

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**General Contexts on The
Reliability of
The Four Books in The View of
Al-Mujahid**

Translation and Commentary by

Habib Zaatar



الْعَتَبَةُ الْعَبَّاسِيَّةُ الْمُقَدِّسَةُ
قِسْمُ الشُّؤْنِ الْمَذْكُورِ وَالثَّقَافِيَّةِ
الْمَكْتَبَةُ وَكَانَ الْمَحْطُوطَاتُ
مَرْكَزُ الشَّيْخِ الطُّوسِيِّ مَدِينَةُ الدِّرَاسَاتِ وَالتَّحْقِيقِ

**The Research: General Contexts on The Reliability of The
Four Books in The View of Al-Sayed Muhammad
Al-Mujahid**

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A Statement from The Scientific and Preparatory Committees For the First International Scientific Conference: (Al-Sayyid Al-Mujahid and His Scientific Legacy)

All praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds, and may His peace and blessings be upon his noble messenger Muhammad and his pure progeny.

The sky of science and knowledge in the history of the Shias is filled with shining stars, whose bright light guides the lost. These great men carried the banner of truth and the torch of guidance and repelled ignorance. They are like how Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s) described as reported by Imam Al-Askari (a.s), "The scholars of our Shias are fighters at the border with Ibleesla and his warmongers, preventing them from advancing upon our weak Shias, and from them being overcome by Ibleesla and his adherents, the Nasibis (Hostile Ones). Indeed! So, the ones from our Shias who stand for that would be superior to the ones who fight against the Romans, and the Turks, and the Khazar, a thousand (upon a) thousand times,

because he defends the Religion of ones who love us, but the other one defends their bodies"⁽¹⁾.

They spread the divine knowledge of Ahl al-Bayt (a.s) and lead their Shias to the correct and upright rulings, making them the cause of guidance and the apparent villages as mentioned by Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s), "So the one who accepts our merits that we are the apparent town between them and their Shias, the town which Allah has Blessed therein, the apparent villages is the Rasool, and the transferring (transmitting of Hadeeth) from us to our Shias, and scholars of our Shias, to our Shias. And the Words of the Exalted: and We Apportioned the traveling therein, so the traveling is like the knowledge, journeying with it nights and days. The example of the one who journeys from the knowledge during the nights and the days from us to them (Shias), regarding the Permissible and the Prohibited, and the Obligations and the Judgements, there is safety in it when it is taken from him, safety from the doubt and the straying, and then transferring from the Prohibited to (become) the Permissible, because they are taking the knowledge from the ones whom it is Obligated for them to take it from them, with the recognition. (This is) because they are the people who inherited the Knowledge from Adam to where it has ended, children of Mustafa, from each other. It has not ended up to you, but it has ended up with us, and we are the children, the Chosen ones, not you and those that

(1) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p5.

resemble you, O Hassan!"⁽¹⁾.

Thus, the school of Ahl al-Bayt produced the most eminent and distinguished scholars the Islamic nation has seen, despite the repression, restrictions, and fears that the Shias faced. The last four centuries are considered the most virtuous academic era and the brightest in development and prosperity, which saw great productivity. The grand scholars of this era left behind many, many significant works, which should intensify scientific efforts to revive their memory by presenting examinations and studies and holding conferences and seminars about the most prominent of those personalities.

Among the brightest stars of the thirteenth century is one of the masters of jurisprudence, the excellent and comprehensively knowledgeable scholar, a competent scholar in the principles of jurisprudence, the great leader, Al-Sayed Muhammad Al-Tabatabaei, nicknamed: Al-Mujahid. Allah has combined unique aspects and numerous characteristics in his honorable personality, such as his knowledgeable family and noble lineage. His father was Al-Sayed Ali Al-Tabatabaei, known as the author of Riyad Al-Masa'il and his mother was Al-Wahid Al-Bihbahani's daughter. Muhammad Ali al-Tabatabaei and Abd Al-Hussain Al-Tabatabaei were his uncles. He married the daughter of his teacher, Al-Allama Bahr Al-'Ulum.

(1) Al-Ihtijaj, v.2, p.63.

He was also blessed with God-given talents, a scientific environment, and a spiritual atmosphere that distinguished his scientific personality. In addition to that, his brilliance and intelligence aided his swift achievements. He studied in the holy seminary of Karbala under his father, in Najaf under Al-Sayed Muhammad Mahdi Bahr Al-'Ulum, and in the holy city of Kadhimiya under Al-Sayed Muhsin Al-A'raji. He then went to the Islamic seminary of Isfahan, in which he engaged in teaching and writing for thirteen years. Hence, he attended various Islamic seminaries and gained his knowledge from several religious schools.

After his father's death – the leading Shia authority – he succeeded his father and became the leading Shia authority and leader of the Islamic seminary. His noble presence in Karbala's Islamic seminary helped it flourish with knowledge and development. Many scholars attended his classes trained under him – some of which were his father's former students, the most important of whom are:

Al-Sheikh Al-Ansari

Dawud b. Asad Allah b. 'Abd Allah Burujirdi

Ibrahim Musawi Qazwini

Muhammad Salih Baraghani

Mulla Hasan b. Muhammad 'Ali Yazdi

Mulla Husayn Wa'iz Tustari

Muhammad Sharif Mazandarani

Mulla Safar 'Ali Lahijani Qazwini

Al-Sayed Muhammad Shafi' Japalaqi

Ahmad b. 'Ali Mukhtar Gulpaygani

'Ali b. Muhammad Wali Qa'ini

Mirza Nasr Allah Mashhadi

Mirza Muhammad 'Ali b. Muhammad Husayn Shahristani

Mirza Muhammad Rida b. Muhammad Baqir Qazwini al-Khuwaysini.

Another significant role Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid had was his fatwa of jihad to protect the Shia borders in the Russo-Persia war. This critical historical incident is considered a significant event in his honorable life, and an important historical turning point in his biography, even more, in the history of Shias. Thus, it becomes clear why he is nicknamed: Al-Mujahid (The Warrior).

Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid left behind various highly valuable works such as:

Mafatih al-usul

Al-Wasa'il fi l-usul

Risalat hujjiyyat al-zann

Al-Manahil

'Umdat al-maqal fi tahqiq ahwal al-rijal

Al-Masabih fi sharh al-Mafatih li l-Kashani

Jami' al-'Aba'ir fi l-fiqh

Kitab fi al-aghlat al-mashhura

Al-Misbah al-bahir fi radd al-yadiri wa ithbat nubuwwat nabiyyina al-tahir

Based on the important historical roles, unique characteristics, and overlooked aspects Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid possessed, the Sheikh Al-Tusi Center for Studies and Examinations committed to holding an international scientific conference on the authority of Al-Sayed Muhammad Al-Mujahid Al-Tabatabaei. The conference aims to commemorate his memory and to preserve his tremendous hard work. In addition, it intends to supplement the Islamic library and fill scientific gaps by shedding light on various aspects of his life, biography, and sacrifices.

Astonishingly, Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid's works have not been published or examined until now. It is also surprising that there are no books, studies, theses, or scientific articles about Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid in Arabic, Persian, and foreign languages. The historical sources are scarce with information about him, and some of them, including errors and inaccurate information regarding the jihad fatwa. Therefore, the importance of holding this conference is undeniable.

The most important objectives of the conference are to shed light on the overlooked aspects of Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid's life and his scientific heritage, examine and publish his most important works, and study his role in the Russo-Persia war to respond to the false and fabricated allegations about his fatwa.

The conference's scientific committee followed meaningful and accurate steps to hold the conference in the best and most complete way. The activities of the conference were divided into the following categories:

The First: Document Examinations of Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid's Works

Most of Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid's works are neither published nor examined and still in the form of manuscripts. Since some scientific centers have announced that they have begun to examine his two books in the field of Principles of Jurisprudence: (Mafatih Al-Usul) and (Al-Wasa'il Fi l-Usul), we turned to his most important remaining scientific works. Al-Sheikh Al-Tusi Center has also made great strides in examining Al-Manahel. This will be the first time these works will be examined and published, except for 'Umdat al-maqal, which was previously published.

The Second: Studies About Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid

Several independent studies have been written about Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid, in which we have tried to complete the various aspects of his scientific personality. This was through writing about the most important fields he mastered and highlighting his role in developing these sciences, such as Jurisprudence, Principles of Jurisprudence, Biographical Evaluation, and Hadith. Moreover, some studies looking at the most overlooked aspects of the personal and academic life of Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid have been written.

The Third: Researches and Articles

Researches and articles written on the personality of Al-Sayed Mujahid – especially the scientific ones –are varied with the variety of sciences and knowledge. Honorable students and eminent figures in the Islamic seminary and several Iraqi university professors wrote various researches. It must be noted that the participants were from different countries, including Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Kuwait.

The Fourth: Media Work About Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid

This category consists of numerous works, the most important of which was preparing a documentary film on the scientific and historical life of Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid.

In conclusion, we would like nothing but to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to everyone who contributed and supported the formation of this scientific conference, even if it was just a prayer. In particular, we would like to mention the supreme religious authority, His Eminence Al-Sayed Ali Al-Husseini Al-Sistani, who like Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid, gave a fatwa of jihad without we would not have been able to hold such conferences. We pray to the Almighty to prolong his life.

We also thank the legal guardian of the Al-Abbas's (p) Holy Shrine, His Eminence Al-Sayed Ahmad Al-Safi, and all the honorable directors and officials of the Al-Abbas's (p) Holy Shrine.

Thanks are due to all the parties that contributed to the establishment of this conference, from institutions, scientific centers, and Islamic libraries, and we would like to mention in particular:

1. The Heritage Revival Center, (Al-Abbas's (p) Holy Shrine – Manuscript Department)
2. The Manuscripts Copying and Cataloging Center, (Al-Abbas's (p) Holy Shrine – Manuscript Department)
3. Karbala Heritage Center, (The Department of Islamic and Human Knowledge Affairs at the Al-Abbas's (p) Holy Shrine.)

We also thank the honorable Sheikhs and figures in the scientific committees, the technical cadres in the General Secretariat, the staff at Al-Sheikh Al-Tusi Center, and all the hands that contributed to the establishment of the conference. They have our sincere gratitude

and appreciation, and we ask Allah Almighty to accept their deeds and greaten their rewards, and our last supplication is that praise is to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

General Contexts on The reliability of The Four Books in The View of Al-Mujahid

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Abstract

The Shias consider the four books—al-Kafi, Tahdhib, al-Istibsar, and Man la yahdur—to be their most reliable sources of hadiths, referring to them as (al-Kutub al-Arba'a) “the Four Books”. One of the many topics in the field of Biographical Evaluation that has been debated by Shia scholars is the extent of the reliability of the Four Books. In this article we will look at the view of Al-Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali Al-Tabatabaei (b. 1180/1766 – d. 1242/1827), also known as al-Sayyid Muhammad Al-Mujahid.

This piece consists of an introduction talking about the place of Hadith in the Shia school of thought along with information about the Four Books and their authors, what can be used as evidence to prove the certainty about the issuance and the reliability of all hadiths in them, the answer and view of Al-Sayed Muhammad Al-Mujahid, and finally a conclusion summarizing the ideas mentioned.

القرائن العامة على صحة الكتب الأربعة

في نظر السيد المجاهد عليه السلام

حبيب زعتر

الحوزة العلمية - قم المقدسة

الملخص

الكتب الأربعة، مصطلح يُراد منه الكتب الحديثية الأربعة التي حظيت بمكانة خاصة بعد القرآن الكريم عند الشيعة الإمامية والتي تعد المصدر الرئيسي للفكر الإمامي بعد القرآن الكريم، وهي: الكافي، التهذيب، الاستبصار ومن لا يحضره الفقيه، وقد وقع الخلاف بين علماءنا الأعلام في صحة ما فيها بمعنى اعتداد جميع ما في الكتب الأربعة من أحاديث رويت عن أهل البيت معتبرة ومقطوعاً بصدورها عن الأئمة عليهم أفضل السلام، وفي هذا البحث نتعرض لنظر السيد الأجل العلامة، المجاهد بالدم والخبر السيد محمد بن علي الطباطبائي الحائري (1180 - 1242 هـ).

يحتوي البحث على مقدمة تعريف على الكتب الأربعة ومصنفاتها، ومقصدتين نذكر أدلة المثبتين ونظر السيد محمد المجاهد في المقام، وخاتمة في تلخيص الأفكار تكون نتيجة للمقالة.

Introduction

The word "hadith" is derived roots in Arabic means: new, story, and narration. Hadith and riwaya are generally distinct but are used synonymously in most cases in hadith terminology; however, they are sometimes used differently, where Imams' (a.s) sayings are called hadith and narrations of any topic from anyone other than Imams (a.s) are called riwaya.

The holy Quran is Islam's first and most important source of knowledge and the base for divine ideology. Nonetheless, the holy Quran contains only general principles of man's prosperity in this life and the one after. For this reason, scholars of the Shia doctrine have asserted that denying the Hadith and claiming that "the Book of Allah suffices us" will result in nothing but distortion of Islam and denial of the necessary aspects of Islam. Although many Sunni scholars will come to defend this claim, it is the opposite of their actions as they cling on to the sayings of the Prophet. Even more, some of their sects use various methods to prove laws, believes, etc. because of the lack of sources useable. All those methods are highly unaccepted in the school of Ahl Al-Bayt (a.s). Thus, to comprehend the major tenets of Islam, one must first become acquainted with the teachings of the Prophet and his pure progeny; the twelve Imams and their mother our lady Fatima Al-Zahra, peace be upon them all.

Therefore, we see that Allah (s.w.t) the all wise and knowing refer in his holy book to the importance returning to the teachings of the Prophet (p.b.u.h & his family) which are illustrated in Hadith. Some of these verses are:

﴿ مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ وَمَا إِلَانَكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فخذوه وما نهاكم عنه فانتهوا واتقوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۞ ﴾

"Whatsoever the Messenger gives you take it and whatsoever he forbids you abstain (from it)." 59:7

﴿ وَلَوْلَا أَنْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَآءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ. وَمَنْ يُشَاقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۞ ﴾

"Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only a revelation revealed." 53:3-4

﴿ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ۞ ﴾

"And We have sent down unto you that you may explain clearly to them what is sent down to them and that they may give thought." 16:44

﴿ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ۞ ﴾

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow." 33:21

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾.

"Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and obey those of you who are in authority (the Imams of Ahlul-Bayt)." 4:59

﴿وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا﴾.

"Allah wishes only to remove all evil deeds from you O Family of the Prophet and to purify you with a thorough purification." 33:33

In accordance to the teachings of the holy Quran the Infallibles (a.s) themselves order to embrace hadith and sayings:

Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s): "Know the status of people to us according to their narrations from us"⁽¹⁾.

Imam Al-Sadiq (a.s.) narrated from his father Imam Al-Baqir (a.s), "My dear son. Know the status of the Shia according to their narrations and knowledge. For surely the knowledge is understanding of the Hadith and by understanding the Hadith a believer will be elevated to the highest level of faith."⁽²⁾

The Prophet (p.b.u.h & his family) on the day of Mina said,

(1) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.96, p.252.

(2) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.150.

"May Allah bloom the face of a slave of God who hears my words and understands them and pass it those who did not hear it. So, how many people who transfer knowledge without understating it, and how many people who transfer knowledge to the one who is more learned than them"⁽¹⁾.

Muawieh Bin Ammar asked Imam Sadiq (a.s), "There is a person who narrates so many Hadith from you and spreads it among people. He makes the hearts of your followers strong. On the other hand, there is another worshipping person who is also one of your followers but does not narrate that many Hadith from you. Which one is more virtuous? The Imam replied, 'The one who narrates many of our Ahadith and distributes them among people and strengthens the hearts of our followers is more virtuous than one thousand worshippers'"⁽²⁾.

A man from Ansar (the habitants of Medina who helped the Migrants) used to attend the sessions of the Prophet (S), listen to his sermons in awe, yet he could never remember the sermons of the Prophet (S) after he left. When he complained to the Prophet (S) the Prophet (S) said pointing to the man's hand, "Seek the help of your hand i.e

. write my words down"⁽³⁾.

(1) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.184.

(2) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.145.

(3) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.152.

Imam Al-Kathim (a.s) narrates that his grandfather; the Prophet (p.b.u.h & his family) stated: "Whoever Muslim memorizes forty Hadith that Muslims need in the matter of the religion on the day of Judgement the Almighty God will raise him as a learned scholar"⁽¹⁾.

Imam Ali (a.s) was counseled by the prophet (p.b.u.h & his family), "O Ali! Whoever from my Ummah memorizes forty Hadith seeking by that the pleasure of the Almighty God and the Hereafter, the Almighty God will associate him on the Day of Judgement with the Prophets and the truthful and the witnesses and the righteous people, and how good associates are they"⁽²⁾

In accordance to these teachings, we see that the followers of Ahl Al-Bayt (a.s) put forward blood and sweat – literally– to collect and compile hadiths. This path continued in preserving, studying, and using them throughout the occultation of the twelfth Imam, may Allah (s.w.t) hasten his return.

المؤثر العظيم الذي لا يزول
الذكر المكنون في القرآن الكريم

(1) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.153.

(2) Bihar Al-Anwar, v.2, p.153

The Four Books

The Four Books (Al-Kutub Al-Arba‘a) are considered by Shias to be their most reliable and valuable sources of hadiths. This is portrayed by the vast amount of importance given by Shia scholars towards these books. The oldest text to call these books “the Four Books” was Zayn al-Dīn ibn Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī ibn ‘Aḥmad al-‘Amilī al-Juba‘ī, better known as Al-Shahid al-Thanī (ibn911/1506 – d. 966/1559). He states, “I also give him permission to transmit **the Four Books** that are in the fundamentals of hadith and the doctrine’s foundation, which are: Al-Tahdhib and Al-Istibṣar compiled by Abi Ja’far Al-Tusi, Man la yahduruh al-faqih compiled by Al-Shaykh Al-Saduq Abi Ja’far Muhammad ibn Babawayh, and Al-Kafi compiled by Al-Shaykh Abi Ja’far Al-Kulayni...”⁽¹⁾.

(1) Rasā'il al-Shahīd al-thānī, v.2, p.494.

Al-Kafi

The Author

Al-Kafi was compiled by the reliable and trustworthy, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub ibn Ishaq Al-Kulayni Al-Razi. He passed away in 328 A.H. or 329 A.H. (939 or 940 A.D.). He started his path as a religious scholar and jurist (Faqih) in Al-Rey in Iran. He then moved to Baghdad and became head of the religious and legal scholars of the Imamis during the time when Al-Muqtadir was Caliph. Al-Kulayni era was cotemporary to that of the Sufara' of Al-Mahdi (the agents who acted on behalf of the Hidden Imam during the lesser occultation, Al ghaiba al-sughra).

The Book

Al-Kafi is a collection of the traditions taught by the Prophet and the Imams and handed down to the Muslim Community by the companions and students of the Imams. The name al-Kafi means "that which is sufficient" that is, the book was intended to be a comprehensive collection of Imami-Shi'i traditions. This is explained by al-Kulaini in his introduction to the work, "...You wanted to have a book which would be sufficient (for your religious needs) (kafin), which would include all kinds of knowledge ('ilm) of religion...". This collection consists of three main parts: Al-Usul,

Al-Furu', and Al-Rawda. The first – Al-Usul – contains traditions that deal with epistemology, theology, history, ethics, supplication, and the Quran. The second part contains traditions that deal predominantly with practical and legal issues. The third and last part contains nearly 600 miscellaneous traditions, many of which are lengthy letters and speeches, not arranged in any particular order.

Other than the fact that this book had been completed during the life time of the special representatives of Imam al-Mahdi, which increases the veracity of his collection of hadith, there are many factors that distinct this work. These factors include: the naming of the whole chain of narrators up to the infallible figure (a.s) and the method of collecting hadith in each chapter is by the order of the authenticity and the clarity of their meaning.

Man la yahduruh al-faqih

The Author

Man la yahduruh al-faqih is the work of Al-Shaykh al-Saduq; Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Babawayh Al-Qomi (ibnafter 305 /917 — d. 381 /991). He was the leading traditionist during the 4th Century A.H and one of the most greats traditionists and scholars of the Shia seminaries. He earned the title of Al-Shaykh Al-Saduq for his renowned reputation for truthfulness.

There is an interesting story surrounding the circumstances of his birth. When his father was in Iraq, he met Abul Qasim al-Husain ibn Rawh, the third agent of the hidden Imam. During their meeting he asked the latter several questions. Later he wrote to al-Husain ibn Rawh asking him to take a letter to the Hidden Imam. In this letter he asked for a son. Al-Husain sent back an answer telling him that they (the Hidden Imam and al-Husain) had prayed to God to ask Him to grant the request and he would be rewarded with two sons. The eldest of these sons was Muhammad, who is the author.

The Author was highly educated by his father – who was a highly respected scholar and figure in Shia seminaries –, and came into close contact with all the leading Shia scholars in Qom and studied under many of them.

Al-Shaykh Al-Saduq devoted all of his energy to the collection, compilation, and teaching of traditions until his death in Al-Rey in 381 A.H. He was probably more than 70 years of age. He left behind him many collections of traditions which are of great importance.

The Book

Despite the fact that many of his other works are extremely important, this book must be regarded as his most important work. As its title implies *Man la yahduruh al faqih* was concerned with practical and legal issues, as the translation of the title is the book for the one who does not have a Faqih before him. Some translate the title as Every man his own lawyer⁽¹⁾.

In his introduction to the book al-Shaykh al-Saduq explains the circumstances of its composition and the reason for its title. He was at Ilaq (an area near Balkh), where he met Sharif Al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah known as Ni'mah. During one of their many discourses Ni'mah mentioned a book compiled by Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi entitled *Kitab man la yahduruhu al-Tabib* (The book for the one who does not have a doctor before him) which is comprehensive, albeit small. So, he asked Al-Saduq to compile a similar book about jurisprudence and to name the book *Kitab Man la yahduruh al-faqih* so that he can refer to it as a reliable book and act according to it when needed.

(1) As translated by E. G. Brown.

One of the features of this work that stresses that it was conceived as a reference book to help ordinary Shias in the practice of the legal requirements of Islam is the omission of many isnads of the hadiths. The isnads – or the chain of authorities by which the hadith had been received from The Fourteen Infallibles (a.s) – was, and is, an all-important feature of the science of traditions. Therefore, this book was not meant to be a work for scholars, who would want to check the authorities. Scholars could check the isnads in the numerous individual studies compiled by al-Shaykh al-Saduq.

Another method used by the author is not to leave the hadiths speak for themselves, as he frequently draws rules from them and explains their meaning. Also, this book is not arranged in chapters (kutub) but rather it was ordered in smaller sections (abwab), with the various categories such as fasting and pilgrimage following closely after each other. As indicated, its lack of isnads and al-Shaykh al-Saduq's own explanations make it an extremely useful compendium of law for ordinary Shias.

Tahdhib Al-Ahkam & Al-Istibsar

The Author

The Author of two of the four books was none other than Shaykh Al-ta'ifa (the chief of Shias) Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Al-Hasan Al-Tusi. He was born in Tus, Khorasan in Ramadan 385 A.H /October 995, four years after the passing of Al-Shaykh al-Saduq. After spending twenty-three years in Khorasan, where he started his studies, he moved to Baghdad. During his time in Baghdad, he studied under the top Shia authorities such as Al-Shaykh Al-Mufid, Al-Sharif Al-Murtada, and Ibn Al-Ghada'iri.

His immense knowledge naturally paved way for him to become the top authority. His knowledge was so impressive that the Abbasid caliph of the time eventually appointed him to the principal chair of theology in Baghdad, where nearly three-hundred students would attend his classes. It is even believed that the ideas and works of Al-Shaykh Al-Tusi had overshadowed Shi'a scholarship and no one opposed his opinions until the time of Ibn Idris (d. 597 /1201).

After Tughril-bek the leaders of the Seljuks entered Baghdad in 447 killed many scholars and burnt down Al-Shaykh Al-Tusi's home and valuable library, Al-Tusi left and went to Najaf. In Najaf he established a Shia scholarly circle which led to the formation of the

Islamic Seminary of Najaf leading it to be the capital for Shia education, which it has maintained down to the present day.

Al-Shaykh al-Tusi lived for 12 years in Najaf and passed away in Muharram, 460 /December, 1067. According to al-Shaykh's will, he was buried in his house, which is now a mosque named Jami' al-Shaykh al-Tusi. It has been reconstructed and repaired several times, and is used by the scholars of the Islamic Seminary of Najaf as a place for holding lectures.

The Books

As it seems Tahdhib Al-Ahkam fi Sharh Al-Muqni'a 'a was the first book authored by Al-Shaykh Al-Tusi, because no other works by him is cited in this book, but this book is frequently cited in the rest of his works. The translation of the books name is "The Refinement of the Laws (as Discussed) in Terms of the Explanation of the Sufficiency". "The Sufficiency" or Al-Muqni'a was a work on hadith by Al-Shaykh Al-Mufid, Al-Tusi's teacher.

The purpose for writing this book was an apologetic motivation. As mentioned by Al-Shaykh al-Tusi in the preface of the book, there was a misconception surrounding the Shia community at the time. This doubt was that Shia sources were mostly, if not all apparently contradictory hadiths. This doubt led to strong criticisms by opponents of the Shia school of thought and the loss of belief by some ignorant Shia. Thus Al-Shaykh al-Tusi wrote a well-argued exposition for Al-Shaykh Al-Mufid's al-Muqni'a, which contains the grounds of

المؤتمر العلمي الدولي الأول
اليسع الحجا هدر في العجمي

The book was written with two different methods that differ in their way of explanation as well as in the way the hadiths are cited. Both methods share Al-Muqni'a's order in topics, elaboration on all its problems by an appeal to reliable sources, referring to widely accepted hadiths among the Shia school of thought, where contradicting hadiths are interpreted away or dismissed as unreliable.

The first method used in the book was in the chapter of taharat (or cleanliness), as the author occasionally appeals to sources such as what later came to be called combined consensus (al-ijma' al-murakkab), the views of senior scholars and some reasoning. It has also cited some hadiths from Sunni sources without mentioning their chains of narrators. In this part of the book, there are various Quranic and literary issues (related to Arabic grammar and lexicology) as well as views in *usul al-fiqh*.

In fear of the book becoming too lengthy and digressed from its main purpose – writing a work in defense of Shia Hadith –, the author altered to a different method in the rest of the book. Thus, he only cited Shia hadiths and reconciling their conflicts. He then decided to cite all or almost all hadiths regarding the laws of sharia regardless of issues raised in al-Muqni'a. This is why he added the sections on ziyara (pilgrimage) in the first three volumes of the book.

The last of the four books; Al-Istibsar, is – as it could be

understood from its introduction – a summary of Tahdhib Al-Ahkam, or at least heavily relies on it. However, Al-Istibsar has its own features regarding the general purpose of compilation as well as the chaptering and the order of hadiths in each chapter.

The Argument

Although the Four Books are considered highly accepted and generally reliable, Shia jurists differ on whether all hadiths in these books are reliable and were issued by the Infallibles (a.s). One view believes that all hadiths in the Four Books are reliable, and all of them are definitely attributed to the Infallibles (a.s)⁽¹⁾. There is also a view that believes in the reliability of all hadiths in the Four Books, but do not have certainty about their issuance from the Infallibles (a.s)⁽²⁾. A third and more popular view is that the hadiths in these books are only probably attributed to the Infallibles (a.s), and they are reliable only if their chains of transmitters fulfill certain conditions, which are disagreed about, or have context that gives certainty that they are reliable⁽³⁾.

Those who believe in the authenticity of the hadiths of the Four Books use it as a reason to disprove the need of biographical evaluation. While on the other hand those who disagree with the idea believe that the best way to distinguish the authentic from the

(1) Al-Fawā'id al-madanīyya, p. 112; Hidāyat al-abrār, p. 17.

(2) Al-Wāfiya fi usūl al-fiqh, p. 166; Minhāj, p. 166.

(3) View Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīth, vol. 1 p. 87-97.

fabricated narrations is by the methods in biographical evolution and studying the chain of narrators.

Those who believe in the reliability of all hadiths support their case by referring to the three authors' statements in their forewords of each book. They understood from the statements that the three authors believed the narrations on the authority of the Infallibles (a.s) are sound (Sahih)⁽¹⁾. It is important to note that the meaning usage of the term sound by past scholars is different to the one used nowadays. From early scholars' point of view, a sound (sahih) hadith is a narration whose issuance from Imams (a) is certain and would be proved from any possible way. Therefore, they simply classified hadiths to reliable and unreliable. Nowadays sound (sahih) is used for the narrations that have a chain of reporters only consisting of Shi'a and trustworthy reporters.

Al- Kulayni states, "...You wanted to have a book which would be sufficient (for your religious needs) (kafin), which would include all kinds of knowledge ('ilm) of religion, which would be adequate for the student, and to which the teacher might refer. Thus, it could be used by anyone who wanted knowledge of religion and of legal practice ('amal) **according to sound traditions (athar) from the truthful ones (the Imams)** ... Praise be to God who made writing of the requested book possible and I hope it would be as that you requested"⁽²⁾.

(1) Wasil Al-Shia, v30, p.195.

(2) Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 5.

Al-Shaykh Al-Saduq states, "... because I found it appropriate to do so. I compiled the book without isnads (asanid) so that the chains (of authority) should not be too many (–and make the book too long–) and so that the book's advantages might be abundant. I did not have the usual intention of compilers (of books of traditions) to put forward everything which they (could) narrate but **my intention was to put forward those things by which I gave legal opinions and which I judged to be correct**"⁽¹⁾.

Al Tusi states in Al-Tahdhib, "...I mention every issue, then I infer it, either by the apparent meaning of the [verses of the] Quran, its explicit meaning, its content, its evidence, or **by the Sunnah, which have certain authenticity, or has been frequently reported, or the reports [about the Infallibles (a.s)] which have clues that indicate their soundness...** Then I put forward what contradicts and opposes them, and I show the manner of dealing with the situation ..."⁽²⁾. And in Al-Istibsar he states, "They asked me to abstract it [Al-Tahdhib] and to devote my attention to collecting and summarizing it... **and to follow the method I used in the big book...**"⁽³⁾.

(1) Al-Faqih, vol.1, p.3.

(2) Al-Tahdhib, vol.1, p.3.

(3) Al-Istibsar, vol.1, p.3.

The View of Sayed Al-Mujahid⁽¹⁾

Let it be known that a group of our companions wrongly believe that the narrations available in the Four Books; Al-Kafi, Al-Tahdhib, Al-Istibsar, and Man la yahduruh al-faqih are all certainly issued [by the Infallibles (a.s)] and are recognized as authentic. Thus, knowing the status of its narrators and the chain [of narrators] as a whole – when relying on the narrations – is not needed. And more than that, it is permissible to rely on them even if their chain of narrators consists of liars, the dispraised, and the slandered. They allege that a group of dignified companions such as Al-Kulayni, Al-Saduq, and others have testified that they are all authentic.

This is an erroneous belief. Firstly, because the mere claim of a group that the narrations are certainly issued does not necessarily give certainty to others, even if they were dignitary and trustworthy, neither rationally or normally.

As for the first [rationally], it is because if rational association is proven, it means that one of the two matters do not separate from the other, just as the number four cannot be separated from the fact that it is an even number or the separation of body from space. Therefore, it is obvious that the claim is false, because it is possible that a group

(1) Mafatif Al-Uusl, p.329 – 330.

reports that they have certainty about it [the issuance of the narrations] without others having certainty.

As for the second [normally], it is because if the two matters were normally inseparable the opposite would not happen, and the consequent is false consequently so is the premise. This is because the meaning of “normally inseparable” is that one of the two matters do not separated, even if it was possible. An example of this notion is the possibility of a mountain turning into gold, yet it is out of the ordinary. As for the falseness of the consequent, it is because many groups of dignitary and trustworthy scholars have obtained certainty about numerous topics and reported about their certainty, yet other scholars who were informed about their certainty did not themselves gain certainty about the topics. This is why they ask them for the reason (proof) of their certainty about the topic and do not approve the topic just because there are groups who are sure about it.

If the litigants insisted that there is a concurrence [between the two matters], we would match with the fact that they have to believe in that the reliability of reported consensuses if it was testified by a group of noble authorities. Also, they would have to act with the ruling noble authorities if they have certainty with that ruling. It cannot be stated that they abide by the stated, because what is known from their method and their works otherwise. How is that true, and they have strongly slandered those who claim the reliability of consensus and prove Sharia rulings without narrations?! It would be nothing but pure contradiction.

Secondly, because the group's statement about the reliability of the narrations is opposed by several things. The first is that most scholars do not give care to the statement nor do they take it into consideration. Therefore, if what was mentioned about the reliability of all the narrations in the Four Books was acknowledged and true, then the many scholars would use it to omit the field of biographical evaluation and would not be in need of studying about the chain of narrators and describing them as correct, good, etc. The falseness of the consequent is obvious for those who reviews their work. If the method of the scholars was not enough to prove the claim false, then it is at least enough to oppose it. With this how is it possible to claim knowledge and certainty by the statement alone?!

It cannot be stated that perhaps the reason of the writing in the field of biographical evaluation and the research about the chain of narrators is not precisely know to us, because we say this skepticism should not be given any attention, as it is known that the reason for studying the classification of the narrations is because the statements do not prove the reliability of the narrations.

The second is that it has been proven by the reports and the testimony of the great scholars that there are fabricated narrations and a need to "separate the wheat from the chaff", which the litigants admit to. It is highly unlikely, and even undeniably impossible to distinguish between the narrations without making a mistake and an error. This is a fact whether the scholar distinguishing was one of the owners of the four hundred principles, the author of the four books, or

anyone else. And in most cases when the fabrication is not distinguished, the possibility is open to every single narration. Therefore, the only way to distinguish is to evaluate the chain of narrators and the narrator's credibility.

The third is that obtaining certainty that all the narrations in the Four Books are undoubtedly issued is far-off. This is because certainty about the issuance of narrations usually does not happen unless it is frequently reported or possesses context that proves its issuance, and the availability of one of the two in the narrations of the four books is unusual.

the fourth is that some of the narrators who reported the sayings in the Four Books may have qualities that prevents certainty in the credible of the narration, such as the reporter being a known to lie, relies on weak sources and Mursal⁽¹⁾ narrations, and the similar qualities that are mentioned in the field of biographical evaluation. The evidence for this is that if a person you knew to be very dishonest and was a big liar reported a story, then a trustworthy person told you that the reported story was true you would be in shock and might even believe that the trustworthy person was mistaken.

In one word they claim that all the narrations in the four books are all certainly issued is undoubtedly invalid.

(1) The narration where one or more reporters are omitted in the chain to the Infallible (a.s).

Commentary

Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid started the topic by bringing up the opposing view that all the narrations in the four books are reliable. Then he points out to only one of the many evidences they bring up to prove their claim⁽¹⁾. The evidence that is pointed out to here is considered by many to be the strongest. In summary they claim that the authors of the Four Books testify that their work only consists of narrations that are certainly attributed to the Infallibles (a.s). So, there are two matters here; the first is that the authors believe in the reliability of the narrations in their books, and the second is that their believe should give us knowledge as well that the narrations are reliable.

To show that this argument is false, usually the topic of the first matter is discussed, but Al-Sayed brings up two points focusing on the second. The first point depends on knowing that the certainty used here means: the belief which a person possesses and does not even have the slightest doubt about; 100% sure. Al-Mujahid does elaborate on the topic after finishing the first point, but it was not translated here in hope it will have an individual article, because of the significance of the topic.

(1) Al-Hurr Al-Amili stated twenty-two, view Wasil Al-Shia, v.30, p.249-266.

Anyhow, the first point mentioned proves that there is no association between the three authors' reports of them having certainty about the reliability of the narrations and others gaining certainty about the topic. This is because the association can be pictured in two manners. The first is logically, such as the association between the number four and it being an even number, sun and light, water and wetness. In a nutshell, the logical association is the association between two things that can must coexist and are impossible to separate. This makes it clear that there is no logical association between the two matters (the authors' certainty and others' certainty), because it possible to imagine, let alone it happening, that they have certainty and others do not.

The second is normally or usually, such as humans not being able to jump thirty meters high or the earth and its movement. Hence, the two matters associated are possible to not coexists, yet it is out of the ordinary. In the case it is not out of the ordinary or unusual for others to not gain certainty about the issuance of the narrations by the certainty of the authors.

After the first point is mentioned Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid brings up the fact that if they insist on their claim then they must accept the reliability of Ijma' Al-Manqul (reported consensus), which is when a scholar does not search the opinions of other scholars himself, rather he relies on the report of another scholar about the existence of a consensus among jurists on a certain ruling. They must also accept the ruling of jurist who claim they have certainty about their ruling.

This is because they believe in the mentioned association. However, upon knowing their slandering of consensus and copying jurists it becomes clear that they do not accept such notions.

As for the second point the author brings up four cases that contradicts with reality of the opposing claim:

The first is the fact that generations of scholars after the three authors continued to study and expand the field of biographical evaluation and the study of the narrations available in the Four Books to see if they were reliable or not. This means that they did not agree with the report of certainty in issuance mentioned in the introductions of the books.

The second it is very unlikely that the authors were able to distinguish all the narrations that were sound and certainly issued by the Infallibles (a.s).

The third is that certainty about the issuance of any narration does not occur unless the narration was either frequently reported or had clues and context that give assurance of its issuance. Both factors are far off to be available for all the narrations in the Four Books.

The fourth is there is no doubt that some of the narration chains stated in the Four Books consists of uncredible narrators or untrustworthy reporter. Therefore, their availability causes doubt in the narration's reliability.

It must be stressed that the stated points put forward by Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid can be discussed.

As for the first point, the claim is that it gives knowledge and certainty differed about. Some – such as Al-Mujahid– claim it as being one–hundred percent sure and having not even the slightest of doubts about the topic. Others claim it to be sureness about the topic, even if it was not one–hundred percent, as the percentage of doubt is usually overlooked by rational people. Therefore, picturing gaining knowledge according to the second definition is possible unlike the first. In addition, if the other contexts are put forward then it would make the case more likely.

As for the second point the four cases can all be challenged. The first with the claim that the study and growth of the field of biographical evaluation by scholars does not contradict with the reliability of the Four Books. This is because there are other sayings available in other books that might need the stated field. It is also likely that the scholars who searched about the chains of transmitters and identify the reliable from non–reliable in the Four Books misunderstood the introduction.

The second is challenged with acknowledging the difficulties to distinguish all the narrations that were sound, it was still possible, even probable for someone like the three authors who were devoted in their works.

The third is challenged with the fact that there were contexts available during the period of the three authors that could and did inherit certainty in the issuance of the narrations.

As for the last claim, its inaccuracy becomes obvious after acknowledging what was stated before; a sound (sahih) hadith is a narration whose issuance from Imams (a.s) is certain and would be proved from any possible way. Thus, the authors with the availability of proper contexts and proof can prove the saying is authentic, even if the reporters were considered liars and untrustful. This can be seen in our daily lives, as people who are not usually believed by community will be believed in if there was proper proof and context to back their claim.

Conclusions

- The Four Books (Al-Tahdhib and Al-Istibsar compiled by Abi Ja'far Al-Tusi, Man la yahduruh al-faqih compiled by Al-Shaykh Al-Saduq Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Babawayh, and Al-Kafi compiled by Al-Shaykh Abi Ja'far Al-Kulayni) are considered to be the most reliable collections of Shia Hadiths.
- There is a disagreement between Shia scholars (mostly between Akhbaris and Usulis) on whether all the narrations in the Four Books are sound and certainly issued by the Infallibles (a.s).
- The main evidence used to prove the soundness of all the narrations in the Four Books is the statements stated by the three authors in which they are claimed to have testified that they have certainty about issuance of the narrations in their books.
- Al-Sayed Al-Mujahid disagrees with concept that all the narrations in the Four Books are all sound and brings up two points to alter the oppositions case.
 - The two points brought up are to disprove the notion that if the authors of the Four Books have certainty, then others should as well.

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