

SHĪ'Ī NARRATOR CRITICISM

A Critical Study of Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī
and Abū l-Qāsim al-Khūī

By:

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Transliteration key

أ- 'ā	ض - ḍ
آ - ā	ط - ṭ
ب - b	ظ - ṣ
ت - t	ع - 'c
ث - th	غ - gh
ج - j	ف - f
ح - ḥ	ق - q
خ - kh	ك - k
د - d	ل - l
ذ - dh	م - m
ر - r	ن - n
ز - z	و - w, ū
س - s	ه - h
ش - sh	ي - y, ī
ص - ṣ	

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Preface

The Difficulty, Significance and Objectives of this Study

This study comprises the science of ḥadīth transmitter criticism (*‘ilm al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*) according to the Imāmī Shī‘ah. It is based on the works of two of their leading authorities, namely al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Asadī al-Ḥillī’s *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl Fī Ma’rifat al-Rijāl* and Abū al-Qāsim al-Mūsawī al-Khūṭī’s *Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*. Furthermore, a comparative analysis between their respective methodological approaches will also be included, as well as a discussion underscoring their respective areas of agreement and disagreement.

The reason for restricting this study to the above-mentioned works only is because their views signify the vast majority of issues concomitant to the science of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl* as understood by the Imāmiyyah. Additionally, I have restricted myself to both al-Ḥillī and al-Khūṭī for the following reasons:

1. According to several scholars of the Imāmī Shī‘ah, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī is regarded as the first person to categorize ḥadīth into *ṣahīḥ* (authentic), *muwaththaq* (trustable), *ḥasan* (fair), and *da‘īf* (weak). According to them, this is referred to as *taqṣīm al-ḥadīth*, or ḥadīth classification.

This study will be restricted to his work *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* because it clearly demonstrates al-Ḥillī’s approach to the science, as well as an elucidation of the normative principles he sets himself out upon—even though he violates them on numerous occasions. Additionally, his work is among the first exclusively dedicated dictionaries of transmitter evaluation (*kutub al-rijāl*) after the phase of ḥadīth classification in the seventh century.

2. As for al-Khūṭī, he is considered one of the last to write a dictionary of transmitter evaluation in the present-day. His work consists of twenty-four volumes; and not only is he a leading authority of the Uṣūlī school, but he is also one of the latter-day proponents of ḥadīth classification.

Al-Khūī stands out because he boldly challenges the status quo of his predecessors—including al-Ḥillī in several places. Furthermore, al-Khūī is seen as a prominent figure for many modern-day ḥadīth scholars of the Imāmī tradition. His methodological approach has had a great impact within several academic circles of the Shī‘ah in the present-day. This fact can be evidenced by the statements of his students who have themselves critically edited several authoritative works of the Imāmī legal school.

(As mentioned previously), this study will (also) include a comparative analysis between their respective methodologies and a discussion underscoring the areas upon which they agree and disagree.

Significance of the Study

The research presented in this work comes at a time in which the unmitigated attacks against Islam’s leading figures have intensified, with the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ at the forefront. Through the media, dilettantes and self-proclaimed Muslims continue to needle doubts and raise suspicions about them. They incessantly launch attacks and cast aspersions against this generation; doing so in the name of academic inquiry, as characterized by the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*. While attacks against the Companions ﷺ precipitate, many individuals, who according to classical scholars are considered heterodoxical and unreliable, are sold as trustworthy and upright. Such individuals appear (again) under the banner of academic inquiry, as characterized by the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*.

Therefore, this study comes to investigate the reality of these principles and whether the Imāmiyyah have objectively applied them to their transmitters of ḥadīth. The critical and empirical analysis will come to show a rather immethodical approach in the Imāmiyyah scholars’ criticism of reports and transmitters. At the same time, the astute methodical approach of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah—irrespective of whether they form part of the early or later generation of scholars—will reveal itself when comparatively analyzed with the statements of

the Imāmī scholars, at the head being Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūī. “Things are known by their opposites,” as the saying goes.

Core Areas of Research

The following areas will be covered in the study:

- The extent to which al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī adhere to their principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*; and the respective application thereof to the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and their reliable transmitters who transmit from the infallible Imāms, according to the Imāmī Shī’ah. Also, the extent of al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī’s impartiality in the principles’ application to their transmitters.
- The motives behind the origins of these principles and the reason as to why they are so many in number.
- The effect that results from the different methodologies of al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī on issues related to ḥadīth transmitters.
- A study of the reasons which lead to the findings upon which the scholar of transmitters’ (*al-‘ālim al-rijālī*) bases his rulings; without simply focusing on the linguistics of the terms associated with *al-jarḥ wa al-ta’dīl*. Rather, a study of the reason and principles which lead to either a transmitter being deemed reliable, or a rejection of his narration; without delving into the linguistic meanings of (words such as) *thiqah* and *ḍa’īf*.

For example, the transmitter (in question) happens to be an agent (*wakīl*) of an infallible Imām. The question then arises, does the act of agency (*wakālah*) signify the agent’s reliability (as a ḥadīth transmitter)?

Or, the fact that an infallible Imām supplicated for a particular individual. Does this supplication by the infallible Imām denote his reliability (as a ḥadīth transmitter)?

- Do these principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* which they formulated have any practical value, or are they merely applied theoretically with no real consequences therefrom?
- The extent to which al-Khūṭī relies on his predecessors *tawthīqāt*, or positive gradings (of transmitters), and the impact it has had on his overall methodological approach of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*.

Part of the objectives of this work is an overall critical analysis of the science of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* according to the Imāmiyyah Shī'ah. Also, to ask the question: do the Shī'ah actually possess their own dedicated sciences to *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*?

With the divine strength of Allah **سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى**, this study will attempt to answer these—and several other—questions in view of these two authoritative figures.

The methodological framework in this study will be (as previously mentioned) entirely empirical and will comprise a comparative analysis between Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī's *al-Khulāsah* and al-Khūṭī's *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, as well as a critical analysis of their respective methodologies.

Previous Research

Vis-à-vis their many writings, scholars from both the early and later generations have continued providing responses to the people of *bid'ah* (innovation), in particular, the Imāmī Shī'ah. However, these works—which I have chronologically divided into three periods—can effectively be described as follows:

1. The Early Period

The writings of the early generation of scholars are largely characterized in non-specifics. Scholars during this period did not write specific treatises concerning the Twelvers. However, this was not due to their negligence thereof. Rather, mention of the Shī'ah (during this time) would merely be *incidental*, similar to

how biographical works would mention when discussing certain transmitters. For example, when such a transmitter is described as a ‘liar’, or with the term ‘*rafḍ*’.

Similarly, when transmitters are described as having ascribed to the creed of the Imāmiyyah and the belief of infallibility—which they incessantly dispute with the entire Ummah. Or, when they excommunicate the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم, curse the pious predecessors, believe in the interpolation (*Tahrīf*) of the Qur’ān, or even believe in the concepts of *Raj’ah*¹ and *Badā’*².

One of the first people to categorically write on the Twelvers was al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu‘aym al-Aṣḥabānī (d. 430 A.H) in his work *al-Imāmah wa al-Radd ‘alā al-Rāfiḍah*. The central theme of the book is precisely as its name suggests: Imāmah and the differences related therein. Again, this period was not characterized with having produced much details. Perhaps this was on account of the sheer lack of works by the Shī‘ah themselves at that time. Or, because of the early generation’s indifferences with them, and the fact that they were undeserving of having their time wasted with the likes of such people. Not a single scholar from the early generation described in detail their principles of ḥadīth for the simple reason that they were only developed (much) later on.

2. The Pre-modern Period

Writings following the early generation and prior to the latter-day period, such as in the time of Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī. Here, the writings began detailing the issues of disagreement more than before. The early generation of scholars wrote in general terms. Thereafter, scholars came and gained benefit from whatever they stated, and at the same time, also began

1 *Raj’ah*: The Shī‘ī belief that the Imāms and others will be brought back to life and return to this world before the Day of Qiyāmah. [Translator’s note]

2 *Badā’*: The Shī‘ah doctrine that Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَلُهُمْ only learns of things after they occur, thus forcing Him to change His Will, Allah forbid. [Translator’s note]

incorporating the writings of the Imāmī Shī'ah scholars. For example, it reads under the biography of 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muḥammadī: “(He was a staunch Rāfiḍī. He has a Tafsīr that contains calamitous information.”¹

The likes of this prove the scholars were aware of their works after their dissemination. The scholars in this time did not mention any of the ḥadīth sciences of the Imāmiyyah for the simple fact that they were not (considered) of the people of ḥadīth and isnād. Ibn Taymiyyah specifically alludes to this fact in his confutation of Ibn al-Muṭahhīr al-Ḥillī (as will be explained later in this study). He writes:

If one of them were asked to produce an authentic, sound report regarding 'Alī عليه السلام or someone else, they would be unable to do so. They do not possess the expertise of isnād nor the transmitters (of ḥadīth) as the Ahl al-Sunnah do.²

He also states:

With regards to the transmitters of (general) knowledge and narrators of ḥadīths and reports, they are unable to distinguish between the transmitter who is a known liar, or commits serious mistakes, or is unaware of what he transmits, and the transmitter who is precise, an expert, and upright, known to possess knowledge of prophetic reports.³

3. The Modern Period

Writings of the modern period that are characterized as having reaped (the benefits of) everything the earlier scholars sowed. They benefited greatly from their scholarly predecessors in relation to the numerous sects—among them the Imāmī Shī'ah. However, they did not deviate much from the set course of their

1 Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī: *Lisān al-Mīzān*.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 3/505.

3 *Ibid*, 1: 8.

predecessors in the nature of the subject matter—the areas that are considered areas of disagreement between the Sunnīs and Shī'ah (as mentioned previously).

Most of the issues revolve around Imāmah and what results therefrom, including the issue of Qur'ānic interpolation, excommunication of the Ṣaḥābah, infallibility (of the Imāms), and other such issues which are stated in the creedal works of the of Imāmiyyah. I have personally come across approximately one hundred and fifty refutational works authored by the Ahl al-Sunnah against the Imāmiyyah.

Unfortunately, I have rarely found Sunnī works dedicated to the ḥadīth sciences according to the Imāmī Shī'ah. Mention of this subject-matter is merely incidental, as will be explained in detail shortly. What is important to note is the fact that whatever has been written regarding the sciences of ḥadīth has been in a very broad sense. The term '*Sunnah*' is defined according to the Shī'ah, and their works of ḥadīth, popular dictionaries of transmitter evaluation, and famous transmitters who have been subject to criticism have been enlisted. However, I have not come across—to the best of my knowledge—someone who has discussed the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* in such a detailed manner as these pages will soon explain.

Among the Ahl al-Sunnah, the following scholars have written on the subject of ḥadīth. At times, the author alludes to some of the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*.

1. *Ma'a al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah fī al-Uṣūl wa al-Furū'* (Dār al-Faḍīlah, Riyadh; Dār al-Thaqāfah, Qatar – 2003), written by 'Alī al-Sālūs. This is a very beneficial work. The author provides an overview of the Imāmī Shī'ah school in terms of both their roots and branches (*uṣūl* and *furū'*), as well as a comparative analysis between the Sunnīs and Shī'ah in every chapter. The section of concern to us is related to the sciences of Ḥadīth. In terms of the Imāmī Shī'ah's general definition of the ḥadīth sciences, it is one of the most excellent works written. However, when it comes to the chapter of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* according to the Shī'ah, he records their account of criticisms leveled at the (famous) Imāms of the Muslims and their books

written on the subject. This is done without any reference to the *reasoning* behind such criticisms and the principles upon which they formulated ḥadīth transmitter criticism, or *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*. At the end of the book the author cites a number of accusations leveled at the noble Companions رضي الله عنهم by al-Khūṭī. However, he does not refer to any of their principles related to *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*.

2. *Mukhtaṣar al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (published by Ḥusayn Ḥilmī Sa'īd Iṣṭānbūlī – 1979), by Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī. This work is primarily centered on defining the Imāmī Shī'ah, their denominations, and their creedal beliefs regarding Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى and the prophets. He also gets into several issues of disagreement between the Sunnīs and Shī'ah and provides an excellent refutation in favour of the Ahl al-Sunnah. There are a number of reservations against the book; however, it does not discredit the academic value found therein. Despite its brevity, it contains a number of unique benefits. May Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى reward the (original) author and its abridger with the best of reward.

In chapter two, the author discusses the classification of reports according to the Shī'ah, the credibility of their transmitters, and the *ṭabaqāt* (classes) of their predecessors. He also briefly mentions the sciences of ḥadīth according to them. To the best of my knowledge, he is the first to speak in detail about some of their principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*. He states:

They have authenticated the narrations of individuals who the infallible Imām supplicated against, with the statements such as, “May Allah disgrace him,” and, “May Allah kill him,” or, “May Allah curse him.” Or, he (i.e. the infallible Imām) judged a person's beliefs to be false, or by dissociating himself from him.

They also authenticated the reports of the *Mushabbihah*, the *Mujassimah*, and (the reports) of those who permit the concept of *Badā'* in relation to Allah سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى. This, even though such acts are akin to disbelief.

Furthermore, the *riwāyah* (transmission) of a disbeliever is unacceptable, let alone it being considered authentic. Their *‘adālah* (uprightness) is of no value by them, even though they mention it in the definition of an authentic ḥadīth. This is because the disbeliever, from inception, is not considered upright (*‘adl*).¹

These finer points from the author highlight his cognizance of their dictionaries of transmitter evaluation (*kutub al-rijāl*) and their usages of these principles.

3. *Al-Shī‘ah wa al-Sunnah* (Dār al-Imām al-Mujaddid (first edition) – 2005), written by Iḥsān Ilāhī Ṣahīr. The author is one of the most knowledgeable people about the specifics of this school. He quotes extensively from both their primary and secondary sources, in all the languages they were written in. He was proficient in several languages, including Arabic, Urdu, Persian, and English, thereby making his books invaluable. However, in most of his works—including this one—he only addresses the contradictions in their transmitter criticism and their incompetence thereof in general terms, without mentioning any of the principles upon which they rely. Instead, he only cites examples of a few transmitters. This is contrary to his customary, more thorough approach in the other issues, all of which remain controversial among the two groups.
4. *Uṣūl Madhhab al-Shī‘ah* (Dār al-Riḍā Publications – 1998), written by Nāṣir al-Qafārī. This is the most well-known and widely available work to date. The amount of effort the author expended in scrutinizing the opinions—both in terms of their *furū‘* (branches) and *uṣūl* (roots)—of the Shī‘ah is self-evident. However, when he addresses the sciences of ḥadīth, he does so pursuant to the subject-matter of his work—the general framework (*uṣūl*) of the Twelvers. Therefore, he speaks in non-specifics about their beliefs regarding the Sunnah, as well as their opinion of prophetic reports

1 Maḥmūd Shukrī al-Ālūsī: *Mukhtaṣar al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā ‘Ashariyyah*, p. 48.

transmitted by Sunnī transmitters, their seminal works, and their method of reconciliation in dealing with contradictory reports. He also mentions their approach to dealing with transmitters—the theme of this present work—in a general manner. However, he only discussed the excuse of *Taqiyyah* as proffered by the Shī'ah scholars. This despite his encyclopedic knowledge, and the fact that Allah ﷻ assisted him in both traversing uncharted territories (*terra incognita*) and quoting from (their) primary sources, he did not, however, explain the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* according to them.

Another important discussion he deals with in this work, and his other work entitled *Mas'alat al-Taqrīb bayn Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Shī'ah*, is that of rapprochement between the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Shī'ah. Although the issue is important, he very much echoes sentiments similar to people of the past; and, in doing so, he abridges much of the discussion.

5. *Rijāl al-Shī'ah fī al-Mizān*, written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Zarī. This is an excellent work in the field. Though small in size, the author mentions the most reliable narrators according to the Imāmī Shī'ah. He also explains their status as transmitters, in addition to their criticisms of the Ahl al-Bayt and vice-versa. He also refutes the Shī'ī scholar 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Sharaf al-Mūsawī in his work *al-Murāja'āt* (which is being circulated as gospel!); who lauds a number of transmitters of the Shī'ah despite him knowing full well they have been subject to serious criticism.

The author of *Ruwāt al-Akhbār* heavily relies on this work; however, he does not discuss any issues of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* according to the Imāmiyyah since it falls outside of the subject matter. The work is mostly an exposition of the transmitters who have been subjected to criticism, as I alluded to. He did a wonderful job—Allah ﷻ grant him success!

6. *Ruwāt al-Akhbār 'an al-A'imma al-Aṭḥār*, written by Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (first edition – 2006). This work is dedicated to the science of ḥadīth

according to the Imāmī Shī'ah. The author offers an overview of several issues, including: the sciences of ḥadīth, the classification of ḥadīth and the status of both their transmitters and works—which transmit from the infallibles (according to them), its development, and their methodology pertaining to transmitters. However, he does not explain the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl* according to them in a detailed manner. It is important to note that the author, despite mentioning numerous beneficial points which have not been mentioned before, unduly quotes from his predecessors. For example, he quotes from *Mukhtaṣar al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*. At times, he references it, and other times, he does not. Similarly, he quotes a clip from 'Uthmān al-Khamīs entitled “*Zawaj al-Mu'ah* (Temporary Marriage)” without referencing it. He does this with others as well without referencing the original sources. This is an objectionable act from the author.

7. *Akḥbār al-Shī'ah wa Aḥwāl Ruwāṭihā*, written by Muḥammad Shukrī al-Ālūsī. The author relied heavily upon *Mukhtaṣar al-Tuḥfah al-Ithnā 'Ashariyyah*. Why wouldn't he? He summarized it. In this work, the author discusses the division of ḥadīth according to the Imāmī Shī'ah. Thereafter, he expounds on the sources of the Sharī'ah, which are four, namely: 1. *Kitāb* (i.e. the Qur'ān), 2. *Khabar* (i.e. prophetic report(s)), 3. *Ijmā'* (consensus), and 4. *'Aql* (rational faculty).

Next, he addresses the *ṭabaqāt* (classes) of Shī'ī transmitters. According to him, the first class includes 'Abd Allah ibn Sabā; he is enlisted among the *mustafīdīn* (a high-ranking transmitter) in their school of thought. The second class includes several people of the hypocrites weak in faith. These include the killers of 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه. The followers of al-Ḥasan رضي الله عنه form part of the fourth class of transmitters. He continues mentioning these classes until he reaches the seventh: those who claim to have enjoyed the company of the Imāms and received knowledge from them. This, even though the Imāms declared them disbelievers and considered them liars.

The author then explains their respective statuses. However, he does not deal with any of their issues related to *al-jarḥ wa al-ta'dīl*.

Most of these studies are similar in nature and reference one another. Also, all of them are late developments since the early generation of scholars did not write on the subject. I have already explained the reason for this.

These works usually contain the *riwāyāt* (transmissions) wherein senior-ranking transmitters from the Imāmiyyah are criticized, such as Zurārah, Jābir al-Ju'fī, Abū Baṣīr, and other senior transmitters. Furthermore, their opinions regarding the Sunnah are scrutinized along with their works on ḥadīth and dictionaries of transmitter evaluation.

These are the works I have come across by the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah regarding this subject.

I ask Allah سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى to rectify any insufficiencies.

Introductory Chapter

Historical Development of Literature on the Sciences of Narrator Evaluation According to the Imāmi Shī'ah

- 1.0 Reviewing the claim that attributes the science of ḥadīth narrator criticism to the Ahl al-Bayt
- 2.0 A historical overview and appraisal of the biographical works authored by the Shī'ah
- 3.0 The lack of sciences by the Shī'ah Imāmiyyah in the field of 'ilm al-rijāl
- 4.0 Historical overview of the Imāmiyyah's literature on Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth
- 5.0 The absence of writing in the sciences of Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth except in later times
- 6.0 Biographies of al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī and an exposition of their methodologies in their respective works



1.0 Reviewing the claim that attributes the science of ḥadīth narrator criticism to the Ahl al-Bayt

Before exploring the details provided in this work, it is important to understand the origins of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* (ḥadīth narrator criticism) as stated by the Twelver Shī'ah. It is not possible to understand the findings of both Ibn al-Muṭaḥhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī except by knowing the intellectual foundations which they relied upon, as well as the legacy they inherited from their predecessors and how they navigated through it.

Many scholars of the Shī'ah have devoted a lot of their efforts in trying to prove that they were, in fact, the first to write about *'ulūm al-rijāl* (sciences of narrator evaluation) *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. In doing so, it bolsters the image of the Imāmī school and establishes their antecedence therein. They substantiate this claim by attributing the science of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* to the Ahl al-Bayt with the following proof:

The first proof

Dr. 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī and Ḥusayn al-Ṣadr¹—both Twelver Shī'ah—attempted to link the origins of this science to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Al-Faḍlī states:

كانت وثيقة الإمام أمير المؤمنين (ع) ... والتي تضمنت تقسيم الرواة إلى أربعة أقسام، البذرة الأولى لنشأة مادة أسماء الرجال، والفكرة الأولى التي انطلق منها التفكير في جمع أسماء الرواة، وتبيان هوياتهم، وتقييم أحوالهم.

The *wathīqah* (document) of Amīr al-Mu'mīnīn al-Imām عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام ... It included the classification of narrators into four categories, laying the first stone for the (eventual) development of narrator evaluation as a subject-matter. And the intellectual foundations through which the concept of collecting the names of narrators, their different identities, and appraising their conditions originated.²

1 Ḥusayn al-Ṣadr: *Nihāyat al-Dirāyah*, p. 15.

2 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 27; Ḥusayn al-Sā'idī: *Kitāb al-Du'afā' min Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1/42.

Al-Faḍlī was unable to (successfully) attribute this science to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه by ascribing its origins to him. Similarly, he was also unable to prove that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه was, in fact, responsible for categorizing ḥadīth narrators into the following four categories:

1. The hypocrite narrator; the liar (*al-rāwī al-munāfiq; al-kadhḥāb*)
2. The narrator who commits mistakes (*al-rāwī al-wāḥim*)
3. The narrator who is inaccurate (*al-rāwī ghayr al-ḍābiṭ*)
4. The reliable narrator (*al-rāwī al-thiqah*)

The narration which al-Faḍlī relied upon is included in al-Kulaynī’s (d. 329 AH) work *al-Kāfī*:

عن علي بن إبراهيم بن هاشم، عن أبيه، عن حماد بن عيسى، عن إبراهيم بن عمر اليماني، عن أبان بن أبي عياش، عن سليم بن قيس الهلالي، قال: قلت لأمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: إني سمعت من سلمان والمقداد وأبي ذر شيئاً من تفسير القرآن وأحاديث عن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وآله غير ما في أيدي الناس، ثم سمعت منك تصديق ما سمعت منهم ورأيت في أيدي الناس أشياء كثيرة من تفسير القرآن ومن الأحاديث عن نبي الله صلى الله عليه وآله أنتم تخالفونهم فيها، وتزعمون أن ذلك كله باطل، أفترى الناس يكذبون على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله متعمدين ويفسرون القرآن بأرائهم؟ قال: فأقبل علي فقال: قد سألت فافهم الجواب...

On the authority of ‘Alī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāshim — from his father — from Ḥammād ibn ‘Tsā — from Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Umar al-Yamānī — from **Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh** — from **Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī**, who said:

“I said to *Amīr al-Mu’minīn*: ‘Indeed, I heard from Salmān, al-Miqdād, and Abū Dharr a certain amount of *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān and aḥādīth from the Prophet of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم different to what the people have in their hands. Then I heard (from you) confirmation of what I heard from them. (And) I saw many things from the *tafsīr* of the Qur’ān and from the aḥādīth of the Prophet of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم in the peoples’ hands and you are opposing them. You claim it is all false. Do you consider the people as having intentionally lied against the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, and interpreting the Qur’ān with their own opinions?’

‘Alī approached and said, ‘You have asked. Now understand the answer...’”¹

Objections to the first proof

The *isnād* (chain of narration) which al-Faḍlī and al-Ṣadr relied upon is *sāqīṭah* (wholly unreliable), even according to the ḥadīth principles of the Shī‘ah. Al-Majlisī (d. 1111 AH) says regarding this ḥadīth:

ضعيف على المشهور معتبر عندي.

Weak according to the most widespread (opinion); duly considered, according to me.²

Therefore, the ḥadīth is famously known to be *ḍa‘īf* (weak).

As for al-Majlisī’s statement, “duly considered, according to me,” the response is: How can it be ‘duly considered’ according to al-Majlisī when the *isnād* contains Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh? Al-Majlisī symbolizes him (in his work) with (the letter) ‘*ḍād*,’ suggesting he is a weak narrator.³ This is a clear contradiction. There is no other version by which this one can be bolstered.

The Shī‘ī scholar Ḥusayn al-Sā‘idī judged the ḥadīth *ḍa‘īf* and he referred to the view of al-Majlisī regarding Abān ibn Abī ‘Ayyāsh when he said:

“ضعفه المجلسي في رجاله وحكم على رواياته بالضعف عند دراسته لأسانيد الكافي وتهذيب الأحكام.”

Al-Majlisī judged him to be weak in his work *Rijāl al-Majlisī*. He also judged his narrations as weak in his review of al-Kāfī’s *asānīd* (pl. of *isnād*) and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*.⁴

1 Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī: *al-Kāfī*, 1/62 (ḥadīth no. 1 under the chapter ‘*Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth*’).

2 Mullā Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Mir‘āt al-Uqūl*, 1/210.

3 Mullā Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Rijāl al-Majlisī*, p. 141.

4 Ḥusayn al-Sā‘idī: *al-Ḍu‘afā’ min Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1/136.

The statements criticizing Abān from the scholars of the Shī'ah are many, including:

- Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī says, “Weak. No consideration of him.”¹
- Al-Ṭūsī says, “Tābi'ī. Weak.”²
- Al-Ḥillī says, “Tābi'ī. Very weak.”³
- Al-Bahbūdī says something similar.⁴

The *isnād* (also) contains Sulaym ibn Qays al-Hilālī. He is *muttahaḥ* (accused of lying) according to many scholars of the Shī'ah. Al-Māzindarānī (d. 1081 AH) says he is “*Majhūl al-Ḥāl* (unknown condition).”⁵

The Shī'ī scholar Hāshim Ma'rūf al-Ḥasanī's statement criticizing one of the narrations is sufficient proof (against him). Al-Ḥasanī states:

ويكفي هذه الرواية عيباً أنها من مرويات سليم بن قيس وهو من المشبهين والمتهمين بالكذب

The fact that this *riwāyah* (narration) is among Sulaym ibn Qays's is enough to render it problematic. He is of the doubtful narrators and of those who have been accused of lying.⁶

How then is it possible to use a narration which is inapt as evidence to establish the origin of the sciences of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*—the science which explains to

1 Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Ghaḍā'irī: *Ḍu'afā' Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī*, p. 36 (biography no. 1).

2 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī: *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 126.

3 Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī: *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*, p. 325, # 1280 (section two on weak narrators); al-Tiffarishī: *Naqd al-Rijāl*, 1/39; Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī: *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1/120. Abān is suspected of having forged the work of Sulaym ibn Qays. Refer to above sources.

4 Muḥammad al-Bahbūdī: *Ma'rifat al-Ḥadīth wa Tārīkh Nashrihi wa Tadwīnihi wa Thaḳāfatihī 'inda al-Shī'ah al-Imāmiyyah*, p. 159.

5 Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Māzindarānī: *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi* (*Bāb Isti'māl al-'Ilm*), 2/139 (under ḥadīth no. 1). He contradicts himself. See p. 307 of the previous reference.

6 Hāshim Ma'rūf al-Ḥasanī: *al-Mawḍū'āt fi al-Āthār wa al-Akhbār*, p. 184 (in the marginalia).

us the authenticity and weakness of narrations? In fact, al-Bahbūdī judged this actual narration *da'if* when he excluded it from his work *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi*!¹

Based on the above, it becomes clear that the link between the origins of this science with 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه is incorrect, as the narrations of the Imāmiyyah assert. As explained earlier, they have been proven false.

The second proof

Al-Faḍlī, and similarly, al-Kajūrī al-Shīrāzī (d. 1293 A.H) attempted it differently when they attributed this science to Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir رضي الله عنه. They based this on a narration that is considered, according to al-Faḍlī's description, "the introduction into the evolution of this subject."² Using this as textual proof for what he believed, al-Faḍlī says:

مقبولة عمر بن حنظلة، فقد جاء فيها ما يرتبط بموضوعنا: قلت [أي: قول عمر بن حنظلة وهو يسأل الأمام المعصوم] فإن كان كل رجل اختار رجلا من أصحابنا فرضيا أن يكونا الناظرين في حقهما، واختلفا فيما حكما وكلاهما اختلفا في حديثكم؟ قال: الحكم ما حكم به أعدلها وأفقهها وأصدقهما في الحديث وأورعهما ولا يلتفت إلى ما يحكم به الآخر، قال: قلت: فإنهما عدلان مرضيان عند أصحابنا لا يفضل واحد منهما على الآخر؟

The *maqbulah*³ of 'Umar ibn Ḥanẓalah. It contains (information) related to our subject-matter: (In asking Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, 'Umar ibn Ḥanẓalah says) If both (Shī'ī) parties (in their dispute) selected one person (each) from our associates (i.e. the Shī'ah) to assume arbitrating in respect to each individual's best interests, and they both (eventually) differ in their

1 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi* (i.e. the ḥadīths which he excluded because they contain narrators who are abandoned (*matrūk*), or the *matn* (text) is not free from any *wahm* (mistake), *iḍṭirāb* (irreconcilable problem), or *takhlīṭ* (confusion), p. 1 (from the introduction, and under the chapter 'Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth' wherein he makes no mention of this ḥadīth in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (collection), 1/10).

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 30.

3 *Maqbulah* (lit. 'accepted') is a term referring to a *riwāyah* that has been consistently accepted by the scholars of the Imāmiyyah. Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī has an entire chapter dedicated to the meaning of this term, as mentioned in Samā' al-Maqāl.

judgement and in (understanding) your ḥadīth? Ja'far al-Ṣādiq replied: “The judgement will be in favour of the one who is more just, possesses more understanding and truthfulness in relation to ḥadīth, and more Allah-conscious. The other individual’s opinion will not be considered.”

I said: “(And what if) They are equally just, and enjoy the same level of approval from our companions (i.e. the Shī'ah) such that one cannot be proven better than the other? ...”¹

Objections to the second proof

Firstly, in terms of the *isnād*, it is *ḍa'īf* and inauthentic. It appears as follows:

قال الكليني (٣٢٩هـ): محمد بن يحيى، عن محمد بن الحسين، عن محمد بن عيسى عن صفوان بن يحيى عن داود بن الحصين، عن عمر بن حنظلة قال...

Al-Kulaynī (d. 329 A.H) states – Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā – from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn – from Muḥammad ibn Ṭsā – from Ṣafwān ibn Yaḥyā – from Dāwūd ibn al-Ḥuṣayn – from **Umar ibn Ḥanzalah** who said...

The *isnād* includes the narrator 'Umar ibn Ḥanzalah. Al-Khūṭī cites six reasons why people regard him as a *thiqah* (reliable) and he disproves all of them.² The abridged version of al-Khūṭī's work regards him as “*majhūl* (unknown).”³ In fact, al-Khūṭī himself considered this specific narration *ḍa'īf* when he said:

إن الرواية ضعيفة السند بعمر بن حنظلة، إذ لم يرد في حقه توثيق ولا مدح وإن سميت روايته هذه بالمقبولة، وكأنها مما تلقته الأصحاب بالقبول، وإن لم يثبت هذا أيضا.

The *isnād* of this *riwāyah* is *ḍa'īf* because of 'Umar ibn Ḥanzalah; there is not mention of *tawḥīq* (attestation of reliability) in his right nor praise,

1 Al-Kulaynī: *al-Kāfī (Bāb Ikhtilāf al-Ḥadīth)*, 1/67-68.

2 Al-Khūṭī: *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 14/31.

3 Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī: *al-Mufīd min Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 425. This work is an abridgement of al-Khūṭī's rulings on narrators.

even though this *riwāyah* of his is named the ‘*maqḅūlah* (accepted).’ It is as if it forms part of those issues that have been acknowledged by the companions (i.e. the Shī‘ah) as acceptable (*tallaqathu al-aṣḥāb bi al-qabūl*), even though it is unproven.¹

The author of *Majma‘ al-Fā‘idah*, al-Ardabīlī (d. 993 A.H), judged that ‘Umar ibn Ḥaṇṣalah is *majhūl*.² Similarly, al-Bahbūdī considered it *ḍa‘īf* when he excluded it from his work *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi*. In fact, this very ‘Umar has no *tawthīq* of him (mentioned) in the primary sources of narrator evaluation (*al-uṣūl al-rījāliyyah*).

Secondly, in terms of the narration’s actual meaning, it has to do with a legal and judicial ordinance (*al-qaḍā’ wa al-ḥukm*); it has no correlation to the narration of ḥadīth. The actual wording is as follows:

عن عمر بن حنظلة قال: سألت أبا عبد الله عليه السلام عن رجلين من أصحابنا بينهما منازعة في دين أو ميراث فتحاكما إلى السلطان وإلى القضاة أيحل ذلك؟

On the authority of ‘Umar ibn Ḥaṇṣalah: “I asked Abū ‘Abd Allāh عليه السلام whether it was permissible for two of our companions who had a debt or inheritance-related dispute to seek a verdict from the ruler or judges.”

Al-Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī (d. 1206 A.H) said:

وأما رواية عمر بن حنظلة فواردة في القاضي دون الراوي، إلا أن يلتزم أن كل راو قاض، وحاكم شرع

Regarding the narration of ‘Umar ibn Ḥaṇṣalah, it is concerning a judge, not a narrator. Unless it means that every narrator is a judge and an Islamic ruler.³

1 Al-Khūṭī: *Kitāb al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd* (under the commentary), p. 143.

2 Aḥmad al-Ardabīlī: *Majma‘ al-Fā‘idah*, 12:10 (under the commentary). The text reads: “And because of ‘Umar ibn Ḥaṇṣalah being unknown (*bijahli ‘Umar ibn Ḥaṇṣalah*) in the dictionaries of narrator evaluation (*kutub al-rijāl*). This author is different to the al-Ardabīlī who authored *Jāmi‘ al-Ruwāt*.”

3 Al-Waḥīd al-Bahbahānī: *al-Fawā‘id al-Ḥāiriyyah*, p. 219.

Therefore, the proof they rely upon to claim the historical roots connecting them to the sciences of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* is wholly unreliable, both in terms of the isnād and meaning.

The third proof

Al-Faḍlī¹ and al-Kajūrī² also use as a proof what is referred to as the “*Marfū‘ah* of Zurārah.” He says:

سألت الباقر (عليه السلام) فقلت: “جُعِلت فداك يأتي عنكم الخبران أو الحديثان المتعارضان بأيهما أخذ؟” فقال: “يا زرارَةَ خذ بما اشتهر بين أصحابك، ودع الشاذ النادر.” فقلت: “يا سيدي إنهما معا مشهوران مرويان مأثوران عنكم؟” فقال (عليه السلام): “خذ بقول أعدلهما عندك وأوثقهما في نفسك.”

I (i.e. Zurārah) asked al-Bāqir عليه السلام: “May I be ransomed for your sake! If two conflicting reports or ḥadīths come regarding you (i.e. the Imāms), which one should I use?”

He said, “O Zurārah, take the one that is (more) well-known amongst your associates. And discard the rare (and) anomalous one.”

I said, “O my master, (what if) they are equally narrated (and) well-known from you (i.e. the Imāms)?”

He said: “Take the statement of the one you think is more just and trustworthy.”³

Objections to the third proof

When returning to the source that mentions the narration, the work ‘*Awālī al-Lāālī* by al-Aḥsā‘ī, I found it saying:

وروى العلامة قدست نفسه مرفوعا إلى زرارَةَ بن أعين قال: سألت الباقر (عليه السلام)

1 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 30.

2 Al-Kajūrī: *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, p. 46.

3 Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā‘ī: *Awālī al-Lāālī*, 4/133.

Al-'Allāmah (may his being be sanctified) narrated *marfū'an*¹ from Zurārah ibn A'yan who said, 'I asked al-Bāqir...'"

It is mentioned like this without an *isnād*?²

After going through great pains searching for the *isnād* of this report, I did not find anything reliable, not to mention the fact that it does not even have an *isnād* to begin with! So how then can it be used to infer the foundations of a science that is meant to understand and distinguish between authentic and faulty (reports)?

The most that can be said of this narration—assuming it is authentic—is that it falls within the parameters of taking precaution and being self-conscious (when accepting reports). This is self-evident from the Imam's statement, "Take the statement of the **one you think is more just and trustworthy.**" Similarly, it falls within the parameters of conflicting authentic reports and how to deal with them because, according to many scholars of the Shī'ah, the *ḍa'īf ḥadīth* does not take into account narrations that are *shādh* (anomalous) and *nādir* (rare).³

1 The term '*marfū'an*' (lit. 'raised') here refers to a *ḥadīth* that is directly attributed to one of the imams, i.e. it is 'raised' up to him. [Translator's note]

2 Ibn Abī Jumhūr al-Aḥsā'ī: *Awālī al-Lā'ālī*, 4/133.

3 The latter-day scholars of the Shī'ah (predominantly the *Uṣūlīs*) infer from the early generation of scholars that they were, in fact, the forerunners to the science of authenticating and disparaging *aḥādīth*. They achieve this by arguing that the early generation of scholars, at times, ruled several *aḥādīth* to be *shādh* and *nādir*. However, I say this is a form of *tadlīs* (obfuscation). The term *shādh*, according to many scholars of the Shī'ah, does not imply the *ḥadīth* in question is weak. Rather, as al-Ḥusayn al-Āmilī says, the term *shādh* refers to a *ḥadīth* which "contradicts the majority, even if its narrator is a *thiqah*." He also says: "*Shādh*, according to us (the Shī'ah) can also refer to a *ḥadīth* whose contents is not acted upon by the scholars, **even though its *isnād* is authentic and (a report) other than it does not oppose it.**" See: al-Ḥusayn al-Āmilī: *Wuṣūl al-Akhyār ilā Uṣūl al-Akḥbār* (printed under *Majmū'ah Rasā'il fī al-Ḥadīth wa al-Dirāyah*), 1/410; 'Abd Allah al-Māmaqānī: *Miqbās al-Hidāyah*, 1/252, He says: "The *shādh* and *nādir* are synonymous terms. *Shādh* is more frequently used; whereas *nādir*, although it exists, it is rarely used."; al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *al-Bidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah*, p. 31. In defining an authentic *ḥadīth*, he states: "It is a contiguous chain up to the infallible (imam) that is narrated by an upright *imāmī* (i.e. believes in Imāmah), from someone similar on all levels (of the chain), **even if it is befallen by *shudhūdh* (anomalies).**"

It is important to note the Shī'ah that substantiate this view with these textual proofs—which are proven inauthentic—are from their leading ḥadīth scholars, individuals who work in the field of understanding how to recognize and distinguish between ṣaḥīḥ and ḍa'īf. They are research specialists and people of isnād and narrator biographies (tarājim). What, then, to say of their remaining scholars?

2.0 A historical overview and appraisal of the biographical works authored by the Shī'ah

The attempts of Shī'ah scholars have continued unabated in establishing their (claimed) antecedence in the history of *'ulūm al-rijāl* and *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. This can be clearly seen in their listing of works dedicated to narrator evaluation and *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. For this reason, we find Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī in his work *Tārīkh 'ilm al-Rijāl* make the same attempts as al-Faḍlī and al-Kajūrī; although, he was somewhat less thoughtful than them and other scholars of the Shī'ah and adopted a much more literal approach. However, he was unsuccessful in his findings. Under the section "*Lamḥah 'an Tārīkh 'ilm al-Rijāl* (A Glimpse into the History of *'ilm al-Rijāl*)," he writes:

إذا أخذنا علم الرجال بمعناه الأعم الباحث عن أحوال الرواة وقبولهم وعدم قبولهم فإن نظرة سريعة على تاريخ علم الرجال يعود بنا العهد إلى النصف الأول من القرن الأول حيث أنه في سنة ٤٠ هـ كتب عبيد الله بن أبي رافع مولى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كتابا في الصحابة الذين شهدوا مع أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام حروبه مثل صفين والجمل والنهروان، وتعيين من كان منهم من البدرين.

When we understand the science of narrator evaluation in its broader sense, i.e. studying the conditions of narrators and whether they are acceptable or not, then a quick glance through its history takes us back to the first-half of the first century. In the year 40 A.H, 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Abī Rāfi', the *mawlā* (client) of Allāh's Messenger ﷺ, wrote a letter regarding the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ who were present with Amīr al-Mu'minīn رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ in his battles, such as *Ṣiffīn*, *Jamal*, and *Nahrawān*. He also specified who amongst them were *Badrīs* (i.e. the Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ who took part in the Battle of Badr).¹

Al-Rāḍī regarded the letter of 'Ubayd Allāh ibn Rāfi' in which he mentioned the individuals who took part in *Ṣiffīn* with 'Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and were *Badrīs* as a work in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*! If we were to ask Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī: Is there, in the work you claim "studies of the conditions of narrators and whether they are acceptable or

1 Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī: *Tārīkh 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 9.

not” *jarḥ* (statement of impugment) or *ta’dīl* (attesting statement of reliability)? Did he (i.e. ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Rāfi‘) describe any of the narrators as being a *thiqah* (reliable)? Did he describe any of the narrators as being ḍa’īf? Did he discuss the concept of their accepting and rejecting of narrators? Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī will certainly be unable to answer. He will never find a way. How could he? The book simply mentions the names of participants in Ṣiffīn!

Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī also attempted to establish a link between the Shī’ah and the letter of ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Rāfi‘ in his statement:

ذكره الطوسي في الفهرست وذكر سنده إليه.

Al-Ṭūsī mentions it in *al-Fihrist* along with his isnād for it.¹

Regarding this claimed link, al-Khūṭī says:

وفي طريق الشيخ [يقصد الطوسي] إليه عدة مجاهيل

And in the sanad of *al-Shaykh* (i.e. al-Ṭūsī) up to the ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Rāfi‘, there are a number of *majhūl* (unknown) narrators.²

Counting ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Rāfi‘ among the authors of the Shī’ah is extremely implausible. Who has ever said he is an Imāmī Shī’ī that believes in Twelve Imāms? After studying his biography, I could not find a single person who said he is a Shī’ī that believes in Twelve infallible Imāms. The most that can be said is that he was a *kātib* (scribe) for ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه.³

We can summarize everything up to now as follows:

1 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 13.

2 Al-Khūṭī: *Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 12:70 (at the end of ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Rāfi’'s biography).

3 Al-Bukhārī writes: “‘Ubayd Allah ibn Abī Rāfi‘, the mawlā of Nabī صلی الله علیه وسلم. He heard (from) ‘Alī and Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه. Busr ibn Sa’īd, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad, and al-A’raj heard his ḥadīth regarding the people of Madīnah from him. See: *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, 5:381.

1. There is no correlation with this work and the sciences of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. In fact, Ja'far al-Subḥānī described it as “a work of history and events.”¹
2. The Shī'ah do not possess one authentic chain of narration for this book, as mentioned in al-Khūṭ's statement.
3. This claim of Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī is contradictory to other statements by Shī' scholars. In fact, Ḥasan al-Ṣadr states that the first person to write in this regard was Abū Muḥammad ibn Jabalah al-Kinānī.²

For the most part, these are the attempts made by the Shī'ah to claim their antecedence in the unique accomplishments of the Islamic sciences in general, not just the sciences of ḥadīth. It has become clear to us from this academic review thus far that the Shī'ah still need to prove this claim, despite their scholars' attempts at finding a historical basis that corroborates their viewpoint.

The Shī'ah conceding to their books being lost

Many scholars of the Imāmiyyah have attempted to prove the existence of several works in narrator evaluation for themselves. However, a number of them have conceded to the fact that whatever was written in the earlier periods was, as they say, lost to history! When mentioning the written works of the third century, al-Ḥasan al-Rāḍī states:

في هذا القرن صدر عدد كبير من الكتب في علم الرجال، وإن كان لم يصلنا منها، ومن أسمائها إلا القليل
جدًا، ومع ذلك فقد حفظ لنا التاريخ عددًا من أسماء المؤلفين في هذا المجال.

In this century, a large number of works in the science of narrator evaluation (*ilm al-rijāl*) appeared, despite only a very small number of them, along with their names, reaching us. Nevertheless, history has preserved for us a number of writers' names in this field.³

1 Ja'far al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fi 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 57.

2 Ḥasan al-Ṣadr: *Nihāyat al-Dirāyah*, p. 25.

3 Ḥasan al-Rāḍī: *Tārīkh 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 29.

Al-Rāḍī only mentions the names, nothing else. Regarding the fourth century, he states:

فقد أكثر تلك الكتب في حوادث أَلَمَّتْ بالعالم الإسلامي، من حروب وفتن مذهبية قضت على الكتب والمكتبات والعلماء.

Most of the works were lost to history on account of the events that befell the Islamic world. Wars and sectarian discord led to the loss of books, libraries, and scholars alike.¹

‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī says:

ولم يصل إلينا منها شيء من هذه الكتب إلا ما ذكره شيخنا الطهراني في الذريعة من وجود كتاب الطبقات للبرقي حتى عصرنا هذا.

None of these works reached us until now, except for what our Shaykh, al-Ṭahrānī, mentioned in *al-Dharī‘ah* concerning the existence of the book *al-Ṭabaqāt*, written by al-Barqī.²

Ja‘far al-Subḥānī recognized this fact when he said:

ومن المأسوف عليه أنه لم تصل هذه الكتب إلينا، وإنما الموجود عندنا وهو الذي يعد اليوم أصول الكتب الرجالية— ما دون في القرنين الرابع والخامس.

Regrettably, these works did not reach us. Whatever we have available— which are considered the primary works on narrator evaluation today— excludes (everything from) the fourth and fifth centuries.³

A similar conclusion was reached by their teacher, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī when he stated:

1 Ibid, p. 61.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 32.

3 Al-Subḥānī: *Kullīyāt fi ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 57.

وأما سائر الكتب القديمة فقد ضاعت أعيانها الشخصية من جهة قلة الاهتمام بها بعد وجود عين ألفاظها مدرجة في الأصول الأربعة المتداولة عندنا.

As for all of the early works, they all individually perished on account of the lack of importance shown to them after their exact wordings were inserted into the Four Primary works (*al-Uṣūl al-Arba'ah*), now common to us.¹

In discussing the works of al-Kashshī and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, al-Khū'ī states:

هذا حال كتاب الكشي وكتاب ابن الغضائري المعدودين من الأصول. وأما باقي الكتب الرجالية المعروفة في عصر الشيخ والنجاشي فلم يبق منها عين ولا أثر في عصر المتأخرين.

This is the condition of al-Kashshī's and al-Ghaḍā'irī's work; they are counted among the primary works. As for the remaining famous works in narrator evaluation during the time of al-Shaykh (i.e. al-Ṭūsī) and al-Najjāshī, no sign or trace remains of them in latter-day times.²

I will conclude with the statement of Muḥammad al-Bahbūdī who, regarding the scholars of the Shī'ah, said:

ومع ذلك ألفوا في معرفة الرواة وعقائدهم وأخلاقهم وسيرتهم معاجم كبيرة مسندة، وفي معرفة الأصول والمؤلفات وصحيحها وسقيمها وطرقها وإسنادها فهارس قيمة ممتعة إلا أنه لم يبق إلى الآن من هذه المعاجم الرجالية إلا معجمين: أحدهما يعرف برجال شيخنا الكشي والآخر برجال شيخنا الطوسي. ولم يبق من تلك الفهارس القيمة إلا اثنان: أحدهما فهرس شيخنا أبي الحسين ابن النجاشي، والآخر فهرس شيخنا أبي جعفر الطوسي.

Nevertheless, they authored a number of works (*ma'ājim*) in identifying narrators, their beliefs, character traits, and biographies. They also authored several invaluable indices in understanding both the primary and the compiled works—both authentic and inauthentic, their many

1 Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī: *al-Dharī'ah ilā Taṣānīf al-Shī'ah*, 1/81.

2 Al-Khū'ī: *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1/45.

versions and isnāds. However, until today, none of these works of narrator evaluation survived, save two: 1) the *Rijāl* of our Shaykh, al-Kashshī, and 2) the *Rijāl* of our Shaykh, al-Ṭūsī. And from the invaluable indices, only the following two survived: 1) the *Fihrist* of our Shaykh, Abī al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Najjāshī, and 2) the *Fihrist* of our Shaykh, Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī.¹

Al-Faḍlī mentioned that some of the works on narrator evaluation of their predecessors, such as *Rijāl al-Barqī*, *Rijāl al-‘Aqīqī*, *Rijāl Ibn Faḍḍāl*, and *Rijāl al-Faḍl Ibn Shādhān* existed until the era of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī.²

In short, there remains no trace of books in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl* written by the Shī‘ah in the first three centuries, according to their many claims; except for the work of al-Barqī, as documented in the text of al-Subḥānī. Also, the earlier works simply dissipated into the Four Primary works of narrator evaluation (*al-Uṣūl al-Rijāliyyah al-Arba‘ah*) after their texts were inserted therein.³

Based on this, the fifth century is regarded as the *actual beginning* for consolidating the science of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta‘dīl*, according to them. Al-Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī states:

وبعد أن انتهى القرن الرابع الهجري ودخل القرن الخامس وفيه كثر التأليف في علم الرجال وفي النصف الأول منه صدرت الأصول الأربعة لعلم الرجال:

1 Al-Bahūdī: *Ma‘rifat al-Ḥadīth wa Tārīkh Nashrihi wa Tadwīnihi wa Thaqāfatihi ‘inda al-Shī‘ah al-Imāmiyyah*, p. 82-83.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 33.

3 In describing these lost works—which represents the first phase of writing in narrator evaluation, as the Shī‘ah claim—Ḥusayn al-Sā‘idī states: “During this phase of writing, it is observed that the scholars only attached importance in mentioning the names and *ṭabaqāt* (classes). Rarely would they operate in the field of authenticating and inauthenticating (reports).” See: *al-Ḍu‘afā’*, 1/50. In fact, this is applicable to everything the Shī‘ah refer to as “*Uṣūl al-Tarājim*,” or the foundations of narrator biographies. Their writings, which they refer to as “the works of the early (scholars)” are names that are applied to (works of) *ṭabaqāt*, or to simply enumerating their works; without any recourse to mention the status of the person in question in terms of his reliability or weakness. This is the case in most instances.

- ١ . اختيار الرجال للشيخ الطوسي [الكشي]،
- ٢ . الرجال المعروف برجال الشيخ الطوسي،
- ٣ . فهرست كتب الشيعة وأصولهم وأسماء المصنفين وأصحاب الأصول للشيخ الطوسي [أيضا] المشتهر بالفهرست،
- ٤ . فهرست أسماء مصنفي الشيعة المعروف بـ (رجال النجاشي - ٤٥٠ هـ).

والكتب الثلاثة الأولى كلها للشيخ أبي جعفر محمد بن الحسن الطوسي المتوفى ٤٦٠ هـ ومن مراجعتنا لأسماء ما تقدمت من كتب علم الرجال في القرون الأربعة المتقدمة وأن أكثرها قد بادت وذهبت، ولم يبق منها إلا الاسم وأن مجرد صدور هذه الكتب المتأخرة للشيخ الطوسي أصبحت محط البحث والتنقيب والتدقيق.

Only after the fourth hijrī century came to an end and the fifth century began, did the writings in al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl proliferate. In the first half of this century, the Four Primary works in the science of narrator evaluation emerged, namely:

1. *Ikhtiyār al-Rijāl*, written by al-Ṭūsī (originally *Rijāl al-Kashshī*),
2. *al-Rijāl* (famously known as *Rijāl al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī*), written by al-Ṭūsī,
3. *Fihrist Kutub al-Shī'ah wa Uṣūluhum wa Asmā' al-Muṣannifīn wa Aṣḥāb al-Uṣūl* (famously known as *al-Fihrist*), written by al-Ṭūsī, and
4. *Fihrist Asmā' Muṣannifī al-Shī'ah* (famously known as *Rijāl al-Najjāshī* (d. 450 A.H)), written by Aḥmad ibn 'Alī al-Najjāshī.

The first three works are all written by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 A.H). In our revision of the names of works in the science of narration evaluation from the first four centuries, most of them have perished and disappeared, only the names appear. The emergence of these latter-day books of al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī have become the object of study, research, and investigation.¹

1 Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī: *Tārīkh 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 110.

It is important to note the words of Ḥusayn al-Rāḍī and other writers of the Shī'ah since they did not mention the work of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī among the primary works of the science of narrator evaluation. Notwithstanding, the work of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī printed and in circulation nowadays is considered one of the works in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* that are *specific to weak narrators*. It is therefore, in reality, *Ḍu'afā' Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī* (The Weak Narrators of Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī). Nevertheless, many scholars of the Shī'ah exacerbated things with their statement “*al-Uṣūl al-Rijāliyyah al-Khamsah* (the Five Primary works of narrator evaluation);” they would (contradictorily) refer to it as “*al-Uṣūl al-Arba'ah* (the Four Primary works).” Ja'far al-Subhānī refers to it as such. On the other hand, 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī disagreed with him and regarded Ibn Ghaḍā'irī's work, *Rijāl al-Ghaḍā'irī*, as the fifth of their primary works.¹ Perhaps this issue stems from the difference of opinion regarding the provability of the work. This is an issue that will be investigated further when dealing specifically with Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī.

Therefore, the works that the Shī'ah scholars eventually settled on were these four, or five (according to the other opinion). These are the primary works that are regarded as the real wealth for understanding *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. Whoever of the Shī'ah scholars that writes on narrator evaluation does so within the parameters of these works; they are like the *qiblah* for their scholars. It is from here they transmit the opinions of their predecessors. In investigating these works, we find that there are no actual written biographies for thousands of Shī'ah narrators; only their names exist, let alone any statements of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*! There are no statements of *jarḥ* or *tawthīq* for hundreds, in fact thousands of narrators!

Let us now consider these works, one by one, in order to understand the principle(s) and intellectual heritage upon which both Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'ī stood. Also, (to offer) an overall evaluation of the Shī'ah legacy of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. The work of al-Barqī will also be included since it is printed and in common use.

1 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 72.

Presentation and critique of the Shī'ah's primary works in narrator evaluation

1. *Rijāl al-Barqī* by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālīd al-Barqī (d. 264/74/80¹ A.H)

Although this work was written before *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, the existence of it is practically insignificant. It “**does not fatten (one), nor avail against hunger.**”² Therefore, we see that most people who speak to the subject of narrator evaluation prefer *Rijāl al-Kashshī* over it, and they do not regard it as part of the primary works. The total amount of narrator biographies mentioned by al-Barqī are 1707. The author rarely speaks *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* of the narrators. For instance, he describes Zayd ibn Arqam رضي الله عنه as having “revealed the hypocrisy of the hypocrites from Banī al-Khazraj.”³

In describing Hisham ibn al-Ḥakam, he did not criticize him in clear terms, he simply said: “(He is) from the students of Abū Shākir al-Zindīq, and he is an anthropomorphist,”⁴ despite the fact that Hishām is one of the most reliable narrators of the Shī'ah!

Similarly, he described 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥabīb saying: “And some narrators have leveled accusations against him.”⁵

1 There is a difference of opinion regarding the exact year he passed away.

2 The author is referring to Sūrah al-Ṭāriq, 7. [Translator's note]

3 Aḥmad al-Barqī: *Rijāl al-Barqī*, biography no. 14.

4 Ibid, biography no. 884. The scholar Jawwād al-Qayyūmī has replaced the words “*jismī ru'īyy*” (which appears in the version of *Mu'assasat al-Nashr* in the University of Tehran – 1383 AH) with “*ḥasbamā ruwiya* (as narrated)”. In *Qāmūs al-Rijāl* of al-Tustarī, the words “*jismī radī* (evil anthropomorphist)” appear (10:552). With this accusation, the scholars of the Shī'ah have attempted to make the personal pronoun (*ḍamīr*) (in the statement) refer to Abū Shākir al-Zindīq. However, the context rejects such a claim.

5 Ibid, biography no. 73.

Additionally, he only regarded four narrators as reliable, namely: Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq ibn Azwar¹, ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn ‘Alī al-Ḥalabī², al-Faḍl al-Baqbāq³, and Dāwūd ibn Abī Zayd⁴—who he simply described as ‘truthful (*ṣādiq al-lahjah*).’ Aside from them, he did not make tawthīq of anyone else!

Part of al-Barqī’s methodology is that he writes (for example) “The Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ” and assigns them to (different) *ṭabaqāt* (classes). He does this because his book is dedicated to *ṭabaqāt*, and not to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*. In fact, Āqā Buzurg mentions it under the title *Ṭabaqāt al-Rijāl* (Classes of Narrators).⁵

The creed of the Imāmiyyah clearly had an impact on the author; he does not even mention Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, or ‘Uthmān among the Companions! In fact, he only mentions a small number among the Companions, enough to be counted on ones’ fingers. Thereafter, he mentions the companions of ‘Alī, followed by the companions of the infallible Imāms, with no reference to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*. He simply introduces them as “So and so. A Kufan,” or “So and so. A food merchant.” In short, the author did not make tawthīq nor criticize anyone except the four aforementioned cases. If he added anything, it was negligible.

The scholars of the Shī‘ah disagree as to whether *Rijāl al-Barqī* is the author’s work or his father’s.⁶

If this is the state of *Rijāl al-Barqī*, how then can it form part of the relied upon primary works, as some scholars of the Shī‘ah hold?

1 Ibid, biography no. 1594.

2 Ibid, biography no. 572.

3 Ibid, biography no. 880.

4 Ibid, biography no. 1613.

5 Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī: *al-Dharī‘ah*, 15/147 (see p. 145 under the title which al-Ṭahrānī refers to as *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt*).

6 The editor of the work prefers the opinion that the author is Aḥmad al-Barqī, not his father. See p. 19. Similarly, Baḥr al-‘Ulūm, al-Sayyid Muḥammad Mahdī prefers the opinion that it is the work of Aḥmad al-Barqī, and not his father. See: *al-Fawā’id al-Rijāliyyah*, 4:156.

2. Rijāl al-Kashshī by Muḥammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Kashshī Abū ‘Amr¹

Despite the author being from the fourth century, we find al-Faḍlī saying about al-Kashshī’s book:

من الكتب التي لم يقدر لها أن تكون في أيدي الباحثين الرجاليين، وبخاصة مصنفي القرن السادس الهجري وما بعده!

It is from the works that researchers in the field of narrator evaluation were unable to get their hands on, especially the writers in the sixth century A.H and beyond.²

Al-Faḍlī does not mention the reason why the book was unavailable; even though it was the central point for those that wrote on the subject. Regarding this, Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Kalbāsī (d. 1315 AH) states:

وضع كتاب الكشي لنقل الروايات المادحة والقادحة، والتعرض لحال الرجل فيه نادر

Al-Kashshī’s work was written in order to transmit both praiseworthy and problematic reports. It rarely addresses the condition of the narrator.³

Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī states:

وكثيرا ما يروي أخبارا متعددة في حق شخص واحد، في مواضع شتى، فلا بد لمن أراد تحقيق الحال، التصفح الأكيد والتفحص الشديد فيه، ليحصل الاطلاع على تمام المرام.

1 Muḥammad al-Jalālī mentions that the works of history do not mention his date of birth nor death; however, they mention him in the category of scholars of the fourth century A.H. See: *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, p. 404.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 34.

3 Abū al-Ma‘ālī al-Kalbāsī: *al-Rasā’il al-Rijāliyyah*, 3/180. The al-Kalbāsī referred to here is Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kalbāsī Abū al-Ma‘ālī (d. 1315 AH). He is different to Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī (d. 1356 A.H), the author of the work *Samā’ al-Maqāl*.

Many times, he narrates several reports of one narrator in different places. Whoever is interested in knowing the condition (of a particular narrator) is therefore required to thoroughly examine and carefully scrutinize in order that he may be completely aware (of his condition).¹

Al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 965 A.H) states:

كيف بمثل الكشي الذي يشتمل كتابه على أغاليط من جرح لغير مجروح بروايات ضعيفة ومدح لغيره كذلك، كما نبه عليه جماعة من علماء أهل هذا الفن، والغرض من وضعه ليس هو معرفة التوثيق وضده كعادة غيره من الكتب، بل غرضه ذكر الرجل وما ورد فيه من مدح وجرح، وعلى الناظر طلب الحكم [من غيره].

What then, with the likes of al-Kashshī, whose work contains errors involving narrators who are wrongfully criticized with weak narrations, and (others) wrongfully praised. Just as a number of scholars in this field have indicated, the intention of the author was not to identify reliable and unreliable narrators—like other works (in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*); rather, his intention was merely to mention the name of the narrator and everything (positive and negative) said about him. It is up to the reader to investigate the (actual) ruling of the narrator in question (from somewhere else).²

Al-Tustarī offers the following evaluation of al-Kashshī's work:

وأما رجال الكشي: فلم تصل نسخته صحيحة إلى أحد حتى الشيخ [الطوسي] والنجاشي

As for *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, an authentic copy of it did not reach anyone until al-Shaykh (al-Ṭūsī) and al-Najjāshī.

A few lines after this, he says:

1 Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samā' al-Maqāl fi 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, 1/90.

2 Al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *Rasā'il al-Shahīd al-Thānī (ṭab'ah ḥajariyyah)*, p. 67. I did not find the words “from somewhere else” in *Rasā'il al-Shahīd al-Thānī*. Rather, I found it as an addition in the work *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah* of Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Kalbāsī (2/303). I also found it in *Samā' al-Maqāl fi 'Ilm al-Rijāl* of Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī (1/91).

قلما تسلم رواية من رواياته عن التصحيح، بل وقع في كثير من عناوينه، بل وقع فيه خلط أخبار ترجمة بترجمة أخرى وخلط طبقة بأخرى

Rarely will one of his narrations be free of any distortions. In fact, this has (also) occurred in a number of his titles. The reports of one (narrator's) biography are mixed up with another's, as are the *ṭabaqāt*.

Then he says:

إن الشيخ [الطوسي] اختار مقدارا مع ما فيه من الخلط والتصحيح، وأسقط منه أبوابا، وإن بقي ترتيبه

Indeed, al-Shaykh al-Tūsī chose selections (from this work), despite the distortions and confusion therein. He removed certain chapters, despite the order remaining.

Then he said:

وبعدما قلنا من وقوع التحريفات في أصل الكشي بتلك المرتبة، لا يمكن الاعتماد على ما فيه إذا لم تقم قرينة على صحة ما فيه.

After what we have stated regarding the extent of distortions in al-Kashshī's original work, it is not possible to rely on its contents unless there is other contextual evidence in support of what it contains.

Until the section wherein he says:

إنه حدث في الاختيار من الكشي أيضا تحريفات غير ما كان في أصله – فإنه شأن كل كتاب – إلا أنها لم تكن بمقدار الأصل

Similarly, distortions which were not in the original work occurred in al-Ikhtiyār of al-Kashshī—this is the nature of every book. However, they were not as many as in the original.¹

1 Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1/58 (in the twenty-first section of the introduction, under *al-Muṣaḥḥaf wa al-Muḥarraf min Nusakh tilka al-Kutub*).

There are numerous contradictions related to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* in al-Kashshī's work. Consequently, a narrator will be elevated to the highest ranks of trustworthiness (*amānah*) and precision (*dabt*), and then (in other places) reduced to the lowest of ranks. As for the contradictory reports in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, they are abundant (*mutawatirah*). In fact, there does not exist a work of theirs in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* that is free from contradictions, as is the case of *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, especially relating to the leading narrators of the Shī'ah. In order to review (the work of) al-Kashshī, let us, for example, look at Zurārah ibn A'yan al-Shaybānī, one of the most prolific narrators of the Shī'ah. In the first narration under his biography, it states:

قال جعفر الصادق: يا زرارَةَ، إن اسمك في أسماء أهل الجنة!

Ja'far al-Ṣādiq said, "O Zurārah, verily your name is among the names of the people of Jannah!"¹

Al-Kashshī did not wait long—after 'admitting' Zurārah into Jannah, before saying something very different. A few narrations later, he says—on the tongue of Ja'far al-Ṣādiq:

لعن الله زرارَةَ

May Allah curse Zurārah.²

This is a clear contradiction! The personal views of al-Kashshī related to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* in this work are minimal, as alluded to by Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Kalbāsī previously.³ Al-Kashshī frequently presents narrations after mentioning the name of the biographee; he makes no mention in many of these biographies of statements of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. He simply informs about an incident that

1 Al-Ṭūsī: *Ikhtiyār Ma'rifat al-Rijāl (Rijāl al-Kashshī)*, p. 133, narration number 208.

2 Ibid, p. 148-49, narration number 237. Regarding this narration, Muḥsin al-Amīn says: "The sanad is authentic." See: *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 7/50.

3 As in biography numbers 1087 and 1080.

occurred with the narrator, or his function/work.¹ How then, is the researcher to find out his (i.e. al-Kashshī's) intended meanings in the likes of this primary work?

In addition to the many contradictions in the work, the scholars of the Shī'ah have conceded to another problem: the numerous errors in al-Kashshī's work. Al-Najjāshī states:

فيه أغلط كثيرة

It contains numerous errors.²

Al-Ḥillī followed in his footsteps saying:

له كتاب الرجال إلا أن فيه أغلطاً كثيرة

He has a work on narrators; however, it contains numerous errors.³

Neither al-Najjāshī nor al-Ḥillī have alluded to the details of these errors! A number of scholars of the Shī'ah have attempted to answer what is meant by these mistakes. Consequently, al-Taqī al-Majlisī states:

إن المراد الروايات المتعارضة ظاهراً

What is intended thereby are the apparent contradictory narrations.⁴

Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī refutes this opinion saying:

1 See biography numbers 973, 1034, 1067, 1069, 1124, and many others.

2 Aḥmad al-Najjāshī: *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, p. 372, biography no. 1018.

3 Al-Ḥillī: *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*, p. 247, biography no. 838.

4 Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samā' al-Maqāl fī 'Ulūm al-Rijāl*, 1:80. The editor of the work (Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Qazwīnī) alluded to the statement of al-Taqī al-Majlisī in *Rawḍat al-Muttaqīn*, 14/445.

ولا يخفى ما فيه من المخالفة لظاهر السياق، بل الظاهر ما هو الظاهر من العبارة، فإنه قد وقع فيه أغلاط كثيرة كما يظهر بعد التتبع والتأمل فيه

This is clearly contrary to the apparent context. In fact, the apparent context is precisely what is apparent from the actual text. There are numerous errors therein, as becomes clear after scrutinizing and examining it.¹

‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī took a neutral course on this issue. He states:

هذه الأغاليلط قد تكون علمية وقد تكون فنية، كما أننا لا نعرف عن مستواها شيئاً، لأن الكتاب لم يصل إلينا، وذلك لأن الشيخ الطوسي عمده لهذا الكتاب واختصره فيما عنوانه بـ (اختيار معرفة الرجال)، فحل محل الأصل.

These mistakes can either be technical or academic in nature. Likewise, we know nothing of their extent because the work did not reach us. That is because al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī took up the work and abridged it under the title *Ikhtiyār Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*, thereby occupying the place of the original.²

Perhaps the reason for these errors was as Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥā‘irī (d. 1216 AH) alluded to:

عمد إليه شيخ الطائفة... فلخصه وأسقط منه الفضلات... والموجود الآن في هذه الأزمان، بل وزمان العلامة وما قاربه إنما هو اختيار الشيخ لا الكشي الأصل

Shaykh al-Ṭā‘ifāh went about and abridged it and removed the ‘residue’ therefrom. The work in existence these days and, in fact, during and after the time of al-‘Allāmah (al-Ṭūsī) is the *Ikhtiyār* of al-Shaykh, not al-Kashshī’s original.³

Perhaps al-Ṭūsī’s doings in his abridgement of al-Kashshī’s work is the primary reason for the existence of the numerous mistakes and all the confusion.⁴

1 Ibid, 1/80.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 35.

3 Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥā‘irī: *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, 6/144. Al-Ḥā‘irī transmits what he says from his teachers.

4 Al-Kalbāsī has a long discussion concerning the errors of al-Kashshī. See his work: *al-Rasā‘il al-Rijāliyyah*, 2/299.

There is another issue which presents itself in the work, as Muḥammad al-Jalālī has documented:

ولم يعين الشيخ الطوسي كيفية الاختيار من رجال الكشي، لا في هذا الاختيار، ولا في غيره من كتبه

Al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī did not stipulate the method of selecting from the narrators of al-Kashshī, not in *al-Ikhtiyār* nor in his other works.¹

In short, the defect in this work is clear and obvious: the birth and death of the author are unknown. Furthermore, it was misplaced for a long time. A difference of opinion transpired: Is the existing work the original or is it the abridgment of the original? There is (also) a difference of opinion about the actual name of the work. Furthermore, it contains numerous errors. There is (also) a difference in determining these mistakes. The entire contents of the work is all but discrepancies and contradictions, all of which the viewer suffers from.

The erudite scholar, al-Muṣṭafawī says:

وأما الخلط في ترتيب الكتاب: فهو خطأ فاحش، لأنه يوجب النقص من غرض التأليف

Regarding the confusion in the sequence of the book, it is an appalling error because it brings about a lack in (understanding) the purpose and intention behind the work.²

Who can guarantee for us there was no distortion in the text of the work? In fact, al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320 AH) clearly stated that the work was manipulated in his statement:

واعلم أنه قد ظهر لنا من بعض القرائن أنه قد وقع في اختيار الشيخ - أيضا - تصرف من بعض العلماء أو النساخ بإسقاط بعض ما فيه، وأن الدائر في هذه الأعصار غير حاو لتمام ما في الاختيار، ولم أر من تنبه لذلك، ولا وحشة من هذه الدعوى بعد وجود القرائن.

1 Muḥammad al-Jalālī: *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, p. 406.

2 Al-Muṣṭafawī: *al-Muqaddimah*, p. 15.

And know well that it has become evident to us through several pieces of evidence that tampering occurred from some scholars or transcribers by omitting some of the contents therein. And the current version in circulation in these times does not include everything of *al-Ikhtiyār*. I have not seen anyone take note of this. There is no irregularity in this claim after the existence of such evidence.¹

Regarding the previously mentioned statement of al-Faḍlī in which he alluded to the book being misplaced for some time and (the fact that) there existed numerous mistakes in the many copies, al-Tiffarishī states:

يخطر ببالي أن النسخة التي [كانت] عند العلامة [الحلي] من الكشي كان غلطا فاشتبه عليه

It seems to me that the copy al-‘Allāmah (al-Ḥillī) possessed of al-Kashshī’s work was incorrect, and therefore it confused him.²

If the copy of al-Kashshī’s work that al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī possessed was incorrect, what then in this time?

The number of narrators in al-Kashshī’s work that have dedicated biographies is 560, according to the highest estimate.³ When a researcher wants to know the ruling of one of these particular narrators in *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, he is required to exert a lot of energy and effort in reviewing the narrations in order to know the condition of the narrator. For example, al-Kashshī cites sixty-two narrations under the biography of Zurārah, the asānīd of which all need to be reviewed. Can

1 Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabrasī: *Khātimat al-Mustadrak*, 3/287.

2 Muṣṭafa al-Tafrashī: *Naqd al-Rijāl*, 1/351.

3 I did not find anyone mention the number of biographies in al-Kashshī’s work; even in the best print (of the book) I came across, al-Muṣṭafī’s print. Therefore, I was forced to count the number of narrators with biographies from the beginning of the work. The number reached 534, including many repeated names. This quick count further emphasises that the amount of biographies does not exceed 560. If it is more, it is not much more. And if it is less, it surely will not exceed this amount by much. In short, this count gives (us) an overall impression of the existing number.

there be more obstinance than this? Even al-Bahbūdī acceded to the difficulty in studying this work. He states:

أنه ذكر الأسانيد المعلقة على ما وجدها من دون إصلاحها، فصعب على الناظرين تمييز صحيحها من سقيمها، ولم يصح لنا من ألف ومائة وخمسين نصا إلا أقل القليل منها، لا يبلغ رقمها إلى ثلاثمائة!

He mentions *mu'allaq* (suspended) chains of narrations as he found them without any rectification thereof. Therefore, it is difficult for those looking at the work to distinguish between the authentic and faulty chains. From 1150 texts, only a trivial amount is authentic. The number does not even amount to 300!¹

Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī (d. 1356 AH) said:

وهو غير مبوب، على خلاف الطريقة المعروفة في الكتب الرجالية. ولذا يصعب منه الظفر على المرام

It is not arranged in chapters, contrary to the known method in works of narrator biographies. Therefore, it is difficult to gain benefit as desired.²

It is also important to point out the statement of al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320 AH):

إن الكشي كثيرا ما يعول في الجرح والتعديل على غير الإمامية، فلاحظ

Indeed al-Kashshī many a times relies on non-imāmīs in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. Take note (of this fact).³

This clearly proves that the Imāmiyyah—at the head of them al-Kashshī—rely upon others, from other groups, in the sciences of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. They have no choice but to rely on others. Contrary to what they propagate, that others rely on them. A work such as this, how is it possible to be primary source in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*?

1 Al-Bahbūdī: *Ma'rifat al-Ḥadīth*, p. 103.

2 Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samā' al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, 1/88.

3 Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī: *Khātimat Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*, 5/78.

In short, when the scholars of the Imāmiyyah want to show admiration to the state of their works, they mention, enumerate, and praise their primary works. And when they want to vindicate themselves from the actual contents therein, they echo the sentiments of Murtaḍā al-‘Askarī:

تصريح العلماء مدى القرون بعدم اعتمادهم على رجال الكشي وتضعيفهم لهذا الكتاب.

The explicit statement(s) of the scholars over the centuries has been one of non-reliance on *Rijāl al-Kashshī* and their deeming this work as weak/unreliable.¹

3. Al-Fihrist by Shaykh al-Ṭā‘ifah Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī (d. 460 A.H)

This is a small work and contains 909 biographies. It is an index specific to the authors of (general) books and the primary sources, not for every narrator. Al-Ṭūsī alludes to his methodology in the introduction saying:

فإذا ذكرت كل واحد من المصنفين وأصحاب الأصول، فلا بد أن أشير إلى ما قيل فيه من التعديل والتجريح، وهل يعول على روايته أو لا؟

When I mention every one of the writers and authors of the primary works, I need to (also) mention what has been said regarding the individual’s *jarḥ* and *ta’dīl*, and whether his narrations are to be relied upon or not.²

However, did al-Ṭūsī actually abide by what he said? The answer is as follows. I embarked on an empirical study of al-Ṭūsī’s work, which contains 909 biographies (of narrators), and I only found 107 cases from them in which he made *tawthīq* and twelve cases in which he made *jarḥ*! Therefore, the total number of narrators he offered statements of *jarḥ* and *ta’dīl* is 119. Some of them are *Shī‘ah*, others are not. With so little rulings, is it then possible for this work to form part of the primary sources?

In describing al-Ṭūsī and al-Najjāshī’s works, al-Tustarī (d. 1401 AH) states:

1 Murtaḍā al-‘Askarī: ‘*Abd Allah Ibn Sabā*, 2/178. He said this when he wanted to vindicate himself from the narrations in which Ibn Sabā is mentioned.

2 Al-Ṭūsī: *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, p. 28.

أنهما كثيرا يسكتان عن تضعيف الإمامي الضعيف، حيث إن كتابيهما ليسا إلا مجرد فهرست لمن صَنَّف من الشيعة أو صَنَّف لهم، دون الممدوحين والمذمومين.

Very often, both remain quiet about the (statement of) weakness of a ḍaʿīf Imāmī narrator. This is because both of their works are nothing but an index of Shīʿī authors or those who wrote for them, without mentioning the praiseworthy and objectionable narrators.¹

Therefore, we can safely say the work is nothing but an index of authors, and not from the works of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl*.

4. Rijāl al-Ṭūsī (Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī)

I acquired the first edition of this work with the editorial notes of Ṣādiq Baḥr al-ʿUlūm (d. 1212 A.H). On the first page, he writes:

يحتوي على زهاء (٨٩٠٠) اسم، وهو أحد الكتب الأربعة المعول عليها في رجال الحديث

It contains some 8900 names. It is one of the four relied-upon works in ḥadīth narrators.

However, the version edited by Jawwād al-Qayyūmī includes 6429 biographies. Perhaps al-Qayyūmī did not count the repeated names. In reviewing the copy of Baḥr al-ʿUlūm, I found that from this large number, al-Ṭūsī only made tawthīq of 173 narrators and jarḥ of another 100. This is according to the amount I calculated—they can possibly add or subtract from this number. Although, 33 narrators whom al-Ṭūsī regarded as reliable in *al-Fihrist*, he also regarded them as reliable in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*.²

1 Al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1:27 (chapter 16 of the introduction).

2 The editor of *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, Jawwād al-Qayyūmī alludes to an enumeration of narrators at the end of the work, such that he concluded al-Ṭūsī ruled 157 narrators as reliable and 43 as weak or problematic (*majrūh*). This number from the editor is close to the number I reached. Perhaps my (number) is larger than his because of the repetition of many names in the copy of *Baḥr al-ʿUlūm*. However, it gives (us) an overall impression of the work's contents.

I noticed Āṣif Muḥsinī claim that both the reliable and praiseworthy narrators in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* amount to 215 and the number of weak and extreme (*ghulāt*) narrators amount to 73, without omitting the repetitions.¹ Therefore, these figures are similar in relation to the total number of narrators, which is approximately 6429; especially considering the difference of opinion among the Rāfiḍah regarding the praiseworthy narrators. A narrator can be considered praiseworthy according to one scholar, and not another. This applies to the calculation of Āṣif Muḥsinī since he included the praiseworthy narrators with the reliable ones in his calculation, a calculation in which he included and did not omit the repeated (names).

Perhaps the reason for so few rulings in terms of *jarḥ* and *tawthīq* of narrators in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* goes back to what al-Tustarī (d. 1401 AH) said:

إنه أراد استقصاء أصحابهم - عليهم السلام - ومن روى عنهم مؤمنا كان أو منافقا إماميا كان أو عاميا، فعّد أبابكر وعمر وعثمان ومعاوية وعمرو بن العاص ونظراءهم في أصحاب النبي - صلى الله عليه وآله - وعد زياد بن أبيه وابنه عبيد الله بن زياد في أصحاب أمير المؤمنين - عليه السلام - وعد منصور الدونايقي في أصحاب الصادق - عليه السلام - بدون ذكر شيء. فلاستناد إليه ما لم يحرز إمامية رجل غير جائز، حتى في أصحاب غير النبي - صلى الله عليه وآله - وأمير المؤمنين - عليه السلام - فكيف في أصحابهم؟

He intended (with his work) an investigation of the companions of the Imāms عليهم السلام and those who narrated from them, be he a believer, hypocrite, Imāmī, or ‘āmmī (i.e. sunnī). He regarded Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Mu‘āwiyah, ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, and their equals to be among the Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. He regarded Ziyād ibn Abīhi and his son, ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Ziyād among the companions of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn عليه السلام. He regarded Manṣūr al-Dawānīqī among the companions of al-Ṣādiq عليه السلام without mentioning anything further about them. Therefore, it is not permissible to rely upon it as long as the Imāmiyyah [status] of a person has not been preserved, even if they be companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and Amīr al-Mu‘minīn عليه السلام. What then about their companions?²

1 Mahdī al-Kajūrī al-Shīrāzī: *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, p. 129.

2 Al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1/29 (chapter 6 of the introduction).

In short, the work is nothing but a writing on *ṭabaqāt*; it was not written for *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*.

5. *Fihrist Asmā' Muṣannifī al-Shī'ah/Rijāl al-Najjāshī* by Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn al-'Abbās al-Najjāshī (d. 540 A.H)

Al-Tustarī (d. 1401 AH) states:

سمينا كتاب النجاشي فهرستاً لتصريحه بذلك في أول الجزء الثاني منه، فتسمية العلامة [الحلي] وابن داود له بالرجال في ترجمته غلط، فإن الرجال ما كان مبنيًا على الطبقات دون مجرد ذكر الأصول والمصنفات فإنه يسمى بالفهرست، ولذا ترى النجاشي يقول في بعضهم: ذكره أصحاب الفهرسات، وفي بعضهم: ذكره أصحاب الرجال.

We termed the work of al-Najjāshī a “*fihrist* (index)” because he himself expressly refers to it as such in the beginning of the second chapter. Therefore, for al-'Allāmah (al-Ḥillī) and Ibn Dāwūd to refer to it as a dictionary of narrator evaluation is incorrect. Dictionaries of narration evaluation are based on *ṭabaqāt*, not simply mentioning the primary and (related) works—this is termed a *fihrist*. Therefore, you will see al-Najjāshī saying about some of them (i.e. narrators), “The people of the *fihristāt* (indices) mentioned him,” and about some (other narrators), “The people of narrator evaluation mentioned him.”¹

The *Fihrist* of al-Najjāshī is much more accurate and better than the previous works. It is the last work of the primary works to be authored. It only mentions the writers of the Shī'ah and those who wrote for them. Ja'far al-Subhānī says:

إن كتابه ليس إلا مجرد فهرس لمن صنف من الشيعة، أو صنف لهم دون الممدوحين والمذمومين

His work is nothing but an index for writers of the Shī'ah, or for those who wrote for them without (mentioning) the praiseworthy and discreditable (narrators).²

1 Ibid.

2 Ja'far al-Subhānī: *Kulliyāt fī 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 62.

What is clearly discernible is the fact that al-Najjāshī did not write this except to fend off the Ahl al-Sunnah’s condemnation of them. He states:

فإني وقفت على ما ذكر السيد الشريف من تعبير قوم من مخالفينا أنه لا سلف لكم ولا مصنف

I came across what al-Sayyid al-Sharīf mentioned regarding the criticism of a people from among our opposition (stating) that ‘you (i.e. the Shī‘ah) have no antecedence nor anything written (i.e. in the field of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*):’¹

This proves the existence of an ‘old knot (i.e. feud)’ of theirs in establishing their existence (in the field). The observer will notice that the total number of (narrator) biographies in al-Najjāshī’s work comes to 1269, of which approximately 45— or slightly more—are *majrūḥ* (criticized) and approximately 550 are *thiqah*. He concurred with al-Ṭūsī in deeming approximately 70 narrators *thiqah*. Most of the Shī‘ah scholars rely on this work; however, it is possible that some hands got a hold of it and distorted the contents therein. It contains things which give this impression. (For example), in the biography of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamzah, al-Najjāshī states:

مات رحمه الله في يوم السبت، سادس عشر من شهر رمضان، سنة ثلاث وستين وأربع مائة، ودفن في داره

He (i.e. the narrator) died رحمته الله on Saturday, the sixteenth of Ramaḍān, in the year 463. He was buried in his house.²

This proves that the biography was inserted into the book after the death of Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Najjāshī. The question here is: How did al-Najjāshī say that his death was in the year 463 when al-Najjāshī himself died in the year 450? This affirms that the book contains distortions. It cannot be said that this is merely a slip of the pen (*taṣḥīf*) because the date of death is an *entire sentence*, not just one word. In investigating biographical works, we find that many scholars of the

1 Al-Najjāshī: *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, p. 3 of the introduction.

2 Ibid, p. 404, biography number 1070.

Shī'ah allude to the flaws in the copies of al-Najjāshī's work. Al-Tiffarishī (d. 1021 AH) states:

ونقل العلامة [الحلي] وابن داود توثيقه من النجاشي، ولم أجد توثيقه فيه وهو أربع نسخ عندي

Al-'Allāmah (al-Ḥillī) and Ibn Dāwūd transmit the (same) narrator's *tawthīq* from al-Najjāshī. I did not find his *tawthīq* (transmitted) in it, and I have four copies!¹

In exonerating al-Najjāshī for not making *tawthīq* of al-Ḥasan ibn Maḥbūb, Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī states:

لم تصل نسخة من النجاشي صحيحة ولا كاملة إلينا

Neither a complete nor reliable copy of al-Najjāshī's work reached us.²

The errors are so numerous that perhaps the work is not to be relied upon. At times, there is a drop (*saqt*) in the names (mentioned). As al-Khūṭī states:

إن ما في عندنا من نسخة النجاشي والشيخ، سقطا ظاهرا، أما الساقط من نسخة النجاشي فهو كلمة (عن) فيما بين كلمة (أبيه) وكلمة (أيوب)، ولكنها غير ساقطة عن نسخة القهباي المطبوعة.

There is in the copy we possess of³ al-Najjāshī and al-Shaykh a clear drop. As for what is dropped in the copy of al-Najjāshī, it is the word “*an* (from)” in-between the word “*abīhi* (his father)” and the word “*Ayyūb*.” However, it is not dropped in the printed version of al-Quhbāṭī.⁴

Whoever pursues this further will find many more similar examples. At times, the drop is in relation to the *tawthīq*. Al-Khūṭī states:

1 Al-Tiffarishī: *Naqd al-Rijāl*, 2/211. He mentioned this under the biography of Dāwūd ibn Zarbī.

2 Al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 3/349. Under the biography of Sa'd ibn 'Abd Allah al-Qummī, he says something similar. See: 2/58.

3 The author mentions that al-Khūṭī wrote this sentence with the word '*fi* (in)' and that it is more correct to have omitted this preposition. [Translator's note]

4 Al-Khūṭī: *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 4/164 under the biography of Ayyūb ibn al-Ḥurr.

وظاهر الميرزا الاسترآبادي: اشتمال نسخة النجاشي التي كانت عنده على التوثيق أيضا، حيث إنه بعد نقله كلام العلامة المشتمل على التوثيق قال: وزاد النجاشي: له كتاب، ونقل الحائري عن حاشية كبيرة للميرزا التصريح بسقوط التوثيق عن كثير من نسخ النجاشي.

Al-Mirzā al-Istarābādī proclaimed that the copy of al-Najjāshī in his possession included the (author’s) *tawthīq* as well. After transmitting the words of al-‘Allāmah—which include the *tawthīq*—he says, “And al-Najjāshī added, ‘He has (written) a book.’” Al-Ḥā’irī transmits from a large commentary (*ḥāshiyah kabīrah*) of al-Mirzā an explicit statement stating the drop of (al-Najjāshī’s) *tawthīq* from numerous copies of al-Najjāshī’s (work).¹

Whoever desires to scrutinize the work will soon come to find numerous mistakes. The work of al-Najjāshī is like the *Fihrist* of al-Ṭūsī; it is not devoted to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*.

6. Al-Rijāl li Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī (also called al-Ḍu‘afā) by Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn²

This work is an area of dispute among the Shī‘ah scholars. Differences of opinion therein are numerous. They include those that assert this work is his, and there are others who belie this ascription to Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī (this will be discussed in the upcoming section of al-Khūṭ’s comments). In fact, in an effort to distort the image of the Shī‘ah, they even went as far as attributing the work to the Ahl al-Sunnah. In short, the total number of narrators with biographies in the book is 159. The editor of the book, Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī, amended the total number of narrators and made it 225. This work is specific to weak narrators. In fact, Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī criticized a number of reliable narrators of the Shī‘ah in this work. This caused al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320 AH) to call him extremely critical (*ta‘ān*).³

1 Ibid, 5/331 under the biography of al-Ḥasan ibn al-Sarī.

2 The death of the author has not been determined. However, the book’s editor states, “The death of the author has not been determined; however, it was in the fifth century. It has been said in the year 450 A.H.”

3 Al-Ṭabarsī: *Khātimat Mustadrak al-Wasā’il*, 5/334.

What can we determine from these overall numbers?

The total number of narrators who have dedicated rulings of *jarḥ* or *ta'dīl* mentioned in the primary works of narrator evaluation of the Shī'ah are more or less as follows:

- 600 from al-Najjāshī
- 273 from al-Ṭūsī in *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* (including the repetitions)
- 119 from al-Ṭūsī in his *al-Fihrist*
- 7 from *Rijāl al-Barqī*

If we exclude the repetitions then the total number comes to approximately 999. In short, the narrators do not even reach a thousand. And if we were to omit the 70 which al-Najjāshī and al-Ṭūsī in his *al-Fihrist* agree upon, the total would be 926 narrators. This is an approximate calculation, without omitting the repeated narrators. And without mentioning the narrators about whom there is a difference of opinion, an explanation that I do not want to explain here. At best, they do not even reach 900, within which both reliable and impugned narrators are included. Where then, is the claimed legacy of the Shī'ah in these primary works? Is it possible to establish the religion and recognize what is and is not authentic from the Ahl al-Bayt with this number of biographies? A number that does not even exceed a thousand, and that too with some compromise and indulgence!

In describing the condition of the early works, Muḥammad Riḍā al-Jalālī states:

قلة التوثيق الصريحة في التراث الرجالي والمصادر الرجالية الأولى، وضآلة عدد الموجود منها بالنسبة إلى زرافات الرواة التي تعج بأسمائهم المعاجم الرجالية المتأخرة، وكذلك تزخر بأسمائهم أسانيد الروايات المجموعة في الأصول الحديثية، حيث لم يختص بالتصريح بحالته الرجالية – أعم من التوثيق والتضعيف – سوى ربع المجموع منهم.

The lack of explicit *tawthīq* in the legacy of narrator evaluation and the primary references of narrator evaluation. (Also,) the small number of

these statements that exist in relation to the clusters of narrators that are teeming with their names in the latter-day works (*ma'ājim*) of narrator evaluation. Similarly, combined with their names, there are an abundance of *asānīd* of narrations that are collected in the primary works of ḥadīth (*al-uṣūl al-ḥadīthiyyah*) such that no mention is even made therein of the status of narrators—which is broader (as a category) than (the terms of) *tawthīq* and *taḍīf*, except for one-fourth of them.¹

I think one-fourth is much. Al-Ḥasan al-Burūjirdī states:

رأيت أن في الطائفة الأولى من هذه الكتب نقائص، لإهمالها ذكر كثير ممن تضمنته الأسانيد من [أسماء] الرواة، وعدم تعرضها— في تراجم من ذكر فيها— لبيان طبقتة، وشيوخه الذين روى عنهم، وتلامذته الذين تحملوا عنه، مع أن هذه [الأمور] من أهم ما له دخل في الغرض من ذلك الفن.

I have noticed that the first group of these works contain defects because they fail to mention the names of many narrators as included in the *asānīd*. Also, for the names that are mentioned, there is no attention given to explaining the *ṭabaqah* they belong to, their teachers from whom they narrate, and their students who received (knowledge) from them. Even though these (matters) are of the most significant objectives in this science.²

Setting aside the serious contradictory statements of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Taḍīl* found in one scholar to the next (in fact, even within one scholar's own statements), one of the senior scholars of the Imāmiyyah discredited al-Ṭūsī's judgements regarding narrators in both his works of narrator evaluation and *fiqh*, since they contain severe contradictions. As al-Kalbāsī transmitted for us al-Khawājūṭ's opinion regarding the confusion of al-Ṭūsī:

أنه يقول في موضع: إن الرجل ثقة، وفي آخر يقول: إنه ضعيف كما في سالم بن مكرم الجمال، وسهل بن زياد، وأنه قال في الرجال: محمد بن علي بن بلال ثقة، وفي كتاب الغيبة إنه من المذمومين، وأنه قال

1 Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī: *Manhaj al-Rijālī wa al-'Amal al-Rā'id fi Mawsū'ah al-Rijālīyyah li Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifah al-Burūjirdī*, p. 112.

2 Ibid, p. 134.

في العدة: إن عبد الله بن بكير ممن عملت الطائفة بخبره بلا خلاف، وفي الاستبصار في آخر الباب الأول من أبواب الطلاق صرح بما يدل على فسقه وكذبه، وأنه يقول برأيه، وأنه قال في الاستبصار: إن عمار الساباطي ضعيف لا يعمل بروايته، وفي العدة: لم تزل الطائفة تعمل بما يرويه، وأنه قد ادعى عمل الطائفة بأخبار الفطحية مثل عبد الله بن بكير وغيره، وأخبار الواقفية مثل سماعه بن مهران، وعلي بن أبي حمزة، وعثمان بن عيسى، وبني فضال، والطاطرين، مع أننا لم نجد أحدا من الأصحاب وثق علي بن أبي حمزة البطائني، أو عمل بروايته إذا انفرد بها؛ لأنه خبيث واقفي كذاب مذموم.

In one place, he says: ‘The narrator is *thiqah*.’ And in another place, he says (about the same narrator): ‘He is *ḍaʿīf*.’ As is the case of Sālīm ibn Mukram al-Jamāl and Sahl ibn Ziyād. In *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, he states that Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Bilāl is *thiqah*, and in *al-Ghunyah* he says he is of the reprehensible narrators. In *al-ʿIddah fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, he states: “‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr is of such narrators whom the *Ṭāʾifah* (i.e. the Shīʿah) have acted upon his reports without any difference of opinion.” In *al-Istibṣār*, under the final chapter of divorce, he clearly states that which indicates to his (i.e. ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr’s) transgression, lies, and to the fact that he exercises his own opinion. In *al-Istibṣār*, he says that ‘Ammār al-Sābāṭī is *ḍaʿīf* and his narrations are not to be acted upon. In *al-ʿIddah*, he states that the *Ṭāʾifah* (i.e. the Shīʿah) have always acted on what he narrates. And he claimed the *Ṭāʾifah* acted on the reports of the *Faṭḥiyyah*¹ such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr and others. And the reports of the *Wāqifiyyah*² such as his *samāʿ* (audition)

1 Al-Shahrestānī states in *al-Milāl wa al-Niḥāl* (1/195): “The *Aḥaṭiyyah* say that the *Imāmah* (i.e. the role of being the Imām) transferred from al-ṣādiq to his (other) son, ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Aḥaṭ. He is the true brother of Ismāʿīl, their mother is Faṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī. He was the eldest of the children. They claim that he said: ‘Imāmah is in (i.e. belongs to) the oldest children of the Imām.’” Al-Kashshī states: “They say that ‘Abd Allah ibn Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad is the Imām. They are referred to as such because it was said he (i.e. ‘Abd Allah) was broad headed. Some say that it was because he had broad feet.” (*Rijāl al-Kashshī*, 254, no. 472). Al-Kashshī has more on this and can be referred to there. Ibn Manẓūr states in *Lisān al-Miẓān* (5/13): “(*Faṭḥ*) *al-faṭaḥ*: a wide space in the middle of the head...a man who is *afṭaḥ* is someone with a broad head.” For more, see: al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī: *Khātimat al-Mustadrak*, 5/13. More about the *Aḥaṭiyyah* will come later.

2 The *Wāqifah*, or the *Wāqifiyyah*, is a sect of the Shīʿah who deny the death of the Imām al-Kāẓim Mūsā ibn Jāʿfar. With that, they (also) deny the Imāmah of his son, al-Riḍā. This sect is also called the *Mamṭūrah*, or *al-Kilāb al-Mamṭūrah*. See: Ḥusayn al-Shākiri: *Musūʾah al-Muṣṭafā wa al-ʿItrah*, 13/287 (in the marginalia). More about them will come later.

from Ibn Mihrān, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Īsā, Banī Faḍḍāl, and the Ṭāṭāriyyīn. This, despite the fact that we have not found anyone that considered ‘Alī ibn Abī Ḥamzah al-Baṭā’inī reliable or having acted on his narrations when he transmits them in isolation. This is because he is an evil, reprehensible, lying *wāqifī*.¹

It suffices to say that these contradictions appear in the most important works of narrator evaluation, the works of *Shaykh al-Ṭā’ifah!*

When we revert back to the total number of narrators in the four primary works of the fourth and fifth centuries—a number that does not exceed a thousand—how then is it possible for the contemporary al-Shāhrūdī to deal with just about 18189 narrators in his work *Mustadrakāt ‘ilm al-Rijāl!* Similarly, al-Khūṭī; he collected 15706 narrators in his *Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth!* Likewise, ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī (d. 1351 A.H); he collected 13360 narrators in *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl!*

This proves to us that the remaining scholars of the Shī’ah who came after this time met with an enormous void such that they encountered thousands of narrators’ names about whom nothing was known in all the works; until the four works, upon which the entire school (of the Shī’ah) is based. And whoever was mentioned in the books of narrator evaluation, as I stated previously, he is usually not void of any contradictions related to *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl*. If he is void of such, only his name is mentioned! Or he is of the thousand (narrators) that have a *jarḥ* or *tawthīq* (mentioned about them).

As such, this void led to confusion and contradiction among the latter-day scholars, those wanting to know the relevant rulings on the asānīd and what is and is not authentic. This resulted in every scholar having their own particular methodology in evaluating narrators as thought up by his *ijtihād* (independent reasoning). Therefore, in most instances, others would not agree to what that particular scholar concluded. And this is the reason for the numerous principles of

1 Abū al-Ma’ālī al-Kalbāsī: *al-Rasā’il al-Rijāliyyah*, 4/177-78.

the Imāmiyyah scholars in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*; principles that were reproduced so as to repair the deficiency and reduce the number of *majhūl* (unknown) narrators.

These are the six that are mentioned as the primary works. However, Ja'far al-Subḥānī attempted to forcibly introduce several (other) works into the primary works of narrator evaluation. In all likelihood, this attempt by al-Subḥānī is nothing but an act of promoting the school of the Shī'ah; by increasing (the amount of) what they consider the primary works upon which the school stands. Al-Subḥānī mentions that the primary works of narrator evaluation are eight, namely: 1) *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, 2) *Fihrist al-Najjāshī*, 3) *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, 4) *Fihrist al-Ṭūsī*, 5) *Rijāl al-Barqī*, 6) *Risālat Abī Ghālib al-Zurārī*, 7) *Mashyakhat al-Faqīh* of al-Ṣadūq, and 8) *Mashyakhat al-Ṭūsī*.¹ We notice that he did not mention the work of *al-Ghaḍā'irī*; instead, he replaced it with the *Risālah* of al-Zurārī, the *Mashyakhat* of al-Ṣadūq, and the *Mashyakhat* of al-Ṭūsī. However, we would ask al-Subḥānī: Are these works suitable for being regarded as the primary works of narrator evaluation by means of which *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* can be established? Let us have a look at and evaluate the extra works that he included.

1. *Risālah* of Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī²

Al-Subḥānī states:

هذه الرسالة على صغر حجمها تعد من الأصول الرجالية وهي بعينها مندرجة في (كشكول) المحدث
البحراني

This work, despite its small size, forms part of the primary works of narrator evaluation and is the very same work inserted in the (*Kashkūl*) of al-Muḥaddith al-Baḥrānī.³

1 Ja'far al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fi 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 55.

2 Al-Najjāshī has a biography about him (no. 201) saying: "Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Jahm ibn Bukayr ibn A'yan ibn Sunsun Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī." I say (i.e. the author) that al-Zurārī died in the year 368 A.H as mentioned by al-Shāhrūdī in *Mustadrakāt 'ilm al-Rijāl* (1/473).

3 Ja'far al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fi 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 73.

I checked the *Kashkūl* of al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186 AH) and found that the work itself does not exceed seventeen pages. It represents a letter that Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī sent to a grandson informing him about his native family, *Āl A'yan*. He speaks about their ancestry, children, womenfolk, heritage, residences, plantations/estates, and something of their affairs (*akhbār*). He concludes the work advising his grandson to memorize several books that he left behind for him with his mother for safekeeping. Al-Zurārī mentions the various modes through which he receives these books. For example, he says:

كتاب غياث بن إبراهيم حدثني به جدي (ره) عن محمد بن الحسين عن محمد بن يحيى الخزاز عن غياث
مجلس لابن هلال، حدثني جدي (ره) عن أحمد بن هلال

The book of Ghiyāth ibn Ibrāhīm was narrated to me by my grandfather ﷺ – from Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn – from Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Khazzāz – from Ghiyāth. The Majlis of Ibn Hilāl was narrated to be by my grandfather ﷺ – from Aḥmad ibn Hilāl.¹

In a similar fashion, he presents the remaining books. Thus, the book simply ends by mentioning the names of the grandfather's teachers, nothing more. Although, he does praise a handful of narrators such as Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Mīhzaẓayār, Ḥumayd ibn Ziyād, Abū 'Abd Allāh ibn Thābit, Aḥmad ibn Rabāḥ and his uncle, Ḥumrān, 'Abd Allāh ibn Bukayr and 'Alī ibn 'Āṣim. If this is the condition of the *Risālah*, how can it be counted among the primary works of the (Shī'ī) school in *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*? In fact, a number of chains that he mentioned for the works are problematic. The previous chain of narration is sufficient proof; it contains Aḥmad ibn Hilāl. Regarding him, al-Ṭūsī states:

كان غاليا متهما في دينه

He was a radical (and) suspected in his religion.²

1 Al-Baḥrānī: *Kashkūl* (Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl: Beirut, 1st edition, 1998).

2 Al-Ṭūsī: *al-Fihrist*, no. 107.

Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī said he was *ḍaʿīf*.¹ In fact, al-Najjāshī—a contemporary of Abū Ghālib—disapproved of his narration from those that are not eligible to narrate. For example, al-Najjāshī states under the biography of Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad ibn Mālik ibn ʿĪsā ibn Sābūr:

كان ضعيفا في الحديث، قال أحمد بن الحسين كان يضع الحديث وضعاً ويروي عن المجاهيل، وسمعت من قال: كان أيضاً فاسد المذهب والرواية، ولا أدري كيف روى عنه شيخنا النزيل الثقة أبو علي بن همام، وشيخنا الجليل الثقة أبو غالب الزراري رحمهما الله

He was *ḍaʿīf* in ḥadīth. Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn said that he used to grossly forge ḥadīth and narrate from unknown persons. I heard someone say that he believed in corrupt doctrines and was misguided in his narration of ḥadīth. I do not know how our teachers, Abū ʿAlī ibn Humām and Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī narrated from him.²

Therefore, the man does not actually care—based on the apparent text of al-Najjāshī—who he narrates from. So how then can he rely on the likes of him, considering the fact that al-Baḥrānī (d. 1186 A.H) does not mention for us in his *Kashkūl* the source for this *Risālah* that is attributed to al-Zurārī. Neither does he mention its *isnād* and how he acquired it. If he found an *isnād* for it in another source, can it form part of the primary works if this is its condition?

Therefore, I do not know how al-Subḥānī accepted this work—which does not exceed twenty pages in the *Kashkūl* of al-Baḥrānī—to be one of the primary sources to recognize the condition of a narrator, whether a *jarḥ* or *tawthīq*!

Before concluding my remarks on this work, I will mention the statement of Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī speaking about the *Kashkūl* of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī:

فيه فوائد كثيرة منها أنه أدرج فيه رسالة أبي غالب الزراري إلى ابن ابنه التي مر بعنوان الإجازة

1 Al-Ḥillī: *Khulāsāt al-Aqwāl*, p. 214 (under the biography of ʿĪsā ibn Jaʿfar ibn ʿĀṣim).

2 Al-Najjāshī: *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, p. 122, no 313.

There are numerous benefits in this work. Among them, he included the entire *Letter of Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī* (*Risālat Abī Ghālib al-Zūrārī*) to his son—which is included under the section ‘*ijāzah*.¹

The *Risālah* is precisely what Āqā Buzurg called it, an *ijazah* (i.e. a license to transmit). In it, the author mentions his teachers and some aspects of the life of family. It is not a work of ḥadīth transmitter criticism. In fact, more than this is the fact that Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī—the editor and the individual responsible for converting it into a separate work—admitted:

بأن النسخة المحققة تخلو عن أية إجازة، أو إنهاء سماع أو بلاغ، أو ما يشبهها

The edited copy is void of any sort of *ijazah*, or transmission via *samāʿ*, or *balāgh* (i.e. using the words *balagha* (it reached us) as a form of transmission), or whatever resembles these.”²

This, despite the fact that he attempted to establish its transmission via a number of chains that are unacceptable in (the realm of) academic research.

2. *Mashyakhat*³ al-Ṭūsī fi Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām

Al-Ṭūsī mentions the *mashyakhah* at the end of his work *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*. The reason he mentioned them (there) is because he omitted the *asānīd* that connect him to the authors of the works that he quotes from. He begins (i.e. in *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*) by mentioning (the name of) the work’s author and the isnād that connects him to the infallible (imam). He did this in order to make the work

1 Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī: *Al-Dharīʿah*, 2/465.

2 Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī: *Risālat Abī Ghālib al-Zurārī ilā Ibnihī fi Dhikr Āl Aʿyan wa Takmilatihā*, p. 79 of the editor’s introduction.

3 A *mashyakhah* is a ḥadīth work wherein the author mentions the names of his teachers, those via whom he narrated aḥādīth. In *Muʿjam Muṣṭalahāt al-Rijāl wa al-Dirāyah* (p. 161): “A place where teachers and chains of transmission are mentioned. Therefore, a *mashyakhah* is a place where teachers (*mashyakhah*) are mentioned.”

easier (for the reader) and for the sake of brevity¹. Then, he mentions at the end of the work his various chains of transmission for each of the author's works in such a manner where, before mentioning them, he states in his *Mashyakhah*:

والآن فحيث وفق الله تعالى للفراغ من هذا الكتاب نحن نذكر الطرق التي يتوصل بها إلى رواية هذه الأصول والمصنفات ونذكرها على غاية ما يمكن من الاختصار لتخرج الأخبار بذلك عن حد المراسيل وتلحق بباب المسندات.

And now, in so far as Allah ﷻ gave *tawfiq* (divine ability to achieve success) to complete this work, we will mention the chains through which we reach the transmission of these primary and (other) authored works. We are mentioning them as concisely as possible, so the reports come out of the realm of *marāsīl* (halted reports) and be included among the *musnadāt* (connected reports).²

He then begins mentioning the *asānīd*, one by one. For example, he says:

وما ذكرته عن علي بن الحسن الطاطري، فقد أخبرني به أحمد بن عبدون، عن علي بن محمد بن الزبير، عن أبي الملك، أحمد بن عمر بن كيسبة، عن علي بن الحسن الطاطري

And whatever I have mentioned on the authority of 'Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭārī, I was informed of it by Aḥmad ibn 'Abdūn – from 'Alī ibn Muḥammad

1 The reader of *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* may be misled in that he will see al-Ṭūsī saying “from so-and-so” and then mention the entire chain of narration. He will get the impression that this is the entire chain. However, in reality, what he is seeing is only half of it; al-Ṭūsī begins (the chain of narration) with the author of the primary work from which he is quoting the ḥadīth until the infallible (imām). He omits the isnād from him to the author of the work. He arranges this (i.e. the isnād from him to the author) in the *mashyakhah* of his work (*Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*). At times, the isnād that is apparent in front of the reader is *rubā'iy* (i.e. the isnād only contains four narrators); however, in reality, it is *subā'iy* (i.e. it contains seven narrators). The reader should be aware of this because whoever desires to know the ruling of a particular isnād, he not only needs to consider the isnād in the actual work, but he also needs to add to it what al-Ṭūsī mentioned in the *Mashyakhah* so that the *isnād* is complete. This has also been observed in *al-Faṭīh* of al-Qummī.

2 Al-Ṭūsī: *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām*, 10:281.

ibn al-Zubayr – from Abū al-Malik Aḥmad ibn ‘Umar ibn Kaysabah – from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ṭāṭārī.¹

And like this, there is nothing but the mentioning of chains of transmission in this *Mashyakhah*. What is the difference between this and him mentioning the complete *asānīd* in the work (as opposed to the end) other than for the sake of brevity? There is no difference. Al-Subḥānī’s inclusion of this among the primary works on narrator evaluation is nothing but an attempt at snowballing their number of primary works. And after examining this *Mashyakhah*, it becomes evident that al-Ṭūsī did not make *tawthīq* of any of the narrators! It is simply his recording of the chains of transmission, nothing else. Does it make sense for us to regard this as part of the primary works?

3. *Mashyakhah al-Faqīh*² (Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī)

This is an entirely similar concept to the *Mashyakhah* of al-Ṭūsī, except that Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī discussed eight narrators in this small work (which includes all the variant chains of narration of his work), no more. Of these eight, he only made *tawthīq* of two.³ For the remaining six, he only mentions narrations that praise them, without mentioning the authenticity, or lack thereof of these narrations. Also, he does so without mentioning his personal opinion about them. In assuming what al-Subḥānī transmitted from al-Ṭūsī—i.e. the fact that al-Ṭūsī made *tawthīq* of these eight and left out mentioning the status of tens of narrators—is it still possible after this for *Mashyakhah al-Faqīh* to be one of the primary works for knowing the *jarḥ* and *ta’dīl* of narrators? This is the reality of the primary works of narrator evaluation which they draw from, some of which are presumed to be of the primary works.

1 Ibid, 10:338.

2 Printed in a small brochure with the explanation and commentary of Muhammad Ja’far Shams al-Dīn. It is also printed as an attachment at the end to the complete work.

3 The two are: 1) Abū Ḥamzah al-Thumālī Thābit ibn Dīnār (p. 39), and 2) Ḥumayd ibn al-Muthanna (p. 67).

The phase of the latter-day scholars' works (sixth century)

After the scholars of the Shī'ah reached the phase of the fifth century in which they collected the primary sources of narrator evaluation, a new period of writing began. It is the period of works of the latter-day scholars which are based on the primary sources of their predecessors. This period, which stretches from the sixth century until our current time, is generally characterized by an effort to conclude the status of narrators (i.e. whether they are acceptable or not) and decide what the preponderant views are between those that appear in the primary works. Al-Ḥusayn al-Burūjirdī accurately described the works of this phase and the subsequent ones up until our time. He states:

لا تفي بغرضها شيئاً إذ لم يبحثوا فيها عما هو موضوعها وهو أسانيد الروايات بأشخاصها، بل [قاموا] باستقراؤها استقراءً ناقصاً، كل حسب وسعه، واستنبطوا منها قضايا كلية ذكروها في تلك الكتب على وجه الفتوى، أو استشهدوا عليها بشواهد قليلة من جزئياتها، مما لا يوجب للمحصل علماً ولا ظناً، ولا يخرجهم عن حد التقليد باعاً ولا وشيراً. ولأجل ذلك صارت تلك الكتب متروكة عند أهل العلم رأساً.

They did not fulfill anything of their purpose since they (i.e. the authors of these works) did not examine in these works what the subject-matter actually entails: the asānīd of the narrations according to the individuals (who narrate them). In fact, they undertook an empirical study which was incomplete. Everyone, according to his (own) ability. They derived therefrom general propositions which they mentioned in those works in the form of *fatwā* (legal opinion). Or they attested to it with few evidences from its parts. All of which does not engender conclusive nor speculative knowledge for the acquirer, and it does not remove him neither a hand nor arm span from the boundary of sheer imitation. For this reason, these works were considered discarded by the people of knowledge.¹

The following works of this phase are:

1 Cited from Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī in *Manhaj al-Rijālī wa al-'Amal al-Rā'id fī al-Mawsū'ah al-Rijāliyyah* by Sayyid al-Tā'ifah al-Burūjirdi, p. 134.

1. Al-Fihrist by Muntakhab al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn Muwaffaq al-Dīn ‘Ubayd Allāh ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī (d. 548 A.H)

This al-Qummī is different to Ibn Bābawayh al-Qummī.

Al-Subḥānī¹ and al-Faḍlī² mention that this work is specific to biographies of Shī‘ī writers. According to al-Faḍlī, it contains 533 biographies. And according to the opinion of al-Subḥānī, it contains 540 biographies. In my copy of the book, with the editorial notes of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṭabṭabā‘ī, it contains 553 biographies.³ There is no difference of opinion among the scholars of the Shī‘ah that this work is not regarded as a primary source of narrator evaluation, despite the fact that it was the first work authored after the previous primary works.⁴ It is a work that mentions the scholars of the Imāmiyyah and their works, nothing else. It is not much relied upon for research purposes.

2. Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’ by Rashīd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, known as Ibn Shahr Āshūb (d. 588 A.H)

Ibn Shahr Āshūb states in the introduction of his work:

هذا كتاب معالم العلماء في فهرست كتب الشيعة وأسماء المصنفين قديما، وحديثا، وإن كان جمع شيخنا أبو جعفر الطوسي رضي الله عنه في ذلك العصر ما لا نظير له إلا أن هذا المختصر فيه زوائد وفوائد، فيكون إذن تنمة له، وقد زدت فيه نحوًا من ستمائة مصنف وأشرت إلى المحذوف من كتابه.

This work, *Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’ fī Fihrist Kutub al-Shī‘ah wa Asmā’ al-Muṣannifīn Qadīman wa Ḥadīthan*—despite the fact that our shaykh, Abū Ja‘far al-Ṭūsī, gathered what he did in an unparalleled fashion—is an abridgement that contains numerous additional beneficial information. It is, therefore, a supplement to it. I have added approximately 600 (other) works and (also) alluded to what has been omitted from his work.⁵

1 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 110.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 40.

3 ‘Alī ibn ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Bābawayh al-Rāzī: *Fihrist Asmā’ ‘Ulamā’ al-Shī‘ah wa Muṣannifihim*, p. 206.

4 Being considered the first work written after the phase of the primary works is based on the order of books as set-out by al-Subḥānī and al-Faḍlī.

5 Ibn Shahr Āshūb: *Ma‘ālim al-‘Ulamā’*, p. 38.

It becomes apparent from the words of the author that his work is nothing but an index of names for the authors of books. In perusing the work, I found that it contained 1012 biographies. Additionally, the author added the names of those whom he calls ‘the poets of the Ahl al-Bayt.’ He adds tens of biographies with no reference to their *jarḥ* or *ta’dil* and simply mentions their names. When he does give a ruling of *jarḥ* or *ta’dil*, he does not mention a basis for it. It is simply words that are incompletely transmitted; he does not mention the source for what he is saying. I was amazed at Ja’far al-Subḥānī’s statement:

وقد أصبح معالم العلماء من المدارك المهمة لعلماء الرجال، كالعلامة الحلبي في الخلاصة ومن بعده

Ma’ālim al-‘Ulamā has become an important tool of understanding for the scholars of narrator evaluation such as ‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī in al-Khulāṣah and those after him.¹

In coming to know and studying the *Khulāṣah* of al-Ḥillī, I did not find him quoting from this work except in only two instances! Therefore, the words of al-Subḥānī are nothing but a means of propaganda for the work, nothing more. If this is not the case, how can it be an “important tool” when he only referred to it twice—according to what I found? Unless this type of exaggeration forms part of the methodology used by Ja’far al-Subḥānī.

The phase of the seventh century

The writings in narrator evaluation during this century followed another trajectory. The scholars of the Shī’ah differed about the reality of this period. At times, we see ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī mentioning Ibn al-Biṭrīq (d. 600 A.H) in his work *Rijāl al-Shī’ah* as being responsible for the beginning (of scholarship) in this century. Then, in his (other) work *Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī Ma’rifat al-Rijāl*, he attaches Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664 A.H) to it (i.e. the beginning of scholarship).² We see that al-Subḥānī neglected both of these works and did not even touch on them! However,

1 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 113.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 41.

what al-Faḍlī concluded was more accurate than what al-Subḥānī left out. As for Ibn al-Biṭrīq's work, I was unable to find it. What is apparent from the words of al-Faḍlī is that the actual work does not even exist, only its name. As for what al-Faḍlī mentioned about the fact that Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī رحمته الله and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī رحمته الله (d. 911 A.H) relied on it in their respective works *Lisān al-Mizān*¹ and *Bughyat al-Wu'āt fī Ṭabaqāt al-Lughawīyyīn wa al-Nuḥāt*², this is incorrect. Therefore, it is not possible to provide a ruling on the work since we know nothing of it except for its name.

As for the work of Ibn Ṭāwūs *Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*, even though it is also missing (this is habitually the case for the works of the Shī'ah), it has had an impact present in our time. Hereunder is an account of this work and the others of this period.

1. Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī Ma'rifat al-Rijāl (Ibn Ṭāwūs)

Ibn Ṭāwūs authored this book in an attempt to fix the mistakes and dispel the contradictions that he saw in the works of narrator evaluation, especially the work of al-Kashshī. In this work the author collected all the previously mentioned primary works except for, as he states:

واختص كتاب الاختيار من كتاب الكشي بنوعي عناء لم يحصلوا في غيره؛ لأنه غير منسوق على حروف المعجم، فنسفته وغير ذلك من تحرير دبرته، ثم القصد إلى تحقيق الأسانيد المتعلقة بالقدح في الرجال والمدح حسبما اتفق لي، وما أعرف أن أحدا سبقني إلى هذا على مر الدهر وسالف العصر، وقد يكون عذر من ترك أوضح من عذر من فعل، ووجه عذري ما نهت عليه، أن الكتاب المذكور ملتبس جدا.

The work *al-Ikhtiyār* of al-Kashshī, in particular, has two problems which others do not have. It is not arranged in alphabetical order, and so I arranged it accordingly. This is in addition to other things I expounded upon and organized. Thereafter, the objective was to scrutinize the

1 Ibn Ḥajar رحمته الله cites as proof this work in a number of places in *Lisān al-Mizān*. For example, under the biography of Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Mīmadhī (no. 49), he states: "Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Bābawayh mentioned him in *Rijāl al-Shī'ah*." See: *Lisān al-Mizān*, 1:29.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 41.

asānīd that are connected to narrators that have been both criticized and praised, according to what concurs with me. I am unaware of anyone that has preceded me in this regard, throughout the ages. The excuse for the person leaving this work out (and doing nothing with it) is perhaps more obvious than actually doing something (with it). My excuse (for doing something with it) is what I have already mentioned: the aforementioned work is very confusing.¹

Therefore, the work is considered an attempt at salvaging whatever was possible from the inconsistencies found in the work of al-Kashshī and others. However, as I mentioned previously, the work is lost. I found a significantly damaged copy that was transferred, by way of inheritance, to Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn (al-Shahīd al-Thānī) (d. 965 A.H). When he brought out the work, al-Shahīd al-Thānī said:

إني لم أظفر لكتاب السيد رحمه الله بنسخة، غير نسخة الأصل التي أغلبها بخط المصنف، وقد أصابها تلف في أكثر المواضع، بحيث صار نسخ الكتاب بكماله متعذرا

I was unable to find a copy of al-Sayyid's work except for the original copy of which most of it is the author's (own) writing. It was damaged in most places such that copying the entire book turned out to be impossible.²

In short, he restricted himself to what Ibn Ṭāwūs mentioned regarding the work of al-Kashshī, without (mentioning) the other works. Therefore, the reality of *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī* of al-Shahīd al-Thānī, which is printed today, is a selection and abridgement of the work *Ḥall al-Ishkāl*.

2. Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd by Taqīyy al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī (d. 707 A.H)

Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī is a contemporary of Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī. Both him and Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī studied under Ibn Ṭāwūs, the author of *Ḥall al-Ishkāl*.

1 Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*, p. 25.

2 Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*, p. 3.

He is the first person to divide the work into two sections: the first section is dedicated to mentioning the *muwaththaqīn* and *muhmalīn* (reliable and neglected narrators)¹, and the second to the *majrūhīn* and *majhūlīn* (impugned and unknown narrators).²

The work is a matter of great dispute among the scholars of the Shī'ah on account of numerous errors and mistakes. Quoting from al-Fāḍil al-Tustarī³, al-Majlisī states in *Malādh al-Akhyār*:

كتاب ابن داود مما لم أجده صالحا للاعتماد، لما ظفرنا عليه من الخلل الكثير في النقل عن المتقدمين، وفي تنقيد الرجال والتمييز بينهم، ويظهر ذلك بأدنى تتبع للموارد التي نقل ما في كتابه منهم.

The work of Ibn Dāwūd is of those that I did not find suitable to be relied upon because of the numerous defects we discovered in (his) narrating from the earlier generation, and in examining/criticizing narrators and distinguishing between them. This becomes clear with the least amount of scrutiny applied to the places where he narrates from them in his work.⁴

Al-Kalbāsī transmitted from the author of *al-Ḥāwī* the statement:

واعلم أنني لم أعتد على كتاب ابن داود وإن كان حسن الترتيب، واضح المسلك؛ لأنني وجدت فيه أغلاطا كثيرة تنبئ عن قلة الضبط. نعم، ربما أذكر كلامه في بعض المواضع شاهدا أو لأمر ما.

And know well that I did not rely upon the work of Ibn Dāwūd, even though it is well organized and clearly laid out. This is because I found numerous

1 There is a difference of opinion regarding the (term) *muhmalīn* (neglected). Al-Kalbāsī alluded to this in *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah*, 4/100.

2 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 114.

3 He is 'Abd Allah ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Tustarī (d. 1021 AH), a student of al-Irdabīlī and the teacher of al-Majlisī, al-Tiffarishī, and al-Qahbā'ī. He is different to Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, the author of *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*.

4 Al-Majlisī: *Malādh al-Akhyār*, 1/37-38 (in his commentary of the first ḥadīth under *Bāb al-Aḥdāth al-Mūjibah li al-Ṭahārah*).

errors which stem from the lack of precision (*dabt*). Yes, I do mention his statements in certain instances as testimonial evidence, or for whatever (appropriate) reason.¹

After mentioning some of his errors, ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī states:

كانت هذه الملاحظة منار خلاف في تقييم الكتاب، ومدى صحة الاعتماد عليه عند الرجاليين المتأخرين

This observation is a matter of dispute in the work’s evaluation, and the extent of its validity for the latter-day narrator scholars.²

The book is no more than a compilation of the previous primary works and a means of giving preponderance between the views of its authors. The method of the latter-day scholars is mostly characteristic of this form of writing.³ Ḥusayn al-Sā’idī states:

أهمية الكتاب وفائدته فيما نقله عن كتب القدماء المفقودة التي لم نجد لها نصوصا

The importance and benefit of the work is in his transmitting from the lost works of the earlier scholars, the texts of which we cannot find.⁴

1 Quoting from *al-Rasā’il al-Rijāliyyah* of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Kalbāsī, 2/402. The complete name of the work *al-Ḥāwī* is *Ḥāwī al-Aqwāl fī Ma’rifat al-Rijāl* of ‘Abd al-Nabī ibn al-Shaykh Sa’d al-Jazā’irī al-Gharawī al-Ḥā’irī (d. 1021 A.H) (as mentioned under his biography by al-Ṭahrānī in *al-Dharī’ah*, 6/237).

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl ‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 46.

3 For more information on the status of *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, see: *al-Rasā’il al-Rijāliyyah* of Muḥammad al-Kalbāsī, 2/100.

4 Ḥusayn al-Sā’idī: *al-Ḍu‘afā’ min Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1/58. Al-Tustarī says something similar about the book *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* of al-Ḥillī. He states: “It is merely beneficial in that which we could not come across a basis for.” In other words, in his transmitting from the lost works. See: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1/24 (chapter 16).

3. *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* by Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī¹

In general, this work is similar to Ibn Dāwūd's work. As such, the references are practically one and the same, as are the statements and rulings pertaining to the narrators. Ja'far al-Subḥānī detailed a comparative analysis between the works of al-Ḥillī and Ibn Dāwūd.²

The phase after the seventh century

‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī states:

وفي القرنين، التاسع والعاشر ضُمَّرُ التَّأْلِيفِ فِي أَسْمَاءِ الرِّجَالِ، ثُمَّ عَادَ إِلَى نَشَاطِهِ فِي الْقَرْنِ الْحَادِي عَشَرَ
بشکل تشکل فيه کثرة ظاهرة فارقة

In the two centuries, the ninth and tenth, writings in dictionaries of narrator evaluation subsided. Then it returned to its activity in the eleventh century in a manner in which a great number of distinct phenomena were formed.³

After listing several of these works, Ja'far al-Subḥānī states:

هذه الأصول الأولية الثمانية والثمانية لعلم الرجال

These are the eight primary and secondary works in the science of narrator evaluation.⁴

1 Al-Ḥillī has an extensive work on narrator evaluation entitled *Kashf al-Maqāl fī Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*. It is larger than *al-Khulāṣah*; however, it is lost and there remains no trace of it. Al-Ḥillī himself alluded to it in the introduction of *al-Khulāṣah* (p. 44). He references it in many places throughout *al-Khulāṣah*. Al-Ḥillī has another work which is printed under the title *Īdāh al-Ishtibāh*. This work is specific to the correct pronouncement of narrators' names (*ḍabt asmā' al-ruwāt*) and distinguishing them from one another. He did not write it for the sake of knowing the rulings of narrators.

2 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 120.

3 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 48.

4 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 123. The 'eight' (works) al-Subḥānī was referring to are: 1) *Rijāl al-Kashshī*, 2) *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, 3) *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, 4) *Fihrist al-Ṭūsī*, 5) *Rijāl al-Barqī*, 6) *Risālat Abī Ghālib*, 7) *Mashyakhat al-Ṣadūq*, and 8) *Mashyakhat al-Faqīh fī Kitāb al-Faqīh wa al-Istibṣār*.

Some pages later, he says:

وقد وقفت على الأصول الرجالية، وهناك جوامع رجالية مطبوعة ومنتشرة يجب على القارئ الكريم التعرف عليها، وهذه الجوامع أُلُفت في أواخر القرن العاشر إلى أواخر القرن الثاني عشر.

I came across the primary sources of narrator evaluation; there are (other) printed collections on narrator evaluation that are widespread which the honorable reader need be aware of. These collections were authored in the late tenth to late twelfth centuries.¹

Like this, we find al-Faḍlī and al-Subḥānī recording the history of the sciences of narrator evaluation; by skipping the eighth century. Both of their statements agree in the omission of this century. Therefore, it would have been more suitable for al-Faḍlī to mention the eighth century as well in his previous statement, “In the two centuries, the ninth and tenth, writings in dictionaries of narrator evaluation subsided.” Al-Subḥānī should have (also) mentioned the decline in the ninth century since he said that the collections (*jawāmiʿ*) were “authored in end of the tenth century.”

In short, the remaining works detailing narrator evaluation that emerged in the tenth century right up to our time, as well as everything that was authored during this period, and the time of Ibn Ṭāwūs and his student are, as I mentioned, nothing but recollections of the Four Primary works as well as an offering of the preponderant opinion (*tarjih*) among them (i.e. the various opinions). In fact, you will only find nothing in these works except for what the Shīʿī scholar, Muḥammad Riḍā al-Jalālī stated:

لا يشاهد في أكثر المؤلفات المتأخرة غير التكرار المممل لما سبق، والإعادة من غير جديد إفادة، مع تكثير التصحيقات المشينة، أو ذكر الاحتمالات البعيدة، مما يزيد الطالب مشقةً وعناءً، ويورطه في التزام الفرضيات العقلية المتناهية البعد عن الواقع، فيعرقل مسيرة عمله ودراسته، ويكدر صفاء ذهنه.

In most of the latter-day works, nothing but tedious repetition of what has been previously mentioned is seen. Repetition with nothing

1 Al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fi ʿilm al-Rijāl*, p. 127.

new of benefit. In addition to the many scandalous distortions, or the mentioning of farfetched possibilities; all of which makes it more difficult and troublesome for the student (of knowledge). It implicates him in committing to the mental hypotheses that are extremely far from reality, thereby hindering the course of his work, study, and research, all the while muddying the clarity of his mind.¹

In another place he says:

المشاهد في بعض المؤلفات المتأخرة، المتسمة بـكبر الحجم وتكديس المنقولات

What is clearly discernable in some of the latter-day literature is their large size(s) and the mere amassment of (earlier) transmitted statements!²

This is what the student goes through when he studies these latter-day works. Until it eventually led to one of the senior scholars of the Imāmiyyah writing an encyclopedia under the title *Mustadrakāt 'Ilm al-Rijāl*. He is none other than 'Alī al-Namāzī al-Shāhrūdī (d. 1405 A.H). The author gathered thousands of narrators who have had nothing written about them for over a thousand years! Here is his exact wording:

جمعت - بحمد الله تعالى - فيه أسامي آلاف من رواة أحاديث الشيعة، من رجال المشايخ الثلاثة في الكتب الأربعة المشهورة، وغيرهم في غيرها، فذكروا ٢٠٠ رجل يسمى بإبراهيم وذكر ٥٢٧ منهم ٢٨٦ لم يذكر وهم، وذكروا ٣١٩ رجلا مسمى بأحمد وذكر ١٢٧١، منهم ٨٤٠ لم يذكر وهم، وذكروا ١٣٥٠ محمدا وذكر ٢٥٦٥، منهم ١٣٧٠ لم يذكر وهم، وذكروا ٣٥٦ حسنا وذكر ٨١٧، منهم ٤٢٦ لم يذكر وهم، وذكروا ٣٠٨ حسينا وذكر ٦٧٣، منهم ٣٣٤ لم يذكر وهم. وهكذا في سائر الأسماء، ولا أذكر ممن ذكره إلا من لنا مزيد بيان في حقه من رفع الجهالة، أو الضعف عنه، أو جعله ممن روى عنهم (عليهم السلام)، أو إدراكه وصحبته لإمام أزيد مما تعرضوا له، أو باعتبار الراوي والمروي عنه، كل ذلك مع تعيين المدرك والدليل.

I have collected—praise be to Allah ﷻ—in it the names of thousands of narrators of Shī'ah aḥādīth from the three *mashāyikh* of the four

1 Muḥammad Riḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī: *al-Manhaj al-Rijālī wa al-'Amal al-Rā'īd fi al-Mawsū'ah al-Rijāliyyah li Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifah al-Burjirdī*, p. 58.

2 Ibid, p. 136.

famous works, and others. They mentioned 200 men named Ibrāhīm and I mentioned 527, 286 of which they did not mention. They mentioned 319 men named Aḥmad and I mentioned 1271, 840 of which they did not mention. They mentioned 1350 men named Muḥammad and I mentioned 2565, 1370 of which they did not mention. They mentioned 356 men named Ḥasan and I mentioned 817, of which 426 they did not mention. They mentioned 3081 men named Ḥusayn and I mentioned 673, of which 334 they did not mention. And in a similar fashion, all the remaining names. I did not mention those whom they mentioned unless we had more information about him in terms of removing his unknownness (*jahālah*) or weakness from him. Or making the narrator from those who narrate from them عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. Or (the fact that) he (i.e. the narrator) met and had companionship with an imam—I have mentioned more than what they did. Or in consideration of the narrator and what has been narrated from him. All of this stipulated with reason and proof.¹

Al-Shāhrūdī mentioned 18189 biographies in his *Mustadrakāt!*

This is the general state of biographical works. If we reflect on the thousands (of narrators) about whom nothing has been said, as al-Shāhrūdī states, how many *asānīd* can they be dispensed into?

This means that prior to the writing of this work, the researcher would find it difficult and practically impossible to know the status of a narrator which was not mentioned before in the biographical works. This results in a standstill for thousands of *asānīd*. Or the ruling of a narrator's condition would be pure conjecture. In fact, even al-Shāhrūdī who named his work *al-Mustadrakāt* (The Amendments) did not provide rulings on many narrators!

This is the intellectual legacy that both Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū'i built all the principles upon which they relied on for their rulings on narrators!

1 'Alī al-Namāzī al-Shāharūdī: *Mustadrakāt 'Ilm Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 1:6.

3.0 The lack of sciences by the Shī'ah Imāmiyyah in the field of 'ilm al-rijāl

3.1 The disregard for death dates

Knowing the death date of a narrator is regarded as a helpful tool for ascertaining whether the isnād is *muttaṣil* (contiguous). The early generation of scholars from the Ahl al-Sunnah used this tool to ascertain such information. As such, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327 AH) mentions:

عن (عفیر بن معدان) قال قدم علينا (عمر بن موسى الوجيبي الميمني) فاجتمعنا في مسجد حمص، فجعل يقول حدثنا شيخكم الصالح خالد بن معدان فقلت: في أي سنة سمعت منه؟ فقال: سمعت منه في ثمان ومائة، فقلت: وأين سمعت منه؟ قال في غزاة أرمينية. فقلت له: اتق الله ولا تكذب! مات خالد بن معدان في سنة أربع ومائة فأنت سمعت منه بعد موته بأربع سنين، ولم يغز أرمينية قط، ما كان يغزو إلا الروم.

Regarding 'Ufayr ibn Ma'dān who said: "Umar ibn Mūsā al-Wajīhī al-Maythamī came to us. We gathered in a maṣjīd in Ḥimṣ. He began saying, 'Your teacher, al-Ṣāliḥ Khālīd ibn Ma'dān narrated to us.' I said: 'In what year did you hear from him?' He said, 'I heard from him in the year 108.' I said: 'And where did you hear from him?' He said, 'In the Battle of Armenia.' I said to him: 'Fear Allah, and do not lie! Khālīd ibn Ma'dān died in the year 104 and you heard from him four years after his death! He never fought against the Armenians ever; he only ever fought against the Romans!'"¹

This has been the status-quo of the scholars of this Ummah to such an extent that most of the biographical works of the Ahl al-Sunnah mention the death dates of the narrators. This is simply not found in the school of the Twelvers. Most of the primary works which mention biographies of narrators do not mention the death date of a narrator. It is rarely mentioned.

Hereunder is general calculation of narrators whose death dates have been mentioned in the works of narrator evaluation according to them:

1 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī: *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*, 6/133.

1. Al-Barqī: 0 from a total of 1707
2. Al-Najjāshī: 24 from a total of 1269
3. Fihrist al-Ṭūsī: 2 from a total of 909
4. *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*: 225 from a total of 6429
5. *Rijāl al-Kashshī*: 8 from a total 560

Based on this, we have:

$$24 + 2 + 225 + 8 = 259$$

This is more or less the sum total of narrators whose death dates have been mentioned in the agreed-upon primary works of narrator evaluation.

After we have concluded that the number of narrators does not exceed 259, did the scholars of the Shī'ah notice this inadequacy and begin to author works dedicated to mentioning the death dates (of narrators)? The answer is no, they did not.

This shortcoming has had a great impact on rulings related to narrators since it is not possible to conclusively determine whether the asānīd are *muttaṣil*. Rulings on many of these asānīd are therefore pure conjecture!

3.2 The disregard for *tadlīs* and *mudallisīn*

The scholars of Islam from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah have always shown interest in the science of ḥadīth. As such, they wrote in all of its respective categories. Regarding the issue of *tadlīs* (obfuscation), the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have a detailed discussion because of its practical implications. When they wrote about it, it was not merely hypothetical; rather, they dealt with it as a living reality. The Ahl al-Sunnah detailed the conditions of narrators and identified those who confused things from those that did not. They distinguished between a *thiqah* and a *ḍa'īf* narrator. This is contrary to the workings of the

Shī'ah Imāmiyyah scholars, among them, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūī.

A person that investigates the biographical works of the Shī'ah, especially the latter-day collections which collected thousands of narrators, will not find them addressing the *tadlīs* of any narrators! This differs to the works of *muṣṭalah*; many scholars of the Shī'ah have written on *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth* and mentioned a chapter on the *mudallis* (the one who commits *tadlīs*)!

So, what is the reason why it is neglected in biographical works and mentioned in the works of *muṣṭalah*? The answer: The biographical works of the Shī'ah, especially the Four Primary works, do not address the *tadlīs* of even a single narrator. That is because there is a disregard for the *ḍabt* (precision) of narrators. Similarly, there are no details about their conditions and knowledge regarding how they would transmit narrations. This is because these works are nothing but indices and *ṭabaqāt*. Since its inception and until our time, the sciences of *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl* have been regarded as being from the preliminary sciences which did not develop among this sect. Whatever the latter-day scholars brought forth was merely facsimiled from whatever the early scholars mentioned. There is no renewal or further analysis; their orbit is one, they do not depart from it. If this is not the case, does it make sense that some biographical works contain more than fifteen thousand narrators and there is not even one narrator described with *tadlīs*, the same technical term that appears in the works of *muṣṭalah*?

As for the works of *muṣṭalah* which mention *tadlīs*, they do not even bring forth one example of a Shī'ī narrator. In fact, all of the examples mentioned are purloined from the *muṣṭalah* works of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. Whoever of the Shī'ah wrote on the subject of *muṣṭalah* did not consider the reality of ḥadīth sciences according to them and establish their principles accordingly; they simply followed and took whatever was in the works of *muṣṭalah* of the Sunnīs, lock, stock, and barrel. More details will follow.

Hereunder I provide a number of examples.

1. In the book *al-Bidāyah fī 'ilm al-Dirāyah* of al-Shahīd al-Thaṇī, he speaks about the *mudallis* and does not mention any example thereof from the biographical works of the Shī'ah.¹
2. In the book *Wuṣūl al-Akhyār ilā Uṣūl al-Akḥbār* of al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-ʿĀmilī (d. 984 AH), he mentions the *mudallis* and does not mention any example throughout his findings in the biographical works of the Shī'ah.²
3. In the book *al-Fanna al-Thānī min al-Qawāmīs* of Mullā Āqā Fāḍil Darbandī, he mentions the *mudallis* in detail and does not mention any example throughout his findings in the biographical works of the Shī'ah.³
4. In the book *al-Wajīz fī 'ilm Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of Mullā 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn 'Alī Riḍā al-Ḥā'irī, he alludes to the *mudallis* and does not mention any example throughout his findings in the biographical works of the Shī'ah.⁴
5. In the book *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Jalālī, he alludes to the *mudallis* and does not mention any example therein throughout his findings in the biographical works of the Shī'ah.⁵
6. In the book *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah* of al-Kajūrī, he spoke in detail (about the *mudallis*); however, he too cited what appears in the works of the Ahl al-Sunnah, without any example from the works of the Shī'ah.⁶

1 Printed among the treatises in *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1/130.

2 Ibid, 1/414.

3 Ibid, 2/125.

4 Ibid, 2/545.

5 Ibid, p. 112.

6 Ibid, p. 205

7. The book *Tawḍīh al-Maqāl fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl* of Mullā 'Alī Kanī, he alluded to the *mudallis* and did not mention any example therein throughout his findings in the works of the Shī'ah.¹
8. The book *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth wa Aḥkāmuhu fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah* of Ja'far al-Subḥānī, al-Subḥānī was unable to find any examples in the biographical works of the Shī'ah to mention. As a result, he was forced to cite examples from the works of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*.²
9. In the book *Miqbās al-Hidāyah fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah* of 'Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī, he blackened (i.e. scribbled over) a number of pages and did not bring one example of *tadlīs* for us from the works of the Shī'ah.³
10. In the book *Dirāsāt fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah* of 'Alī Akbar Ghifārī he does not mention any example.⁴
11. In the book *Rasā'il fī 'Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfizyān al-Bābilī he does not mention any example.⁵
12. In the book *Ṭarā'if al-Maqāl* of 'Alī al-Burūjirdī (d. 1313 AH) he does mention any example.⁶

The rest of the scholars of the Shī'ah set out on similar grounds; we do not find this technical term (of *tadlīs*) except in the works of *muṣṭalah* of the latter-day scholars. This proves that the matter of *tadlīs* was 'saturated' with what they do not possess and is propaganda work for the school (of the Shī'ah) in order

1 Ibid, p. 285.

2 Ibid, p. 114.

3 Ibid, 1:376.

4 Ibid, p. 69.

5 Ibid, 3:130.

6 Ibid, 2:255.

for them to increase their sciences. When the neutral researcher looks to find the truth of the matter, he will find nothing but conjectural anecdotes with no practicality. After this, how is a scholar among them to know how to distinguish between a *mudallils* or know the degree of his *tadlīs*. It is simply impossible. And it is, quite frankly, sheer obstinance for someone to say that a narrator described with *tadlīs* is simply not to be found among the Shī'ah, even though there exist thousands of biographies!

4.0 The Imāmī Shī'ah's lacking in the sciences of *taṣḥīḥ*, *taḍīf*, and *ta'līl*

4.1 The lack of effort expended by the Imāmiyyah in making *taṣḥīḥ* and *taḍīf* of *aḥādīth*

The issue of scrutinizing and sieving through *asānīd* and distinguishing between *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍa'īf* is one of the greatest academic conflicts in the intellectual legacy of the Shī'ah. Regarding this matter, there are two groups that emerge.

The first group does not regard everything that exists in the works of the Imāmī school as authentic. The *asānīd* for all the works they have are subject to criticism. The person with this type of orientation is referred to as the *Uṣūlī*.

The second group regards whatever is contained in the works of the Shī'ah as authentic, at the forefront of which are the Four (Primary) works.¹ This group warns, in fact, threatens whosoever (from the other group) analyzes and works on sifting through the intellectual legacy. This group claims it is on the same path of the first and early Shī'ah. The person with this type of orientation is referred to as the *Akḥbārī*.

Each of these orientations has its supporters and observers. I would not dare venture into the issue of writings of the Shī'ah Imāmiyyah on *ṣaḥīḥ* *aḥādīth*. As I have mentioned, it is already an enormous conflict. There are those who do not even consider the science of narrator evaluation from the outset. These are the *Akḥbārīyyah* who consider that the “origin of differences in *aḥādīth* is *Taqīyyah* (dissimulation), not the foisting of reports.” Mahdī al-Kajūrī entered into an academic discussion with the proponents of this view in his book *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*.²

1 *Al-Kāfi*, *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Istibṣār*, and *Man La Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*.

2 Al-Kajūrī: *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, p. 50 (under the chapter *Radd al-Akḥbārīyyah fī 'Adam al-Ḥājah ilā 'ilm al-Rijāl*).

These individuals regard the works of their predecessors as authentic that take the place of authorship in authentic aḥādīth. The brassiest example of these individuals is what the contemporary, ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn Abū al-Ḥasan, said regarding his support of al-Nāʿīnī’s opinion that states the work of *al-Kāfī* is authentic!¹

The neutral observer of both schools will see that the difference of opinion is superficial and has no practical reality, even though tens of books have been written on it. The people (i.e. the Shīʿah), whether *Uṣūlī* or *Akhbārī*, do not distinguish between ṣāḥīḥ and *daʿīf* ḥadīth, even if they claim to have accurately and precisely researched the matter. My remarks are not mere ramble; in fact, I will mention what supports what I say, *in shā’ Allah*.

When we come to the school that claims accurate and detailed investigation, the *Uṣūliyyah*, and we question its observers: Did any of them author a work in which *daʿīf* aḥādīth were collected and their reasons explained? The answer is no. This is true despite the fact that this school existed from the time of Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and his teacher, Ibn Ṭāwūs! As for the *Akhbārī* school, they consider this to be evil, as will be seen in the statement of al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī.

The reality of the matter is that the scholars of the Shīʿah, whether *Uṣūlī* or *Akhbārī*, know very well that subjecting the aḥādīth of their works to the scale of academic inquiry will inevitably mean the invalidity of the entire *Imāmī* school. Here we have al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1104 AH) warning the *Uṣūlīs* of the consequences of this approach saying:

أنه يستلزم ضعف أكثر الأحاديث، التي قد علم نقلها من الأصول المجمع عليها، لأجل ضعف بعض روايتها، أو جهالتهم، أو عدم توثيقهم، فيكون تدوينها عبثاً، بل محرّماً، وشهادتهم بصحتها زوراً وكذباً ويلزم بطلان الإجماع، الذي علم دخول المعصوم فيه - أيضاً - كما تقدم واللوازم باطلة، وكذا الملزوم بل يستلزم ضعف الأحاديث كلها، عند التحقيق؛ لأن الصحيح عندهم: “ما رواه العدل، الإمامي، الضابط، في جميع الطبقات” ولم ينصوا على عدالة أحد من الرواة، إلا نادراً، وإنما نصوا على التوثيق، وهو لا يستلزم

1 The work is from the first volume. However, it is a section from the first two sections of *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah* that starts from p. 1 to 230. Thereafter, the second section (*al-Intiṣār li Siḥḥat al-Kāfī*) restarts the numbering from p. 1 to 188.

العدالة، قطعاً، بل بينهما عموم من وجه، كما صرح به الشهيد الثاني، وغيره. ودعوى بعض المتأخرين: أن (الثقة) بمعنى (العدل، الضابط). ممنوعة، وهو مطالب بدليلها وكيف؟ وهم مصرحون بخلافها، حيث يوثقون من يعتقدون فسقه، وكفره، وفساد مذهبه؟! فيلزم من ذلك ضعف جميع أحاديثنا، لعدم العلم بعدالة أحد منهم؛ إلا نادراً ففي إحداث هذا الاصطلاح غفلة، من جهات متعددة، كما ترى.

This necessitates rendering *ḍaʿīf* most of the *aḥādīth* which are known to have been transmitted from the agreed-upon primary works. This is on account of the weakness of a few of their narrators, or their unknownness (*jahālah*), or the fact that no one has made *tawthīq* of them, thereby rendering their documentation futile. This would mean their documentation was done in vein. In fact, ḥarām. Their testimony in favour of their authenticity would be false, a lie, and necessitate the invalidity of the *ijmāʿ* (consensus) which, as mentioned, is also known to include the infallible—as mentioned above. The antecedents (*al-lawāzīm*) and the consequent (*malzūm*) are (also) invalid. In fact, a critical examination would necessitate that all the *aḥādīth* are *ḍaʿīf* since a *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* is, according to them “that which is narrated by an upright (*ʿadal*) and precise (*dābiṭ*) imāmī on all levels (of the *sanad*).” Very rarely do they document the uprightness (*ʿadālah*) of any of the narrators; they merely document the *tawthīq*, and this (alone) does not definitively necessitate uprightness. In fact, between the two (terms), there is (only) commonality in one regard, as clarified by al-Shahīd al-Thānī and others. The claim by some latter-day scholars that the term *thiqah* means “*al-ʿadl al-dābiṭ* (upright precise)” is prohibited and requires proof. They explicitly state its opposite in that they make *tawthīq* of those they consider to be a *fāsiq*, *kāfir*, and even believing in an invalid school!... This means rendering all of our *aḥādīth ḍaʿīf* on account of not knowing, in most instances, the uprightness of any of them. From many angles, there is a measure of heedlessness in the creation of this term, as you can see.¹

Thus, al-ʿĀmilī is not speaking in a vacuum; rather, he is warning of the seriousness of the approach that necessitates the revision and investigation of a legacy because of his knowledge of the (abysmal) condition of this school’s works and what this type of orientation will lead to.

1 Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī: *Wasāʾil al-Shīʿah*, 30:249.

With this new (and) old conflict between Shī'ah scholars, the researcher sees, as I stated earlier, that there is no real difference of opinion because both schools did not collect *ḍa'īf* or *mawḍū'* (forged) aḥādīth. In fact, one of the scholars of the Shī'ah regarded the editing of *al-Kāfi* by one of the contemporary scholars, Muḥammad al-Bahbūdī¹, wherein he removed the *ḍa'īf* (aḥādīth) and (re)named it *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi* (The Authentic *al-Kāfi*) as a crime against the school! 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Ghaffār stated:

هذا محمد باقر البهبودي قد صير (الكافي) في ثلاثة أجزاء صغيرة وسماه بـ(صحيح الكافي)، ثم أعاد طبعه تحت عنوان (زبدة الكافي) ظنا منه أنه يحسن صنعا، وما يدري أن ذلك إساءة كبيرة إلى التراث الشيعي، بل إساءة إلى أهل البيت عليهم السلام.

This Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī made *al-Kāfi* into three small volumes and named it *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfi*. Then he reprinted it under the title *Zubdat al-Kāfi* thinking that he is 'doing something good.'² He does not know that it was a great insult to the legacy of the Shī'ah. In fact, an insult to the Ahl al-Bayt عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ.³

1 Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī is an erudite shī'ī scholar whose has given much effort into reviewing the intellectual legacy of the Shī'ah. He has reviewed *Kitāb al-Mabsūt* of al-Ṭūsī, *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* of 'Alī ibn Yūnus al-'Āmilī, *Zubdat al-Bayān* of al-Ardabīlī, and the work of Ibn al-Maghāzilī. He also participated with the committee responsible for overseeing the printing of *Biḥār al-Anwār* of al-Majlisī for Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. In the introduction to his revised work of *al-Kāfi*, the great shī'ī scholar 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī says about him: "Our respected, brilliant, and favorite colleague, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī." 'Alī 'Āshūr, the editor of *Ghāyat al-Marām* of al-Baḥrānī referred to him as "the eminent scholar Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī." Therefore, al-Bahbūdī is a noteworthy scholar who holds weight among the scholarly circles of the Shī'ah. He has a number of works, including: *Ma'rifat al-Ḥadīth wa Tārīkh Nashrihi wa Tadwīnihi wa Taḥāfatihī 'inda al-Shī'ah*, *Īlal al-Ḥadīth*. This is a response to those who claim that he is incompetent to verify aḥādīth. To find out everything that al-Bahbūdī has done, review the work *Nazariyyat al-Sunnah fī al-Fikr al-Imāmī al-Shī'ī* of Ḥaydar Ḥubb Allāh. He has an entire chapter dedicated to the efforts of al-Bahbūdī and the ruthless campaigns he was subjected to—to such an extent that Khomeini's successor actually summoned him. There is a story about this which can be referred to in Ḥubb Allāh's work, p. 564.

2 In reference to the eighteenth verse of Sūrat al-Kahf "while they think that they are doing well in work." [Translator's Note]

3 'Abd al-Rasūl al-Ghaffār: *al-Kulaynī wa al-Kāfi*, p. 432.

He also stated:

نهج فيه طريقا غير مرضي، أسقط ما يقارب نصف أحاديث الكتاب، واختار الصحيح حسب مذاقه الخاص، ولا أحسبه يجيد هذا الفن أو يحسن اختياره، بل إن ذلك موكول إلى علماء الطائفة ومراجعتها؛ لأنهم منزهون عن الأهواء والميول.

He approached the work in an unsatisfactory matter; he dropped nearly half of the aḥādīth of the work and chose the ṣaḥīḥ ones' according to his own particular taste. I do not think he did well for this science or selecting it. In fact, this is entrusted to the scholars and leaders (*marāji*)¹ of the sect since they are free from desires and inclinations.²

He also stated:

بل إن البعض منهم قد أساء إلى الشيخ [الكليني] بصورة مزرية، بل أنه أساء إلى الفكر الإمامي، وإلى تراث أهل البيت كالبهودي، محمد باقر، الذي اختزل كتاب الشيخ من غير أن يستند في عمله ذلك على منهج علمي صحيح، أو مبني واضح سليم، حتى يعذر فيما صنّفه في كتابه (صحيح الكافي)، الذي يعد من أحد مساوئه التي لا تغتفر، وسبيله إنما ينطوي تحت شعار «خالف تعرف».

In fact, some of them, such as Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī, insulted al-Shaykh (al-Kulaynī) in a disgraceful manner, as well as the entire Imāmī thought and the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt. He abridged the book of al-Shaykh (al-Kulaynī) without relying on—in this work of his—a true, academic methodology, or a clear, sound edifice such that he may be excused in his writing of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfī*; a work which is considered one of his shortcomings that is unforgiveable. The path (he undertook in this work) falls under the saying “Be different. Become known.”³

1 If we were to ask the person who stated this a question: Have your great leaders undertook this task from the very advent of Islam until our time today? The answer is no! This is because they know the consequences of this act, which will expose what is referred to as the sciences of ḥadīth according to the Imāmiyyah.

2 *Al-Kulaynī wa al-Kāfī*, p. 453-454.

3 *Ibid*, p. 556-557.

This scholar was not satisfied with what he said. In fact, he also stated:

غير عنوان هذا المختصر في الطبعة الثانية فأسماء: (زُبْدَةُ الكافي)، وهذا خير دليل على سوء فعلته السابقة. ولا أدري ما هو المبنى الذي يسير عليه، فلا هو يطابق مسلك القدماء، كما أنه نأى عن مذاق المتأخرين، ومن مثله يصدق عليه القول: حاطب ليل.

He changed the title of this summary in the second edition and he called it *Zubdat al-Kāfī*. This is the best evidence of his previous misdoing. I do not know what edifice he set himself upon. As such, he does not conform to the path of the early scholars. Likewise, he distanced himself from the ‘flavour’ of the latter-day scholars. The statement *ḥāṭib layl* (a woodcutter at night) truly applies to his likes.¹

And this is how the issue of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) and inquiry is regarded; a crime against the school (of the Shīʿah) and the *Āl al-Bayt*, even if it is from an adept scholar such as the al-Bahbūdī. Perhaps this attack is the one that called for changing the work’s name from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfī* to *Zubdat al-Kāfī*, due to the attack of some Shīʿah extremists on the printing press. Based on this, they changed the name of the book, as mentioned by Ḥaydar Ḥubb Allāh.

Hāshim Maʿrūf al-Ḥusaynī, one of the erudite scholars and the author of the work *al-Mawḍūʿāt fī al-Āthār wa al-Akḥbār* states in the introduction of his work:

وأنا واثق بأنني سأتعرض لحملات قاسية من بعض حشوية الشيعة والمتاجرين بالدين ولكني بحول الله وقوته سوف أتجاهل كل ما يقال معتمدا على الله.

I am sure that I will be subject to harsh attacks from some of the viciousness of the Shīʿah and the “traffickers of religion,” but I will, with the strength and power of Allah, ignore everything that is said with complete dependence on Him.²

1 Ibid, p. 454.

2 Hāshim Maʿrūf al-Ḥusaynī: *al-Mawḍūʿāt fī al-Āthār wa al-Akḥbār*, p. 10.

The man knows the reality of the situation, and the reality his predecessors went through. However, this group that claims to investigate matters commonly does not have a specific work authored that gathers *ḍaʿīf* and *mawḍūʿ* aḥādīth. Rather, they merely allude to what they see as inconsistent, and considered—by other senior scholars of the school—as red lines that cannot be crossed. The strange thing about this section is that some fanatics of the Shīʿah regarded the authorship wherein *ḍaʿīf* and *mawḍūʿ* aḥādīth are explained as a shortcoming! In criticizing the methodology of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Qazwīnī states:

وقد ألف القوم كتبا عديدة في هذا الموضوع، منها: الضعفاء الصغير للبخاري، الضعفاء والمتروكون للنسائي، الضعفاء الكبير للعقيلي، الجرح والتعديل للرازي، المجروحين لابن حبان، الكامل في ضعفاء الرجال لأبي أحمد عبد الله، الضعفاء والمتروكون للدارقطني، معرفة التذكرة في الأحاديث الموضوعية لابن القيسراني، الأبطال والمنكير والصحاح والمشاهير للجوزقاني، الضعفاء والمتروكون لابن الجوزي، الموضوعات للصابغاني، المغني في الضعفاء للذهبي، اللآلئ المصنوعة في الأحاديث الموضوعية: للسيوطي، الأسرار المرفوعة في الأخبار الموضوعية لملا علي القاري، الفوائد المجموعة في الأحاديث الموضوعية للشوكاني.

The people (i.e. the Ahl al-Sunnah) authored a number of works on this subject, among them: *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Ṣaḡhīr* of al-Bukhārī, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkūn* of al-Nasāʾī, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Kabīr* of al-ʿUqaylī, *al-Jarḥ wa al-Taʿdīl* of al-Rāzī, *al-Majrūḥīn* of Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Kāmil fī Ḍuʿafāʾ al-Rijāl* of Abū Aḥmad ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkūn* of al-Dāraquṭnī, *Maʿrifat al-Tadhkirah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍūʿah* of Ibn al-Qaysarānī, *al-Abāṭil wa al-Manākīr wa al-Ṣiḥāḥ wa al-Mashāḥīr* of al-Jūzaqānī, *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa al-Matrūkūn* of Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Mawḍūʿāt* of al-Ṣāghānī, *al-Mughnī fī al-Ḍuʿafāʾ* of al-Dhahabī, *al-Lāʾil al-Maṣnūʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍūʿah* of al-Suyūṭī, *al-Asrār al-Marfūʿah fī al-Akhbār al-Mawḍūʿah* of Mullā ʿAlī al-Qārī, *al-Fawāʿid al-Majmūʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍūʿah* of al-Shawkānī.¹

1 Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samʿ al-Maqāl*, 1/11 (introduction to the edited version). I slightly adjusted the wording—without changing the contents—and summarized by omitting the full names of scholars and their death dates

After citing all of these blessed efforts, he follows it saying:

هذا كله يدل على وجود أحاديث موضوعة كثيرة اصطنعتها الأيدي الصنيعة وبثتها بين أحاديثهم

All of this indicates the existence of many mawdū‘ aḥādīth that were created by willing hands and spread among their (other) aḥādīth.

And like this, he turns truth into falsehood, good into evil. My Lord spoke the truth when he said: “Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?”¹ He regarded all this giving, effort, inquiry, and purging of the Sunnah from what was wrongly attached to it among the reasons for criticism! This is only but envy. The poet rightfully said with his statement:

لو قطعت البلاد طولاً إليهِ
ثم من بعد طولها سرت عرضاً
لرأى ما فعلت غير كثير
واشتهى أن يزيد في الأرض أرضاً

If I traversed the length of the country,

Then, after that, I set out traveling its breadth,

Only but a few will see what I have done,

And desire that the ground expand.

Every illness has a cure, except for rancor and envy. In fact, this individual did not suffice himself with just that; he explained what the satisfactory method is according to him saying:

إلا أن للشبيعة الإمامية ميزات في هذا الصعيد إذ لم يقعوا في الشراك الذي وقع فيها علماء المذاهب الإسلامية الأخرى، حيث إن الأئمة الأطهار عليهم السلام قد تصدوا لهذه الظاهرة من أول يوم انتشر فيه الحديث وأعطوا كل ذي حق حقه. فلما رأوا أن عدة من أصحاب الأهواء الباطلة والآراء الفاسدة أخذوا يتلاعبون في الأحاديث الشريفة، ويحرفون الشريعة النبوية ويدسون في آثار العترة الطاهرة، أعلنوا التبري منهم ووصفوهم بالكذابين والوضاعين، ولعنوهم أشد اللعن، ليسقط صدقهم ويذهب بهاؤهم عند الناس، وأمروا الشيعة بعدم الأخذ عنهم، لكي تمحص الأحاديث من الدسائس، والحقائق من المنكرات.

1 Sūrat al-Nisā', v. 54.

However, the Imāmī Shī'ah have advantages in this regard as they did not fall into the traps in which scholars from the other Islamic schools of thought fell; such that the Pure Imāms, peace be upon them, responded to this phenomenon from the first day when ḥadīth spread and they gave every person his due. When they saw that several people of false desires and corrupt opinions began to manipulate the noble aḥādīth, distorted the prophetic Sharī'ah, and interpolated the reports of the Pure Family, they openly recanted from them and described them as liars and forgers, and cursed them in no uncertain terms so their trustworthiness would fall and their standing with people would go away. They commanded the Shī'ah not to accept from them so that the aḥādīth could be purified from machinations, and truths from falsities.

We have the right to ask this individual: Where can I find the aḥādīth which you described their people as “people of false desires and corrupt opinions... and distorted the prophetic Sharī'ah...and interpolated...as liars and forgers, and cursed them in no uncertain terms?” The answer: We find them widespread in the most authentic and best ḥadīth works of the Shī'ah. The observer does not know what is *ṣaḥīḥ* from what is a lie. With what and how did this man make this distinction, and what is the trap in which scholars of the other Islamic schools fell into and he got away from!

In contrast to this extremism, we find someone from the adept scholars of the Shī'ah who is more rational. He is Muḥammad Ṣādiq *Baḥr al-'Ulūm*. In describing the efforts to defend the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, he says:

أفرد جماعة من العلماء المتأخرين كتباً في الأحاديث الموضوعية وحدها جمعت من كتب المتقدمين في التاريخ، والعلل، وكتب الرجال في الضعفاء، وكتب الجرح والتعديل. واشتهرت هذه المؤلفات، وعم نفعها، وازدادت مادتها بازدياد ما حدث من الأباطيل في كل جيل. فتعقبها أهل الاستقراء التام من الحفاظ ودونها في كتبهم، وفندوا علة كل حديث منها ثبت عندهم وضعه. فرووه بسنده، وأبانوا عن عواره، وزيفوا نسبته إلى الرسول الكريم صلى الله عليه وسلم.

A group of latter-day scholars devoted works dedicated to *mawḍū'* aḥādīth that were collected from earlier scholars' works in history, *'ilal* (hidden

defects), *da'if* narrators, and *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl*. These works became well known, and their utility widespread. Their material increased with the increase of what occurred of falsehoods in every generation. Thereafter, ḥadīth masters (*ḥuffāz*) conducted inductive studies and recorded them in their works. They specified the *'illah* (hidden defect) of every ḥadīth which was proven to them to be *mawḍū'*. They narrated it with its sanad, and revealed their flaws, and falsified its attribution to the noble Messenger

صلى الله عليه وسلم¹

However, when he wanted to mention these efforts, he cited the works authored by the Ahl al-Sunnah, and did not mention the literature of the Shī'ah! This is because he does not know them to have any literature in this regard.

This is what 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī admitted to when he said:

ويسجل لعلماء الحديث من أهل السنة مآثرة علمية جليلة هي تأليفهم في الموضوعات

A great academic feat was recorded for the ḥadīth scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah. It is their writings on ḥadīth forgeries.²

Then al-Faḍlī cited a number of works of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah and did not mention any works of the Shī'ah except for what the contemporary scholar, Hāshim Ma'rūf al-Ḥasanī, authored in *al-Mawḍū'āt fī al-Āthār wa al-Akhbār*. More on this will come later.

A researcher will be amazed at the opinion of the Shī'ī Muḥammad al-Sanad who asserted that there are no interpolated aḥādīth in the works of the Shī'ah. Despite this, he does not prohibit studying the *asānīd* and *mutūn* (texts) as he claims, and that the authentication, revision, and discarding of interpolated aḥādīth have been completed and finished. In fact, Muhammad al-Sanad regarded the claim of

1 He stated this in the introduction of his edited version of *Takmilat al-Rijāl* of 'Abd al-Nabī al-Kāzīmī.

2 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 166.

authenticating the Shīʿah legacy as having defects in it, and that he responded to it in detail. He also admitted that many scholars of the Shīʿah view the Four Primary works to be authentic, and that some of them regard the *Tafsīr* of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī as authentic.¹

And thus, we find many scholars of the Shīʿah claiming entire books are authentic, such as the *Akhbārīyyah*, and some *Uṣūliyyah*, such as al-Khūʿī’s opinion of *Tawthīq* of all the narrators of ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī’s *Tafsīr*. We do not find anyone who wrote on the topic of collecting false and daʿīf aḥādīth, and explained their defects.

This is Jaʿfar al-Subḥānī, who is not free from his many exaggerations, saying:

More than one of our scholars undertook the task of thoroughly examining what has been narrated of aḥādīth from the Imāms of the Ahl al-Bayt. By way of example, I will mention: 1) *al-Akhbār al-Dakhīlah* (printed) of Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī (d. 1401 A.H), and 2) *al-Mawḍūʿāt fī al-Āthār wa al-Akhbār* of Hāshim Maʿrūf al-Ḥasanī.”²

Al-Subḥānī’s words can be contested in two ways. Firstly, we find the work *al-Akhbār al-Dakhīlah* of al-Tustarī—which al-Subḥānī claims is a work that thoroughly examines the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt—as a mere imitation of the Ahl al-Sunnah, and following of a path different to what the scholars of the Shīʿah were on. Regarding this, Yāsīn al-Mūsawī states in his annotation of al-Ṭabarsī’s work, *al-Najm al-Thāqib*:

1 Muḥammad al-Sanad: *Buḥūth fī Mabānī ʿilm al-Rijāl*, p. 253.

2 *Al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī Bayna al-Riwāyah*, p. 72. The purpose of this book is to disparage the literary works of the Ahl al-Sunnah; however, he does so in a twisted manner. He conceals his poison within honey; disparaging the Ṣaḥābah, al-Bukhārī and Muslim along with them as well, in the name of academic research. If only al-Subḥānī had dedicated his time to scrutinising the books of his own people and scholars, then he would have truly understood the difference in value between the literary works of the two groups.

والغريب موقفه في ذلك الكتاب من الأخبار فكأنه تأثر ببعض علماء السنّة الذين كتبوا في الأخبار الدخيلة والموضوعة فأراد أن يجاريهم بأحاديثنا، وهو مسلك غير صحيح في دراسة الأخبار والأحاديث، وخرقاً للسنّة المتبعة بين علماء السلف الصالح في فهم الأحاديث ومعرفة السقيم من المستقيم، والصحيح من الضعيف، والمعتبر من الموضوع.

He has a strange position in that work on the topic of reports (*al-akhbār*). It is as if he was affected by some Sunnī scholars who wrote on the subject of extraneous and forged reports. As a result, he wanted our aḥādīth to conform to them (and their standards). This is an incorrect path in the study of reports and aḥādīth and a violation of method followed by the righteous scholarly predecessors (i.e. of the Shī'ah) in understanding aḥādīth, knowing the 'sick (reports)' from the 'straight,' and the ṣaḥīḥ from the ḍa'īf, and the considered (mu'tabar) from the mawḍū'.¹

Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī penned a refutation of *al-Akhbār al-Dakhīlah* in his work *Ma'rifat Allāh*.² This Shī' scholar named Luṭf Allāh Ṣāfī (Golpayga) did not leave the work *al-Akhbār al-Dakhīlah* and merely brush past it; in fact, he authored a specific work (against it) entitled *al-Nuqūd al-Laṭīfah 'alā al-Kitāb al-Musammā bi al-Akhbār al-Dakhīlah*. I will leave Luṭf Allāh Ṣāfī to accurately evaluate al-Tustarī's work for us so that the proof (against them) will come from the words of the Imāmiyyah themselves, even though, as mentioned, he himself does not deny the existence of false aḥādīth in their collections. Still, the work of al-Tustarī did not appeal to him much. And despite his respect for al-Tustarī, we find him saying:

رأيت أنه قد عد من الموضوعات طائفة مما رواه شيخنا الصدوق.. كمال الدين، وشيخنا الطوسي ..، ووجدت أنه مع إصراره على إثبات وضعها اعتمد على أدلة ضعيفة وشواهد واهية .. وهذا الباب، أي باب التشكيك في الأحاديث سندا أو متنا، سيما متونها البعيدة عن الأذهان المتعارفة باب افتتن به كثير .. إلا أنه لا ريب أن التسرع في الحكم القطعي بالوضع والجعل على الأحاديث سيما بشواهد عليلة لا يتوقع صدوره عن العلماء الحاذقين والعارفين بموازين في الرد والحكم بالوضع والتحريف والجرح وغيرها، .. فلذلك رأيت أن الواجب أبدا ما في تشكيكات هذا المؤلف حول هذه الأحاديث حتى توجب سوء ظن بعض المغترين وبالتشكيكات بالمحدثين الأقدمين .. وخلاصة كلامنا معه دام بقاءه، أن هذه الأحاديث التي ذكرت في كتابه لو كان فيها بعض العلل على اصطلاحات بعض الرجاليين فإنه

1 al-Ṭabarsī: *al-Najm al-Thāqib*, 2/178.

2 Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī: *Ma'rifat Allāh*, 2/11.

يجبر بما يجبر مثله أيضا، على ما بنوا عليه من الاعتماد على الأحاديث، مضافا إلى أن كثيرا مما ذكره من العلل واضح الفساد لا يعتنى به العارف بأحوال الأحاديث، إن التهجم على مثل كتاب كمال الدين وغيبة الطوسي، مع أن مؤلفيها من حذاق فن الحديث وأكابر العارفين بالأحاديث وعللمها، والإكثار من ذكر العلل في رواياتها والقول بأن هذه الكتب خلط مؤلفوها الصحيح بالسقيم والغث بالسمين، لا فائدة فيه غير زرع سوء ظن في نفوس بعض الجهال.

I saw that he regarded as *mawḍūʿ* a number of reports that were narrated by our Shaykh, al-Ṣadūq ... *Kamāl al-Dīn*, and our Shaykh, al-Ṭūsī ... I found that, despite his insistence in proving they are *mawḍūʿ*, he relied on weak and flimsy evidences ... Many were infatuated by this door, i.e. the door of opening doubts of aḥādīth in terms of their sanad and matn, especially the texts that are far from the common minds (i.e. from their understanding) ... However, there is no doubt that (the act of) hastening to judge a conclusive rule as *mawḍūʿ*, and deeming aḥādīth as false evidences, is not expected to come from expert scholars; those who understand the (different) dimensions related to refutation, judging reports as forgeries, interpolation, *jarḥ*, and other (sciences) ... Therefore, I saw that the duty is not in the what is necessary is never to be in the doubts raised by this author ... surrounding the aḥādīth such that they bring about a negative opinion of the early ḥadīth scholars by some of those deceived by the doubts ... The summary of our words with him (may Allah prolong his duration) is that the aḥādīth that are mentioned in his work, even if they contained a few defects according to the terms of some scholars of narrator evaluation, they can also repair one another according to what they established in terms of their (overall) reliance on aḥādīth. Additionally, many of what he mentioned as defects are clearly false; the person acquainted with the variant conditions of aḥādīth will pay no regards to it ... Attacking the likes of the work of *Kamāl al-Dīn* and *al-Ghaybah* of al-Ṭūsī (despite the fact that their authors are experts and in the science of ḥadīth and senior specialists of aḥādīth and their hidden defects (ʿilal), excessively mentioning defects in their narrations, and saying that the authors of these works combined authentic (aḥādīth) with unsound ones' and "fat" ones' with "lean" ones' is of no benefit, except that it sows a negative opinion in the hearts of some ignorant people.¹

1 Luṭf Allāh al-Ṣāfi: *Majmūʿat al-Rasāʾil*, 2:138-140.

In short, the work that al-Subḥānī venerates so much is actually unsatisfactory to other scholars of the Shī'ah. What is important is the fact that this work, *al-Akḥbār al-Dakhīlah*, is from a contemporary. Where then is what the early scholars of the Shī'ah wrote in this regard? Did they only come to discover the mistakes in this era? However, as I have repeatedly stated: this is but the way of the people (i.e. the Shī'ah)—at the head of which is Ja'far al-Subḥānī—in presenting their 'goods' to others.

Secondly, a person who scrutinizes the work *al-Mawḍū'āt fī al-Āthār wa al-Akḥbār* of Hāshim Ma'rūf will only find him comparing and explaining some of the reasons behind ḥadīth forgery. He spoke about al-Bukhārī (d. 256 A.H)—as is the Shī'ah's habit—and frequently attacked him. Then he spoke about *al-Kāfī*, a few narrators, and criticized some narrations. In short, *mawḍū'* and *ḍa'īf aḥādīth* were not collected in this work; rather, it set down frameworks and general principles on how to recognize false aḥādīth. This is what I wanted to explain and intended in this section. Hāshim Ma'rūf's book is a contemporary book; he himself admitted that it would not appeal to many of the Shī'ah, as mentioned. And if one of them authored a work they would attack him and say as 'Abd al-Rasūl said about al-Bahbūdī:

بل إن ذلك موكول إلى علماء الطائفة ومراجعها

Rather, this is entrusted to the scholars of the group (i.e. the Shī'ah) and their *marāji'* (religious authorities).

The question is: Where are your senior *marāji'* when it comes to authorship in this important field? Why did they not author any works during these centuries?

Finally, a person could say: What about the works *Mir'āt al-'Uqūl*, *Malādh al-Akhyār* of al-Majlisī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Kāfī*, and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Faqīh* of al-Bahbūdī? All of them mention the aḥādīth with an explanation of their respective levels (of authenticity)?

Firstly, all the authors of these works are from the latter-day scholars. Where are the earlier scholars of this science? This is the most important factor. Was this discovered only after twelve centuries?

Secondly, when the authors of these works give a ruling on a particular ḥadīth, they do not mention the reason of weakness or authenticity. This is what amazed the Shīʿī scholar Ḥusayn al-Sāʿidī when he said about a ḥadīth: “Al-Majlisī (d. 1111 A.H) states in *Mirʾāt al-ʿUqūl*: “The ḥadīth is *ḍaʿīf*.” I do not know the reason for its weakness, and I did not find a single weak narrator in the links of the sanad.”¹

At times, al-Majlisī would rule a narrator to be weak and, despite this, his narration would still be acceptable by him?! This, even though the narration in question does not have another chain (i.e. to support it). An example of this, as previously mentioned, is the narration of Abān ibn ʿAyyāsh. Al-Majlisī states: “Yūnus ibn Ḍabyān: (*dād*). In other words, he symbolizes him with weakness (*ḍaʿīf*). Despite this, he states regarding a narration of his in *Mirʾāt al-ʿUqūl*: “Weak according to the most widespread (opinion), duly considered, according to me.”²

Thirdly, these works are not included in what we are in; the purpose here is “what the Shīʿah authored of weak and false aḥādīth.” Therefore, *Mirʾāt al-ʿUqūl* and *Malādh al-Akhyār* are nothing but ḥadīth commentaries. As for al-Bahbūdī, he has already been discussed.

4.2 The disregard for collecting the various chains of ḥadīth and explaining its hidden defects (ʿilal)

4.2.1 Hidden defects and anomalies (al-ʿilal wa al-shudhūdh)

From early on already, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah authored works in the categories of ḥadīth sciences. They wrote on ʿilal (hidden defects) in aḥādīth and

1 Ḥusayn al-Sāʿidī: *al-Muʿallā ibn Khunays*, p. 160. The ḥadīth which al-Majlisī says is weak is in *Mirʾāt al-ʿUqūl*, 8/428.

2 Mullā Bāqir al-Majlisī: *Mirʾāt al-ʿUqūl*, 10/126.

excelled in this category. As for the Imāmī Shī'ah, they, as Ibn Taymiyyah said: "If one of them were asked to produce an authentic, established report from 'Alī رضي الله عنه or someone else, they would be unable to do so. They do not possess the expertise of isnād nor the (knowledge of) narrators as the Ahl al-Sunnah."¹ He spoke the truth. May Allah have mercy on him.

Anyone who reflects on the reality of ḥadīth sciences will find truth to what Ibn Taymiyyah said; they are in need of many foundational components of this science, as mentioned previously. Mentioning the death date of a person, tadlīs, and writings explaining false aḥadīth is of no concern to them. How then do they fare with the science of 'ilal, which is considered the "camel's hump" (i.e. the pinnacle) of ḥadīth sciences? Regarding this (science), al-Kajūrī al-Shīrāzī stated:

ومعرفته أجل علوم الحديث وأدقها

Knowledge of it (i.e. the science of 'ilal) is the most sublime and intricate of ḥadīth sciences.²

The Shī'ah have absolutely no knowledge of this science and they have not authored anything therein. This is because their ḥadīth sciences are undeveloped to say the least. In contrast to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah who are leading in this category.

Those who read the books of Shī' authors will find that they mention many (different) works of their authors. I have come across works that are dubbed as 'ilal; however, they do not mention for us what type of 'ilal they are speaking about. An example of this is cited by al-Najjāshī.

- Under the biography of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Dūl al-Qummī, al-Najjāshī lists the works he authored and mentions *Kitāb al-'Ilal* among them.³

1 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah*, 3/505.

2 Al-Kajūrī: *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, p. 205.

3 Al-Najjāshī: *Rijāl al-Najjāshī*, p. 89 (no. 223).

- Under the biography of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Ammār he mentions *Kitāb al-‘Ilal*.¹
- Under the biography of ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī ibn Faḍḍāl he mentions *Kitāb al-‘Ilal*.²
- Under the biography of ‘Alī ibn Abī Sahl (he mentions) *Kitāb al-‘Ilal*.³
- Under the biography of Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān he mentions *Kitāb al-‘Ilal*.⁴

Similarly, al-Ṭūsī mentions under the biography of Ismā‘īl ibn Mihrān ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Naṣr al-Sukūnī *Kitāb al-‘Ilal*.⁵

Whoever contemplates over these works cannot definitively confirm the type of these ‘*ilal*. And since we do not possess but the names of these works, they may be the ‘*ilal* of legal rulings, the ‘*ilal* of the Sharī‘ah, the ‘*ilal* of *Taqīyyah*, or the ‘*ilal* ḥadīth. Is it possible to confirm the type of these ‘*ilal*? If not, inferring from these works is not possible.

Whoever examines the books of *muṣṭalah* of the Shī‘ah, we find them documenting what is called ‘*al-mu‘allal* (defected)’ without reference to what was written in this field from the scholars of the Shī‘ah. The situation here resembles the previously mentioned section of *tadlīs*; there is no reference to specific works in the field.

Note, for example, the following works:

- *Al-Fawā‘id al-Rijāliyyah* of Maḥdī al-Kajūrī⁶

1 Ibid, p. 95 (no. 236).

2 Ibid, p. 257 (no. 676).

3 Ibid, p. 263 (no. 688).

4 Ibid, p. 466 (no. 1208).

5 Al-Ṭūsī: *al-Fihrist*, p. 38 (no. 32).

6 P. 205.

- *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Jalālī¹
- *Al-Bidāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Dirāyah* of Zayn al-Dīn al-‘Āmilī al-Shahīd al-Thānī (d. 965 A.H)²
- *Wuṣūl al-Akhyār ilā Uṣūl al-Akhhbār* of al-Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd al-Ṣamad al-‘Āmilī (d. 984 A.H)³
- *Al-Wajīzah fī ‘Ilm al-Dirāyah* of al-Bahā’ī⁴
- *Al-Fann al-Thānī min al-Qawāmīs* of Mullā Fāḍil Āghādarbandī⁵
- *Miqbās al-Hidāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Dirāyah* of ‘Abd Allāh al-Māmaqānī⁶
- *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth wa Aḥkāmuhu of Ja‘far al-Subḥānī*⁷, and other works of theirs in this field.

I did not find a single reference to a work in the conventional field of hidden defects in ḥadīth. This has a profound impact on everyone who spoke on the sciences of narrator evaluation from the early and latter-day scholars, among them al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī. How will they deal with thousands of *asānīd*, *mutūn* (pl. of *matn*), and narrators without having any trace from their predecessors in the chapter concerning the science of *‘ilal*? All the while remembering the previous words of al-Kajūrī in which he described the science of *‘ilal* as “the most sublime and intricate of ḥadīth sciences.”

What I have mentioned of *‘ilal* is the same for what can be said of *shudhūdh* (anomalies). If there is a work of the Imāmiyyah in *‘ilal*, then it is the work *al-Akhhbār al-Dakhīlah* of their Shaykh, al-Tustarī. I came across it and found him speaking

1 P. 110

2 Printed among *Rasā’il fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1:130.

3 Ibid, 1/412

4 Ibid, 1/543

5 Ibid, 2/114.

6 1/153.

7 P. 113.

about reports which history has testified to their being distorted. Or (he speaks about) distorted reports as attested to by their context. He (also) mentioned a number of forged reports, according to his claim, distorted supplications, and so on. It is a work from a contemporary scholar. Many scholars of the Shī'ah objected to it and, in fact, did not even reprint the work a second time, as far as I know. To such an extent that it has become of the rare books that are difficult to obtain. Therefore, is it possible for us to say that the Shī'ah have works in *'ilal* knowing that they only authored but one work, from a contemporary who they themselves have refuted and denounced his work?

4.2.2 The issue of collecting narrations (*jam' al-ṭuruq*)

The isnād is of great importance in knowing the truth of a report, and the extent to which it reliably reached us. Multiple asānīd enable the researcher to compare between them. With this, the narrator's error from his correctness becomes clear to us. Additionally, the *ziyādah* (addition)—or lack thereof—in the isnād or matn becomes clear to us. This is what distinguished the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah; most of the aḥādīth have varying narrations. At times, al-Bukhārī (d. 256 A.H) will mention a ḥadīth from one Ṣaḥābī with a number of (different) chains that connect with him. Compare this to (other examples) in the works of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

However, the matter is very different to that of the Shī'ah. This is because most of their asānīd are only via one chain, it has no second. This is the basis for them. If Zurārah ibn A'yan narrated a ḥadīth from an Imam, you will not find from the companions of that Imam another person sharing (this ḥadīth) with him. And you will not find this ḥadīth narrated from Zurārah except from one student. And like this, the ḥadīth reaches the book (of ḥadīth). This is the case for most of the aḥādīth narrated in the primary works of the Shī'ah; most of their aḥādīth are *āḥād* (singular) on all levels.

I am not claiming that there is no narration that does not have one, or two, or more chains by the Shī'ah; however, I am merely emphasizing that this is extremely

rare. In fact, it is something that is not even mentioned in relation to their total number of aḥādīth, even in creedal matters. The Shī'ah did not author works specific to collecting (different) chains in order to be compared to the different asānīd of one matn. This is due to the scarcity of the material found in this field by them, contrary to what the scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have authored. *Al-'Ilal* of al-Dāraquṭnī and other works of the Ahl al-Sunnah is sufficient for us in this regard.

The Shī'ah (also) do not know the issue of *mutāba'āt* (parallels narrations) in asānīd. This stems from the non-existence of multiple chains of aḥādīth. Therefore, there is no significant mention of them in their works, except rarely. This is because the weakness in a chain of ḥādīth they have *closes* the door in front of them of authenticating through the asānīd.

Mutāba'āt in their works are nothing but what they have written on paper; there does not exist any examples worthy of mentioning. If they are found, as I mentioned, they are of consideration because of their rarity. It is not possible for us to build (principles and rulings) on rarities. It is for this reason we find that the scholars of the Shī'ah have replaced (the term) *mutāba'āt* with what they refer to as “circumstantial evidences indicative of the truth of the report.”¹ We do not find them relying much on *mutāba'āt*. Therefore, we find them frequently ‘repairing’ aḥādīth with what is known as “*shuhrat al-fatwā*,” or “popularity of the *fatwā*,”² which lead to the satisfaction in the issuance of ḥādīth.

This is ‘Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī, the Shī'ī scholar mentioning how a *ḍa'īf* ḥādīth is ‘repaired’ according to some of their scholars:

1 Al-Subḥānī mentioned this and divided them into circumstantial evidence which is internal and external in nature. The difference of opinion between the earlier and latter-day scholars of the Shi'ah is in his work *Durūs Mūjazah fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl wa al-Dirāyah*, p. 68.

2 The Shī'ī scholar Muḥyiy al-Dīn al-Musawī al-Gharīfī alluded to accepting a ḥādīth based on its popularity and the difference therein in his work *Qawā'id al-Ḥādīth*, p. 109.

1. Popularity of the narration (*al-shuhrah fi al-riwāyah*),
2. the popularity of fatwā (*al-shuhrah fi al-fatwā*).¹

Al-Faḍlī did not even touch on the issue of *mutāba'āt*.

Similarly, Ja'far al-Subḥānī states, quoting from the early generation of scholars, that the circumstantial evidence which they rely on in authenticating reports can be summarized as follows:

1. The existence of a *khābar* (report) in many of the four-hundred primary sources (*al-uṣūl al-arba'umī'ah*).
2. The *khābar* being repeatedly mentioned in one, two, or more of the primary works with different chains.²
3. The existence of the narration in a primary work that is known to be attributed to one of the group members about whom their truthfulness has been agreed upon by them.
4. Its inclusion in the works that were presented to the Imāms, who accordingly praised their authors.
5. It being taken from one of the works that was popular, dependable, and relied-upon among their predecessors.³

1 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 168.

2 From his words here it appears that the mere presence of *mutāba'āt* to ḥadīth is nothing but circumstantial evidence, nothing more than that. This circumstantial evidence reassures the trust in the issuance of ḥadīth, and it is not one of the foundations by which authenticity of a hadith is judged. Is relying on the different chains for it common in their works or is it rare such that it is not considered? The second (opinion) is the correct one. In fact, they may strengthen the ḥadīth because of the existence of another chain, even if it is more unsound and contains more *'ilal* than the first. In fact, they accept stories and authenticate them even if there is isnād for it, as is the case with the work *Nahj al-Balaghah*; it is falsely attributed to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib عليه السلام.

3 Al-Subḥānī: *Durūs Mūjazah fī 'Ilmay al-Rijāl wa al-Dirāyah*, p. 167.

Therefore, al-Subḥānī did not consider *mutāba‘āt* except as one form of a number of circumstantial evidences, not a standalone principle to be relied upon as in paragraph number two.

It is this intellectual legacy that both al-Ḥillī and al-Khūṭī appeared. As such, they did not find a very fertile legacy in this chapter. They have no previous academic principle left behind for them by their scholars. This led to the existence of a major flaw in the judging of narrations. How then is it possible for the researcher to strengthen/bolster a ḥadīth which is not known to have another chain? And how is the researcher to judge a ḥadīth when he does not possess any critical works that explain the *‘ilal* in aḥādīth?

5.0 The absence of writing in the sciences of *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* except in later times

The question of authorship in the science of *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* is one of the issues of anguish in the school of the Imāmī Shī'ah. This is, as will be seen later, on account of their differences regarding its permissibility, origins, and its practical application.

Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth, or *'ilm al-Dirāyah* (the in-depth science of ḥadīth knowledge) is from, in reality, the direct sciences of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. They are its rightful and outstanding heirs. As for the Shī'ah, they are nothing but imitators of the Ahl al-Sunnah in this regard. The Shī'ī scholar, Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī states:

يمتاز علم الدراية لدى السنة بالقدم والوضوح عما عليه عند الشيعة، وكان متداولاً بين علمائهم منذ عهد مديد، وقد ألفوا في هذا المضمون كتباً عديدة جداً. أما بالنسبة إلى الشيعة الإثني عشرية فلم يشعروا بالحاجة إلى علم الدراية؛ وذلك بسبب وجود الأئمة المعصومين (عليهم السلام) بين ظهرانيهم؛ إذ كانوا ينهلون عنهم الأحكام والأحاديث وهم في مأمن من خطر تسرب الوضع أو التحريف أو الكذب إليها.

The Sunnīs in-depth knowledge of *'ilm al-Dirāyah* is distinguished in terms of its antecedence and clarity than that of the Shī'ah. It was in circulation among their scholars for a long time. They authored a great number of works in this regard. In relation to the Twelver Shī'ah, they did not feel a need for *'ilm al-Dirāyah* because of the existence of the infallible Imāms عليهم السلام in their ranks. They would draw legal rulings and aḥādīth from them as they were safe from the risk of forgery, distortion, and lies slipping in.¹

There are a few observations on the words of al-Bābilī:

1. His recognition of the precedence, and in fact, clarity of the Ahl al-Sunnah in this regard. This is the evidence.

1 Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī: *Rasā'il fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1:13-14.

2. His recognition of the Shī'ah's delay in this science, which he attributed to the existence of infallible Imāms that freed them from the need of authorship in *muṣṭalah*. This is the other evidence.

Ghulām Ḥusayn Qaṣariyyah agreed with him when he stated:

لما كانت الشيعة في زمن الأئمة عليهم السلام غير محتاجة إلى علم الدراية – لأنهم مرتبطون بالأئمة عليهم السلام ومعتمدون على الأصول المصنفة. وعندهم قرائن كانوا يعولون عليها، وكانت القرائن لا تزال موجودة عند المتقدمين من الأصحاب – لم يهتموا بهذا العلم، ولم يدونوا أصوله ولم يؤلفوا فيه تأليفاً.

When the Shī'ah were in the time of the Imāms عليه السلام they did not require 'ilm al-Dirāyah since they were linked to the Imāms عليه السلام and use to rely on the authored Uṣūl works. They had (knowledge of) circumstantial evidences which they relied on. These evidences continued to exist with the early scholars of the Shī'ah; they too did not show much importance to this science and did not document its uṣūl. They did not author any works therein.¹

In refutation of al-Bābīlī and Qaṣariyyah, I say: Did you both not claim the existence of an Imam in every age until our present; that is, the awaited Mahdī? Therefore, why do you not draw your legal rulings and aḥādīth from him such that you are safe from the dangers of forgeries, distortions, and lies in your aḥādīth? If they say that he is absent (*ghā'ib*), I ask: Did al-Ṭūsī not produce a chapter in his work *al-Ghaybah* with the chapter heading “What has been narrated of reports regarding those who saw him عليه السلام while not knowing him, or coming to know him after – (these reports are) more than can be counted; however I will mention a selection from them?”² Al-Ṭūsī goes on to cite a number of narrations of those that met him!

1 He states this in the introduction of *al-Bidāyah fi 'ilm al-Dirāyah*, 1/108 (printed among *Rasā'il fi Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*).

2 Chapter Three, p. 253.

The infallible, who is the Mahdī, the last of the Imāms in their belief, is not absent from sight. In fact, he is present in every time and place. The Shī'ī scholar, Fāḍil al-Mālikī states:

هذا الشخص المقدس صلوات الله وسلامه عليه يمكن أن يلتقي به بعض الأبدال وبعض الأوحدين وبعض الأفاضل من الناس ممن يليق أن يفوز بلقاء الإمام صلوات الله وسلامه عليه ورؤية طلوعته المباركة. وهذا باب واسع عقد له الميرزا النوري أعلى الله مقامه كتابا في هذا المعنى فيمن رأى الإمام المهدي سلام الله عليه في الغيبة الكبرى، وكذلك عقد له السيد البحراني كتابا سماه تبصرة الولي فيمن رأى القائم المهدي سلام الله عليه، وهنالك ملحق في بحار العلامة المجلسي رحمه الله فيمن التقى بالإمام سلام الله عليه في عهد الغيبة الكبرى.

It is possible for some of the *abdāl* (saints of Allah), ultra-monotheists (*al-awḥadiyyīn*), and noble peoples of whom are deserving of obtaining a meeting with the Imam ﷺ to meet him and see his blessed outward appearance. This is an extensive chapter; al-Mirzā al-Nūrī ﷺ composed an entire book on this; those who saw al-Imam al-Mahdī ﷺ in the Major Occultation. Similarly, al-Sayyid al-Baḥrānī composed a book called *Tabṣirat al-Walī fī man Rāa al-Qā'im al-Mahdī* ﷺ. There is (also) an appendix to al-'Allāmah al-Majlisī's ﷺ *Bihār al-Anwār* concerning those that met with the Imam ﷺ during the Major Occultation¹

The issue of the Mahdī meeting with his fellow Shī'ah is *mutawātir*; there is no dispute between them, even in the time of the Major Occultation! So why did they not draw their rulings and aḥādīth from him when they were safe from the risk of forgery and distortion? Is the meeting of the absent (Imam) with his believers and disciples just a greeting, or is to communicate beneficial things to them and teach them their religion?

Therefore, what the scholars of the Shī'ah claim when they are late in every (religious) science is untrue. May Allah have mercy on Ibn Taymiyyah when he said: "Neither a believer of this awaited (Imām) nor his rejector benefitted from him."²

1 Fāḍil al-Mālikī: *al-Ghaybah al-Sughrā wa al-Sufarā' al-Arba'ah*, p. 14-15.

2 Ibn Taymiyyah: *Minhāj al-Sunnah*, p. 133.

This is the truth that no one, who promotes this self-admitted excuse, wants to admit. Based on this, it becomes known that there is no credibility to this excuse. This is because their claim of total and complete occultation is unconfirmed. If what they claim of these meetings is confirmed, then it is actually one of the greatest criticisms against the infallible and absent (Imam); he does not even take advantage of his meeting with his loved ones to do (or say) what is beneficial for their *Dīn*, even before their *dunyā*. In reality, they are claims, the truth of which its claimants can never verify. These peoples' clinging to illusions, secretive meetings, or dreams is one of the greatest ways to deviate from the straight path. Ibn Taymiyyah states:

The person of the time (i.e. the awaited Imām) whom they call toward, it is impossible for people to know who he actually is, what he commands and prohibits people to do, and what he informs them of. If a person's felicity and success (i.e. in the Hereafter) depends on obeying this Imam, whose commands and prohibitions is unknown, it becomes impossible for anyone to attain success, felicity, and obedience to Allah. This is one of the greatest forms of burdening someone with that which they cannot bear (*taklīf mā lā uṭāq*). (At the same time,) they are one of the greatest/most frequent of people (i.e. the Shī'ah) to refer to him.¹

Among those who have admitted to the antecedence of the Ahl al-Sunnah and the late-coming of the Shī'ah in this particular chapter is the introduction submitted by the University of al-Imam al-Ṣādiq to the work *Dirāsāt fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah* of 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī. It states therein:

إن الدقة والعمق والعراقة التي تبرز في تصانيف الشيعة في هذا المجال قد ميزت هذا العلم بكثير على الرغم من سبق الآخرين لهم

The accuracy, depth, and deep-rootedness that stand out in the writings of the Shī'ah in this field have characterized this science much, despite the antecedence of others.”²

1 Ibid, 1:88.

2 Introduction to *Dirāsāt fī 'Ilm al-Dirāyah* of 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī, p. 4. This work is a summary of *Miqbās al-Hidāyah* of 'Abd Allah al-Māmaqānī.

Another person to point out the late-coming of the Shī'ah in this field is al-Karakī (d. 1076 A.H). He states:

وأن تقسيم الأحاديث إلى الأقسام الأربعة المذكورة في الدراية من مخترعات العامة؛ لأن معظم أحاديثهم أخبار خالية عما يوجب القطع بورودها عن النبي (ص) فلذلك اضطروا إلى التقسيم المذكور وما يتعلق به واشتهر العمل به عندهم لذلك أو لغيره من الأغراض.

And the division of aḥādīth into the four distinct aforementioned divisions in *al-Dirāyah* is from the inventions of the 'Āmmah (i.e. the Sunnīs). This is because most of their aḥādīth are reports mentioned from the Prophet ﷺ that are bereft of what necessitates certain knowledge. Therefore, they were forced into the aforementioned division and whatever is related to it. According to them, it became common practice for this purpose and others.¹

Al-Karakī states:

لم يكن للإمامية تأليف في الدراية لعدم احتياجهم إليها ومخالفة عمدة مقاصدها لطريق القدماء وكون العمل بها يوجب سوء الظن بالسلف الصالح وعدم الاعتماد عليهم وتخطئتهم فيما شهدوا بصحته وما أشبه ذلك بالماء الصافي يلقي فيه التراب فيكدره. وأول من ألف في الدراية من أصحابنا الشهيد الثاني اختصر (دراية ابن الصلاح الشافعي في رسالته) ثم شرحها.

The Imāmiyyah did not have a work in *'Ilm al-Dirāyah* because they did not have a need for it, and because the major objectives behind it were contrary to the path of the early scholars. Acting on them would bring about a negative opinion of the pious predecessors, non-reliance on them, and their being considered mistaken in what they viewed as authentic. This is similar to dirt thrown into clean water, causing it to become muddy. The first person to write in *al-Dirāyah* from our companions was al-Shahīd al-Thānī. He summarized, and thereafter commented on *Dirāyat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shāfi'ī fī Risālatihi*.²

1 Ḥusayn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Karkī al-'Āmilī: *Hidāyat al-Abrār*, p. 178.

2 Ibid, p. 104.

This work is nothing but a summary of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's (d. 643 A.H) work. It is not a separate treatise specific to the school (of the Shī'ah)! The opinion of al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn is important in this regard. In his discussion on concept of *iḍṭirāb* (irreconcilably discrepant ḥadīth), he states:

فإنها من مستخرجاتهم [يقصد السنة] بعد وقوع معانيها في حديثهم فذكروها بصورة ما وقع، واقتفى جماعة من أصحابنا [الشيعة] في ذلك أثرهم، واستخرجوا من أخبارنا في بعض الأنواع ما يناسب مصطلحهم وبقي منها كثير على محض الفرض. ولا يخفى أن إثبات الاصطلاح للمعنى بعد وقوعه وتحققه أبعد عن التكلف واحتمال الخطأ من إثبات المعنى للاصطلاح بعد وقوعه وتحققه، وأن البحث عما ليس بواقع واتباعهم في إثبات الاصطلاح له قليل الجدوى، بعيد عن الاعتبار، ومظنة للإيهام.

It is from their inferences (i.e. the Sunnīs), the meanings of which occurred in their ḥadīth. And so they mentioned it in the manner it occurred. A group of our companions (i.e. the Shī'ah) followed in their tracks and extracted from our reports a number of technical terms that resembled their technical terms. Many of the terms remained purely hypothetical. It is obvious that establishing a technical term for a meaning after its occurrence and verification is less susceptible to error and strain than establishing a meaning for a technical term after its occurrence and verification. And the fact that analyzing that which is unreal and following them (i.e. the Sunnīs) in establishing a technical term for it is useless, far from consideration, and a cause for ambiguity.¹

So, the Shī'ah have admitted to following the Ahl al-Sunnah in this science, and that they took sciences for themselves which were not theirs. In fact, as al-Ḥasan Zayn al-Dīn described them: "A group of our companions (the Shī'ah) followed in their tracks and extracted from our reports a number of technical terms that resembled their technical terms. Many of the terms remained purely hypothetical." For this reason, we find that many technical terms in *al-Dirāyah* of the Shī'ah have no existence in reality. The best example of this is what has already been mentioned, and what I have mentioned in the chapter of *Tadlīs*.

1 Ḥasan Ṣāhib al-Ma'ālim: *Muntaqā al-Jammān*, 1/10.

Of those that admitted to this fact is al-Istarābādī (d. 1033 A.H). In commenting on the words of al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn, he states:

الحق أن تقسيم الخبر الواحد الخالي عن القرائن إلى الأقسام الأربعة من هذا القبيل ومن باب الغفلة عن أن معاني تلك الاصطلاحات مفقودة في أحاديث كتبنا عند النظر الدقيق.

The truth is that dividing the solitary report which is free from circumstantial evidences into four categories is of this kind and, upon careful consideration, it is heedless to the fact that the meanings of those technical terms are not to be found in the aḥādīth of our works.¹

Al-Baḥrānī (1186 AH) considered that the division of reports has no existence in the works of the Shī'ah, and that accepting such a division and applying it to their works stems from obstinacy and deviance. In criticizing the previously mentioned text of al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn, he states:

وأنت إذا تأملت بعين الحق واليقين وجدت التقسيم المذكور من هذا القبيل إلى غير ذلك من الوجوه التي أنهيناها في كتاب المسائل إلى إثني عشر وجهاً، وطالب الحق المنصف تكفيه الإشارة والمكابير المتعسف لا ينتفع ولو بألف عبارة.

And if you ponder with the eyes of truth and conviction, you will find the aforementioned division is of this type, and the likes of it which we have completed in twelve parts in *Kitāb al-Masā'il*. A mere indication is enough (to understand) for the fair-minded student who seeks the truth and, even if expressed in a thousand (different) ways, the despotic, obstinate individual will not benefit.²

And like this, their scholars acknowledge that they drew these sciences from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, and that they took from them a science that does not conform to their aḥādīth, all of which put them in difficulty and hardship in their application thereof. In fact, it went further than that when some of the

1 Nūr al-Dīn al-ʿAmilī: *al-Fawā'id al-Makkiyyah wa bi Hāmishihi al-Shawāhid al-Madaniyyah*, p. 126.

2 Al-Baḥrānī: *al-Ḥadā'iq al-Nāẓirah*, 1:24.

proponents of the *Akhbārī* methodology prohibited this field for the Imāmiyyah since it was taken from the Ahl al-Sunnah, and that the truth and salvation is to be considered in opposing the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah. Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1104 A.H) states:

إن طريقة المتقدمين [يقصد متقدمي الإمامية] مباينة لطريقة العامة [أهل السنة]، والاصطلاح الجديد موافق لاعتقاد العامة، واصطلاحهم، بل هو مأخوذ من كتبهم كما هو ظاهر بالتبعية، وكما يفهم من كلام الشيخ حسن، وغيره وقد أمرنا الأئمة عليهم السلام باجتناوب طريقة العامة. وقد تقدم بعض ما يدل على ذلك، في القضاء في أحاديث ترجيح الحديثين المختلفين، وغيرها.

The method of the early scholars is different to the method of the ‘*Āmmah* (the Ahl al-Sunnah). The new convention is in accordance to the belief and technical terms of the ‘*Āmmah*. In fact, they are taken from their works, as is clear after studying, and as understood from the words of Ḥasan and others. The Imāms عليه السلام have ordered us to stay away from the method of the ‘*Āmmah*.¹ Some evidence for this and other issues has been provided in the issue of giving preference between two conflicting aḥādīth.²

When did the Imāmiyyah write about the science of Muṣṭalah?

Imāmī scholars differed in answering this question; some of them were realistic and fair, and some of them were controlled by the propaganda complex of the

1 Do not be surprised by the reasoning of al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī that one of the evidences of the division of ḥadīth into *ṣaḥīḥ* and *ḍa‘īf* is that it is from the division Ahl al-Sunnah scholars’. The issue of opposing the Ahl al-Sunnah, whom they call the ‘*Āmmah* is one of the greatest doctrines of *al-Walā’ wa al-Barā’* (loyalty and disavowal) according to the Twelver Shī‘ah. Just as the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم commanded us to oppose the polytheists in many aḥādīth, such as, when he صلى الله عليه وسلم, as reported by al-Bukhārī, said: “Oppose the polytheists” (*Bāb Taqlīm al-Azāfir*). Similar, the Shī‘ah; among their universal objective in both their *uṣūl* and *furu’* is their opposition to the Ahl al-Sunnah. The words of their scholars have been massively transmitted (i.e. it is mutawātir) in this regard. After recounting several narrations commanding opposing the Ahl al-Sunnah, Khomeini states: “In any case, there is no problem that opposing the ‘*Āmmah* is one of the ways of giving preference (to an opinion) in the chapter of (how to deal with) contradictions” (p. 83). Therefore, the words of al-‘Āmilī do not go beyond the legal theory of the school—which is supported by narrations.

2 Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī: *Wasā’il al-Shī‘ah*, 30/249.

Shī' school—in that they were at forefront in everything—to such an extent that people were included among the Imāmī Shī'ah who were not even from them. All so that he (i.e. the proponent of this view) can tell people that we (i.e. the Shī'ah) have a head start in everything. This inferiority complex has continued to control the minds and opinions of many of their scholars.

I will answer this question by first mentioning their views in chronological order and commenting on each of them accordingly.

The first opinion

The first to write on this subject from the scholars of the Shī'ah is al-Imam Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405 AH), the author of *al-Mustadrak* رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. Of those who held this view is Ḥasan al-Ṣadr when he stated:

تقدم الشيعة في تأسيس علم دراية الحديث وتنويعه إلى الأنواع المعروفة فأول من تصدى له أبو عبد الله الحاكم النيسابوري، صنف فيه كتابا سماه معرفة علوم الحديث.

The Shī'ah came first in establishing *'Ilm al-Dirāyah* and its division into its well-known divisions. The first to undertake this was Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī ... He authored a work therein and called it *Ma'rifaṭ 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*.¹

The reason for Ḥasan al-Ṣadr's claims goes back to what was said in the biography of al-Imam al-Ḥākim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ when some scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah attributed him to the Shī'ah; in fact, to the Rawāfiḍ. Commenting (on the biography), al-Ṣadr states:

الحاكم من الشيعة باتفاق الفريقين، فقد نص السمعي في الأنساب والشيخ أحمد بن تيمية، والحافظ الذهبي في تذكرة الحفاظ على تشيعه، بل حكى الذهبي في تذكرة الحفاظ عن ابن طاهر أنه قال: سألت أبا إسماعيل الأنصاري عن الحاكم فقال: ثقة في الحديث، رافضي خبيث. قال الذهبي: ثم قال ابن طاهر: كان الحاكم شديد التعصب للشيعة في الباطن، وكان يظهر التسنن في التقديم والخلافة، وكان منحرفا عن

1 Ḥasan al-Ṣadr: *al-Shī'ah wa Funūn al-Islam*, p. 55 (abbreviated).

معاوية وآله، متظاهرا بذلك ولا يعتذر منه. قلت: وقد نص أصحابنا على تشييعه، كالشيخ محمد بن الحسن الحر في آخر الوسائل، وحكى عن ابن شهر آشوب، في معالم العلماء في باب الكنى، أنه عده في مصنفى الشيعة، وأن له الأمالي وكتابا في مناقب الرضا.

Al-Ḥākīm is from the Shī'ah, as agreed upon by both sects. Al-Sam'ānī in *al-Ansāb*, as well as Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah and al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī in *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* have documented his Shī'ism. In fact, al-Dhahabī in *Tadhkirat al-Ḥuffāẓ* (narrates) from Ibn Ṭāhir that he said: "I asked Abū Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī about al-Ḥākīm and he said: 'Reliable in ḥadīth. A repulsive *Rāfiḍī*.' Al-Dhahabī said: 'Then Ibn Ṭāhir said: 'Inside, al-Ḥākīm was a fanatical Shī'ī. He used to outwardly express Sunnism regarding issues of *taqdīm* (i.e. preferring 'Alī over the other Khulafā') and the khilāfah. He openly and unapologetically held distorted views about Mu'āwiyah and his family.'

I (i.e. Ḥasan al-Ṣadr) say: Our companions (i.e. the Shī'ah) have documented the fact that he is a Shī'ī. For example, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr at the end of *al-Wasā'il*. He reported from Ibn Shahr Āshūb in *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'* under the chapter of agnomens (*bāb al-kunā*) that he regarded him among the authors of the Shī'ah, and that he has *al-Amālī* and a work on the virtues of al-Riḍā.¹

There are a number of observations to the words of Ḥasan al-Ṣadr. Firstly, his statement "al-Ḥākīm is from the Shī'ah, as agreed upon by both sect" requires some explanation. First of all, if, by this statement, he meant that al-Ḥākīm was an Imāmī that believed in Twelve "infallible" Imāms, then he is mistaken. In fact, none of the scholars have said that al-Ḥākīm was a Twelver. Secondly, if he meant that al-Ḥākīm sided with 'Alī, then yes. Many scholars have said this. However, his claim that this is agreed-upon by both the Sunnīs and Shī'ah requires proof. The correct and appraised answer to this issue is that he was not a Shī'ī, let alone a Rāfiḍī, as will come later.

The second observation to al-Ṣadr statements is his (attempted) inference from al-Dhahabī's statement:

1 Ibid.

In fact, al-Dhahabī in *Tadhikirat al-Ḥuffāz* (narrates) from Ibn Ṭāhir that he said: “I asked Abū Ismā‘īl al-Anṣārī about al-Ḥākīm and he said: ‘Reliable in ḥadīth. A repulsive Rāfiḍī.’ Al-Dhahabī said: ‘Then Ibn Ṭāhir said: ‘Inside, al-Ḥākīm was a fanatical Shī‘ī. He used to outwardly express Sunnism regarding issues of *taqḍīm* (i.e. not preferring ‘Alī over the other caliphs) and *khilāfah*. He openly and unapologetically held distorted views about Mu‘āwiyah and his family.’

Firstly, Ḥasan al-Ṣadr did not assume a true academic and trustworthy role when he omitted al-Dhahabī’s commentary on Ibn Ṭāhir. After quoting Ibn Ṭāhir, al-Dhahabī رَحِمَهُ اللهُ immediately states:

كلا ليس هو رافضيا، بل يتشيع

Never. He was not a Rāfiḍī; rather, he was a Shī‘ī.¹

In *Mīzān al-I’tidāl*, he states:

الله يحب الإنصاف، ما الرجل برافضي، بل شيعي فقط

Allah loves fairness; the man was not a Rāfiḍī. Rather, he was only a Shī‘ī.²

Secondly, adding al-Ḥākīm among the authors of the Shī‘ah merely based on Ibn Ṭāhir’s statement that al-Ḥākīm was a ‘Rāfiḍī’ is far from accurate academic research. This is because it has not been established that al-Ḥākīm ever said anything disparaging about Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, and ‘Uthmān. Where is the proof that he is a Rāfiḍī?

Thirdly, adding al-Ḥākīm among the authors of the Shī‘ah on account of some Sunnīs saying that he has Shī‘ī tendencies is incorrect. As it appears, the reason for describing al-Ḥākīm as a Shī‘ī is on account of him authenticating a number of weak aḥādīth on the virtues of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

1 Al-Dhahabī: *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 17/174.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Mīzān al-I’tidāl*, 3/608.

Describing a scholar as a Shīṭ simply on account of his authenticating ḥadīth on virtues of ‘Alī is an incorrect description. Al-Ḥākīm reached his conclusions based on his independent reasoning. It is irrational to say that someone who authenticates a ḍa‘īf ḥadīth on (the subject of) virtues is a Shīṭ. As is irrational to say that someone who grades the same ḥadīth ḍa‘īf a Nāṣibī.

Fourthly, Ḥasan al-Ṣadr’s clinging to the word ‘Shīṭ’ in order to drag al-Ḥākīm into the group of Shīṭ authors is also rejected. The Shīṭ scholar, al-Tustarī (d. 1401 A.H) explains a reality—often hidden by the scholars of the Shī‘ah from the ordinary non-scholar Shī‘ah. That is, if they wanted to include someone who has been attributed to the Shī‘ah among the group of the Imāmiyyah in order to increase their numbers, many of their scholars would infer to the term “Shīṭ” that is given to one of the scholars or one of the narrators. In his discussion about one of the narrators, al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī states:

جاء أن يكون رجح من العامة إلى الشيعة، الذي هو أعم من الإمامية—أي الإثنا عشرية—الذي هو المراد الآن من الشيعة. فلا يكون هذا دالاً على حسنه وإماميته.

It is possible that he reverted from the ‘Āmmiyyah (i.e. the Ahl al-Sunnah) to Shī‘ism—which is a more general term than the Imāmiyyah (i.e. Twelver Shī‘ism)—and which is implied nowadays from the term Shī‘ah. Therefore, this is not indicative of his goodness and his status as an Imāmī.¹

Muḥammad al-Tustarī explains the meaning of “Shīṭ” according to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah saying:

إن قول العامة [أهل السنة]: فلان شيعي أو يتشيع أعم من الإمامية وإنما المراد له الرافضي أو الشيعي الغالي.

قال الذهبي في ابن البيع الحاكم النيسابوري: أما انحرافه عن خصوم علي فظاهر. وأما أمر الشيخين فمعظم لهما بكل حال، فهو شيعي لا رافضي. وعتون ابن قتيبة—في معارفه—الشيعة و عد فيهم طاووسا والحكم بن عتيبة وإبراهيم النخعي والحسن بن صالح بن حي و سفيان الثوري وجمعا آخر مع وضوح عدم كونهم إماميين بل الشيعي الغالي أيضا عندهم أعم .

1 Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī: *Khāṭimat al-Mustadrak*, 1/119.

قال الذهبي في ميزانه (في عنوان أبان بن تغلب): إن الشيعي الغالي في زمان السلف وعرفهم هو من تكلم في عثمان والزبير وطلحة ومعاوية وطائفة ممن حارب عليا وتعرض لسبهم. والغالي في زماننا وعرفنا هو الذي يكفر هؤلاء السادة ويتبرأ من الشيخين أيضا. وللشيعي أيضا عندهم معنى آخر وهو أنه عباسي.

The statement of the 'Āmmah (Ahl al-Sunnah): "So and so is a Shīṭī, or practices Shī'ism" is more general than the (term) Imāmiyyah and this is but synonymous to the Rāfiḍī or the extreme Shīṭī (*al-Shīṭī al-ghālī*).

Al-Dhahabī states about Ibn al-Bayyī' al-Ḥākīm al-Naysabūrī: "As for his deviation from the opponents of 'Alī, it is apparent. And as for the matter of the Shaykhayn, either way, he respects them. Therefore, he is a Shīṭī, not a Rāfiḍī. Ibn Qutaybah in *al-Ma'ārif* has a title "The Shī'ah" and counts among them Ṭawūs, al-Ḥakam ibn 'Utaybah, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaṭī, al-Ḥasan ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Ḥayy, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and a number of others. He clarifies that they are not Imāmīs...

In fact, the extreme Shīṭī is also, according to them, more general...

Al-Dhahabī states in *al-Mizān* under the section of Abān ibn Taghlib: "The extreme Shīṭī in the time of the predecessors and their 'urf (i.e. customary usage of the term) referred to anyone who spoke (negatively) and cursed 'Uthmān, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, Mu'āwiyah, and a group of those who fought with 'Alī. The extreme (Shīṭī) in our time and customary usage is he who makes *takfīr* (excommunicates) these noble personalities and also disavows the Shaykhayn."

According to them, they also have another meaning for (the word) Shīṭī; and that is he is an 'Abbāsī.¹

It is clear now that the scholars' statements about al-Imam al-Ḥākīm do not include him among the Imāmiyyah, as Ḥasan al-Ṣadr attempted to do.

Fifthly, we will now challenge Ḥasan al-Ṣadr regarding the Shī'ism of al-Ḥākīm and whether he was a Shīṭī.

1 Al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1/22 (introduction of chapter five).

Ḥasan al-Ṣadr confirmed that the first work of the Shī'ah in *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* is the work of al-Imam al-Ḥakim *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*. A question arises here: How can al-Ḥākīm be a Shī'ī when he himself stated in this work: “Mentioning the seventh type of knowing the types of ḥadīth. The seventh type of this science is knowing the Ṣaḥābah according to their ranks. The first of them are the people who became Muslim in Makkah, like Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, and others رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ”¹ This is clear documentation from him in the work itself which Ḥasan al-Ṣadr infers. He arranged the Ṣaḥābah according to their respective ranks as follows: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī. Can the person who arranged them in this manner be regarded as a Shī'ī, let alone an Imāmī?

The person who prefers 'Uthmān over 'Alī is not regarded as a Shī'ī. In fact, after mentioning them, he says *Raḍi Allāh 'anhum* (may Allah be pleased with them). Neither the Shī'ah nor Ḥasan al-Ṣadr will be pleased with this. In fact, more than that. After establishing al-Imam al-Ḥākīm's arrangement of the Ṣaḥābah according to that of the Ahl al-Sunnah, and his being pleased with 'Uthmān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, I will mention this text so that we can understand the reality of al-Ḥākīm's Shī'ism. Imam al-Dhahabī states:

وروى ابن شؤدب عن ليث قال: أدركت الشيعة الأول بالكوفة وما يفضلون على أبي بكر وعمر أحداً،
يعني إنما كانوا يتكلمون في عثمان وفيمن قاتل علياً.

Ibn Shawdab narrated from Layth: “I met the first Shī'ah in Kūfah; they would not prefer anyone over Abū Bakr and 'Umar. They would simply speak about 'Uthmān and those that fought 'Alī.”²

Let us apply this text to al-Imam al-Ḥākīm. We find him arranging the Ṣaḥābah as the Sunnīs do. As mentioned, he (also) documented his pleasure with 'Uthmān. Therefore, there remains nothing for us from the description of Shī'ism except Layth's statement “and those that fought 'Alī.” Thus, whoever falls into (the category of) fighting 'Alī is considered to be of the Shī'ah. Did this happen to al-

1 Al-Ḥākīm: *Ma'rifat 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*, 1/43.

2 Al-Dhahabī: *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 3/:88.

Imam al-Ḥākim such that we regard him as a Shīʿī? The answer: The most famous of those who fought ‘Alī are al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām and Ṭalḥāh ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh رضي الله عنه. And of the most famous enemies of the Imāmī Shīʿah is al-Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah as well. Let us see how al-Imam al-Ḥākim dealt with them. He states: “Mentioning the virtues of the Messenger’s disciples and his cousin al-Zubayr ibn al-‘Awwām ibn Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā ibn Quṣayy.”¹

And he states: “Mentioning the virtues of Ṭalḥāh ibn ‘Ubayd Allāh al-Taymī—may Allah be pleased with him.”²

And he states: “Mentioning the virtues of al-Mughīrah ibn Shuʿbah—may Allah be pleased with him.”³

What kind of Shīʿī is this who dedicates chapters to the virtues of these people? He was pleased with many of the Ṣaḥābah whom the Shīʿah are not pleased with such as ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها. When mentioning the female Companions, he describes her as: “The first of them (i.e. female Companions) we will begin with is al-Ṣiddīqah bint al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr, may Allah be pleased with both of them.”⁴

Regarding Abu Hurayrah, he states: “I am confused with commencing on the virtues of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه because of his memorizing the ḥadīth of al-Muṣṭafā صلى الله عليه وسلم, and the testimony of the Ṣaḥābah and Tābiʿīn in his favour in that regard. Every person who seeks to memorize ḥadīth from the advent of Islam until our time are among his followers and supporters. He is but their first and most deserving of the word *ḥifẓ* (i.e. to memorize the ḥadīth of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم).”⁵

His praise for the great Sunnī Imāms, like Ibn Khuzaymah, appear a lot in his book. In fact, the sources of al-Ḥākim’s work are all the (same) sources of the

1 Al-Ḥākim: *al-Mustadrak*, 5/39.

2 Ibid, 5:51.

3 Ibid, 5:156.

4 Ibid, 5:428.

5 Ibid, 5/245.

Sunnīs, whether they are the asānīd or actual wordings (of the ḥadīth), they are different to the Shī'ah's wordings. Similarly, the authoritativeness of the work is contrary to what Ḥasan al-Ṣadr wanted it to pass as; al-Ḥākim رحمته الله did not adhere to the statements of the infallible Imāms, as Ḥasan al-Ṣadr believes. Therefore, he is from the honourable and greats of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

There remains nothing for us of the Shī'ism of al-Imam al-Ḥākim except for his stance regarding Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān رحمته الله. Here, it is necessary to pose a question: Has it been proven that al-Imam al-Ḥākim criticized Mu'āwiyah? The answer is no. In fact, al-Ḥākim mentioned a number of asānīd that include Mu'āwiyah رحمته الله, as it comes in the *Mustadrak*:

حدثني علي بن حمشاد العدل، ثنا بشر بن موسى، ثنا الحميدي، ثنا سفيان، ثنا عمرو بن دينار قال: سمعت وهب بن منبه في داره بصنعاء وأطعمني خزيرة في داره يحدث عن أخيه عن معاوية بن أبي سفيان رضي الله عنه: أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: لا تلحفوا في المسألة فوالله لا يسألني أحد منكم شيئاً فتخرجه له مني المسألة فأعطيه إياه وأنا كاره فيبارك له في الذي أعطيه.

قال الحاكم: هذا حديث صحيح على شرط الشيخين ولم يخرجاه بهذه السياقة.

تعليق الذهبي في التلخيص: على شرط البخاري ومسلم.

‘Alī ibn Ḥamshād narrated to me – Bishr ibn Mūsā narrated to us – al-Ḥumaydī narrated to us – Sufyān narrated to us – ‘Amr ibn Dīnār narrated to us (and) said: “I heard Wahb ibn Munabbih in his house in Ṣan‘ā’—and he fed me *khazīrah*’ in his house—narrating from his brother, from Mu’āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān رحمته الله that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: ‘Do not be importunate² in asking. By Allah, if one of you asks me for something and I give it to him unwillingly, there is no blessing in what I give him.’

1 Ibn al-Athīr (d. 606 A.H) states in *al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*: “(Khazar) ... *al-khazīrah*: Meat that is cut into small pieces and a lot of water is poured over it. When it gets well done, flour is sprinkled over it. If there is no meat in it, it is ‘*aṣīdah*’. It is said that it is mixed with flour and cream. It is also said that when it is from flour then it is *ḥarīrah*, and when it is from bran then it is *khazīrah*.” (2/72)

2 Ibn al-Athīr states in *al-Nihāyah fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth*: “(Lahf) ... *alḥafa fī al-mas’alah ulḥifu ilḥāfan* – when a person persists therein and perseveres.” (4/455) Ibn Manẓūr states in *Lisān al-‘Arab*: “(Lahf) ... *Wa alḥafa al-mas’al alahḥa*.” (9/314)

Al-Ḥākim says: This ḥadīth is ṣaḥīḥ according to the condition of the *Shaykhayn* (i.e. al-Bukhārī and Muslim) and they did not include it (in their collections) with this thread of the conversation.

Al-Dhahabī's commentary in *al-Talkhīs*: On the condition of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.¹

If al al-Ḥākim had a negative opinion or criticism against Mu'āwiyah he would not have included his aḥādīth that he regarded as ṣaḥīḥ.

The judgement of al-Ḥākim on any of the Ṣaḥābah is to be in the positive and not in the negative. Accordingly, if his tongue and pen abstained from Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه, then the original and actual presumption is soundness (of opinion regarding Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه). If, on the other hand, a positive statement appeared from him such that he spoke or wrote something about Mu'āwiyah رضي الله عنه, then we are to judge him accordingly (i.e. based on his statement).

How so, when he included the aḥādīth of Mu'āwiyah and judged their asānīd to be authentic and sound. If there was something in his heart, he would have said or implied it.

Also, if Ḥasan al-Ṣadr regards al-Imam al-Ḥākim رحمته الله as a Shī'ī, why did the scholars of the Imāmiyyah not mention him in their difference of opinion regarding the division of ḥadīth into *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *muwaththaq*, and *ḍa'īf*?

The Shī'ī dispute is confined to Ibn Ṭāwūs and his student Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī. Al-Ḥākim was not mentioned, despite the fact that he classified ḥadīth in sections before Allah created Ibn Ṭāwūs and his student.

Sixthly, the definitions and divisions mentioned by al-Imam al-Ḥākim do not correspond with the doctrine of the Imāmī Shī'ah; the Shī'ah do not infer the

1 Al-Ḥākim: *al-Mustadrak*, 2/325.

statements of al-Imam al-Ḥākim in any chapters of ḥadīth because he contradicts them altogether.

Seventhly, the most important thing we respond with to the claim of Ḥasan al-Ṣadr are the statements of the Shī'ah scholars themselves about al-Imam al-Ḥākim. Not one of the scholars of the Shī'ah stated, according to my findings, that al-Imam al-Ḥākim is a Twelver Shī'ī. In fact, commenting on Ḥasan al-Ṣadr's view, the Shī'ī scholar Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī states:

تجدد الإشارة إلى أن انتماء الحاكم النيسابوري إلى المذهب الشيعي غير متفق عليها وثمة شكوك حولها

It should be noted that al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's affiliation to the Shī'ī school of thought is not agreed upon and there are doubts about it.¹

And what confirms the invalidity of what Ḥasan al-Ṣadr believed is the statement of 'Alī al-Mīlānī about al-Ḥākim:

هو من كبار أهل السنة بل أساطينهم، ومن صدور علمائهم، بل سلاطينهم

He is from the seniors of the Ahl al-Sunnah, in fact, their masters. And (he is) from their foremost scholars, in fact, their sultans.²

Ja'far al-Subḥānī states:

لا يصح لنا عده ممن ألف من الشيعة في هذا المضمار فضلا عن كونه أول المؤلفين فيه

It is incorrect for us to regard him from those of the Shī'ah who authored works in this category, let alone him being the first one.³

Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī states:

1 Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī: *Rasā'il fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1?14.

2 'Alī al-Mīlānī: *Nafahāt al-Azhār*, 14/160.

3 Al-Subḥānī: *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth wa Aḥkāmuhu*, p. 11.

ويحكى العزم بتشييعه عن ابن تيمية أيضا لكنه احتتمل جمع من الأعلام أن رمي هؤلاء إياه بالتشييع لإرادة إبطال احتجاج الشيعة بما أورده في مستدركه وغيره مما يضر بعقائدهم وهو غير بعيد، فراجعه.

A definitive opinion of his Shī'ism has been reported from Ibn Taymiyyah as well. However, a number of notable scholars conceived the fact that these individuals' accusations of Shī'ism against him was merely intended to invalidate the Shī'ahs ability to use as proof whatever he mentioned in his *Mustadrak*, and other works regarding such things that would harm their doctrines. This is not farfetched, so consider it.¹

The contemporary Shī' scholar Ḥusayn al-Ma'tūq states:

وتهمته بالتشييع وكذا الرفض على حد تعبيرهم لا شك في بطلانها وعدم صحتها وذلك: أولا: لأن المعروف من حال الحاكم أنه من أهل السنة وأعلامهم، بل ومن كبار أئمتهم.

There is no doubt about the invalidity and inauthenticity of the accusation of his Shī'ism, and similarly, being a Rāfiḍī—according to their interpretation. Firstly, because it is known from al-Ḥākim's condition that he was from the Ahl al-Sunnah and their notable scholars. In fact, he is of their senior Imāms.²

Thāmir Hāshim Ḥabīb al-'Amīdī:

إنَّ الحاكم نفسه متنازع فيه بين الشيعة والعامّة؛ إذ لم يثبت - بنحو القطع، على كثرة ما قيل حوله - انتماؤه إلى أحد الفريقين، وإن كان ظاهر مستدركه عدم الاعتقاد بالتشييع.

Al-Ḥākim himself is in conflict between the Shī'ah and the 'Āmmah (i.e. the Sunnīs). This is because his affiliation to one of the two groups has not been definitively established, despite much of what has been said concerning him.³

1 Āqā Buzurg al-Tahrānī: *al-Dharī'ah*, 2/199.

2 Ḥusayn al-Ma'tūq: *al-Inṣāf fi al-Masā'il al-Khilāf*, 1/44.

3 In his published research entitled "Tārīkh al-Ḥadīth wa 'Ulūmuhu" in *Majallat Turāthinā*, 47/248.

Did Thāmir Hāshim not bother to look at the remaining works of al-Ḥākīm so that he could know the truth that he does not want to speak out about? It may be difficult for him seeing that al-Ḥākīm is from the most notable and greatest scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah. These are the statements of the Shī'ah scholars about al-Ḥākīm, our Imām. It is worth noting that the Shī'ī scholar 'Alī al-Namāzī al-Shāhrūdī stated in his biography of al-Ḥākīm: “They (i.e. the Shī'ah) did not mention him.”¹ In other words, there is no mention of him in the encyclopedias of Shī'ī narrator evaluation, such as *Tanqīḥ al-Maqāl* of al-Māmaqānī, *Mu'jam al-Khū'ī*, and *Jāmi' al-Ruwāt* of al-Ardabīlī, all of which are considered the most comprehensive encyclopedias in Shī'ah narrator evaluation. All of this further proves that al-Ḥākīm رحمته الله is free from Shī'ism.

The third observation to Ḥasan al-Ṣadr's statements has to do with the error he committed in his biography of al-Imam al-Ḥākīm. He stated:

Our companions (i.e. the Shī'ah) have documented the fact that he is a Shī'ī. For example, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥurr at the end of *al-Wasā'il*. He reported from Ibn Shahr Āshūb in *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'* under the chapter of agnomens (*bāb al-kunā*) that he regarded him among the authors of the Shī'ah, and that he has *al-Amālī* and a work on the virtues of ('Alī) al-Riḍā.²

The first reference which documents the Shī'ism of al-Ḥākīm from the ones mentioned by Ḥasan al-Ṣadr is *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'*. When I referred to *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'* by Ibn Shahr Āshūb, I found him³ saying: “Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Naysābūrī, *al-Shaykh al-Mufīd* (d. 413 AH). He has (written) *al-Amālī* and *Manāqib al-Riḍā 'alayhi al-salām*.”⁴

1 7/170.

2 Ḥasan al-Ṣadr: *al-Shī'ah wa Funūn al-Islam*, p. 55.

3 After writing this chapter—which took about five months, I came across the words of Dr. 'Umar al-Farmāwī in his work *al-Khilāf bayn al-Shī'ah wa al-Sunnah* (p. 105). He preceded me in several of the refutations I reached, among them is regarding the error of al-Ḥurr al-'Āmilī. Therefore, it is necessary to point this out since I found him refuting the opinion that al-Ḥākīm was a Shī'ī. He refuted Ḥasan al-Ṣadr excellently. May Allah reward him.

4 P. 167.

Ibn Shahr's statement "Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Naysābūrī, *al-Shaykh al-Mufīd*;" the identification of (the epithet) *al-Mufīd* proves the delusion and confusion of Ḥasan al-Ṣadr, especially when the text states "*al-Shaykh al-Mufīd*." This further proves to me the existence of a mistake in the understanding of Ḥasan al-Ṣadr. What further proves this is what I found in the work *A'yān al-Shī'ah* of Muḥsin al-Amīn. Under the biography of al-Imam al-Ḥākim, he states: "And what is apparent from what he mentioned in *Ma'ālim al-'Ulamā'* is that it is somebody else. In in, it states "Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Naysābūrī al-Shaykh al-Mufīd. From his works is *al-Amālī* and *Manāqib al-Riḍā* عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام." His famous nickname is '*al-Ḥākim*;' no other nickname is mentioned."¹

Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī mentions the following among the works of the Shī'ah: "*Al-Riḍawīyyāt* of al-Shaykh al-Mufīd Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī al-Khuzā'ī al-Rāzī al-Ḥāfiz al-Thiqah, the student of the two *sayyids* al-Riḍā and al-Murtaḍā, *Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifah*, al-Karāchī, Sallār, Ibn al-Barrāj. Muntakhab al-Dīn mentions him; perhaps it (i.e. *Manāqib al-Riḍā*) too is attributed to him."²

What is meant by 'al-Mufīd' here is not Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Nu'mān, the teacher of the Shī'ah, which al-Ḥillī has a biography about saying: "From the most honourable *mashāyikh*, leaders, and teachers of the Shī'ah. Everyone that succeeded him benefited from him. His virtue is more famous than can be described in *fiqh*, *kalām* (scholastic theology) and *riwāyah*. The most reliable and knowledgeable of his time. The Imāmiyyah's rule in his time ended with him."³

1 5/328. From the contradictions of Muḥsin al-Amīn is that he stated in another place in *A'yan al-Shī'ah*: "(2421) Abū 'Abd Allah al-Naysābūrī al-Shaykh al-Mufīd, famously known as Ibn al-Bayyī'. His name is Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamawayh ibn Na'im al-Ḍabbī al-Ṭahmānī al-Naysābūrī" (2/380). Muḥsin al-Amīn also stated: "(391) Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Ḥamawayh ibn Na'im al-Ḍabbī al-Ṭahmānī al-Naysābūrī, famously known as al-Ḥākim and Ibn al-Bayyī'." This proves the error of Muḥsin al-Amīn; at times, he shows that al-Ḥākim is different to al-Mufīd. Other times, he makes them one person.

2 Āqā Buzurg: *al-Dharī'ah*, 11/240. Refer to: *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb* of 'Abbās al-Qummī, 2/666 (no. 702).

3 Al-Ḥillī: *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl fī Ma'rifat al-Rijāl*, p. 248.

In fact, this is another useful point since whatever has been attributed to al-Ḥākīm of being a Shī'ī is not true, even a slight form of Shī'ism is not proven رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ.

The second opinion

The first person to write on the in-depth sciences of ḥadīth or *'ulūm al-Dirāyah* is Sa'īd ibn Hibat Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan al-Rāwandī (d. 573 AH). His work is entitled *Risālah fī Ṣiḥḥat Aḥādīth Aṣḥābinā*. From those who held this view is the Shī'ī scholar 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥakīm. After mentioning this work, he states:

يعد القطب الراوندي أول من ألف من أصحابنا في علم الدراية

Al-Quṭb al-Rāwandī is regarded as the first of our companions to write in the in-depth science of ḥadīth.¹

Where did the Shī'ah come to know that this is a work on *'ilm al-Dirāyah* and *muṣṭalah*?

It appears from the title that it does not depart from the *Akḥbārī* methodology which considers all (ḥadīth) reports as *ṣaḥīḥ*. If this is not the case, who of the Shī'ah scholars actually transmits the technical terms of *al-Dirāyah* from this work?

What confirms that this work does not depart from the *Akḥbārī* methodology (which rejects the division of ḥadīth) is the fact that it was relied upon by the head of the *Akḥbārīs* in his time, the erudite scholar al-Istarābādī. He used to reference it in his work *al-Fawā'id al-Madaniyyah*. In describing the work, he states: “The work which he authored in explaining the conditions of the aḥādīth of our companions and proving their authenticity.”²

1 He mentioned this in *Majallat Turāthinā*, 39/273. Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī also quoted this from him, as mentioned in *Rasā'il fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1/14.

2 Al-Istarābādī: *al-Fawā'id al-Madaniyyah*, p. 381.

Therefore, the work is, as documented by al-Istarābādī, an explanation on the authenticity of aḥādīth. It is the methodology of the *Akhbārī* school which opposes the division of aḥādīth. With this, it becomes clear that what ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Ṭabṭabāī believed is far from the truth; there is no correlation with this work and the in-depth sciences of ḥadīth and its definitions.

The third opinion

What Ḥasan al-Ṣadr mentioned in his statement:

وصنف بعد أبي عبد الله الحاكم في علم دراية الحديث، جماعة من شيوخ علم الحديث من الشيعة، كالسيد جمال الدين أحمد بن طاووس أبي الفضائل، وهو واضح الاصطلاح الجديد للإمامية، في تقسيم أصل الحديث إلى الأقسام الأربعة: الصحيح، والحسن، والموثق، والضعيف، كانت وفاته سنة ٦٧٣ هـ.

A number of scholars of the Shī‘ah in the science of ḥadīth authored works after Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim in *‘Ilm al-Dirāyah*, such as al-Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs Abī al-Faḍāyil. He is the originator of the new technical terms of the Imāmiyyah in their division of ḥadīth into four categories: *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *muwaththaq*, and *ḍa‘īf*. He died in the year¹ 673 A.H.²

Based on this statement, chronologically, Ibn Ṭāwūs is third. If we asked those who held this opinion: What the name of Ibn Ṭāwūs’s work is that you claim is about *‘Ilm al-Dirāyah*? Their answer would be: *Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī Ma‘rifat al-Rijāl*.

The book is missing. Nothing of it reached us except for what Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī found; he summarized it in what is known as *al-Ṭaḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*. The editor of *al-Ṭaḥrīr* writes in his introduction to the work:

1 What is strange is the fact that the editor of the work mentioned on the cover that the death date of Ibn Ṭāwūs is 664 A/H. And in the introduction to the work he mentions that he died in the year 673 AH.

2 Ḥasan al-Ṣadr: *al-Shī‘ah wa Funūn al-Islam*, p. 56. Muḥsin al-Amīn also held this view in *A’yān al-Shī‘ah*, 1/149.

وصل هذا الكتاب إلى الشيخ حسن صاحب المعالم ووجده مشرفا على التلف. فانتزع منه ما حرره السيد من كتاب اختيار الكشي وزاد عليه بعض الزوائد في المتن مع حواشي لطيفة وسماه بـ (التحرير الطاوسي)

This work reached al-Shaykh Ḥasan, the author of *al-Maʿālim* and he found it completely damaged. He removed from it what al-Sayyid edited from the book *Ikhtiyār al-Kashshī* and added additional information to the text alongside a brilliant supercommentary that he named *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*.¹

Therefore, this book is nothing but explanatory remarks on al-Kashshī's work on narrator evaluation. Where is *Rijāl al-Kashshī* in terms of the sciences of *muṣṭalaḥ*?

I perused this work and found Ibn Ṭāwūs saying in it: “I have decided to collect in this work of mine the names of authors and others about whom praiseworthy or negative things have been said and has been harmed by other (statements in other works).” And he states: “After completing the names, I began, in a similar manner, verifying the agnomens (*kunā*) and other titles (of narrators).” And he stated: “Thereafter, the intention is to scrutinize the *asānīd* that are related to narrators who have been praised and criticized, according to what has been concluded by me. I do not know anyone that has preceded me in this regard throughout the ages.”

Ibn Ṭāwūs mentions these texts in the beginning of his work.² In reality, the subject-matter of this work is to be regarded as part of the works of narrator evaluation—works that examine the conditions of narrators. This is clear from its title: *Ḥall al-Ishkāl fī Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*. The attempt by some researchers to add this work among the (other) works of *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* is nothing but an attempt to gain, as much as possible, antecedence in writing (in this field) to the Ahl al-Sunnah. As we have mentioned this work has no correlation to *Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth*.

1 The editor of the work, Muḥammad Ḥasan Tarḥīnī said this in the introduction, p. 7.

2 Al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*, p. 24-25 (a summary of a Ibn Ṭāwūs's lengthy statements).

Based on this, the Shī'ah do not have anyone that wrote on the sciences of *muṣṭalah* until the time of al-Ḥillī (648-726 A.H). This is what I wanted to explain; that is, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī does not have a legacy of writing and authorship (to rely on) from his predecessors in the sciences of *muṣṭalah*. This led him to invent rules that were completely unprecedented, such as the division of ḥadīth into separate categories. He was the first to divide ḥadīth, according to many scholars of the Shī'ah. There is a difference between al-Ḥillī—who could not find a foundational basis from the statements of his scholars—and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūṭī—who was aware of the statements of al-Ḥillī and those after him until our time. This lends support to the opinions of al-Khūṭī, relatively speaking, in those areas wherein he disagrees with Ibn al-Muṭahhar.

The fourth opinion

ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī states: “The earliest imāmī work in this science which reference is made to is *Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of al-Sayyid ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Najafī al-Nīlī, the student of al-ʿAllāmah al-Ḥillī who is from the scholars of the eighth century A.H.”¹

I searched long and hard so I could find a person who transmitted even one letter from this work, but I was unable to. It appears from the title that the work speaks about *ʿIlm al-Dirāyah*; however, it does not exist in the first place such that we can verify its subject matter. We are only able to ascertain a name like *Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*; we cannot build a historical basis for it. The words of Muḥsin al-Amīn drew my attention: “Among the authors therein is al-Sayyid ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥasanī. He has (i.e. authored) *Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, as has been said from the eighth century.”²

If we turn our attention to his statement “as has been said,” it is as if al-Amīn was uncertain about the reality of the work. However, this is a statement that

1 Al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 26.

2 Muḥsin al-Amīn: *Aʿyān al-Shīʿah*, 1/149.

is not possible to be certain about, especially since, under his biography in the *Ṭabaqāt* of eminent Shīʿī personalities, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī mentioned some of his works but did not mention this work. However, he alludes to him having a work on narrator evaluation (*Kitāb al-Rijāl*)¹ without mentioning an actual name for. In *Kitāb al-Dharīʿah* of Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī stated:

شرح أصول دراية الحديث – للسيد علي بن عبد الكريم بن عبد الحميد النجفي النيلي تلميذ العلامة
الحلي المتوفى سنة ٧٢٦هـ. وشيخ أبي العباس أحمد بن فهد الحلي. ذكر في ترجمته في عداد مصنفاته.

Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat Ḥadīth of al-Sayyid ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Najafī al-Nīlī, a student of al-‘Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726 A.H) and the shaykh of Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Fahd al-Ḥillī. This work is mentioned in his biography among his works.²

The question is: Is the work *Kitāb al-Rijāl* the same as *Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*? Especially since the scholars of the Imāmiyyah mentioned *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī* among the works of the in-depth science of ḥadīth, and it is a work on narrator evaluation!

This is possible. In short, this work is doubtful, at most. It is not possible to say with certainty that this work falls within the parameters of our subject-matter. Perhaps this is closer (to the truth). If the opposite is proven true in that *Kitāb al-Rijāl* is different to *Sharḥ Uṣūl Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, and we can see the contents, it is possible to say that this is the first work of the Shīʿah in this regard. Therefore, authorship in this science commenced in the eighth century, notwithstanding the uncertainty that hovers around this work.

The fifth opinion

The first work written by the Imāmiyyah in *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth* is *al-Bidāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Riwāyah* of Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī al-‘Āmilī, famously known as al-Shahīd al-Thanī

1 3/142-143.

2 13/94.

(d. 965 A.H). This opinion is the most famous and closest to the truth. A number of scholars of the Shī'ah held this view. Riḍā al-Mukhtārī states:

من المشهور أن الشهيد الثاني أول عالم من الشيعة كتب كتابا في علم الدراية، ولم يكتب قبله أحد من علماء الشيعة كتابا في هذا العلم وقالوا: "وهذا العلم لم يسبقه أحد من علمائنا إلى التصنيف فيه". جاء هذا الكلام من جملة ما جاء فيه في الكتب التالية: الدر المنثور وأمل الأمل ورياض العلماء وروضات الجنات وريحانة الأدب ومعجم رجال الحديث ومقدمة شرح اللمعة وإن المرجع الأول لكل هذه المصادر - مباشرة أو بالواسطة - هو كلام ابن العودي المنقول في "الدر المنثور".

It is famously known that al-Shahīd al-Thānī was the first scholar of the Shī'ah to write a book on *ʿilm al-Dirāyah*. None of the scholars before him wrote a book in this science and they said: "There was no one to write before him in this science from our scholars." This statement came from among what was mentioned in the following books: *al-Durr al-Manthūr*¹, *Amal al-Āmil*, *Riyāḍ al-ʿUlamāʾ*, *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, *Rayḥānat al-Adab*, *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, *Muqaddimah Sharḥ al-Lumʿah*. The first reference for all of these sources—directly or indirectly—is the words of Ibn al-ʿAwdī which is transmitted in *al-Durr al-Manthūr*.²

This is the preference of a number of notable scholars of the Imāmī school. I add the following:

1. What was mentioned by Ghulām Ḥusayn Qayṣarāhy and Niʿmat Allah al-Jalīlī. They stated: "It has been said that the first person to independently study the (different) subjects of *ʿilm al-Dirāyah* and write a separate treatise on it was al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī. He authored the work

1 This work is not the same as the famous one of al-Imam al-Suyūṭī. In fact, it is another work. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī states: "*Al-Durr al-Manthūr min al-Khabar al-Māthūr wa Ghayr al-Māthūr* is a large work that consists of three volumes. It was written by al-Shaykh ʿAlī ibn al-Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayn al-Dīn al-Shahīd al-Thānī al-Jubāʾī al-ʿĀmilī—born 1014 (*al-Dharīʿah*, 8/76).

2 He stated this in his editorial introduction to *Munyat al-Murīd* of al-Shahīd al-Thānī, p. 43-44 (with slight variation).

al-Bidāyah fi 'ilm al-Dirāyah. Thereafter, he went on to offer a commentary on it.”¹

2. In describing the work of al-Shāhīd al-Thānī, Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī states: “It is a short and very famous work and is considered by many researchers as the first Shīʿī work in *'ilm al-Dirāyah*. It had a great influence on what was written later on (*'ilm al-Dirāyah*.”²
3. Iʿjāz Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī states: “He is the first to author a work *'ilm al-Dirāyah*. The beginning of it starts with ‘We praise you at the beginning and the end and ask You for good care until the end...’”³
4. Muḥsin al-Amīn states: “Al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn ibn ‘Alī al-‘Āmilī al-Jubāī was the first of our companions to author a work therein in a fashionable manner.”⁴

When looking at and contemplating these sayings, we find that they revolve around two tendencies. Firstly, al-Shahīd al-Thānī did not convey anything new. In fact, he gathered (the opinions) of a number of Shīʿī authors among his predecessors. This is apparent from several texts, as Riḍā al-Mukhtārī mentioned when he spoke about the origins of writing in this field. He states:

وعلى فروض ورود الإشكال والتشكيك في بعض الموارد المذكورة آنفاً – والظاهر أنه كذلك – فمع ذلك يثبت من مجموعها أن الشهيد لم يكن أول من ألف في ذا الفن من علماء الشيعة.

Assuming there exist problems and doubts in several of the aforementioned resources (and it seems that is the case), nevertheless, all of the resources collectively prove that al-Shahīd was not the first person to write in this field from the scholars of the Shīʿah.⁵

1 They mentioned this in the introduction to the edited version of *al-Rawāshih al-Samāwiyyah*, p. 5.

2 Al-Bābilī: *Rasā'il fi Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1/22.

3 Iʿjāz Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī: *Kashf al-Ḥajb wa al-Astār 'an Asmā' al-Kutub wa al-Asfār*, p. 82.

4 Muḥsin al-Amīn: *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 1/149.

5 Al-Shahīd al-Thānī: *Munyat al-Murīd*, p. 45 (editor's introduction).

Therefore, his admitting that all the sources mentioned before this work are questionable sources is the correct opinion and what I believe, except that he (also) believed that al-Shahīd did not convey anything new.

Of those who specifically expressed this point is Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābilī. He states:

فهو أول من جمع ما كان متناثرا في الكتب والرسائل من آراء سلفه من علماء الشيعة

Therefore, he is the first to collect what was scattered in the works and treatises from the opinions of his predecessor, Shī'ah scholars.¹

The second tendency is the fact that this work is the first of its kind in its field; the Imāmiyyah have no knowledge of this field *before* this work. Also, what al-Shahīd did is merely transmit what the Ahl al-Sunnah have. The clearest example of this is what al-Karkī (d. 1076 AH) stated:

The Imāmiyyah did not have a work in *‘Ilm al-Dirāyah* because they did not have a need for it, and because the major objectives behind it were contrary to the path of the early scholars. Acting on them would bring about a negative opinion of the pious predecessors, non-reliance on them, and their being mistaken in what they viewed as authentic. This is similar to dirt thrown into clean water, causing it to become muddy. The first person to write on the in-depth science of ḥadīth from our companions was al-Shahīd al-Thānī. He summarized, and thereafter commented on *Dirāyat Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shāfi‘ī fi Risālatihi*.²

Al-Khūṭ states: “He is the first of the Imāmiyyah to write on *‘Ilm al-Dirāyah*. However, he transmitted the technical terms from the works of the *‘Āmmah* (i.e. the Ahl al-Sunnah), as mentioned by his son and others.”³

1 Al-Bābilī: *Rasā'il Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*, 1/15.

2 Ḥusayn ibn Shihāb al-Dīn al-Karkī al-‘Āmilī: *Hidāyat al-Abrār*, p. 104.

3 Al-Khūṭ: *Muḥjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 8/385.

The erudite scholar Ghulām Ḥusayn Qayṣariyyah admitted to this when he stated:

نظرا إلى أن أكثر الأقوال والآراء التي نقلها المصنف من أهل السنة والجماعة، ويلفظ (قيل) بذلنا وسعنا لتخريج الأقوال من مصادرها الأصلية والإرجاع إليها، وتفحصنا على قائلها. ولهذا كان أكثر مصادر التحقيق من كتب العامة.

Given that most of the sayings and opinions conveyed by the author are from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah. And with the word “*qīla* (it was said),” we have made every effort to resort back to and extract the sayings from their original sources and examined them accordingly. Therefore, most of the sources of inquiry were from the works of the ‘*Āmmah* (i.e. Ahl al-Sunnah).

After a few lines, he states:

We found that al-Shahīd was influenced by *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* ... This becomes apparent to those who have reviewed *Sharḥ al-Bidāyah* and *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*.¹

This second tendency is in accordance with the truth and the evidence. This is clear to anyone who reads the work *al-Bidāyah fī ‘Ilm Dirāyah*. It does not go beyond the work of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. More than one scholar of the Shī'ah themselves alluded to this. Al-Shahīd al-Thānī even mentioned the (same) examples as mentioned by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ. For example, the ḥadīth “Whoever misrepresents me intentionally, let him prepare for himself a seat in the Hellfire.” Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ

1 Introduction to the reviewed work *al-Bidāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Riwāyah* (p. 19). This work has been printed more than once, of which I have two prints. The first one is by *Markaz al-Abḥāth wa al-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyyah* (Qom). I have transmitted this text from this print. The second one printed in *Rasā'il fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* of Ḥāfiẓyān al-Bābīlī. However, the introduction of the same editor, Ghulām Qayṣariyyah, mentioned the same introduction in full and in the exact same order, except that he altered most of the words. I mentioned this so that a mistake does not occur, and that if the reader comes across the same words in one of the prints that he thinks that I transmitted it by way of meaning (i.e. not by its exact wording).

mentioned this in the section on *mutawātir* (massively transmitted) reports and al-Shahīd al-Thānī followed him and mentioned the same example.

Another example is the ḥadīth “Indeed deeds are (judged) by intentions.” Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ mentioned this when speaking about the *mashhūr* (wide-spread) ḥadīth. Al-Shahīd al-Thānī quoted the same example in the same discussion. Likewise, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ mentioned the same ḥadīth in the section on *gharābah* (rare reports) and al-Shahīd followed suit. This is in addition to the many words quoted from the work of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ.

If someone said that al-Shahīd took from his predecessors and did not take from the Ahl al-Sunnah, I say that consideration is to be given to the majority and greater portions. Al-Shahīd al-Thānī could have taken from some scholars of the Shī‘ah, such as al-Ḥillī¹ or al-Shahīd al-Awwal² (d. 786 A.H) some words or terms such as the definition of *ṣaḥīḥ*, *ḥasan*, *muwaththaq*, *ḍa‘īf*, and *mutawātir*. However, those are general and relatively easy words and terms. Definitions of the sciences of *muṣṭalaḥ* were not brought forth. Therefore, they do not represent anything in relation to what al-Shahīd al-Thānī mentioned. Also, it is not possible to judge a methodology of a group like the Imāmiyyah and establish opinions and knowledge of the sciences of *muṣṭalaḥ* through a word that has not been mentioned in the actual subject-matter unless the science is rooted and properly arranged. Only al-Shahīd al-Thānī undertook such a task in this work. Therefore, the correct opinion is that he was the first to author a work in this regard, without forgetting that most of the work is a summary of the Sunnī scholar Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ’s work.

There is an important issue that deserves attention here. That is, al-Shahīd al-Thānī stated at the end of his work *al-Bidāyah fī ‘Ilm al-Dirāyah*:

ومن أراد الاستقصاء فيها مع ذكر الأمثلة فعليه بكتابتنا غنية القاصدين في معرفة اصطلاحات المحدثين

1 Al-Ḥillī: *Muntahā al-Maṭlab*, 1:15 (in the eighth introduction).

2 Al-Shahīd al-Awwal: *Dhikrā al-Shī‘ah fī Ahkām al-Sharī‘ah*, 1:48 (under the chapter “*Ta‘rīf al-Sunnah wa Taqṣīmuḥā*”).

And whoever wants to investigate it with the citation of examples should read our work *Ghunyat al-Qāṣidīn fī Maʿrifat Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Muḥaddithīn*.¹

This statement from al-Shahīd al-Thānī proves that he has another extensive work in this chapter. However, most scholars of the Shīʿah did not mention this work. In fact, they believed that *al-Bidāyah fī ʿilm al-Dirāyah* is where this science actually commenced. In any event, whether *al-Bidāyah* or *Ghunyat al-Qāṣidīn*, there is no difference since both of them are from one author. It is beneficial to know that the work *Ghunyat al-Qāṣidīn* is missing. Abu al-Faḍl Ḥāfiẓyān documented the fact that it was missing when he stated:

لم يُعثر على نسخة من هذا الكتاب

No copy of this work was found.²

There is another important note here. Riḍā al-Mukhtārī, in his biography of al-Shahīd al-Thānī in the introduction to this work *Munyat al-Murīd* states:

وقد كتب بعض علماء الشيعة قبل الشهيد الثاني كتابا في هذا العلم، مثل: ابن أبي جمهور الأحسائي (توفي بعد ٩٠١ هـ) والذي ألف كتابه (تحفة القاصدين في معرفة اصطلاح المحدثين) قبل الشهيد بعدة أعوام.

A number of scholars of the Shīʿah have written a work on this science before al-Shahīd al-Thānī. For example, Ibn Abī Jamhūr al-Aḥṣāʾī (d. 901 AH). Also, the person who authored the work *Tuḥfat al-Qāṣidīn fī Maʿrifat Iṣṭilāḥ al-Muḥaddithīn* several years before al-Shahīd.³

Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī wrote in this regard saying:

1 P. 47.

2 Al-Bābilī: In a work entitled *Muṣannafāt al-Shīʿah fī ʿilm al-Dirāyah*, 1/67, printed among *Rasāʾil fī Dirāyah al-Ḥadīth* of the same author.

3 Introduction to *Munyat al-Murīd*, p. 44 where he mentioned a detailed biography of al-Shahīd al-Thānī.

تحفة القاصدين في معرفة اصطلاح المحدثين، للشيخ محمد بن علي بن إبراهيم ابن أبي جمهور الاحسائي، قال في آخر كتابه (كاشفة الحال) المؤلف سنة ٨٨٨هـ، عند ذكره لأنواع الحديث وأقسامه: ومن أراد الاستقصاء مع ذكر الأمثلة فعليه بكتابنا (تحفة القاصدين في معرفة اصطلاح المحدثين).

Tuḥfat al-Qāṣidīn fī Maʿrifat Iṣṭilāḥ al-Muḥaddithīn of Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Jamhūr al-Aḥsāʾī. He stated in the end of his work *Kāshifāt al-Ḥāl*—authored in the year 888 A.H—when mentioning the types and divisions of ḥadīth: “And whoever wants to investigate (it) with the citation of examples should read our work *Tuḥfat al-Qāṣidīn fī Maʿrifat Iṣṭilāḥ al-Muḥaddithīn*.”¹

We conclude from this that the Shīʿī scholar Riḍā al-Mukhtārī emulated Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī in proving that al-Aḥsāʾī has a work, the subject-matter of which concerns the sciences of *muṣṭalaḥ*, and that it was before al-Shahīd al-Thānī.

A response to this can be given based on what Abū al-Faḍl Ḥāfizyān stated: “Whoever refers back to *Kāshifāt al-Ḥāl*, he will not be able to find what al-Ṭahrānī attributed to al-Aḥsāʾī; though there exists a similar statement at the end of *al-Bidāyah* of al-Shahīd al-Thānī. However, instead of “*Tuḥfat al-Qāṣidīn*,” it comes as “*Ghunyat al-Qāṣidīn*.” What was mentioned as a mistake in the work that was edited by al-Ṭabṭabāʾī under the title *Risālah fī al-Dirāyah* of Ibn Abī Jamhūr was *Bidāyat al-Dirāyah* of al-Shahīd al-Thānī.² We can therefore conclude that his opinion—which he replicated from Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī—is incorrect. And that it was a mistake from al-Ṭahrānī.

More than this is the fact that the Shīʿī scholar al-Khuwānasārī mentioned in his work *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt* that Ibn Abī Jamhūr al-Aḥsāʾī is on the methodology of the *Akḥbārīyyah*, and that he heavily criticized him and deemed acting on all reports as something admissible. Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1320 AH) alluded to and contested

1 Al-Ṭahrānī: *al-Dharīʿah*, 18/299.

2 Al-Bābilī: *Muṣannafāt al-Shīʿah fī ʿilm al-Dirāyah*, 1/34 (printed among *Rasāʾil fī Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth*).

this in his work *Khātimat Mustadrak al-Wasā'il*.¹ Based on this, it is highly unlikely that the likes of this *Akhhbārī* authored a work in this field, especially considering the fact that he bases his methodology on the principle that all books of ḥadīth are sound and authentic, as well as attacking the methodology espoused by the Uṣūliyyah—who consider the classification of ḥadīth as something valid.

1 Al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī: *Khātimat al-Mustadrak*, 1:334-335.

6.0 A biography of al-Ḥillī and al-Khūī and an exposition of their creed and respective methodologies in their works

Before delving into the biographies, it is appropriate that I mention what Twelver Shī'ism actually is. That is, the beliefs of both Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūī.

6.1 Biography of al-Ḥillī and his methodology in *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*

His name

Al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn 'Alī Ibn al-Muṭahhar Abū Maṣṣūr al-Ḥillī—born and raised in Hillah, Iraq.¹

His birth

Al-Ḥillī said: “The nineteenth of Ramaḍān in the year 648.”²

His status among the Imāmiyyah

There is a consensus among the scholars of the Imāmiyyah regarding the virtue and greatness of al-Ḥillī. Whoever studies and reads his biography will perceive this reality. To such an extent that the appellation ‘al-‘Allāmah,’³ whenever it is

1 Al-Ḥillī: *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*, p. 109, no. 274. This is what al-Ḥillī said about himself in *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl* when he wrote his autobiography in the first section that is dedicated to reliable narrators!

2 Ibid, p. 113. He mentioned one hundred in *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl* instead of six hundred. The correct (number) is what I affirmed here from the other biographical works. The editor of the *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*, Jawwād al-Qayyūmī missed this. However, he did mention in the introduction the difference of opinion regarding his birthday: it has been said the twenty-ninth and the twenty-seventh of Ramaḍān. However, the correct date is what al-Ḥillī himself mentioned. See: p. 5 of *al-Khulāsat*. Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī in his work *Ṭabaqāt A'lām al-Shī'ah* (al-Qarn al-Thāmin: *al-Ḥaqā'iq al-Rāhinah fī al-Mī'at al-Thāminah*, p. 52) is of those who felt he was born on the twenty-seventh of Ramaḍān.

3 The term ‘al-‘Allāmah’ is the superlative form (*ism al-mubālaghah*) of ‘‘ālim (learned),’ meaning ‘very learned.’ [Translator’s Note]

mentioned in unrestricted terms (i.e. without someone's name attached to it), it refers to him, no one else.¹ His contemporary, Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī says:

شيخ الطائفة وعلامة وقته وصاحب التحقيق والتدقيق كثير التصانيف، انتهت رئاسة الإمامية إليه في المعقول والمنقول، مولده سنة ثمان وأربعين وستمائة، وكان والده قدس الله روحه فقيها محققا مدرسا عظيم الشأن.

Master of the sect and the most learned scholar of his time, an individual of accurate and critical scholarship, and a prolific author. The leadership of the Imāmiyyah ended with him in the rational and transmitted (sciences). He was born in 648 A.H and his father (may Allah sanctify his soul) was a jurist, specialist, and teacher of great rapport.²

After mentioning the words of Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, Muṣṭafā al-Tiffarishī (d. 1021 A.H) stated:

ويخطر ببالي ألا أصفه إذ لا يسع كتابي هذا ذكر علومه وتصانيفه وفضائله ومحامده، وإن كل ما يوصف به الناس من جميل وفضل فهو فوقه، له أزيد من سبعين كتابا في الأصول والفروع والطبيعي والإلهي وغيرها.

It has occurred to me that I should rather not describe him because this work of mine cannot fully encompass mentioning his knowledge, works, virtues, and praise-worthy traits. He is beyond everything that people have described about his beauty and virtue. He has more than seventy works in *uṣūl* (legal theory), *furū'* (branches of jurisprudence), science, theology, and others.³

1 For the Imāmiyyah, al-Ḥillī exclusively enjoys the appellation '*al-'Allāmah*.' Of those who have written a biography of him with this appellation and greatly praised him is 'Abbās al-Qummī in his work *al-Kunā wa al-Alqāb* (2/468, no. 492). See *Mu'jam al-Rumūz wa al-Ishārāt* of Muḥammad Riḍā al-Māmaqānī (p. 285) and *Rijāl Baḥr al-'Ulūm* (2/257). When al-Khūṭī and others mention the appellation '*al-'Allāmah*,' it only refers to al-Ḥillī, as will be seen later.

2 Al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī ibn Dāwūd: *Kitāb al-Rijāl (Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd)*, p. 2, no. 466.

3 Muṣṭafā al-Ḥusaynī al-Tiffarishī: *Naqd al-Rijāl*, 2/69.

There is no difference of opinion regarding his greatness and that he is one of the pillars of knowledge in the Imāmī school.¹

His teachers

Al-Ḥillī was a student of numerous teachers, among them:

1. His father, Sadīd al-Dīn Yūsuf – he narrates from him *ijāzatan* (i.e. he received a license to transmit from him).
2. His uncle, Najm al-Dīn Ja'far ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, the author of *Sharā'ī' al-Islām*.
3. The philosopher al-Khawājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the minister of Halagu Khan.
4. Maytham al-Baḥrānī, the commentator of *Nahj al-Balāghah*.
5. Aḥmad ibn Ṭāwūs al-Ḥasanī.
6. 'Umar al-Katbī al-Qazwīnī al-Shāfi' (Dabīrān).

And many others.²

His students

Many scholars were students of al-Ḥillī, among them:

1. Kamāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn Aḥmad al-Shaybānī (famously known as Ibn al-Fuwaṭī).

1 Thāmir Kāzīm: *Muqaddimat Iḍāḥ al-Ishtibāh*, p. 33; Abū 'Alī al-Ḥā'irī (d. 1216 AH): *Muntahā al-Maqāl*, 2/475 (no. 831); al-Ḥurr al-Āmilī: *Amal al-Āmāl*, 2/81 (no. 224); al-Khūṭ: *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, 6/171 (no. 3213). The best biography I found of him was by Baḥr al-'Ulūm in his *al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah*, 2/257, and Muḥsin al-Amīn in *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 5/396 (no. 865).

2 Muḥsin al-Amīn: *A'yān al-Shī'ah*, 5/396 (no. 865); al-Ḥillī: *Muqaddimat Iḍāḥ al-Ishtibāh* (ed. Thāmir Kāzīm), 35; and the references mentioned above.

2. His son, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan, the author of *Īdāḥ al-Fawā'id fī Sharḥ Ishkālāt al-Qawā'id*.
3. Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Jurjānī.
4. Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Ma'iyah al-Ḥillī, the author of *'Umdat al-Ṭālib*.

And many others.¹

His writings

There has been much talk regarding the number of al-Ḥillī's works, to such an extent that Baḥr al-'Ulūm (d. 1212 A.H) transmitted for us the statement of al-Khuwānasārī (d. 1313 A.H), the author of *Rawḍāt al-Jannāt*, who transmitted from several commentators of *al-Tajrīd*:

أن للعلامة نحواً من ألف مصنف كتب وتحقيق

Al-'Allāmah has written and edited approximately one thousand works.

And in *Lu'lu'at al-Baḥrayn* of Yūsuf al-Baḥrānī:

لقد قيل إنه لو وزع تصنيف العلامة على أيام عمره من ولادته إلى موته فكان قسط كل يوم كراساً

It has been said that if the works of al-'Allāmah were apportioned over the days of his life from the time he was born until his death, it would be (equal to) a book every day.²

Listing the number of works will be unnecessary lengthy and so I will restrict them to the following:

1 Ibid.

2 Baḥr al-'Ulūm: *Rijāl Baḥr al-'Ulūm (al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah)*, 2/260.

1. *Muntahā al-Maṭlab fī Taḥqīq al-Maṭlab*
2. *Talkhīṣ al-Marām fī Maʿrifat al-Aḥkām*
3. *Mukhtalif al-Shīʿah fī Aḥkām al-Sharīʿah*
4. *Al-Durr wa al-Marjān fī al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣiḥāḥ wa al-Ḥisān*
5. *Al-Sirr al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-ʿAzīz*
6. *Al-Alfayn al-Fāriq bayna al-Ṣidq wa al-Mayn*
7. *Minhāj al-Karāmah fī al-Imāmah*

Al-Ḥillī has three works in narrator evaluation:

1. *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl fī Maʿrifat al-Rijāl* (one of the subjects of this study)
2. *Īdāḥ al-Ishtibāḥ fī Asmāʾ al-Ruwāt*, the objective of this work is to distinguish between narrators by accurately identifying their names. Like *Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*, this work is not for ḥadīth narrator criticism. In this work, he collected 756 names and added 29 *kunyas* (agnomens).¹
3. *Kashf al-Maqāl fī Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*, in describing this work, al-Ḥillī states:

ذكرنا فيه كل ما نقل عن الرواة والمصنفين مما وصل إلينا عن المتقدمين، وذكرنا أحوال المتأخرين والمعاصرين، ومن أراد الاستقصاء فعليه به، فإنه كاف في بابه.

We have mentioned in it everything that has been transmitted of the narrators and writers from that which has reached us of the early-day scholars. We have mentioned the conditions of the latter-day and contemporary (writers and narrators). Whoever wants a thorough understanding should use this work; it alone is sufficient in this category.²

1 This number is according to the version (of the book) edited by Thāmir Kāzīm ʿAbd al-Khafājī.

2 Al-Ḥillī: *Muqaddimat Khulāsat al-Aqwāl*.

Therefore, as described by al-Ḥillī, it is a detailed and comprehensive work on narrators' biographies. Many times, al-Ḥillī refers (some 57 times) to it in *al-Khulāsah* for more (information).¹

Kashf al-Maqāl is among the works that have been lost.² Baḥr al-'Ulūm (d. 1212 A.H) states:

ولم يظفر به أحد فيما أعلم

To the extent of my knowledge, no one has successfully obtained a copy of it.³

Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī (d. 1356 AH) states:

وهو غير موجود في هذه الأعصار، بل الظاهر، أنه لم يقف عليه أحد من علمائنا الأختيار

It is not to be found in these times. In fact, it seems that none of our outstanding scholars have come across it.⁴

His death

Al-'Abbās al-Qummī (d. 1359 A.H) states: "He died on Saturday, the twenty-first of Muḥarram in the year 726 A.H. He was buried near Amīr al-Mu'minīn عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام. The author of *Nukhbat al-Maqāl* said:

1 Refer to biography numbers 71, 91, 118, 131, 174, and many others.

2 It is necessary to note the following: Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, the contemporary of Ibn al-Muṭahhar has a work entitled *Kashf al-Maqāl bi Ma'rifat Ahwāl al-Rijāl*. In his work *al-Dharī'ah*, Āqā Buzurg al-Ṭahrānī rejected the notion that Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī has a work with a similar name to al-Ḥillī—whom al-Ṭahrānī regards as a teacher of Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī. Al-Ṭahrānī also alludes to the fact that the work of al-Ḥillī exists in what he titled *al-Khazānah al-Riḍawiyyah*. Thereafter, he also regards as farfetched that this work is actually al-Ḥillī's. As he says, maybe it is Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī's! He mentions that the work of al-Ḥillī, *Kashf al-Maqāl*, consists of four volumes. Refer to: *al-Dharī'ah*, 18/63 (nos. 688 and 689).

3 Baḥr al-'Ulūm: *Rijāl Baḥr al-'Ulūm (al-Fawā'id al-Rijāliyyah)*, 2/278.

4 Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samā' al-Maqāl fī 'ilm al-Rijāl*, 1/219.

سبط مطهر فريدة الزمن
ولد رحمة ٦٨٤ وعز ٧٧ عمره

وآية الله يوسف الحسن
علامة الدهر جليل قدره

The sign of Allah Yūsuf al-Ḥasan -

The grandson of Muṭahhar, the unrivaled of his time -

The erudite scholar of the time, exalted is his rank -

Born as a mercy in 684 and lived his life for 77 cherished years.¹

A description of the work *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl fī Maʿrifat al-Rijāl*

In describing his work, al-Ḥillī said:

تصنيف مختصر في بيان حال رواة ومن يعتمد عليه، ومن ترك روايته ولم نطل الكتاب بذكر جميع الرواة، بل اقتصرنا على قسمين منهم، وهم الذين اعتمد على روايتهم، والذين أتوقف عن العمل بتقلهم، أما لضعفه أو لاختلاف الجماعة في توثيقه وضعفه، أو لكونه مجهولا عندي. ولم نذكر كل مصنفات الرواة، ولا طولنا في نقل سيرتهم ورتبته على قسمين وخاتمة: الأول: فيمن اعتمد على روايته، أو ترجح عندي قبول قوله.

الثاني: فيمن تركت روايته، أو توقفت فيه. ورتبت كل قسم على حروف المعجم للتقريب والتسهيل.

The authoring of an abridged work in explaining the conditions of narrators², who can be relied upon, and whose narrations should be abandoned... We will not prolong the work by mentioning all the narrators. In fact, we will restrict ourselves to only two types: those whose narrations are relied upon, and those whom I desisted from acting upon their narrations, either because of a narrator's weakness; or because there is a difference of opinion from the group (i.e. scholars) regarding his reliability or weakness; or because he is *majhūl* (unknown) according

1 'Abbās al-Qummī: *al-Kunā wa al-Aqāb*, 2/470. Refer to the biography of al-Ḥillī in the introduction to *Īdāh al-Ishtibāh* of Thāmir Kāzīm. He mentions a minor difference of opinion about his death date.

2 The reference mentions 'narrators' (i.e. without the definite article 'al'). Perhaps it should be 'the narrators.'

to me. We did not mention all of the writings of the narrators and neither did we elaborate in narrating their biographies... I organized it into two sections and a conclusion:

1. Regarding those whose narrations are relied upon, or, according to me, his statement is acceptable.
2. Regarding those whose narrations are abandoned, or I came to a standstill.

I organized every section in alphabetical order to facilitate its understanding and make easy (i.e. for the reader).¹

Al-Ḥillī mentioned 1779 biographies in his *al-Khulāṣah*, divided over two sections. He concludes his work with ten beneficial points related to the sciences of narrator evaluation.

Two points of caution regarding the work *al-Khulāṣah*

1. The scholars of the Imāmiyyah differ and have two views regarding the authoritative value (*ḥujjiyyah*) of the latter-day scholars' rulings of *tawthīq*, at the head of them is al-Ḥillī.² There are those who accept their rulings of *tawthīq* and there are those who reject them, such as al-Khūī. This issue will be dealt with later. Based on this, the benefit of al-Ḥillī's *al-Khulāṣah* in relation to those that do not consider his rulings of *tawthīq* is only in his transmission of the previous scholars' statements, as well as his transmission from books that were lost and hence inaccessible to the latter-day scholars. This is what al-Tustarī alluded to in his statement:

1 Muqaddimat *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*.

2 Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Kalbāsī mentions in his *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah* a number of issues in accepting the statements of al-Ḥillī and the difference (of opinion) therein. See: *Radd Tawthīqāt al-'Allāmah*, 1/219, pp. 222, 223, 456; 2/347, 348, 360, 367; 3/362; *Taṣḥīḥāt al-'Allāmah*, p. 516; *Tawthīqāt al-'Allāmah*, 4/374; Abū al-Hudā al-Kalbāsī: *Samā' al-Maqāl*, 1/225. See: al-Gharīfī: *Qawā'id al-Ḥadīth*, p.191.

It is only good for that which we could not find a basis for.¹

The statement of al-Tustarī is not general. In fact, the authenticity of the narration of al-Ḥillī is required for the statements he transmits, as mentioned by al-Khūṭ—as is still to come.

2. Many scholars of the Imāmiyyah have raised concerns regarding the action of al-Ḥillī in his work *al-Khulāṣah*. For example, after dividing the work into two sections, we find him mentioning, at times, those who are at an impasse regarding his statement in the first section. It would have been more appropriate for him to have included it in the second section specific to weak narrators and those whose statements are rejected or there is a standstill about them. Whatever has been said in the first chapter can be said in the second chapter. This is considered to be of the faults against al-Ḥillī.²

1 Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī: *Qāmūs al-Rijāl*, 1/24 (chapter 16). Refer to p. 29-30 for (other) important issues. Al-Tustarī mentions on p. 35 and subsequent pages the differences between the methodology of al-Ḥillī in *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl* and *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī*. He also examined the meaning of majhūl between the two. This is what Ja'far al-Ṣubḥānī quoted without explicit reference to the fact that it is from the words of al-Tustarī, as mentioned in *Kulliyāt fi 'ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 120.

2 Al-Kalbāsī: *al-Rasā'il al-Rijāliyyah*, 4/96; *Rijāl Baḥr al-'Ulūm*, 2/277

6.2 Biography of al-Khūṭī¹ and an exposition of his methodology in Muʿjam al-Rijāl

His Name

Abū al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlī Akbar ibn Hāshim al-Mūsawī al-Khūṭī

His Birth

Al-Khūṭī states: “I was born in the city of Khoy, one of the cities of Azerbaijan, on the fifteenth night of Rajab, in the year 1317 A.H. I grew up there with my parents and brothers. I mastered *qirāʾah* (Qurʾān recital), calligraphy, and other foundational sciences.

His Emigration

He states: “A major difference of opinion occurred between the Ummah on account of the incident of *al-Mashrūṭah*² and so my late father emigrated because

1 I took this biography from al-Khūṭī's *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* wherein he has an autobiography (3/23). Before it, he states: “Following the tradition of narrator evaluation scholars' (*rijāliyyīn*) wherein they set forth their own biographies when their name reaches its turn, I have briefly explained my autobiography when the print of this work (*muʿjam*) reaches that point.” I adjusted and altered some of sections of the biography.

2 It is written as “*Mashrūṭah*” *Muʿjam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*. And it is also called “*al-Mashrūṭah*,” if the wording in *al-Muʿjam* is not a mistake. Sālim al-Ḥasanī said about it in an article: “The *Mashrūṭah* movement began in 1905 CE and was led by two of the most senior religious scholars in Iran, namely, al-Sayyid Muḥammad al-Ṭabṭabāʾī and al-Sayyid ʿAbd Allah al-Bahbahānī. The movement tried to rely on the religious authority in Najaf to take a stance against the Qajar dynasty, which was opposed to the movement's goals in establishing a Shūrā Council. However, a schism occurred between supporters and opponents in the *Hawzah ʿIlmiyyah*. Al-Shaykh Kāẓim al-Khurāsānī, al-Nāʾinī, and others were at the head of *al-Mashrūṭah*'s supporters. Kāẓim al-Yazdī led the opposition and with him was Kāshif al-Ghiṭāʾ. The conflict between the two parties was intense and painful, and its effects were reflected on the *Hawzah ʿIlmiyyah* in Iran. This could be seen when Faql Allah al-Nūrī emerged as a strong opponent because he identified the existence of deviations that crept into the reality of the movement. Al-Shahrestānī, who is one of the advocates of *al-Mashrūṭah*, says: “The rivalry between al-Yazdī and al-Shaykh al-Khurāsānī reached its apex in the year 1907 AH as did the height of its brutality.....

of it to al-Najaf al-Ashraf in the year 1328 A.H. I joined up with him in the year 1330 A.H accompanied by my older brother, ‘Abd Allāh al-Khūṭī, and the remaining members of my family.

His Teachers

He states: “When I arrived in al-Najaf al-Ashraf, at the Islamic University of the Imāmī Shī‘ah, I commenced with reading the literacy sciences and logic. Thereafter, I read the instructional works in *uṣūl* and *fiqh* by several of the institute’s leading scholars, among them was my late father. Then I attended graduate studies “research abroad (*baḥth al-khārīj*)” under senior lecturers in the year 1338 A.H. I will specifically mention five of my teachers among them, namely Āyat Allah Faḥ Allah (famously known as Shaykh al-Sharī‘ah al-Aṣfahānī), Maḥdī al-Māzindarānī, Ḍiyā‘ al-Dīn al-‘Irāqī, Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Aṣfahānī, and Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Nā‘īnī. I mostly studied *fiqh* and *uṣūl* under the last two. In fact, I attended their complete courses in *uṣūl*, as well as a number of *fiqh* works for a number of years. I used to relate back both of their research to a number of those present. There were a number of great personalities therein. Al-Nā‘īnī (may Allah have mercy on him) was the last teacher I accompanied.

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The scope of division expanded, and its effects included the circles of the Ummah. To such an extent that students of the religious sciences from the supporters of the *Mashrūṭah* were subjected to many harassments that reached the point whereby they did not go for an entire year to visit Karbalā, Kūfah, or the Masjid al-Sahlah, fearing for their lives. This dispute developed when the tribes entered to support the position of the conflicting parties. It is narrated that al-Yazdī asked the Iraqi tribes to attend al-Najaf al-Ashraf, and so they came armed and surrounded him whilst denouncing the *Mashrūṭah*. There would be thousands of people marching with him when he attended ṣalāh, while only a small amount would read ṣalāh behind al-Khurāsānī. The most dangerous thing that the events of the *Mashrūṭah* bore were the contradictory *fatāwā* (plural of *fatwā*) between the two parties. The split almost led to killing (one another), since each group considered the other to be outside of Islam.” From an article of his entitled “*al-Marja‘iyyah al-Dīniyyah Dirāyatan fī Taḥawwulāt mā Qabl al-Sittīnāt*” (the eighth article from al-Ṣadr’s website. See *Muḥsin al-Amīn’s A’yān al-Shī‘ah* wherein he mentioned that al-Shaykh (Faḍl Allah al-Nūrī) was executed in Tehran because of this incident (2/604)! Also see Muḥammad al-Ṭarīḥī’s work *Dalīl Mu‘jam al-Rijāl wa al-Ḥadīth*, p. 12.

His Authorizations to Transmit (Ijāzāt)

He states: “In (ḥadīth) narration, I have teachers who have granted me authorization to narrate from them the works of our Imāmī scholars, and others. Therefore, I narrate via a number of chains our Four (Primary) works (*al-Kāfī*, *al-Faqīh*, *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Istibṣār*), the other *jawāmi‘* (*al-Wasā’il*, *al-Biḥār*, *al-Wāfi*), and other works of our scholars (*aṣḥāb*) (may Allah sanctify their secret). Among these chains is what I narrate from my teacher, al-Nā’īnī, from his teacher, al-Nūrī, via the chains that have been explained in the epilogue of his work *Mustadrak al-Wasā’il* (famously known as *Mawāqī‘ al-Nujūm*); all of which end with the infallible and pure Ahl al-Bayt.

His Teaching

He says: “I taught much, and gave many lectures on jurisprudence, legal theory, and exegesis. And trained a large number of prominent students in the *Ḥawzah* of al-Najaf al-Ashraf. Accordingly, I gave two complete fiqhi lectures (research abroad) on *al-Makāsib* of al-Shaykh al-A’zam al-Anṣārī. I also taught a number of other works, and two complete sessions on *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*. On twenty-seventh of Rabī’ al-Awwal, 1377 AH, I began teaching the *furū‘* of *al-‘Urwah al-Wuthqā* of Faqīh al-Ṭā’ifah, Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭabṭabā’ī al-Yazdī, beginning with *Kitāb al-Ṭahārah* such that I taught *al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd* until I reached *Kitāb al-Ijārah*. I started this on the twenty-sixth of *Rabī’ al-Awwal*, 1400 A.H ... During the previous years, I began teaching the *Tafsīr* of the Noble Qur’ān for a while until several harsh conditions prevented me from completing what I wanted to. How I desired to develop and further spread this lesson!

His Writings

He says: “I have authored a number of works in *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, and *rijāl* (narrator evaluation); some of which have been printed and others remain in manuscript form. Herewith are the works that have been printed (title/no. of volumes/subject):

1. *Al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān/1/tafsīr*
2. *Ajwad al-Taqrīrāt/2/uṣūl*
3. *Takmilat Minhāj al-Ṣāliḥīn/1/fiqh*
4. *Mabānī Takmilat Minhāj al-Ṣāliḥīn/2/fiqh*
5. *Tahdhīb wa Tatmīm Minhāj al-Ṣāliḥīn/2/fiqh*
6. *Al-Masā'il al-Muntakhabah/1/fiqh*
7. *Mustahdathāt al-Masā'il/1/fiqh*
8. *Ta'liqah 'alā al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā/1/fiqh*
9. *Risālah fī al-Libās al-Mashkūk/1/fiqh*
10. *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth/21* volumes have been printed and the remaining are under print. I completed writing it in the blessed month of Ramādān in the year 1389.¹

And many others.

His Students

Considering the fact that al-Khūī remained the head of the Islamic seminary in al-Najaf for a long time, many students graduated at his hands who (eventually) became famous in this time. Among them: 'Alī al-Sīstānī (Iraq), Muammad Ishāq al-Fayaḍ (Iraq), Jawwād Tabrizī (Iran), Muḥammad Riḍa al-Khalkhālī (Iraq), Muḥammad Āṣif al-Muḥsinī (Afghanistan), Ḥusayn Waḥīd al-Khurāsānī (Iran), 'Alā' al-Dīn Baḥr al-'Ulūm (Iraq), Muḥammad al-Rūḥānī (Iran), Yūsuf al-Īrawānī (Iran), Muḥyiy al-Dīn al-Gharīfī (Bahrain), Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (Iraq), and others.²

1 Al-Khūī mentions until here about himself.

2 This was stated on the official website of the al-Khūī Foundation.

His Death

Murtaḍā al-Riḍawī states while mentioning the time of this death: “At half past two after ḡuhr on Saturday 8 Ṣafar, 1413 A.H. He was buried in his last place of residency next to al-Imam Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام in one of the rooms of *al-Ṣaḥn al-‘Alawī al-Sharīf*, which was the entrance to *Masjid al-Khaḍrā’* adjacent to *al-Ṣaḥn al-Sharīf* at four o’clock after midnight on Sunday, the ninth of Ṣafar.”¹

Some Statements Regarding Him

In describing al-Khūī, Ḥusayn al-Shākirī states: “The final *marja’* (religious authority to follow) that al-Najaf al-Ashraf lived through was led by the Supreme Authority (*al-Marja’ al-‘Alā*) al-Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khūī. With his death, al-Najaf lost its relative leadership. This was in the year 1413 AH/1992 CE.”²

Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī, the individual responsible for abridging *Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, states: “He is *al-Marja’ al-‘Ām* (the General Religious Authority) of the Shī’ah” (of the Twelvers) “and a teacher at the *al-Ḥawzah al-‘Ilmiyyah* in al-Najaf al-Ashraf. All of the students from the Shīī academic seminaries studied at his hands, and the hands of his students. His opinions regarding *fiqh*, *Tafsīr*, *uṣūl*, and (ḥadīth) narrators are the area of academic focus among the academic circles of the ḥawzāt (plural of *hawzah*); our teacher and leader in *al-Intifāḍah al-Sha’bāniyyah* against the Baathist Party in Iraq in 1991. He died after the *Intifāḍah* in extremely mysterious conditions in the year 1992/1413. The Baathist authorities prevented his funeral and imposed martial law, fearing another revolution, and so he was buried at night.”³

1 Murtaḍā al-Riḍawī: *Ma’a Rijāl al-Fikr*, 1:146 (footnote).

2 Ḥusayn al-Shākirī: *Tadwīn al-Ḥadīth wa Tārīkh al-Fiqh*, p. 110.

3 Muḥammad al-Jawharī: *al-Mufīd min Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 719 (with some alternation in some of the words). See: *Majjalat Turāthīnā* (affiliated with *Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt ‘Alayhim al-Salām* of *Iḥyā al-Turāth* in Qom), volume 28 (where they mentioned something of his condition in an obituary statement in the journal’s editorial).

From among all the teachers of the Najaf school of thought, he alone held the title *Za'im al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyyah* (the Leader of the Islamic Seminar).¹

An Introduction to al-Khūī's Work *Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* and a Detailed Explanation of the Ṭabaqāt of Narrators

Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth is regarded as the most important work in the intellectual legacy left behind by al-Khūī considering the sheer amount of effort that went into it, its size, and the fact that so many people after him rely so heavily on it.

The Number of Volumes

The *Mu'jam* of al-Khūī is twenty-four volumes. This is the edition of the work I relied upon.²

Ḥusayn 'Abd Allāh Marī states that the *Mu'jam* is twenty volumes. He does not mention the source of its print.³

'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī mentions that the *Mu'jam* is twenty-three volumes. It was printed in al-Najaf, Beirut, and Iran. Muḥammad al-Ṭarīḥī and Ja'far al-Subḥānī agreed with him.⁴

The reason for the difference of opinion in the number of volumes goes back to what Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī states in his abridgement of al-Khūī's *Mu'jam* about

1 Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Ṭarīḥī: *Dalīl Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 11.

2 'Abd al-Ṣāhib al-Khūī said this in his introduction to the book when describing the changes in the form and publication of the book: "Organizing the parts of the book into 24 parts instead of 23 parts because of the many additions that followed the first four parts." The book was printed in *Maṭābi' Markaz Nashr al-Thaqāfah al-Islāmiyyah* and bound at *Mu'assasat Mahr 'Ā'im* (fifth edition—1413 A.H/1992 AD).

3 Ḥusayn 'Abd Allāh Marī: *Muntahā al-Maqāl fī al-Dirāyah wa al-Rijāl*, p. 187.

4 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī: *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 61; Muḥammad Sa'īd al-Ṭarīḥī: *Dalīl Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*, p. 32; Ja'far al-Subḥānī: *Kulliyāt fī 'Ilm al-Rijāl*, p. 146.

the twenty-third and twenty-fourth volumes. He states: “Before I commence with my work (in this abridgment), I have incorporated the twenty-fourth volume of the *Mu’jam*” (which is printed separately in al-Najaf al-Ashraf and only contains amendments) “into the one before it, the twenty-third volume. Other than the amendments, it contains additional information from a number of individuals... The volume specific to amendments has not been incorporated into the volumes before it in the Beirut edition, and neither has it been printed separately. The number of volumes for this edition is twenty-four” (before the Iranian edition was released) “is twenty-three volumes.”¹

The Number of Biographies

The edition I relied on contains 15706 biographies. Al-Faqlī mentions the number of biographies for them in the work is 15676. With this, the difference in the number of narrators between the two editions is only thirty.

Al-Khūṭ’s Methodology

Al-Khūṭ employed the following methodology in his work *Mu’jam al-Rijāl*:

1. He identified the narrator’s *ṭabaqah* by mentioning who he narrated from (i.e. his teachers) and who narrated from him (i.e. his students). However, al-Khūṭ restricted himself in this regard to (only) four works, namely *al-Kāfī*, *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Istibṣār*, and *al-Faqīh*. This led many to negate the *samā’* of individuals if the narration is not found in these four works. This is because they did not realize that al-Khūṭ only relied on these and no other works that are transmitted with *asānīd*, such as most of al-Ṣadūq, al-Ṣaffār, and others’ works.
2. He evaluated the *asānīd* of praiseworthy and objectionable narrations so as to know the most authentic narration of a (particular) narrator. However, what al-Khūṭ can be criticized for is the fact that he generally

1 Muḥammad al-Jawāhirī: Introduction to *al-Mufīd min Mu’jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth*.

did this only when objecting to narrators of the Imāmiyyah. This will be explained in detail later.

3. Similarly, he mentioned the number of narrations of a narrator in the four works and, at times, their places (of residence).
4. He endeavored to distinguish between homonymous names (*al-asmā' al-mushtarakah*).
5. Al-Khūṭī's work generally obviates the need to refer to the (other) works that are considered primary in the science of narrator evaluation by the Imāmiyyah, such as *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, *Fihrist al-Ṭūsī*, *Rijāl al-Najjāshī* (*al-Fihrist*), *al-Kashshī*, *al-Barqī*, and others. This is because he mentions the views of his predecessors regarding the narrator (in question), discussed them, and (eventually) offers his preponderant view.
6. Al-Khūṭī mentions his judgment similar to the ways al-Ṭūsī offers in his *Mashyakhah*. In other words, the ruling of al-Ṭūsī on a narrator when he is of those mentioned in *Mashyakhah al-Ṭūsī* or in *al-Fihrist*. This is also true for the narrations of al-Ṣadūq.
7. The biographies included in the *Mu'jam* are different with respect to the amount spoken about some of the narrators. Some biographies are merely one or two lines. Others are tens of pages.
8. In the introduction to his work, al-Khūṭī objects to a number of principles that the scholars before him used. He repeats these objections in different places as well. Accordingly, he would fill it up in one place and mention what he did not mention in another place as needed. All of which produced a response, explanation, or an inference for us for many of the principles related to narrator evaluation according to the Imāmiyyah. I produced all of this into research, most of which will come throughout this study.¹

1 For more, see: *Mu'jam al-Khūṭī*, 1/11; *Uṣūl 'Ilm al-Rijāl* of 'Abd al-Hādī al-Faḍlī, p. 61; *Muntahā al-Maqāl* of Ḥusayn Marṭī, p. 187; *Dalīl Mu'jam Rijāl al-Ḥadīth* of al-Ṭarīḥī, p. 23.

