn Ziyād, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from Dāwūd ibn Sarḥān, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) ....

We know through our research that al-Kulaynī does not narrate directly from Sahl, so the chain in the second narration that starts from Sahl must be based on the previous narration and an annotation to it. It is as if he is saying: 'I am narrating this second tradition from some of our companions, from Sahl' however he omitted the word 'a group' because it is based on the previous chain.

A novice in this area might be unaware of this issue and might assume that al-Kulaynī is narrating from Sahl, and conclude that Sahl is one of the *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī.

At times he could narrate directly from Sahl without annotation to the previous chain, like in *Furūʿ al-Kāfī*, volume 3, pages 154, 155, 165, *et passim.*

In these cases the tradition is discredited as far as the chain because the link between al-Kulaynī and Sahl is unknown, unless of course one gains assurance that it is the same link that he mentions in other cases.

The mentioning of Sahl and omitting the links is only one example, as we can see other cases and examples similar to this.

This is in regards to al-Kulaynī. As for Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṣadūq, the prevailing method is they do not mention the complete chain of the tradition. They might omit some of it, and they rarely mention the complete chain, which we will explain in detail when dealing with their books.

The Authenticity of All the Traditions of *al-Kāfī*

It has been said that everything in *al-Kāfī* is authentic and credible. Shaykh al-Nūrī attempts to prove this in his book *al-Mustadrak* with four points,[232] and we will mention two of them here:

> Al-Kulaynī was contemporary to the four deputies, and it is highly unlikely that he did not present his book to one of them, especially in that al-Kulaynī had compiled the book in order for it to be a reference for the Shiʿa, as he clearly mentions in his introduction.

Presenting books to one of the deputies to review was something commonly practised.

It is important to note that what is meant by authentication (of *al-Kāfī*) is not what is commonly suggested amongst some people that Imam al-Mahdī (A) had said '*Al-Kāfī* [*The Sufficient*] is sufficient for our Shiʿa' because this has no origin in the writings of our scholars, and further to this, the hadith scholar al-Astarabādī had clearly stated it is baseless. The purpose

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[232] *Al-Mustadrak*, fourth *fā'idah*.

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for the claim of presenting the book to one of the noble deputies is to achieve a level of assurance (*iṭmi'nān*).

We would respond: the claim of acquiring assurance through the presenting of the book, or even the claim of conjecture (*ẓann*) is something irrelevant. The purpose in showing a book to one of the deputies is usually because of the deviation of its author, like in the case of al-Shalmaghānī and Banī Faḍḍāl. Asking about their books, or presenting it to one of the deputies was due to the deviation of their behaviour or belief which would make some believe that this deviation would prevent taking their traditions. Therefore, there was a need to ask or present the book. As for the case of al-Kulaynī about whom al-Najāshī had said: 'The shaykh of our scholars in his time, and the most distinguished among them. He was the most reliable of people in traditions', what reason would there be to show his book to one of the deputies?

If you were to say: it could be claimed that the appropriate act was for al-Kulaynī himself to have showed his book, or that the appropriate thing was that someone else would have done so, then we would respond: the first argument is refuted as it has not been proven that it was customary for authors of books to present their writings, and the second is also refuted for the same reason.

Referring to what al-Kulaynī had mentioned in his introduction to *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, where some had requested that he write the book *al-Kāfī* and he said:

> You have mentioned that you wish to have a sufficient (*kāfī*) book that would combine all different aspects from the science of religion and be sufficient for a learner. A book that a guide can refer to and take what they need from matters of their religion in order to follow the authentic teachings from the Truthful Ones (A) ... Almighty Allah, and gratitude is to Him, has made it possible for me to author what you have requested ... We extended the book to add the Chapter of Divine Guidance, although not to the extent it rightfully deserves.

This statement indicates that he was requested to write a book where people who want to act upon authentic teachings can refer to it, and he met this requirement and he testifies that he accomplished this by saying: 'Allah has made it possible to author what you have requested.'

Apparently, this introduction by al-Kulaynī was written after he completed *al-Kāfī*, because he had said 'Allah has made it possible to author what you have requested'. And he also said: 'We extended the book to add the Chapter of Divine Guidance.'

Based on this, no one can say that even though al-Kulaynī was requested to write a book that includes authentic teachings, he did not know whether

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he had fulfilled what he promised. This is because it always occurs that a person might intend for something when starting a book, but during the process they change from what they intended.

We would respond: al-Kulaynī did not say that he will only mention the authentic teachings, but he said that it will include authentic teachings, and this does not contradict it including non-authentic teachings.

Moreover, the term authentic according to early scholars did not mean the specific traditions that have been narrated by just narrators, but rather it meant a tradition that must be acted upon, even though by supporting it with surrounding factors in which if we were to review them they might not give us certainty.

Of course, if al-Kulaynī were to have said: 'Acting upon the teachings of the reliable from the Truthful Ones' this would have validated that theory, because it is a testimony to the reliability of the narrators of the traditions. However, he used the phrase 'authentic teachings', and testimony to the authenticity of traditions does not necessitate testimony to the reliability of the narrators.

It is based on this that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī discusses some of the traditions in *al-Kāfī* and rejects them as far as the weakness of the chain. Some examples of this were given when discussing the authenticity of everything in the Four Books.

'Some of Our Companions'

Al-Kulaynī had numerous *shuyūkh* from whom he narrated the traditions of *al-Kāfī*, probably exceeding thirty in total. Some of them he abundantly narrated from, then there are some he rarely narrated from, and thirdly there are those in between.

Those whom he abundantly narrated from are: ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad, Ḥamīd ibn Ziyād, and Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl.

In the first level comes ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, as close to one-third of the traditions in the book are narrated from him, totalling 4957 traditions.[233]

In the second level comes Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā whom al-Kulaynī narrates one-fourth of his traditions from, being 3114 traditions.

The levels of the rest of them follow with slight differences. A good coincidence is that all of these narrators are among the great and reliable.[234]

There is a phenomenon exclusive to al-Kulaynī, and that is his expression of 'some of our companions' (*'iddah min aṣḥābina*). He has frequently used

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[233] As mentioned the amount of traditions in *al-Kāfī* are 16199.

[234] Except for Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl who has been criticised, however the correct view is that he is reliable.

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this phrase in the beginning of the chain, like saying 'some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā', or 'some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī', or 'some of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād'.

There are many occasions where this is mentioned in *al-Kāfī*, where the 'some' are narrating from either Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā or al-Barqī or Sahl.

In rare occasions they would narrate from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr or Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh.

There is a discussion about what 'some' means, and whether this type of chain is authentic or not.

I would like to draw attention to some writings on this issue, like the treatise written by Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Iṣfahānī al-Shiftī (1175/1761-1260/1844) whose title was Ḥujjat al-Islām. The views in this regard are as follows:

> What has been mentioned by 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (R) in the third *fā'idah* of the *fawā'id* that he recorded in the end of his *rijāl* work which was called *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*. He said....

Al-Kulaynī has said:

> What I mean by "some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā" is Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā and 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Kamandānī and ... What I mean by "some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī" is 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm and ... What I mean by "some of our companions, from Sahl ibn Ziyād" is 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Allān and ....

Al-Najāshī mentions in the biography of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā that al-Kulaynī has said:

> Any time that I say in my book 'some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā', they are Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā all the way to the last of who 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī mentions.

What al-Najāshī says is specific to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā.

According to the explanation given by 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī this removes the misconception about the 'some', because each of the three 'some' includes one reliable narrator and that is sufficient for the authenticity of 'some'. One of them includes the reliable Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, the second includes the reliable 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm, and the third has the reliable Ibn 'Allān.

Many scholars relied on 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's explanation about this, especially in it being supported by al-Najāshī about the one of the three 'some'.

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It is clear that such a view is questionable, because neither ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī or al-Najāshī were contemporary with al-Kulaynī for them to have directly heard from him, so there must be omitted links between them, and seeing that they are unknown this means such a transmission is invalid.

In the first tradition in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī* al-Kulaynī mentions the following:

أخبرنا أبوجعفر محمد بن يعقوب قال: حدثني عدة من أصحابنا منهم محمد بن يحيى العطار، عن أحمد بن محمد، عن ...

> Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb narrates to us, saying: "It has been narrated to us by some of our companions, among them Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from ....

This phrase clearly states that whenever al-Kulaynī uses the word 'some' (*al-ʿiddah*), one of them is the reliable and noble Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār.

This is what Sayyid al-Khūʾī had said when we asked him his opinion about the term 'some'.

In line with this it can be added that al-Kulaynī in Part Nine of the Chapter of Emancipating mentions the following:

عدة من أصحابنا، علي بن إبراهيم ومحمد ابن جعفر، ومحمد بن يحيى، وعلي بن محمد بن عبد الله القمى، واحمد بن عبد الله، وعلي بن الحسين جميعاً عن احمد بن محمد بن خالد ...

> Some of our companions, ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar, Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Qummī, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, all from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid ....

However, this does not exist in all copies of *al-Kāfī*. In some of them it says: 'Some of our companions, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid.' According to this the mentioned transmission loses its credit and only the first transmission can be used.

Whatever the case may be, this view is questionable because what has been said does not form a proof that can be generalised to all cases.

To say that the least number of 'some' is three, and it is unlikely that three of al-Kulaynī's *shuyūkh* have united in agreement to lie.

This is good for one who acquires assurance in what has been mentioned.

What we have chosen in solving the problem is that if we were to study the *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī we would see that, after counting the same person

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who might be mentioned under different names as one, there are thirty *shuyūkh.*

If we were to count the traditions al-Kulaynī narrates from each of them we would see that he narrates from ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm in 4957 places, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā in 3114 places, from Ḥamīd ibn Ziyād in 361 places, from Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, who was Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, in 803 places, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad in 663 places, and from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl in 513 places.

This means that one-third of *al-Kāfī* has been narrated by these six reliable people, because as mentioned there are 16199 traditions in *al-Kāfī.*

If we refer to the rest of his *shuyūkh* we would see that a large amount of them are also reliable, and the others can be divided into two groups: a large group referred to with the expression 'some of our companions', and a small group whose reliability has not been established.

We add another premise to this, which is that the term 'some' refers to three or more.

Including this premise with the first we establish that the possibility of all the individuals from the three 'some' being from the remaining unknown narrators whose reliability have not been established and not one of them being from the six from whom he has narrated in more than ten thousand places to be a very weak possibility. This produces assurance that at least one of them is from the six reliable narrators.

Furthermore, if we were to add something else to consider then the acquiring of assurance of reliability of the individuals in the 'some' will become stronger, and that is to say: there are three forms of 'some' that are mentioned in *al-Kāfī*:

> Some, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā.
>
> Some, from al-Barqī.
>
> Some, from Sahl.

Regarding 'some', from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, assurance can be achieved that one of them is Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā because Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā narrated abundantly from Ibn ʿĪsā. It is rare that the name Ibn ʿĪsā is mentioned without it being associated with Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā who is among the noble and reliable.

With 'some', from al-Barqī, assurance can be achieved in that one of them is ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Bindār who was reliable, because Ibn Bindār narrated abundantly from al-Barqī.

As for 'some', from Sahl, assurance can be achieved by one of them being Ibn Bindār as well, due to his excessive narrating from Sahl.

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It is also possible to add another premise that will hasten the acquiring of assurance, and that is with the three of the *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī who wrote the book as a reference for the Shi'a until Judgement Day, for them to unite in lying is something very unlikely.

In all, adding these contexts to each other will produce an undoubtable assurance in the reliability of one of the people in the 'some', and this is the required result.

The *Shuyūkh* of Al-Kulaynī

Al-Kulaynī had several *shuyūkh* from whom he received the traditions recorded in his book, *al-Kāfī*. We will mention those whom we have come across during our summary research.

Some scholars made a table of their names which has been mentioned in the beginning of *al-Rawḍah*. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī mentioned some of the *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī and also explains the term 'some of our companions', which has been frequently repeated in *al-Kāfī*, amongst the *fawā'id* at the end of his book. However, we have not found some of these names in *al-Kāfī* as being the *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī.

An important point is that al-Kulaynī had sometimes mentioned one shaykh with different names, thus an observer might assume that they are numerous individuals, but in fact it is one person.

The following is a table of the names of the *shuyūkh*:

No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
1.	'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm	4957 traditions were narrated from him. He is noble and reliable. The author of the famous exegesis known as *Tafsīr al-Qummī*. He is the person most narrated from in *Kitāb al-Kāfī*.
2.	Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā	3114 traditions were narrated from him. He is the famous Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār al-Ash'arī, the reliable and noble.
3.	Ḥamīd ibn Ziyād	361 narrations were narrated from him, and he was among the reliable.
4.	Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, Abū 'Alī al-Ash'arī	Al-Kulaynī would sometimes narrate from him with the name Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, with 120 traditions being narrated under this name.

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No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
		At other times he used the name Abū ʿAlī al-Ashʿarī, with 683 traditions being narrated under this name. He is among the reliable and noble. ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī has mentioned in *al-Khulāṣah* that this teknonym was used for Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Saʿd ibn Mālik, the shaykh of the Qummīs, but this is not important after having both of them being classified as reliable.
5.	Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad	663 traditions were narrated from him, and he was among the reliable narrators.
6.	Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl	513 traditions were narrated from him. He narrates from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, and al-Kulaynī narrates a lot from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān. There is a discussion as to who Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl is, because the name is used for three individuals. It is used for the reliable Ibn Bazīgh, the reliable al-Barmakī and al-Bunduqī whose reliability has not been established. Supposing that the person referred to here is Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Bazīgh or Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Barmakī, then he is reliable, and if it was Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bunduqī, then his state is unknown. Apparently it is not referring to Ibn Bazīgh, even though the author of *Taʾsīs al-Shīʿah li ʿUlūm al-Islām* – Sayyid Ḥasan al-Ṣadr (1272/1856-1354/1935) – insisted on this in a treatise he wrote for it. Ibn Bazīgh narrates from Imam al-Riḍā (A), and al-Kulaynī narrates from him through two links, like in *Uṣūl al-Kāfī*, volume 1, page 436, and in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 3, pages 47, 152. It also cannot be al-Barmakī because al-Kulaynī narrates from him through one link, so this means that it is the third person. This is why the chain can be weakened because of him, but this can be overcome because of his name being

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No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
		mentioned in *Kāmil al-Ziyārah*. The name was mentioned there as Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl, from al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān, and this would suffice based on the validity of him being mentioned there to be enough to establish reliability, or based on al-Kulaynī excessively narrating from him to be sufficient to also establish his reliability.
7.	Muḥammad ibn Ja'far al-Razāz al-Kūfī	Al-Kulaynī narrates from him in a few places and with different names. In some cases he narrates from him with this name, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 4, page 578. In another case with the name Muḥammad ibn Ja'far Abū al-'Abbās, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 6, page 59, 64. A third case is with the name Abū al-'Abbās al-Razāz, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 6, page 84. A fourth case is Muḥammad ibn Ja'far al-Kūfī, like in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 325. It is possible that he is the same as Muḥammad ibn Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Kūfī from whom al-Kulaynī narrates in a few cases, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 6, page 160. There is a discussion about this person's reliability. Al-Najāshī has said: 'Muḥammad ibn Ja'far ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Awn al-Asadī Abū al-Ḥasan al-Kūfī who lived in Rayy and was known as Muḥammad ibn Abū 'Abd Allāh. He was reliable and authentic in narrations.' It has been said that this person is the same al-Razāz who al-Kulaynī narrates from, which will establish his reliability. It is also said that there is nothing that proves that al-Razāz and al-Asadī are one person, so it is not possible to rule his reliability.
8.	Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Kūfī, al-'Āṣimī	This is how his name has been mentioned in *al-Rawḍah*, page 17. In other cases al-Kulaynī narrates from him under the name Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-'Āṣimī, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 6, page 6. In a third case under the name Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, like in *al-Furū'*, volume 4, pages 44, 45, 133. He is among the reliable narrators.

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No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
9.	ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Bindār	At times al-Kulaynī narrates from him with this title, like in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 3, pages 23, 123. In other times under the name ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, like in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 396, and *al-Rawḍah*, pages 231, 255. In a third case under the name ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, like in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 275.
10.	Aḥmad ibn Mahrān	Al-Kulaynī narrates abundantly from him, and he in turn narrates from ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Ḥasanī. His reliability has not been established, unless we were to say that it is sufficient that al-Kulaynī abundantly narrates from him.
11.	Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ṣalt	Al-Kulaynī narrated from him under this name, like in *al-Rawḍah*, page 390. In other cases under the name Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣalt, like in *al-Rawḍah*, page 302. In a third case his name is Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qummī, like in *al-Rawḍah*, pages 334, 304. His reliability can be established based on al-Ṣadūq mentioning in *Ikmāl al-Dīn wa Ikmāl al-Niʿmah* that: 'My father narrated from him and praised his knowledge, his virtue, asceticism and piety.'
12.	(Al-Ḥusayn) al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Hāshimī	He has been mentioned in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 4, page 146. He is unknown (*majhūl*).
13.	Al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-ʿAlawī	He has been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, pages 372, 523, and in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 3, page 62. He is unknown.
14.	Al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥasanī	He has been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 299. He is unknown.
15.	Al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan al-ʿAlawī	He has been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 525. He is unknown, and it is possible that he is the same above person.

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No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
16.	Al-Ḥasan ibn Khafīf	He has been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 525. He is unknown.
17.	Abū Dāwūd	He has been mentioned in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 3, pages 49, 51, 365, 304, 314. He is unknown.
18.	Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh and Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā	Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā is the same Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār that was mentioned in number 2. As for Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh, it could be that he is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī who was reliable and among the noble. The evidence for this is that they both narrate from the noble and reliable ʿAbd allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī, as can be seen in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 329. In any case the reliability of Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā is sufficient enough without a need to classify Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh as reliable. As for ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī who was among the noble of our companions, al-Kulaynī does not directly narrate from him, but through the link of his son Muḥammad or someone else. If it is supposed that he could sometimes be the first in the chain, then this would mean that it is annotated (*al-taʿlīq*).
19.	Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh	He has been mentioned in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 4, page 54. It could be that he is same person as Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Umyah and also Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad. Whatever the case may be he is unknown.
20.	Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ashʿarī	He has been mentioned in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 6, page 282. He is unknown.
21.	ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Kamandānī	He is also the shaykh of al-Ṣadūq. His reliability has not been established.
22.	Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muʿamar	He has been mentioned in *al-Rawḍah*, pages 18, 31. He is unknown.

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No.	Name	Cases of Traditions
23.	ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās	He has been mentioned in *al-Rawḍah*, page 178. He is unknown.
24.	ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Mu'addab	He has been mentioned in *al-Rawḍah*, pages 352, 187, 180. He is unknown.
25.	Saʿd ibn ʿAbd Allāh and ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī	They have been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 457, volume 2, page 402. Their names have been repeated a few times at the end of volume one of *al-Uṣūl*. Both of them are among the noble and reliable, but it seems that they are not the direct *shuyūkh* of al-Kulaynī. That he mentions them at the beginning of a chain must be interpreted to be an addendum to a previous tradition.
26.	Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn al-ʿAlā'	He has been mentioned in *al-Uṣūl*, volume 1, page 198. It is said that he was among the representatives of Imam al-Mahdī (A), and if this is established then he will be ruled as being reliable.
27.	Muḥammad ibn ʿAqīl	He has been mentioned in *al-Furūʿ*, volume 4, page 224. He is unknown.
28.	Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan	There is a difference in view about him, as to whether he is al-Ṣaffār, or al-Barnānī or someone else, and with it not being possible to confirm he is al-Ṣaffār he is ruled as unknown.
29.	Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd al-Kūfī	He is known as Ibn ʿUqdah. Even though it has been said that he was a Zaydi, he is classified as reliable.

Questions

1. Which era did al-Kulaynī live in?

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2. How many parts is *al-Kāfī* divided into? Mention them with details.

3. There is a misconception about *al-Rawḍah* being attributed to al-Kulaynī. What is it and how can it be argued?

4. The method that Shaykh al-Kulaynī has in transmitting traditions is different to the method of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. Explain this.

5. Explain the first of the two arguments that Shaykh al-Nūrī uses to prove the validity of all the traditions in *al-Kāfī*. How can this be argued?

6. Explain the second argument and its refutation.

7. Al-Kulaynī narrates from _____ in the first level and from _____ in the second level. (Fill in the spaces.)

8. There is a phenomenon specific to al-Kulaynī. What is it?

9. There are a few views about the explanation of the term 'some' from whom al-Kulaynī narrates. What is the first explanation and its refutation?

10. What is the second explanation and its refutation?

11. What is the fourth explanation and the chosen view?

12. Mention five of al-Kulaynī's *shuyūkh* with explanation of their state as far as reliability is concerned.

13. Al-Kulaynī narrated abundantly from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, and there is a dispute about him. Mention your view on what could be referred to in order to establish his reliability.

14. Refer to *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, The Prayers of Jaʿfar, chapter 1, hadith 1, and explain the chain of this tradition.

A Glance at *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*

The book *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh* was written by the great Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī, famously known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991).

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It is known that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq was born by the prayer of Imam al-Mahdī (A). Al-Najāshī mentions in the biography of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's father, ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh, that he went to Iraq and met with Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Rūḥ (R) and asked him some questions. He then had some correspondences with him and asked him to deliver a written request (*ruqʿah*) to the Imam, asking in it to be granted a son. The Imam replied to him, saying: 'We have prayed to Allah for you and you will be blessed with two righteous sons.' He then had Abū Jaʿfar and Abū ʿAbd Allāh. Abū Jaʿfar (al-Ṣadūq) himself had said: 'I was born as a result of the prayer of Imam al-Mahdī (A),' and he was proud of this fact.

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq mentions this story in *Ikmāl al-Dīn.*[235]

It is mentioned in *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* that Imam al-ʿAskarī (A) corresponded with ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, wherein he says: 'May Allah give you success in what pleases Him, and may He grant with His mercy righteous children from your loin who have piety in Allah and uphold prayers and pay zakat ... You must await the relief, as the Prophet (S) has said: "The best of the acts of my nation is to await the relief, and our followers will continue to be grievous until my son appears."'

In his introduction to the book Shaykh al-Ṣadūq mentions the reason why he wrote it. He says that as fate led him to live in a foreign land forcing him to reside in Balkh in the vicinity of Īlāq,[236] the noble Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, known as Niʿmah, asked him to compile a book in jurisprudence on issues related to the permissible and the prohibited and to name it *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh* (*The Jurist for Him Without a Jurist*). This would be the same as the physician Muḥammad ibn Zakariyya al-Rāzī's book on medicine called *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Ṭabīb* (*The Physician For Him Without a Physician*). He complied with the request and wrote this book.[237]

This book was published in Najaf in the year 1376/1956 in four volumes. This was after it had been published three times, once in Lucknow, once in Tabriz, and once in Tehran.

The edition that is commonly used today is an offset from the Najaf edition.

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq valuably served the Shiʿa school of thought with the books he wrote that are more than two hundred.

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[235] *Ikmāl al-Dīn*, p. 276.

[236] A region in the south of what is today Uzbekistan.

[237] An important point is that the word *Kitāb* must be added as a part of the book's name, because the name of the book is not *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, but it is *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*.

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One of his books is *Madīnat al-ʿIlm* which was ten volumes and was larger than *al-Faqīh*, but there is sadly no trace of this book with us today.

Shaykh al-Bahāʾī said in his *al-Dirāyah*:

> We have five foundational works: *al-Kāfī*, *Madīnat al-ʿIlm*, *Kitāb Man Lā Yaḥḍuruh al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār*.

Shaykh Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭehrānī said in *al-Dharīʿah*:

> It is unfortunate that this great blessing of a book is lost among us from the era of Shaykh al-Bahāʾī's father whose statement apparently revealed that he had a copy of it ... ʿAllāmah al-Majlisī had even spent large sums of money in searching for it but was not successful ... Ibn Ṭāwūs narrates from him in *Falāḥ al-Sāʾil* and some other of his books.[238]

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq passed away in the year 381 AH, and he was buried in Rayy, close to the grave of Sayyid ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Ḥasanī.

It has been said that his noble grave was split due to severe rain, and his blessed body appeared and had not been affected in any way, even traces of henna could be seen on his finger nails, despite 857 years passing since his burial.

The discussion on this book will be presented in the following points:

Point One

It was previously mentioned that the method Shaykh al-Kulaynī used in *al-Kāfī* was usually to mention the whole chain and that it was only on rare occasions he did not. However, the method Shaykh al-Ṣadūq adopted was the opposite, as he would mainly omit the chain and would suffice in mentioning the direct narrator from the Imam. He would say, for example Zurārah [from], or Zurārah narrated from Imam al-Bāqir (A). In rare occasions he would mention the whole chain. He explained the reason for this in his introduction, saying:

> I compiled this book while omitting the chains to avoid there being many paths, even though there are many benefits for it.

It is for this reason that he had to mention at the end of the book his paths to those whom he starts the chain from, so for example he would say: 'Whatever I narrated from Zurārah, it was from my father, from ...'

These paths are called *mashyakhah*, which is the plural of *shaykh*.

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238 *Al-Dharīʿah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shīʿah*, vol. 20, p. 252.

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It is unfortunate that he did not mention his path to some whom he had mentioned in the beginning of the chain, and these traditions will of course be considered discontinued (*mursalah*).

Point Two

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq did not author his book as an encyclopaedia for the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt, but rather as a practical reference for the Shi'a, and not a hadith reference book. This can be understood from some of the statements he expresses in the introduction and also from the writing style of the book itself.

It is here where a phenomenon appeared, which is that when he mentions some traditions by a commentary or a gloss on them he would connect it to the tradition. The reader might sometimes not be aware of this and assume that the whole thing is one tradition, however only some of it is from the Imam and the rest is from al-Ṣadūq.

For example, al-Ṣadūq mentions the following:

> وقال (عليه السلام): الماء يطهِّر ولا يطهَّر. فمتى وجدت ماء ولم تعلم فيه نجاسة فتوضأ منه واشرب، وإن وجدت فيه ما ينجسه فلا تتوضأ منه ولا تشرب إلا في حال الاضطرار فتشرب منه ولا تتوضأ منه وتيمم ...
>
> He (A) said: "Water purifies, but it cannot be purified. So, whenever you find water and you do not know if it has any impurity then you can perform ablution with it, or drink from it. If you find it is impure then do not perform ablution with it and do not drink from it, except in emergency, where you can drink from it, but do not do ablution with it, you [instead] do *tayammum* ....

The reader would assume that this whole statement belongs to the Imam, however what the Imam said was only: 'Water purifies but it cannot be purified,' and the rest is from al-Ṣadūq.

Point Three

There is a famous view that says that all the traditions mentioned in *al-Faqīh* are valid without a need to look into their chains.

This is based on the following two arguments:

> Certain statements al-Ṣadūq mentions in his introduction, like: 'My intention was not the same as other authors in bringing everything they narrated. I intended to only bring what has given as a verdict and what I would rule as authentic and believe in being valid between me and my Lord, may His name be exalted.'

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This statement is clear in saying that he does not mention but only authentic traditions, and this would mean that all the traditions in *al-Faqīh* can be taken.

We would respond: even though al-Ṣadūq kept to only mentioning authentic traditions, the term authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) however, according to early scholars is different to how it is used by later scholars. The definition of authentic according to later scholars is a tradition whose narrators are all Shi'a and just. Whereas according to early scholars it meant any tradition that must be acted upon, including narrations with contextual factors that engender assurance regarding their veracity, even if it was supposed that the narrators were profligate or otherwise unreliable.

If this is what al-Ṣadūq meant by the authentic traditions, then him mentioning the traditions in his book would not necessitate them becoming valid for us, because it is possible that if these factors were presented to us they would not give us assurance.

Further to this is that al-Ṣadūq had his special method in authenticating traditions. According to him any tradition authenticated by his shaykh, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd was authentic to him, and any tradition not authenticated by his teacher was not authentic to him.

He had distinctly stated this method in numerous places. Based on this how could his testimony to the authenticity of the traditions in his book be credible for us?

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has another statement in the introduction to his book different to the previous statement, where he says:

> Everything that is in it [*al-Faqīh*] is extracted from famous books that are reliable and are main references, like Kitāb Ḥurayz ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Sijistānī, Kitāb 'Ubayd Allāh ibn 'Alī al-Ḥalabī, etc.

As long as the traditions in *al-Faqīh* are taken from famous books that scholars relied on then there would be no need to find an authentic path between al-Ṣadūq and the author of the book from whom he narrates. Of course, we would need an authentic path between the author of the book and the Imam.

This view has been referred to in previous discussions.[239]

We would respond:

First: This would be correct supposing that any person al-Ṣadūq mentions in the beginning of the chain was the name of the author of the book he took the tradition from. However, this is not established, because he did not mention this in the introduction of his book or in the *mashyakhah*.

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[239] It is said that Sayyid al-Burūjurdī (R) was among those who accepted this view.

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Yes, as opposed to al-Ṣadūq, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī clearly states this in the introduction to the *mashyakhah* of *al-Tahdhībayn* (*Kitāb al-Tahdhīb* and *Kitāb al-Istibṣār*).

What confirms that al-Ṣadūq did not adhere to this is that in his *mashyakhah* he mentions a path to Ibrāhīm ibn Sufyān, Ismāʿīl ibn ʿĪsā, Anas ibn Muḥammad, Jaʿfar ibn al-Qāsim, and others. However, they do not have books; this is known through al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in their *al-Fihrist* as they did not mention them among those whom they mention as having books.

In addition to this, al-Ṣadūq mentions a path he has to Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays, and it is very unlikely that she has a book.

Shaykh al-Ṣadūq also in his *mashyakhah* mentions a path to a specific certain tradition, like the tradition that narrates a group of Jews visiting the Prophet.

Question: If someone who al-Ṣadūq starts with in the chain does not have a book, then how did he say that everything in his book was extracted from famous books?

We would respond: There is no ambiguity in the statement, because it can be supposed that al-Ṣadūq started with Ābān ibn Taghlab in the chain but he does not have a book. He could have taken the tradition from a book by his shaykh, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd. His shaykh's book might be famous, but the most that this would necessitate is there not being a need for an authentic path between him and his shaykh's book, but not between him and from whom he starts the tradition, being Ābān.

Second: The fame of a book and depending on it does not suffice the need to find a credible path, because the book might have multiple copies where some have more, others have less, or it might be distorted. A book being famous and reliable does not negate these mentioned possibilities. For example, *al-Kāfī* in our time is classified as a famous book that is relied on, but this does not mean that all copies of this book are safe from additions or missing information.

Thus, based on the view we have accepted, we will be in need of a credible path through which we can establish the authenticity of the copy by al-Ṣadūq when he says, that: 'My shaykh has permitted me to narrate a specific copy of Ḥurayz's book'. His shaykh had permitted him, and so did his shaykh, and this chain of permits of reliable people continues all the way to Ḥurayz himself. Therefore, Ḥurayz must have given a specific copy of his book to a reliable person and permitted him to narrate it, and in his turn he would have given it to a third person and permitted him to narrate it. This would have continued until it reached al-Ṣadūq.

Third: The fame of a book and relying on it does not mean relying on all its traditions without exemption. It means to rely and depend on it in

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general, like *al-Kāfī* is considered among the Shi'a as a famous book and is relied upon, but that does not mean that all its traditions are authentic or that each one of them can be acted upon.

Point Four

It is said that the book *al-Faqīh* has 5963 traditions, but a large amount of them reaching up to 2050 traditions are discontinued (*mursal*).

It is from here that there came a need to think about a way that could authenticate these discontinued traditions.

Some believed in their validity and said that the discontinued traditions of al-Ṣadūq in *al-Faqīh* are similar to the discontinued traditions of Ibn Abī 'Umayr in being valid and credible.

Their validity could be justified either by explaining that al-Ṣadūq had mentioned in his introduction that he does not mention anything in his book unless he has ruled its authenticity, has adopted the same opinion and considers it valid between him and his Lord. Another way is by saying that he had also mentioned in his introduction that everything in it is taken from famous books that are credible and relied upon.

Both of these explanations have been discussed and refuted in detail.

There is a view taken by a few scholars that distinguish if al-Ṣadūq was to use the phrase 'He said' (*qāl*), like if he was to say: 'Al-Ṣādiq (A) has said: "Every water is pure unless you have certainty that it is dirty [impure]."' Or if he was to use the phrase 'it is narrated' (*ruwiya*), like if he was to say: 'It is narrated from al-Ṣādiq (A) that: "Every water ..."' then the first is valid, but the second is not.

Among those who accepted this view of distinguishing is Sayyid al-Khū'ī (R) in some of his early *uṣūl* research courses. He says that if al-Ṣadūq was to say 'He said', this indicates his certainty in the authenticity and validity of the traditions, or else he would not have used the expression 'He said' that indicates his certainty in the provenance of the context of the tradition from the Imam.[240]

The issues with this view are clear, because if al-Ṣadūq was using the phrase 'He said', even though it implies his certainty in the authenticity and validity of the tradition, but this does not mean his testimony to the reliability of the narrators of the chain. It could be that there are some surrounding factors that bring about certainty in accepting them according to him, but maybe not according to us. This is why Sayyid al-Khū'ī (R) changed his view about this in his more recent research courses.[241]

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[240] See: *al-Dirāsāt*, p. 322.

[241] See: *Miṣbāḥ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 2, p. 520.

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Questions

1. What does *mashyakhah* mean? Why did Shaykh al-Ṣadūq need to list his *mashyakhah* at the end of his book?

2. There is a phenomenon exclusive to Shaykh al-Ṣadūq that we have mentioned in Point Two. Explain it.

3. Mention the first explanation that can be used to prove the validity of all the traditions of *al-Faqīh* without a need to research its chain. Mention the argument against it as well.

4. Mention the second explanation and the argument against it.

5. Mention the third argument against the second explanation.

6. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has abundantly mentioned discontinued traditions in his book. One view is that all of these discontinued traditions are valid based on two explanations. Mention them.

7. How can the distinguishing view be argued?

A Glance at *Al-Tahdhībayn*

The two books *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibṣār* (referred to as *al-Tahdhībayn*) were written by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī wrote *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* as a commentary on his teacher Shaykh al-Mufīd's book, *al-Muqni'ah.* At the beginning of the book, he commentated on the work and made annotations, as he would first mention between brackets his teacher's text, comment on it and give an analytical explanation as far as the rulings are concerned. However, after that he limited it to just mentioning the traditions, and he stated this in the beginning of *al-mashyakhah.* The reason he gave for this was for the sake of brevity, not obscuring the purpose of the book, and ensuring the book would not be left incomplete.

Therefore, *al-Tahdhīb* is not only a hadith book, but an analytical jurisprudential book as well.

It is said that this was the first book written by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī while he was only twenty-five or twenty-six years old.

A reader of this book will understand that a part of this book was written at a time when his teacher, Shaykh al-Mufid, was still alive, and the second part was written after the latter had passed away. This is observable in that

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at the beginning of the book until almost the end of the Chapter of Prayer, when al-Ṭūsī mentions his teacher, he says: 'The shaykh, may Almighty Allah protect him, said:' However, after this point he begins to say: 'The shaykh, may Allah have mercy upon him, said' (indicating that his teacher had passed away).

This book has been recently published in Najaf in ten volumes. The full number of traditions in this book as counted by Shaykh al-Nūrī is 13590.[242]

The author of *al-Ḥadā'iq* has a statement about *al-Tahdhīb* that is a bit extreme or exaggerated. He says:

> It is rare for there to be a tradition in *al-Tahdhīb* that is fabricated, distorted, with additions or reduced in its text or chain.[243]

As for *al-Istibṣār*, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī wrote it because the Shi'a were mocked that their traditions are inconsistent and contradicting, thus he wrote this book as an attempt to refute the contradictions that might appear to exist between some traditions. Therefore, he authored this book to mention the conflicting traditions and explain the way to combine between them. This is why the book was called *al-Istibṣār fī mā Ikhtulifa min al-Akhbār* (*The Revelation of What Conflict Exists in Traditions*).

This book was recently published in Najaf in four volumes.

The Shaykh himself set the number of the traditions he mentions at 5511. He mentions this at the end of the book and he says that he specified this to ensure that nothing could be added or removed from the text.

Our discussion about these two books will be in the following points:

Al-Ṭūsī's Method

Al-Ṭūsī has a different method in transmitting in each of these two books. Sometimes he would mention the complete chain while at others he would only mention some of the chain. He would usually not mention the complete chain as al-Kulaynī does in *al-Kāfī*, nor some of the chain as how al-Ṣadūq does in *al-Faqīh*.

It is for this reason that he needed to author a *mashyakhah* to record his paths to those whom he narrates the traditions from so that he would elevate them from the level of discontinued (*irsāl*) to the level of chained (*isnād*).

This *mashyakhah* at the end of *al-Tahdhīb* is predominantly correspondent with the *mashyakhah* of *al-Istibṣār*.

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[242] *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, vol. 3, p. 757.

[243] *Al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāẓirah*, vol. 3, p. 209.

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The Authenticity of All the Traditions in *Al-Tahdhībayn*

Some believe that all traditions in *al-Tahdhībayn* are authentic, and this could be justified with one of two explanations:

> Referring to what al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī mentioned in *al-Wāfī*, from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *'Uddat al-Uṣūl* who said: 'What I mention from traditions in my book I have only collated from the *uṣūl* that are relied upon.'

If he was taking the traditions from books that were relied upon then there is no need to find a path between the shaykh and the author of the book.

To this, we would respond: it has not been established that this statement actually comes from *'Uddat al-Uṣūl*. And even if we were to accept that it does, we would respond that as a general rule this does not mean we must rely on all the traditions without exception, it simply means the general acceptance of the book.

What confirms this meaning is the shaykh himself critiquing the chains of some of the traditions he recorded in his book. If these traditions were not authentic according to the shaykh himself then how can it be expected for them to be authentic for us?

What has been mentioned by Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Tafrīshī as narrated from him by the author of *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt*[244] that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī stated in the beginning of *al-mashyakhah* that the traditions he mentions are precisely from the books and *uṣūl* of the companions. He adds to this a second premise, in that these books and *uṣūl* were known and their attribution was known to their authors, and there is no doubt about it, on the same level as our knowledge of who the authors of the Four Books are. Based on this we would not need an authentic path between the shaykh and the authors of those books.

We would respond: as previously mentioned, what Shaykh says in the beginning of *al-mashyakhah* is proof of the invalidity of the fame of those books that they would not need to have an authentic path to them.

The evidence is when he said 'I mention the paths to the authors of the books to extract the traditions that I transmit from being discontinued to being chained'.

Another issue that has already been explained is that the fame of a book does not necessitate fame of all its copies. Some of these copies could be incorrect, and so there is a need to have a credible path to guarantee there being no mistakes.

This claim would also mean that the shaykh's writing of *al-mashyakhah* was meaningless and wasted a part of his life. Unless of course he did this

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[244] *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt*, vol. 2, p. 48.

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for the purpose of seeking blessings by connecting his chain to the Imam, but this is weak because seeking blessings does not need each and every chain to be mentioned. There would also be no need to record them in the book, as it would be sufficient to have it in his heart or on a paper.

Replacing a Weak Path

The shaykh had mentioned in the beginning of *al-mashyakhah* that when he mentions someone at the beginning of a chain, it means that he has taken the tradition from his book.

If we were to refer to his *mashyakhah* to find out the path to the author of the book we might not find the shaykh mentioning a path to him, or that the path to him is weak.

In this case it is possible to refer to *al-Fihrist* in which he authored to compile the names of the authors of Shi'a books and explains his paths to them.

This book mentions the paths more than what he had mentioned in his *mashyakhah*. So, he might mention in one path to the author of a book in his *mashyakhah*, whereas in *al-Fihrist* he mentions two or three paths. He might not even mention a path to a person in *al-mashyakhah*, but does so in *al-Fihrist*.

Therefore, if the path to *al-mashyakhah* was weak and some of the paths in *al-Fihrist* were authentic it could be replaced and helped by the authentic path mentioned in *al-Fihrist*.

The reason for this is that the shaykh, usually when he finishes mentioning someone and their book in *al-Fihrist*, says: 'The person who narrated to us all his books and traditions was so and so, from so and so.' This expression can be understood that what he narrates from some of these paths are narrated through another path, not that he narrates some traditions of a person through some of the paths, and some of the other traditions from another path.

The reason for replacing the paths in his *mashyakhah* with those of *al-Fihrist* is clear in light of what we have previously mentioned. Of course, the problem remains if the paths in *al-Fihrist* were also weak, so would there be other paths that could be used to overcome the problem?

Our next discussion will be on some of the new paths.

The Method of Shaykh al-Ardabīlī

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī (d. 1101/1689) who was one of the students of 'Allāmah al-Majlisī and the author of the famous book *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt* has an unpublished treatise called *Risālat Taṣḥīḥ al-Asānīd* (*A Treatise on the Authenticating of Chains*).

In the introduction of this treatise he explains a way to overcome the weakness of some chains.

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He had given a brief account of this method in Point Seven at the end of his book *Jāmiʿ al-Ruwāt.*

The method that he concluded with is relatively ambiguous, and Sayyid al-Burūjurdī expended a great deal of effort to clarify it.

To explain this we will give the following example: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in *al-Tahdhīb* a few traditions from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī who was among the noble and reliable. The text is as follows:

علي بن الحسن الطاطري قال حدثني عبد الله بن وضاح عن سماعة بن مهران قال قال لي ابو عبد الله (عليه السلام): اياك ان تصلي قبل ان تزول فانك تصلي في وقت العصر خير لك ان تصليقبل ان تزول

> ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī said: "Abd Allāh ibn Waḍḍāḥ, from Samāʿah ibn Mahrān who said: "'Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A) said to me: 'Be careful of not praying before its time finishes, and if you were to prayer in the afternoon it is better than for you to pray at the end of its time.'"'[245]

If we were to refer to *al-mashyakhah* to find the path the shaykh has to al-Ṭāṭirī we would see that he says:

وما ذكرته عن علي بن الحسن الطاطري فقد اخبرني به أحمد بن عبدون عن علي بن محمد بن الزبير عن أبي الملك أحمد بن عمر بن كيسبة عن علي بن الحسن الطاطري

> What I mention from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī has been narrated to me by Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdūn, from ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr, from Abū al-Malik Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Kīsbah, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī.

This sentence indicates that the path the shaykh has to al-Ṭāṭirī includes three links: Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdūn, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr, and Abū al-Malik.

There is no referencing of these three individuals being reliable, and therefore the path is weak and as a result all the traditions that start with al-Ṭāṭirī – which are thirty-four traditions – are weak and rejected.

In an attempt to authenticate these traditions al-Ardabīlī said:

> I have researched into *al-Tahdhīb* in its various chapters and I saw in the chapter of Circumambulation that the shaykh mentions four

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[245] *Al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 2, h. 549.

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> traditions in the following way: Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī, from Durust ibn Abī Manṣūr, from Ibn Maskān, from Abū ʿAbd Allāh (A).

All these four are reliable.

Shaykh al-Ardabīlī then did something else, which was to study in *al-Fihrist* or the *mashyakhah* the path the shaykh has to Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim. He found it was authentic, because it was in the following form: al-Mufīd, from Ibn Bābawayh, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ṣaffār, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim.

Through this we can acquire a new path to al-Ṭāṭirī by adding the first case to the second, being in the following way: al-Mufīd, from Ibn Bābawayh, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ṣaffār, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭirī. This is considered a credible path.

A reply to this method is that it would be correct if we supposed that al-Ṭāṭirī's book was with Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim when he transmitted the four mentioned traditions. Based on this all the traditions of al-Ṭāṭirī reached Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim, and as the shaykh has a credible path to him, all the traditions of al-Ṭāṭirī have reached us in a credible way.

However, it is possible that Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim did not have al-Ṭāṭirī's book, but only had the book of the narrator that preceded al-Ṭāṭirī, like Durust or Ibn Maskān. For example, Durust had a book that contained many traditions and among them were these four previously mentioned traditions, and Durust said to al-Ṭāṭirī 'I permit you to narrate this book of mine,' then al-Ṭāṭirī said to Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim 'I permit you to narrate Durust's book', and Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim then took the four traditions from Durust's book and recorded them in his book which he compiled traditions in.

Based on this Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim would not have been the narrator of all of al-Ṭāṭirī's traditions, but he would have been the narrator of Durust's book which had reached him through al-Ṭāṭirī. This would therefore allow Mūsā to say that al-Ṭāṭirī narrated these four traditions to him from Durust.

The Method of Shaykh al-Majlisī

The following method is attributed to Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (1037/1616-1111/1698) in his book *Kitāb al-Arbaʿīn*:

> If the path of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to the author of a book is weak, then whenever Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has an authentic path to that author then it is possible to rely on his path and replace it instead of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path.

The basis for this is that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has an authentic path to all the traditions of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, because he narrates all of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's

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traditions through Shaykh al-Mufīd. If Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has an authentic path to all of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's traditions, and it is supposed that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq also had an authentic path to the traditions of the author of the book which Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates, then this establishes an authentic path Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has to the author of the book.

When Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates a tradition from the author of an *aṣl* and he does not mention Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in the narration but he had an authentic path to the author of the book, it is possible to replace this and acquire an authentic path to the tradition.

We would respond: this would be correct if we suppose that it is not possible for there to be two different copies of the book, where Shaykh is narrating from one copy through a weak path, and al-Ṣadūq narrates from another copy through an authentic path. With this possibility – which is established and cannot be refuted – it is not possible to resort to this mentioned path because the tradition that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates might be in his copy and not Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's copy.

What confirms this possibility is the multiple copies that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in his *al-Fihrist* (page 112) in the biography of al-'Alā' ibn Zarīn who had a book that had four copies and for each copy he had a special path that was different to each of the others.

A Third Method

If we had a tradition which has reached us through two different paths and each one of them is weak from a certain aspect then it is possible to amalgamate between the two paths and acquire a third path.

Example: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates a tradition with the following chain:

> Al-Mufīd, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from his father, from Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from al-Ḥusayn, from al-Ḥasan, from Zar'ah, from Samā'ah, from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) ....[246]

This same tradition is narrated by al-Kulaynī in the following chain:

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[246] The narrators in this path are all reliable except for Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad who was a teacher of al-Mufīd (his full name was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd), unless we take mastership of permit as establishing a narrator's reliability.

As for Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, Sa'd, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (ibn 'Īsā), al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'ī al-Ahwāzī, Zar'ah and Samā'ah, all of them are reliable.

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> Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl, from ʿUthmān ibn ʿĪsā, from Zarʿah, from Samāʿah, from the Imam (A) ....[247]

The first path has weak points as far as Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad whom al-Mufīd narrates from, because Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd who is one of the masters of permit has not been mentioned as being reliable.

As for the second path, it is weak due to ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl.

The weakness that exists in the first path can be overcome because the problem that is created by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan in the chain is the doubt as to whether Aḥmad's father truly did narrate this tradition to him, or whether Aḥmad fabricated this and falsely attributed it to his father, because if Aḥmad was reliable then through his reliability we would be sure that his father had narrated the tradition to him and he did not falsely attribute it to his father; but as we are not sure of his reliability we must assume that he has falsely attributed it to his father.

This problem can be overcome through the second path, because this second path that al-Kulaynī uses should say that Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā narrated him this tradition without having Aḥmad as a link.

As for the weakness in the second path due to ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl, this can be overcome through using the first path, because if it is established that Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā had narrated the tradition to al-Kulaynī then we can take the first path and that would overcome the problem as far as ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl. After this amalgamation we can accept the tradition.

We would respond: we can assume that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan had fabricated the narrators in the chain between him and the Imam. Through this we do not want to claim that he forged the tradition, but we claim that it is possible for him to have fabricated the chain, and therefore we have nothing other than the second chain, and it is assumed that ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl is in the chain and his reliability is not established.

The Method of Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Astarabādī

Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Astarabādī (d. 1028/1619) who is the author of the famous *rijāl* book called *Manhaj al-Maqāl fī ʿIlm al-Rijāl* has a method for authenticating some weak chains.

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[247] The narrators of this path are all reliable except for ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl. Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-ʿAṭṭār is the famous shaykh of al-Kulaynī who is known for his reliability and nobleness. As for Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā and the rest, all of them are reliable.

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He says that the path of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, for example, to ʿUbayd ibn Zurārah is weak because of al-Ḥakam ibn Miskīn.[248] It is possible to extract an authentic path from Shaykh al-Ṣadūq to ʿUbayd after observing two points:

First: al-Najāshī has an authentic path to ʿUbayd as he mentions the following in ʿUbayd's biography:

> He has a book which a group have narrated from him. Some of our companions have narrated to us, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar, from Abī al-Khaṭṭāb, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl Bazīʿ, from Ḥammād ibn ʿUthmān, from ʿUbayd in his book.

Second: looking at the path al-Najāshī has to ʿUbayd it becomes clear that one of the narrators that fall in al-Najāshī's path is ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar.[249] If we were to look at Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* we would find that he mentions a path to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar in the following way:

> Shaykh al-Mufīd (R) has narrated to us through all of his books and narrations, from Abū Jaʿfar ibn Bābawayh, from his father and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, from him.

We are therefore able to understand that al-Ṣadūq narrates through an authentic path all the traditions of al-Ḥimyarī.

With these two clarifications it becomes known that it is possible to acquire al-Ṣadūq's path to ʿUbayd, because through the second point we know that al-Ṣadūq narrates with an authentic path all the traditions of al-Ḥimyarī. This is added to the first point that al-Ḥimyarī narrates all the traditions of ʿUbayd through an authentic path, which establishes that al-Ṣadūq would therefore be narrating with an authentic path to ʿUbayd all his narrations.

This new path is: al-Ṣadūq, from his father and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, from al-Ḥimyarī, from Abī al-Khaṭṭāb, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl Bazīʿ, from Ḥammād ibn ʿUthmān, from ʿUbayd.

This is the outcome of this method.

We would respond: with this method it is possible to authenticate every tradition that is proven to exist in ʿUbayd's book and that they are from his narrations, but how can it be proven that the tradition that al-Ṣadūq narrates in his book al-Faqīh that has in its path al-Ḥakam ibn Miskīn exists in

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[248] Refer to the *mashyakhah* of *al-Faqīh*, p. 31.

[249] He is the reliable ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Ḥimyarī.

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'Ubayd's book and also some of his narrations? It is supposed that al-Ṣadūq transmitted it through al-Ḥakam ibn Miskīn, and it is possible that because the reliability of al-Ḥakam has not been established he might have fabricated the tradition or added to it.

Of course, if it is supposed that al-Ṣadūq had taken the tradition from al-Ḥimyarī's book and not from 'Ubayd then this method would be correct, but we assume that al-Ṣadūq took the tradition from 'Ubayd's book which reached him through al-Ḥakam ibn Miskīn.

The Method of Sayyid al-Khū'ī

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (R) has narrated an amount of traditions from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Faḍḍāl.

If we refer to *al-Fihrist* we see that the shaykh mentions the following:

> He transmitted all his books to us; most of them we read with him and the rest we received from the permit of Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn, from 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr who heard it and had a permit from him.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī have not explicitly classified Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn as reliable, but he can be considered reliable in him being one of al-Najāshī's *shuyūkh*. It has already been previously explained that it is possible to classify all of al-Najāshī's *shuyūkh* as reliable.

There is the problem of 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr as he has not been classified as reliable.

This would necessitate the discrediting of all the traditions that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Faḍḍāl as far as Ibn al-Zubayr is concerned.

Sayyid al-Khū'ī (R) tried to overcome the problem of Ibn al-Zubayr in the following way: if we were to refer to *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, in the biography of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Faḍḍāl we see that al-Najāshī narrates all the traditions of Ibn Faḍḍāl in a way that begins with Ibn 'Abdūn, and Ibn al-Zubayr is not between them, which means it is an authentic path.

Through this we understand that the chain of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī who narrate the traditions of Ibn Faḍḍāl goes back to Ibn 'Abdūn.

If it is established that al-Najāshī's path is authentic this would authenticate all the traditions that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates from Ibn Faḍḍāl because as their chaining (*isnād*) is one – and it is assumed he is reliable – this would mean that what he narrates to his two students (al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī) is one. If it was not one then that would mean he is lying in one of the two transmissions, and this is against the supposition of him being reliable.

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If it is proven that there is one transmission and there is no difference, then in this case it has reached Ibn ʿAbdūn in an authentic path, which is the second path transmitted by al-Najāshī. This necessitates the authenticating of all the traditions that Shaykh narrates from Ibn Faḍḍāl.

In summary: as long as the book of Ibn Faḍḍāl has reached Ibn ʿAbdūn through two paths and one of them is authentic then whatever traditions Shaykh al-Ṭūsī transmits from Ibn Faḍḍāl through the link of Ibn ʿAbdūn is valid.

The general principle for this method is that if Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path to a particular narrator's book is mentioned as weak in both *al-Fihrist* and *al-mashyakhah*, then whenever al-Najāshī's path to the book is authentic and their shaykh (al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī) whom they narrate the book from is the same, it is possible to replace Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's weak path with al-Najāshī's authentic path.

Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm had adopted this method before Sayyid al-Khūʾī, as is mentioned in his *rijāl* book where he states the following:

> This path of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī can be known from al-Najāshī's book because they were contemporary to each other and shared most of the *shuyūkh*, like al-Mufīd, al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdūn and others. If it is known that he is narrating from an *aṣl* or a book through one of these narrators then this path would be to the shaykh.[250]

This method can be questioned from two aspects:

> It is possible that Ibn ʿAbdūn had two copies of Ibn Faḍḍāl's book which were different to each other. He might have transmitted one of the copies to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī through Ibn al-Zubayr and the other copy to al-Najāshī through someone else. Supposing this possibility it cannot be certain that whatever Ibn ʿAbdūn narrated to al-Najāshī is the same as what he narrated to al-Ṭūsī. The difference of the transmission does not necessitate it being a lie, as long as the copy is different.

Question: The traditions of Ibn Faḍḍāl which he heard from the Imam are the same, so where did the two different copies come from?

Answer: There could be a few reasons for this, like in the case of Ibn al-Zubayr who has not been classified as reliable as he might have added things he received from Ibn Faḍḍāl or he could have forged something.

If the major premise of this method was correct, its minor premise is not correct, which is using the previous example, because the teacher of Shaykh

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[250] *Rijāl al-Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm*, vol. 4, p. 75.

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al-Najāshī in the traditions of Ibn Faḍḍāl is not the same. Even though the path Shaykh has to Ibn Faḍḍāl is in the following way: Ibn ʿAbdūn, from ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr, from Ibn Faḍḍāl, however al-Najāshī's path is different. It is:

> Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn [251] dictated the Book of Prayer, Zakat, rituals of hajj, etc. ... to Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid[252] during a time I heard it from him. I dictated the Book of Fasting to him in the presence of al-ʿAqīqah, from Ibn al-Zubayr, [253] from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan. He informed us of the rest of Ibn Faḍḍāl's book through this method. Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar narrated to us in Ākharīn,[254] from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan in his book

This means that al-Najāshī has two paths to Ibn Faḍḍāl:

> Ibn ʿAbdūn, from Ibn al-Zubayr, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan.
>
> Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd, from ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan.

The first path cannot be used because even though it starts with Ibn ʿAbdūn, but the chain includes Ibn al-Zubayr similar to the path Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has.

With the second path, even though it does not include Ibn al-Zubayr but it does not start with Ibn ʿAbdūn.

Therefore, both paths are of no use, and the only path that could be of use is a path that starts with Ibn ʿAbdūn and does not include Ibn al-Zubayr, because if it did not start with Ibn ʿAbdūn then Shaykh al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī would not have one path. If it did include Ibn al-Zubayr then the problem in Shaykh's path that we want to get rid of would still not be removed.

Another Method of Sayyid al-Khū'ī

Sayyid al-Khū'ī (R) has another method to overcome the problem of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā and others whose reliability have not been established.

To explain this we give the following example: Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions a tradition in *al-Istibṣār* with the following chain:

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[251] He is the famous al-Ghaḍā'irī, and he was a collegue of al-Najāshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

[252] Ibn ʿAbdūn.

[253] ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zubayr.

[254] The name of a specific place.

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> Al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, from al-ʿAmrakī, from ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar.[255]

There is no problem in this chain except for Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā whose reliability has not been established based on the insufficiency of mastership in permit in establishing reliability.

In order to overcome this problem, it is possible for us to choose another narrator that would be between Aḥmad and the Imam. Let us suppose that we choose Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. After this we refer to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*, and in it we find that Shaykh has an authentic path to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, with this we can replace the weak previous chain with this authentic chain.[256]

The technical justification for this replacement is that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī after mentioning the name of the narrator he is writing an entry about and mentioning his books, says: 'So and so transmitted to us all his books and traditions, from so and so, from ...'

If we supposed that Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā is within the chain, it would confirm that the tradition whose chain is looked into is one of his traditions. If it is proven that it is one of his traditions he would be included in the general expression of 'informed us of all his books and traditions, and it is possible to authenticate it with one of these paths that are mentioned in *al-Fihrist*, in the biography of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. The apparent meaning of what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions when he says 'we were informed of all his books and traditions' is that everything that reached him through one of the two paths reached him through the second path. Therefore, the tradition narrated from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā in the weak path had also reached Shaykh al-Ṭūsī through another authentic path.

We would therefore be able to acquire the following authentic chain: a group of people, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā, from Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, from al-ʿAmrakī, from ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar.

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[255] *Al-Istibṣār*, vol. 1, p. 23.

[256] If we refer to *al-Fihrist*, p. 144, we find that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī quotes two paths to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. One of them is authentic and the other is weak. The weak path is the same path that we want to overcome, and it is as follows: al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. As for the authentic path it is: a group narrated to us, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from Aḥmad ibn Idrīs, from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.

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An important note is that the person we want to choose from the chain must be someone that occurs before Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, which means between him and the Imam, and it would be of no use if it was after Aḥmad, or else it would obviously not remove the problem.

That person who is chosen must also have been mentioned by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his *al-Fihrist*, and he mentions a path to him where some of it is authentic.[257]

Shahīd al-Ṣadr (R) spoke about this path in some of his writings[258] and accepted it on two conditions:

> Before the weak narrator – that is the problem which should be overcome – there is a reliable person and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has an authentic path to him. In our previous example Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā is the reliable person before Aḥmad, and Shaykh has an authentic path to him.[259]
>
> The weak path that is the problem and needs to be overcome is mentioned as one of the paths to Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. In the previous example the weak that was required to be replaced – which was al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from his father – is mentioned in *al-Fihrist* as one of the two paths to the traditions of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.

The basis for this condition is that if the chain that we want to circumvent is not one of the two paths and the mentioned is one or two paths other than the weak path then we cannot use what Shaykh narrates via the weak path and also narrated it from an authentic path. It is possible that he had narrated it only from a weak path. However, if he had mentioned it as one of the two paths then this possibility would not exist, because the apparent meaning of Shaykh's statement 'So and so transmitted to us all his books and traditions, from so and so, from ...' means that everything he narrates from one of the paths he had also narrated from the rest of the paths. He does not mean that some of the traditions were narrated from some of those paths and some of the other traditions were narrated from other paths.

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[257] Sayyid al-Khūʾī mentions this method in numerous places in his earlier research works. See: *al-Tanqīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 463. However, we never heard this throughout the time I was his student, and this means that he had changed his view about it.

[258] See: *Buḥūth fī Sharḥ al-ʿUrwah al-Wuthqā*, vol. 3, p. 125, vol. 4, p. 51.

[259] It is important to note that this condition is not something new or additional to what has been mentioned by Sayyid al-Khūʾī.

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This is a summary of the method he has adopted. If it was correct it would be beneficial and applicable to many cases.

The following argument could be put forward against it:

> Just the mere mentioning of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā in the chain does not bring about certainty that the tradition is one of his narrations in order for it to be included with the expression used by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī that says 'So and so transmitted to us all his books and traditions, from so and so, from'. This is because it is possible that Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā might have fabricated the tradition with this chain and attributed it to his father and Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā which they had not narrated.

In other words, applying this method depends on having certainty in the veracity of the tradition being among the traditions of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā. This certainty depends on having certainty that Aḥmad did not, for example, fabricate the tradition with the mentioned chain. But if we are certain that Aḥmad did not do this then there would be no need to use this method and seek help with the idea of replacing the chain in the first place!

This could be used to argue against the mentioned method.

One could respond to this by turning to the second condition mentioned by Shahīd al-Ṣadr. With the weak path that we want to replace, if one of its two paths had been mentioned by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, this means that if any tradition is narrated by a weak path it is also narrated by another authentic path. As the tradition we have which we want to find a new chain for has parts of which is narrated in the weak first path is certainly narrated in the authentic path. In this way the possibility of Aḥmad lying would be baseless, because the shaykh himself explicitly says that he is narrating it from the first weak path and everything he narrates from the first weak path he is narrating from the second authentic path.

However, the correct view is to say that we suppose that when Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says 'So and so transmitted to us all his books and traditions ...' he means that 'whenever I start with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā in the chain I am narrating from him in these numerous paths'. He does not mean 'I am narrating these paths from Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā even if he occurs within the chain'. This possibility exists, and with it we cannot apply the mentioned method.[260]

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[260] I thought of this argument in my mind and I then came across it in the writings of Shahīd al-Ṣadr. See his *Taqrīrāt al-Baḥth al-Uṣūlī*, vol. 5, pp. 60, 436.

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Practical Exercises

It is mentioned in *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*:

علي بن جعفر في كتابه عن أخيه قال: سألته عن المريض ...

> 'Alī ibn Ja'far in his book, from his brother said: 'I asked him about a sick person ....'[261]

Shaykh al-Ḥurr narrates this tradition from the book of 'Alī ibn Ja'far, as he had a copy of this book and it is one of the sources of *al-Wasā'il.*

The path to it is authentic, because with all the sources Shaykh al-Ḥurr relies on he narrates them through many credible paths that end with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has a credible path to 'Alī ibn Ja'far.

In regards to Shaykh al-Ḥurr's credible paths that reach Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, this can be seen when referring to the end of *al-Wasā'il.* He mentions some *fawā'id* there, and amongst them[262] he mentions his paths to these sources which are many and include our righteous scholars.

As for Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path to 'Alī ibn Ja'far being authentic, this is because his path is mentioned in his *mashyakhah*, even though it is weak, as he says:

وما ذكرته عن علي بن جعفر فقد اخبرني به الحسين بن عبيد الله عن أحمد بن محمد بن يحيى عن أبيه محمد بن يحيى عن العمركي النيسابوري البوفكي عن علي بن جعفر.

> What I mention from 'Alī ibn Ja'far, then it was narrated to me by al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from his father Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from al-'Amrakī al-Naysābūrī al-Būfakī, from 'Alī ibn Ja'far.

The reliability of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā has not been established based on the insufficiency of mastership in permit for establishing reliability.

In general, even though the path of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his *mashyakhah* is weak, it is authentic in *al-Fihrist*, where he says:

اخبرنا بذلك جماعة عن محمد بن علي بن الحسين عن أبيه عن محمد بن يحيى عن العمركي الخراساني البوفكي عن علي بن جعفر عن أخيه موسى الكاظم (عليه السلام). ورواه أبو جعفر محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن بابويه عن أبيه عن سعد

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261 *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, vol. 5, p. 493, h. 5.

262 In the fifth *fā'idah.*

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والحميري وأحمد بن ادريس وعلي بن موسى عن أحمد بن محمد عن موسى بن القاسم البجلي عنه.

A group narrated this to us, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from al-ʿAmrakī al-Khurāsānī al-Būfakī, from ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar, from his brother Mūsā al-Kāẓim (A). It was also narrated by Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Bābawayh, from his father, from Saʿd al-Ḥimyarī, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and ʿAlī ibn Mūsā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim al-Bajalī, from him.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in this statement mentions two paths to ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar, and they are:

A group, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, from his father, from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, from al-ʿAmrakī, from ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar. This path is authentic.

As for 'a group', because the least of them is three, and we cannot suppose the probability of three of al-Ṭūsī's *shuyūkh* combining in lying – especially with the possibility of acquiring assurance that one of the three is al-Mufīd or al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Ghaḍā'irī – this is because Shaykh al-Ṭūsī abundantly narrates from them in *al-Fihrist*.

With Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī and his father, they are al-Ṣadūq the son and al-Ṣadūq the father and they are beyond the classifying of reliability.

In regards to Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā, he is al-ʿAṭṭār, the shaykh of al-Kulaynī and he is among the reliable and noble.

As for al-ʿAmrakī, he is also reliable as classified by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, from his father, from Saʿd al-Ḥimyarī, Aḥmad ibn Idrīs and ʿAlī ibn Mūsā, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from Mūsā ibn al-Qāsim al-Bajalī, from him. This path is also authentic, and the authenticity of the first path suffices us from establishing the authenticity of this path.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr also mentions in *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*:

محمد بن الحسن باسناده عن الحسين بن سعيد عن صفوان عن ابن مسكان عن الحلبي قال ...

Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, with his chain, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, from Ṣafwān, from Ibn Maskān, from al-Ḥalabī who said ....[263]

After he mentions the tradition he then mentions the following phrase:

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263 *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 8, h. 2.

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ورواه الصدوق باسناده عن ابن مسكان

And al-Ṣadūq narrates this with his chain from Ibn Maskān.

This phrase al-Ḥurr uses indicates that the mentioned tradition was narrated by both Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.

It is sufficient for us to rule on the authenticity of the tradition the authenticity of one of the two paths, so it is not necessary to authenticate both their paths, but only one of any of the two.

As Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path is authentic, there will be no need to research into the state of al-Ṣadūq's path.

To establish the authenticity of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path we can say:

> With al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd and the rest all to the Imam (A), all of them are reliable and noble.

The important point is to research the state of Shaykh's path to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, and he (R) has mentioned a vague phrase in *al-mashyakhah* that says:

وما ذكرته في هذا الكتاب عن الحسين بن سعيد فقد اخبرني به الشيخ أبو عبد الله محمد بن محمد بن النعمان والحسين بن عبيد الله وأحمد بن عبدون كلهم عن أحمد بن محمد بن الحسن بن الوليد عن أبيه محمد بن الحسن بن الوليد.

واخبرني به أيضاً أبو الحسين بن أبي جيد القمي عن محمد بن الحسن بن الوليد عن الحسين بن الحسن بن ابان عن الحسين بن سعيد.

ورواه أيضاً محمد بن الحسن بن الوليد عن محمد بن الحسن الصفار عن أحمد بن محمد عن الحسين بن سعيد

What I mention in this book from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, it was narrated to me by Shaykh Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Nuʿmān, al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdūn, all from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from his father Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

It was also narrated to me by al-Ḥusayn ibn Abī Jīd al-Qummī, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Ābān, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd.

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> It is also narrated by Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Sa'īd.[264]

This statement indicates that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates the traditions of Ibn Sa'īd in a path that has in it Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd.

It also refers to Shaykh having two paths to Ibn al-Walīd, and Ibn al-Walīd has two paths to Ibn Sa'īd.

As for *shuyūkh*, two paths to Ibn al-Walīd are:

> Al-Mufīd, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, Ibn 'Abdūn, all from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, from his father.
>
> Ibn Abī Jīd, from Ibn al-Walīd.

As for the two paths from Ibn al-Walīd to Ibn Sa'īd, they are:

> Ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān, from Ibn Sa'īd.
>
> Ibn al-Walīd, from al-Ṣaffār, from Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā, from Ibn Sa'īd.

This can be explained in the following diagram:

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Shaykh al-Ṭūsī</td><td>The three, from Aḥmad</td><td rowspan="2">Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd</td><td>Al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān</td><td rowspan="2">Ibn Sa'īd</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ibn Abī Jīd</td><td>Al-Ṣaffār, from Ibn 'Īsā</td></tr>
</table>

To establish the authenticity of Shaykh's path to Ibn Sa'īd it is necessary to establish the authenticity of one of the first two paths to Ibn al-Walīd. It would also necessitate establishing the authenticity of one of the two last paths to Ibn Sa'īd.

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[264] Refer to the *mashyakhah* at the end of *al-Tahdhīb*, p. 63.

After quoting this statement he says the following: 'Anything I quote from al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd, from al-Ḥasan, from Zar'ah, from Samā'ah and Faḍālah ...' This phrase does not intend to explain other paths to al-Ḥusayn ibn Sa'īd as can clearly be seen.

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For the first two paths, the first of them can be questioned because of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd, based on the insufficiency of the master of permit in establishing reliability.

As for the second path, it can be authenticated because even though Ibn Abī Jīd has not been specifically classified as reliable, but he is from the *shuyūkh* of al-Najāshī. It has been mentioned in the chapter of general classifications of reliability that it is possible to classify all the *shuyūkh* of al-Najāshī according to the statements he had made.

With the last two paths, the first of them could be argued as far as al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān because he has not been specifically mentioned as reliable,[265] but the second path is authentic because al-Ṣaffār and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā are noble and reliable.

Therefore, the path Shaykh has to Ibn Saʿīd is authentic, because one of the first two paths and one of the last two paths are authentic.

Questions

1. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī authored the book *al-Tahdhīb* as a commentary on _____?

2. What is the extreme statement used by the author of *al-Ḥadā'iq* in regards to *al-Tahdhīb*?

3. What is the reason that made Shaykh al-Ṭūsī write his book *al-Istibṣār*?

4. What is Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's method in transmitting traditions in his two books?

5. Mention the first explanation that establishes the authenticity of all the traditions in *al-Tahdhībayn*, with its argument.

6. Mention the second explanation with its argument.

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[265] It has previously been mentioned that when al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd entered Qum he resided at the house of al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ābān and fell sick there and before he died he bequeathed his books to al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan. This bequeathing of the books to him which represents an important stage in the Shiʿa hadith heritage carried a great burden and responsibility in acquiring it and that it must be preserved for generations until Judgement Day, which reveals his complete trust in al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan. If not, then how could it be supposed that a sane believing person would neglect this important heritage by handing it over to someone unreliable?

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7. What is the meaning of the theory of replacing a weak path?

8. If we refer to the *mashyakhah* of *al-Tahdhīb* or *al-Istibṣār* to find Shaykh's path to the narrator of a tradition and it was weak, what do we do?

9. Mention the conclusion of Shaykh al-Ardabīlī's method on the issue of replacing.

10. How can this method be argued?

11. What is Shaykh al-Majlisī's method on the issue of replacing?

12. How can this method be argued?

13. Explain the third method on the issue of replacing?

14. How can this method be argued?

15. Explain al-Astarabādī's method on the issue of replacing?

16. How can this method be argued?

17. What is Sayyid al-Khū'ī's method in authenticating the chain to Ibn Faḍḍāl?

18. How can this method be argued?

19. What is Sayyid al-Khū'ī's second method on the issue of replacing?

20. How can this method be argued?

21. What are the two conditions mentioned by Shahīd al-Ṣadr in accepting Sayyid al-Khū'ī's second method?

A Glance at *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*

The book *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* was written by Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī al-Mashgharī (1033/1624-1104/1693), who was a contemporary of 'Allāmah al-Majlisī.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr compiled *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah* from numerous sources. The most important of them were the Four Books. He (R) mentions the sources

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of his book in his introduction and in his conclusion, and they are approximately one hundred and eighty sources.

At the end of his book he discusses twelve beneficial points (*fawā'id*).

Its first manuscript print was in three volumes, and then it was printed in Iran in twenty volumes. After this the Ālul Bayt Institute published a researched edition that is thirty volumes.

It took the author twenty years to compile.

If a miracle was to occur in our time then it had occurred to Shaykh al-Ḥurr and his *Wasā'il*. For every tradition he records in his book he refers to all of the Four Books in order to find it, and if it was there he notes it by saying that al-Ṣadūq has also narrated it, or Shaykh al-Kulaynī.

He did not suffice with referring to the Four Books to record each tradition, but as mentioned he used one hundred and eighty references.

When he writes a tradition that is related to a certain chapter in the chapters of purity he would refer to the Four Books, *Kitāb ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar, al-Khiṣāl, Nahj al-Balāghah, ʿUyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (A), al-Ikhtiṣāṣ, Thawāb al-Aʿmāl* and other references.

He also tries to study each tradition when he records it in order to understand the rulings that could be derived from it.

If there were a set of traditions that were relevant to a specific ruling, he would allocate a special chapter for it and mention the traditions that indicate it under that title.

Such strenuous work means there will be mistakes when transmitting the chain or the text, especially with the intertwining names between the chains, but we do not see this in *al-Wasā'il*. We do not mean to claim there are absolutely no mistakes, but we mean that the mistakes in it are far less that what would be expected from such a difficult project.

Issues Related to *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*

We indeed value the great meticulous effort of Shaykh al-Ḥurr in compiling his great book which has cleared the path for *mujtahids* to derive rulings and has removed many obstacles for them.

At the same time we believe that this magnificent work cannot be achieved by a person without being encompassed and protected by divine providence.

Among the divine providences granted to *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* is that after him every student of Islamic studies has a copy of his book. Thousands of seminary students frequently refer to this book on a daily basis and the name of the author is always mentioned coined with asking mercy and forgiveness for his blessed soul.

With all of this we do not refute there being some marginal comments that any book would usually have, and they are as follows:

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> He (R) separated the traditions, meaning that if a tradition had multiple parts to it he would not mention the whole part in one chapter, but he would mention each part in its appropriate chapter. Furthermore, he might not make reference to this part not being the complete tradition, but only a section of it.

This could sometimes have a negative effect because if the parts were joined together then they might be understood in a way different to when it is separated.

A reader of the book might sometimes not be able to extract the chain of a tradition. For example, when he mentions numerous traditions he says in the first tradition: 'Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, with his chain, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, from Muḥammad ibn Abī 'Umayr ...' And when he mentions the second tradition he says: 'From him, from Ṣafwān, from Manṣūr ...'

The reader might not know what the pronoun in 'from him' refers to and assumes that it is referring to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, but it is referring to al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd. So, it would be as follows: Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, with his chain, from al-Ḥusayn ibn Saʿīd, from Ṣafwān, from Manṣūr.

There are many cases similar to this in *al-Wasā'il*, and it might not be clear unless one refers to the original source.

When he mentions a tradition, for example, from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, if that tradition is close to what Shaykh al-Kulaynī has narrated then at the end of the tradition he would say: 'Al-Kulaynī mentions similar to it.' However, what al-Kulaynī mentions might be slightly different to what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions without Shaykh al-Ḥurr mentioning the difference between them.

Inconsistency in the tradition when transmitting the chain or the text: if one refers to the original source they might find a difference between what Shaykh al-Ḥurr mentions and what exists in the original source. This means it is necessary for the jurist to refer back to the original source and not suffice with referring to *al-Wasā'il*.

If he mentions from a particular source he does not mention the difference in the source if there was a difference. It is here that makes it necessary for the jurist to refer back to the original source when deriving a ruling.

Not specifying the reference in the source as far as the part, chapter, page or hadith number, making it difficult for the reader in spending a lot of time looking for the exact reference.

In addition to this he would narrate from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and not mention which reference it was, whether it was *al-Tahdhīb* or *al-Istibṣār*.

Shaykh al-Ḥurr would sometimes omit some of the traditions that are related to a chapter and say: 'Some of the traditions related to the chapter have already been mentioned' or 'will be mentioned'. However, he does not

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explain these previous or forthcoming traditions. This is why some scholars[266] attempted to define those traditions and write a special book called *al-Ishārāt wa al-Dalā'il ilā ma taqaddam wa ya'tī fī al-Wasā'il.*

Shaykh al-Ḥurr did not mention the Qur'anic verses that might be related to each chapter, but he sufficed with mentioning only the traditions.

To avoid these criticisms Sayyid al-Burūjurdī (R)[267] formed a committee from his students and requested that they author a hadith book called *Jāmiʿ Aḥādīth al-Shīʿah* so they do not encounter the previous problems. This book also includes more features, like mentioning other traditions that have not been mentioned in *al-Wasā'il*, and they are the traditions that were added by Shaykh al-Nūrī in his book *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il.*

Sayyid al-Burūjurdī himself supervised this committee and it was completed during his lifetime and its first volume was also published. After his passing the rest of the volumes continued to be published. May Almighty God graciously reward them all.

Mustadrak al-Wasā'il

There are some hadith references that Shaykh al-Ḥurr had not referred to, like *Daʿā'im al-Islām, al-Ashʿathiyāt*, etc. Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (1245/1838-1320/1902)[268] wrote an addition to *al-Wasā'il* and called this book *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il.* He mentions the chapters that Shaykh al-Ḥurr has in his book without any change, and under each chapter he mentions the traditions that have not been mentioned in *al-Wasā'il.* He does not repeat the traditions that Shaykh al-Ḥurr had already mentioned.

Even though Shaykh al-Nūrī must be thanked for his great effort, most of the sources he relies on are not unreliable according to scholars. This might be the reason why Shaykh al-Ḥurr did not refer to those sources in his book, because it is unlikely that he had not come across them or he was unmindful of them. It could be that according to him they were weak.

Shaykh al-Nūrī did something important at the end of his book, and that is to refer to important *rijāl* discussions that a researcher would need. The importance of *Mustadrak al-Wasā'il* could exist in these mentioned discussions.

An older print was published in three large volumes, of which most of the third volume includes the *rijāl* discussions. It has recently been edited and published in numerous volumes.

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[266] Being Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ṣāḥib al-Jawāhirī (R).

[267] Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Burūjurdī (1292/1875-1380/1961). [Translator's note]

[268] Also known as al-Muḥaddith al-Nūrī. [Translator's note]

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Al-Wāfī

The book *al-Wāfī* is a hadith book written by Muḥammad ibn Muḥsin al-Fayḍ al-Kāshānī (1007/1598-1091/1680), the famous author of *al-Maḥajjah al-Bayḍā'* and *Tafsīr al-Ṣāfī*.[269]

In this book he limited his selection of gathering traditions only from the Four Books.

The good feature that makes this book important is his explanations. When he mentions a tradition that has some ambiguity as far as its meaning, its language or anything else is concerned, he would add the word 'explanation' (*bayān*) and then explain the ambiguity. This reveals the extensive and accurate knowledge al-Fayḍ (R) had.

He arranged his book starting with an introduction, fourteen chapters (*kitāb*) and then a conclusion. For each chapter he also added an introduction and a conclusion.

Its old print is large and in three volumes and it has been recently re-printed in numerous volumes.

Biḥār al-Anwār

The book *Biḥār al-Anwār* was written by Shaykh Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī (1037/1616-1111/1698). This great Shaykh was contemporary to Shaykh al-Ḥurr the author of *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*. Each of these two scholars is a miracle in his own right. *Biḥār al-Anwār* is distinguished by it being an Islamic encyclopaedia where he gathered jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, history, exegesis, astronomy, philosophy, and much more.

Some assume that what al-Majlisī did was nothing but just compiling from numerous sources, and this is an unfair judgment. He compiled his book in twenty-five large manuscript volumes,[270] where he devoted eight volumes to the history of Ahl al-Bayt, five volumes to various religious rulings, and the rest of the volumes in other different sciences.

With each chapter he mentions the verses related to that chapter, and he then commentates on it and explains the complex parts of each tradition which shows his complete extensive ability in different Islamic sciences.

He astonishes the reader who goes through the volumes of this book as to how much time was taken to compile this great heritage. How was he able to ponder on each tradition and explain the difficult ones and how he could

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[269] He was also the son-in-law of the famous philosopher Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, the author of *al-Asfār al-Arba'ah*.

[270] It has been recently edited and printed and it exceeds one hundred and ten volumes.

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have entered into each science as if he was an expert in that field. He was indeed a miracle of his time, or rather all times.

We believe that it is not possible for one person to achieve such an enormous project unless they were endowed with divine providence and were included in the prayers of our Awaited Saviour Imam al-Ḥujjah ibn al-Ḥasan al-Mahdī (A).

The purpose this great scholar had in authoring this book was to gather the heritage of Ahl al-Bayt and preserve it from loss. It is then for the reader to research about this heritage and take the correct and leave the weak, which is exactly what he had mentioned in the introduction of his book when he mentions the sources that he relies on and when he weakens some of them. His aim was to preserve the references in his book the same way an ocean has pearls and has other things, and a diver must distinguish and take the first and leave the rest.

One of the statements that could be understood regarding the fact that he does not rely on all of the sources, is what he mentions: 'The book *Miṣbāḥ al-Sharīʿah wa Miftāḥ al-Ḥaqīqah* which is attributed to our master Imam al-Ṣādiq (A).'[271]

When he said 'attributed' it means that he does not completely believe in the authenticity of the book.

In another statement he says: 'The book *al-ʿAtīq* which we found in al-Gharī [Najaf], may the praises of Allah be upon he who is buried there, was authored by some of the early *muḥaddithīn* in *al-Daʿawāt*. We called it *al-Kitāb al-Gharawī*.'[272]

And: 'And *Kitāb al-Tamḥīṣ* which was by some of our early scholars.'[273]

And more examples in other places.

Based on the fact that it is not correct for us to rule that what he mentions in *Biḥār al-Anwār* is authentic completely, we also cannot rule that not everything in it is unauthentic.

Of course, as the sources that al-Majlisī relied on, like the Four Books and others, are available with us it would be sufficient for us to refer to them without a need to refer to *Biḥār*, unless for the explanations and clarifications he had given. The rest of the sources that are not available for us to refer to because they are weak we would not be in need to refer to *Biḥār* as far as they are concerned.

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[271] *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 1, p. 14.

[272] Ibid. p. 16.

[273] Ibid. p. 17.

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Chapter Four: A Glance at Our *Rijāl* Books

When discussing the books of hadith, we mentioned that the companions of the Imams recorded what they heard from the Imams into booklets. These booklets ultimately numbered about four hundred, and as a result they were called the Four Hundred *Uṣūl* (*al-uṣūl al-arbaʿami'ah*). After this, the Three Muḥammads (R) compiled their own collections from these *uṣūl* and arranged their material into categories, producing the Four Books.

Something similar to this has also occurred with the issue of narrators (*rijāl*), where some of the companions of the Imams compiled books on narrators. The methods with which these companions wrote the books differs from one to the other, as some wrote a book naming the companions of the Prophet who participated with Imam ʿAlī (A) in his battles. Some have written a book mentioning the good and bad traits of narrators of traditions. Others have written a book mentioning the categories of the companions of the Infallibles, from the Prophet until the last Imam.

It might be that the first person to write on *rijāl* was ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Abī Rāfiʿ, who was a scribe for Imam ʿAlī (A) and wrote a book that mentions the names of those companions of the Prophet who were with the Imam in his battles.

After this al-Najāshī, al-Kashshī and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī set out to compile these books and write new *rijāl* books which are the famous four *rijāl* books.

A Glance at *Rijāl al-Kashshī*

Rijāl al-Kashshī is by the great Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Kashshī.[274]

This great shaykh was contemporary to al-Kulaynī and is considered in the same generation. It has been said that he was reliable, had a strong insight in traditions and narrators, but he also frequently narrated from weak sources.

He was one of the students of al-ʿAyyāshī. Al-Najāshī mentions that al-Kashshī was in the company of al-ʿAyyāshī and learnt from him in his house, which was a hub for the Shiʿa and the people of knowledge.

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[274] It has been said that his *nisbah*, 'Kashshī' comes from Kashsh, which was a city close to Samarqand in the south of Uzbekistan and its name is now Shahrisabz. That being said, we would hear Sayyid al-Khūʾī (R) pronounce it Kashī, without the *shaddah*.

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Shaykh al-Kashshī authored a book that includes traditions that praise or criticise some of the narrators. He does not usually give his own opinion whether a narrator is reliable or weak, but he first mentions the name of the narrator and then mentions one or more traditions that have been mentioned in his regard. Based on this, he did not mention all, or even most, narrators, because he just focused on those who are specifically mentioned in traditions. As a result, there are a very small number of narrators mentioned in this book, and it is said they number five hundred and twenty.

It is known that the original copy of *Rijāl al-Kashshī* does not exist with us today; what we have is the copy that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī refined and edited, which is why it is called *Ikhtiyār Maʿrifat al-Rijāl.* The original copy was called *Maʿrifat al-Rijāl* and the result of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's efforts was *Ikhtiyār Maʿrifat al-Rijāl* as he selected parts of the book.

There is a discussion about the editing carried out by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī; it seems likely that the original book included narrators in general and then Shaykh al-Ṭūsī removed them and made it specific to Shiʿa narrators. It is also likely that it contained additional material but Shaykh al-Ṭūsī removed it.

Some sources have said that they came across the original copy that belonged to Shaykh Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Jubaʿī al-ʿĀmilī (959/1551-1011/1602) the author of *Maʿālim al-Dīn.* He praised the book and described its vastness in such a way that implies it being different to the book that exists today, as if it was an encyclopaedia and narrators were only a part of it.

This book has been printed numerous times and the best of them was printed by Mashhad University edited by Shaykh Ḥasan Muṣṭafawī (1970).

This book is important to read because it includes the biographies and descriptions of many narrators which al-Kashshī presents through the traditions mentioned about them.

Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has two books and one of them is in *rijāl,* which is what we will be discussing now and it is known as *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.*

In this book Shaykh al-Ṭūsī first mentions the names of the companions of the Prophet, and then the companions of Imam ʿAlī (A), and after that the rest of the Imams. At the end he has an index of the names who have not narrated from them.

The prevailing distinction Shaykh has in this book is when he mentions the name of a narrator he does not mention if he is reliable or weak, even though this has occurred in rare occasions.

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This reveals the benefit of the book in getting to know the generation to which the narrator belongs, which era he lived in, and of which Imam he was the companion.

There are two points that are related to this book that deserve to be mentioned here.

Point One

First, the shaykh says in his introduction to the book that firstly he mentions the names of those who have narrated from the Prophet or any of the Imams, and secondly the names of those who have not narrated from them, whether they were contemporary to the Imams and did not narrate from them or not contemporary to them.

This is not what we want to discuss, but what we want to point out is that in certain cases the shaykh has mentioned the name of a person twice, once in the part of those who, for example, narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), and again in the part of those who did not narrate from the Imams. This is like in the case of al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Jawharī, Faḍḍālah ibn Ayyūb, Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-ʿUbaydī, and so on.

The incoherence in this is evident, because if a person had met one of the Imams and narrated from them, then the appropriate thing would be to mention them in the first part of the book and not to repeat his name in the part of those who did not narrate from the Imams. If they had not met the Imams then the appropriate thing would be to mention them in the second part only. Based on this, mentioning one narrator in both parts necessitates incoherence in that one person simultaneously narrates from them and does not narrate from them.

Some explanations have been offered to resolve this problem:

What it meant by mentioning the person as being a companion of one of the Imams is referring to him being contemporary to them, whether he had narrated from them or not. Based on this it is correct to mention one person in both parts of the book. He can be mentioned in the part of the companions of the Imams because he was among their companions and contemporary to them, even though he did not narrate from them. He can also be mentioned in the second part of the book because even though he was contemporary to them, he did not narrate from them.

We would respond: first: this is against what Shaykh himself clearly mentions in the introduction, as he said that: 'I am firstly mentioning the names those who narrate from one of the Imams, and secondly mentioning the names of those who have not narrated from them.' He did not say: 'I am firstly mentioning the names of those who were from their companions, even though they did not narrate from them.'

Second: if we look at the names that have been repeated in both parts we will see that some of them cannot fit in with this justification, because they

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are among those who narrated from the Imams and they were not just their companions and did not narrate from them.

If a person sometimes narrates from the Imams directly without the link of another narrator, and at other times through another narrator then it would be correct to mention that person in both parts. Because, at times he narrates without a link and therefore it is correct to mention him in the part of those who narrated from one of the Imams, and at times he did not narrate directly from them and so it is correct to mention him in the part of those who did not narrate from them.

We would respond: first: as long as this person has directly narrated even some times from the Imams it is not correct to mention him in the part of those who did not narrate from them, because in reality he is among those who narrated from them and he really is not among those who did not narrate from them.

Second: this justification means that the shaykh must mention most of the narrators in both parts, because most of the narrators would sometimes directly narrate from the Imams and at times would narrate from them through a link. However, the case is that the repetition that exists is in only some narrators.

They are multiple narrators, because the one name that is mentioned in both parts is in reality two people. For example, in the case of al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Jawharī it means there are two people who have this same name, where one of them narrated from the Imams and the other did not.

This justification is farfetched because it is rare that two people have the same name, the same father's name and the same surname. If this was to happen, it would occur maybe once or twice, but not in numerous cases.

With the invalidity of these justifications we say: it is likely that what the shaykh had done was a mistake, as in the area of *rijāl* the excessive names and their similarities contributes to the occurrence of errors.

In addition to this, is the vast scope of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's (R) work in it being a main reference for the Shi'a during his time. He was a great teacher who delivered his lectures daily to his students. He was the author of large encyclopaedias where each one would need a large committee to accomplish. Look at *al-Tahdhīb*, or *al-Istibṣār*, or *al-Nihāyah*, and then there is *al-Mabsūṭ*, *al-Tibyān*, *al-Fihrist*, *al-Rijāl*, *al-'Uddah fī al-Uṣūl*, *al-Khilāf*, *Talkhīṣ al-Shāfī*, and so on.

If we do suppose that there were such mistakes then it is nothing in comparison to his status.[275]

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[275] After writing this chapter I came across something written by Sayyid al-Burūjurdī in his jurisprudence book called *Nihāyat al-Taqrīr*, vol. 2, p. 270. In it he says: 'Apparently the book *Rijāl al-Shaykh* was a draft copy and he had the

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Point Two

In the chapter of the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions the name of a narrator and after that he repeatedly uses the phrase 'connected from him' (*usnida 'anhu*).

There is a discussion about what this phrase means and how it is to be read. Should it be read in the passive voice, in saying 'it is connected from him' (*usnida 'anhu*), or the active voice 'the chain comes from him' (*asnada 'anhu*)?

There are a few views about this, and we will mention some of them:

It means that a particular narrator did not narrate directly from the Imam, but he narrated from the Imam through a link. This particular narrator connects from him, which means he narrates through the chain and link from the Imam.

We would respond: the phrase used has been mentioned in regards to certain people who have directly narrated from the Imam, like Muḥammad ibn Muslim, Jābir al-Ju'fī, and others.

It means that great scholars have narrated from him with them relying on him. Based on this it would be correct to read it as a passive voice, so *usnida 'anhu* would mean 'it is narrated from him in a chained and reliable way'.

We would respond: this explanation cannot be understood from the apparent wordings of the phrase.

Furthermore, the phrase is used in relation to some unknown (*majāhīl*) narrators.

It would also be appropriate to interpret the phrase in regards to all reliable and noble narrators from the companions of Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), but it is mentioned in only some of them.

It means that the particular narrator only narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) and does not narrate from any of the other Imams. This means that his traditions are chained and connected to Imam al-Ṣādiq (A) and not chained to anyone else.

We would respond: in addition to this explanation being against the apparent meaning, the shaykh has mentioned this phrase in some of the

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intention of reviewing it as a second draft to arrange, organise and explain the state of those mentioned in it. What supports this is his brevity in some of the narrators with just mentioning their name, their father's name and not explaining anything about them as far as reliability or anything else. He had also repeated the mentioning of some of the narrators ... All of this shows how occupied he was in authoring and compiling ... So much so that if his life was to be divided according to his writings this particular book would only fill up a few hours.'

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narrators who narrated from other than Imam al-Ṣādiq (A), like Muḥammad ibn Muslim and others.[276]

Therefore, this phrase remains vague and unclear as to what it means.

Fihrist al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī has another book called *al-Fihrist* and it deals with the Shi'a narrators who have authored one or more books.

The difference between this book and the previous book is that the previous dealt with mentioning the companions of the Prophet and the Imams, whether they had a book or not. With this book, it mentions those among the Shi'a who have a book, and it does not mention those who do not have a book even if they were from the companions of the Infallibles, which means that this index is exclusively for Shi'a authors.

He (R) mentions in his introduction to the book that with every person he mentions he will mention what has been said about that person in being praised or criticised, and whether their traditions can be relied on or not, or if their belief was correspondent to the truth or not.

This is what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says, but he did not always follow this method except in some cases.

It could be said that he did not classify the reliability (*tawthīq*) of some because of how clear their reliability was, as would be with the likes of Zurārah, Salmān, and others who do not need to be classified as reliable.

A reply to this is that he overlooked the classifying of reliability of those who need to be classified as reliable because of their state not being clearly known, such as 'Ammār al-Sābāṭī; because he was a Faṭḥī it could be said that his traditions cannot be relied on, but yet Shaykh al-Ṭūsī overlooked his reliability judgements.

We can also see that he classified some individuals as reliable although they do not need to be classified as reliable, like Shaykh al-Kulaynī and Ibn Abī 'Umayr.

The clarity of the state of a person, them being reliable and great does not occur unless they have been graciously mentioned by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, al-Najāshī and others in that person being reliable and noble. According to this how can it be said that with Shaykh al-Ṭūsī not mentioning someone it could be because their greatness is obvious?

The Term 'A Group'

When Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions the name of a person who has a book, Shaykh would usually mention his path to that book. When he does mention

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[276] For example, Muḥammad ibn Muslim narrated from Zurārah, like in *al-Kāfī*, vol. 2, p. 630, h. 12. He also narrated from Ḥamrān, like in *al-Kāfī*, vol. 4, p. 157.

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the path he sometimes says: 'A group (*jamā'ah*) of our companions have informed us of this book, from so and so ...'

The validity of this path could be criticised because of not specifying who the 'group' is.

However, this is refuted because most of the books of the companions who Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates from are Shaykh al-Mufīd, al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā'irī, Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn and others who are all known for their reliability. Based on this when he says 'a group of our companions informed us, from so and so ...' we will have certainty that one of the individuals of the group is one of the reliable who have just been mentioned whom he frequently narrates from in other cases and explicitly mentions their names.

In addition to this there are numerous cases where he says: 'I was informed by a group, among them are: Shaykh al-Mufīd, al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā'irī, Ibn 'Abdūn' and based on this, the criticism has no place at all.

Rijāl al-Najāshī

Rijāl al-Najāshī is by the great and reliable Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abbās al-Najāshī (372/893-450/1058), and his teknonym was Abū al-'Abbās.

This eminent scholar was contemporary to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, and at times they were together, studying under one teacher.

Much has been said in praise of this great Shaykh, and the majesty of his high status in the sect is more famous than what would need to be said.

He wrote this book to compile only the authors of books, so he does not mention any narrator unless they have a book, and he then mentions his path to the book. This method of his is similar to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist.*

In his introduction he wrote that the reason that made him compile this book was that a group of non-Shi'a were mocking the Shi'a saying that they have no predecessors and no authors.

He arranged the book alphabetically, but before he mentions the names alphabetically he lists a group of early companions of the Prophet and Imam 'Alī (A) who had authored a book. He calls them the first category and the amount he mentions are less than ten.

After the first category he lists the names of the companions of Imam al-Bāqir (A) and the Imams after him based on alphabetic order.

He (R) did not mention in his introduction that he will refer to the reliability or weakness of a person, but within the book he would do so, except in rare occasions.

This book is regarded as the most important and preferred work that has been written in this field. It has been said that when there is a conflict of view between what Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī say in the classifying of

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reliability or weakness of a person, the opinion of al-Najāshī is to be preferred.

The reason for the preference of this book can be seen by any person who looks into it, as a reader will find a high level of accuracy and vast encompassing knowledge of lineages and information about tribes. When he mentions some names he also mentions their fore-fathers, brothers, children and their biographies, just like he was one of them.

This is because most of the narrators are from Kufa and its surroundings, and al-Najāshī was among the noblest and highly regarded of them. He also came from a well-known family in Kufa.

In addition to this it has already been explained how Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had extensive knowledge in various sciences and authored many books and was extremely occupied, whereas with al-Najāshī was similar to a qualified expert in one particular field.

Why Compose a Second Book?

The question still stands as to why al-Najāshī had to author a book after having assumed that was what al-Ṭūsī accomplished in listing the authors of books and compilations in his famous book *al-Fihrist*. The books *al-Fihrist* and *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī* are earlier than *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, because when al-Najāshī mentions Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his book he refers to some of the books authored by al-Ṭūsī and *al-Fihrist* and *Rijāl al-Shaykh* is among them.

In answer to this Sayyid al-Burūjurdī (R) has been mentioned that in his view he believed al-Najāshī wrote his book as an attempt to correct what was in al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist*.[277]

It is possible for us to add to this that al-Najāshī's book is distinctive from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's *al-Fihrist* by its vastness in explaining the details of the people he lists, which is what justifies him compiling a new book.

The *Rijāl* Works of Al-Barqī and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī

These two books were authored before the Four Books that have been previously explained.

The First: *Rijāl al-Barqī*

There is a discussion as to whether it belongs to Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Barqī or his son Aḥmad (d. 274/887 or 290/902), or to another Barqī.

Some later scholars chose the third possibility.[278]

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[277] See: The introduction of *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, University Publication.

[278] Shaykh Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī in his book *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, vol. 1, p. 31.

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However, this difference is not important because the book does not deal with classifying of reliability or criticising narrators. It just explains the categories of narrators, completely like *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.*

This book has recently been published along with *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd.*

The Second: *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*

Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī is Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā'irī (date of death unknown but he lived during the fifth century AH). Aḥmad was a colleague of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī and al-Najāshī, and the three of them were students of Aḥmad's father, al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Ubayd Allāh al-Ghaḍā'irī.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions in the introduction to *al-Fihrist* that Aḥmad had two books, one of them was on compilations and the other was on the *uṣūl.* Shaykh al-Ṭūsī then says that none of our companions had copied these two books, and the author passed away and some of his heirs intended to destroy these two books and other books, as some have narrated.

That being said, 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs sometimes narrate from this book, as can be seen when reading through 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's *rijāl* book.

However, this narrating cannot be relied on, because how could *Rijāl Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī* have reached them after Shaykh al-Ṭūsī having said that the two books were destroyed?

Regardless of this, it is not possible to rely on the mentioned narrating because of the path to the book being unknown. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī and Ibn Ṭāwūs did not mention their path to the book in order to investigate whether it was authentic and reliable or not.

Furthermore, it has also been said that Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī has excessively criticised narrators, so much that it is rare to find someone safe from his criticism.

This is why based on this reason some hesitate in taking his classifying of certain narrators as weak.

However, this is of no importance after what we have said that the book was destroyed and the path to it is unknown.

Other *Rijāl* Works

These previously mentioned four *rijāl* books, being *Rijāl al-Kashshī, Rijāl al-Najāshī, Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* and *al-Fihrist* are called the 'foundations of *rijāl*' because they are the foundational works relied upon in this field. Anything that was published after them were dependent on them and taken from them.

Among the most important of these later books is the *rijāl* book of 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī which is called *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl.*

'Allāmah al-Ḥillī divided his book into two parts. The first part was devoted to those who are reliable in their narrations, and the second part is for the weak narrators whose narrations cannot be relied on.

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In ʿAllāmah's book he mainly relied on the four mentioned *rijāl* books, as he mentions in the text itself. In rare cases he does not rely on the four books, and it has been explained in the beginning of this book in the section of the classifying of reliability of later scholars that it is problematic to rely on his classifying of reliability.

Another later book is *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, and it mainly relies on the four *rijāl* books.

Other *rijāl* books have been recently published, such as:

1. *Rijāl* of al-Mīrzā Muḥammad al-Astarabādī, called *Manhaj al-Maqāl.*
2. *Rijāl* of Sayyid Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, called *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah.*
3. *Rijāl* of Shaykh ʿInāyatullāh al-Qahbā'ī, called *Majmaʿ al-Rijāl.*
4. *Rijāl* of Shaykh Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥā'irī, called *Muntahā al-Maqāl.*
5. *Rijāl* of Sayyid Muṣṭafā al-Tafrīshī, called *Naqd al-Rijāl.*
6. *Rijāl* of Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī, called *Jāmiʿ al-Ruwāt.*
7. *Rijāl* of Shaykh Muḥammad Ṭāhā Najaf, called *Itqān al-Maqāl.*
8. *Rijāl* of Shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, called *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl.*

And other *rijāl* books.

Some of these books have only combined the statements of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, al-Najāshī, al-Kashshī, and ʿAllāmah, and nothing else.

Others research into the conflicting views of *Rijāl* scholars

The best of what has been recently published in this field is Sayyid al-Khū'ī's *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, and the following points can be given to explain the features of this book.

In the introduction to the book he explained some beneficial *rijālī* concepts in a simplified and easy way.

This feature is not specific to this book, as other books previously mentioned, mainly did this same thing either in the beginning or the end of their book.

He mentions the text of the statements of al-Najāshī, al-Kashshī, al-Ṭūsī, ʿAllāmah, Ibn Dāwūd, and al-Barqī.

If they were from later scholars he would mention from the statements of Shaykh Muntakhab al-Dīn from his *al-Fihrist* and Ibn Shahrāshūb from his *Maʿālim al-ʿUlamā'*.

It is for this reason that whoever refers to *al-Muʿjam* it would suffice them from having to refer to those books.

One narrator might have numerous titles in traditions or *rijāl* books. For example, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī might sometimes be mentioned in the traditions under the title Aḥmad, and in other places with

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the title Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, or Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, or Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī, or another title.

This book gathers all these titles in alphabetic order, so if one person had six titles he would be mentioned six times.

The author would then point that each of these titles were for one person, or give the possibility that they are one person. For example, when he mentions Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā under number ten he would say that it is the same Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Ashʿarī that will come in number eleven, twelve, or so on.

He would then give a biography of the person and what has been said about him under the title al-Najāshī gave him in his book.

Of course, he would mention all the traditions that have been mentioned under that title, in mentioning the references and not the tradition itself.

Sayyid al-Khūʾī (R) limited his reference to the four books and did not exceed that. He mentions anyone whose name has been mentioned in any of these four books, but if someone's name was mentioned in, for example, *al-ʿIlal, Maʿānī al-Akhbār,* or any other such book, he does not mention them.

If the traditions a person narrates were a small amount he would mention them when mentioning his name, and if they were many he would mention them at the end of the book in a special index.

When he mentions a narrator he mentions whom the narrator narrated from, and whom that person narrated from. For example, when he mentions Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā, he mentions the people who narrate from him and the people he narrated from. This has a great benefit because through this whenever we come across the name of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad in a chain without mentioning Ibn ʿĪsā, we are able to define that it is Ibn ʿĪsā or someone else based on who narrated from them or whom they narrated from.

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Ardabīlī had preceded him in doing this in his book *Jāmiʿ al-Ruwāt,* where he would mention the narrator and person whom they narrated from, but he did not do this on a wide scale and did not refer to the sources with details.

He refers to areas of differences in copies. If the copies of *al-Kāfī* or the other Four Books differed in the name of the narrator he would mention that.

He mentions all the arguments possible to classify a certain narrator as either weak or reliable. He then judges between them and comes out with a certain conclusion. All of this is done in a technical, systematic method with easy sentences.

Of course, if it is supposed that the narrator cannot be said to be reliable or weak he would refrain from saying anything, which means that the narrator is unknown and would be ruled as weak.

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If the narrator exists in the chains of *Tafsīr al-Qummī* or *Kāmil al-Ziyārah* he would mention that. This means that according to him they are considered reliable, because he adopted the view that anyone mentioned in the chains of these two books are considered as reliable.[279]

These are the most important features of *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth.*

Questions

1. Mention five criticisms directed at *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah.*
2. How can the criticisms on *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah* be refuted?
3. Give a brief account of Mustadrak al-Wasā'il.
4. Give a brief account of *al-Wāfī.*
5. Give a brief account of *Biḥār al-Anwār.*
6. The Four Books were published as a result of _____?
7. What is the method al-Kashshī uses in his *rijāl* book?
8. What did al-Ṭūsī do in regards to al-Kashshī's *rijāl* book?
9. Explain the first point regarding *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.*
10. The problem of incoherence that exists with al-Ṭūsī of him repeating some names in different ways was refuted. Explain the first reason.
11. Explain the second reason and its argument.
12. Explain the third reason and its argument.
13. What is the correct reply?
14. What is the first explanation for the phrase *usnida ʿanhū* and how can it be argued?

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[279] Towards the end of his life Sayyid al-Khū'ī (R) retracted his view about the narrators of *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* and believed that the only ones that are reliable are the direct shaykhs of Ibn Qūlawayh.

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15. What is the second explanation and how can it be argued?

16. What is the third explanation and how can it be argued?

17. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in *al-Fihrist* frequently used the term 'from a group of our companions'; how can the credibility of the group be justified?

18. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī wrote his *rijāl* book for the purpose of _____?

19. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī wrote his *al-Fihrist* for the purpose of _____?

20. Al-Najāshī wrote his *al-Fihrist* for the purpose of _____?

21. Why did al-Najāshī write his book after there being two books written by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī?

22. Who wrote *Rijāl al-Barqī*? Why is it not important to discuss this?

23. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī transmitting from Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī cannot be relied on for two reasons. Mention them.

24. 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī divided his book into two parts. Explain them.

25. What is the method of *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*?

This brings us to an end in what we wanted to discuss in issues related to the science of narrators. We completed this book in the holy city of Qum on 25 Rajab, 1416 (18 December 1995), and we thank Almighty Allah for the success in doing so.

Bāqir al-Īrawānī

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