



Are the majority of Shi'a ahadith narrated by exaggerating Mughaalis?

- by Ayatullah Sayyed Munir al-Khabbaz

In the Name of Allah, Compassionate to all, Merciful to the believers.

May His blessings and peace be upon the most honourable Prophet and messenger, Muhammad and his benevolent and pure progeny.

There is a statement by some people that most narrations that describe ***the characteristics of Ahlul Bayt (a) in the Shi'a Imami books of hadith are exaggerated ghuluw-based narrations***. As a result, it is not possible to rely and depend on these books [in their entirety], because they include *ghuluw-based* exaggerated narrations about Ahlul Bayt (May Allah SWT's blessings and peace be upon them all).

In the context of answering and discussing this statement, we shall mention a number of points:

Firstly: It is necessary to define the term “*ghuluw*” (*religious exaggeration*) – so that we can judge whether the narrations reported in the books of hadith are really *ghuluw* narrations or not. So what does *ghuluw* mean?

When we witness Shi'a scholars of *Rijaal - (the science of narrators)* - such as *al-Kashhi, al-Najashi and Shaykh al-Tusi* describing certain narrators as being Mughaalis (religious exaggerators), or that they have *ghuluw* beliefs, such as Muhammad bin Aruuma, or Muhammad bin Sinan, among others; so we ask: what does this *ghuluw* mean?

If we refer to the book “*Al-Qaamus fi 'Ilmil Rijaal*”, by *al-muhaqqiq al-Tustari* (May Allah SWT have Mercy on him) - one of the very well-versed scholars in this science - one finds that he defines the “*ghuluw*” in question, to be: “*belief in the lordship - i.e. rububiyya - of the Imams (peace be upon them)*”.



In other words, to believe that they were Gods. Or to believe that they were Prophets, and that an Imam is a Prophet; or to believe that their love alone is sufficient and if one loves them, then they do not need to fulfil religious obligations or stay away from sins.

This is the true reality of what ghuluw is. And various narrations from Ahlul Bayt (May Allah SWT's blessings be upon them all) attest to this meaning. Among them is the narration reported by Shaykh al-Saduq, through his chain from Ibrahim bin Abi Mahmud, in which he says:

"I asked [Imam] al Ridha (a): O son of the Messenger of Allah [SWT], we have received narrations concerning the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful, Amir Al-Momineen, and yourselves Ahlul Bayt (a), and they have been narrated by those who oppose your Imamah (the Mukhalifeen); [meaning that the narrators who reported them were not Imami Shi'as; rather they were non-Imami opposers of your leadership], and we have not found such narrations amongst [the ahadith] that have been narrated from yourselves [i.e. the Imams pbut], so should we adhere to them in our faith?"

He (a) responded: *"O Ibn Abi Mahmud, our opposers have fabricated three types of narrations concerning our virtues. The first type of narrations are those that have ghuluw [exaggeration]; the second are those that have taqdir [meaning that belittle their rank]; and the third are those that openly defame our enemies. So, when people hear narrations that exaggerate and have ghuluw regarding us, they label our followers as disbelievers and kafir and accuse them of believing us to have independent Lordship."* So notice he is making ghuluw to be equal to the belief in the lordship of the Imams. He (a) continues: *"When they hear narrations that belittle our rank and our status, the taqdir in our position, they believe in them, and if they hear narrations which defame our enemies by names, then they defame us by name."* [Al-Saduq, Muhammad ibn 'Ali: "Uyuun Akhbaar al-Ridha", v.2, pg. 272]

As a result, we conclude that ghuluw means to believe that the Imams (a) are Gods, or to say they are Prophets, or to believe that their love and to follow them alone suffices a person from needing to perform religious obligations and from having to stay away from sins.



When we survey the narrations, which we find in the books of hadith, we do not come across a single reliable, considerable and authentic narration in terms of its chain of narrators, which has such [ghuluw] content that would lead us to say that the majority of [our ahaadith] are ghuluw-based, exaggerative narrations.

However, there is an individual view adopted by [Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Walid](#), the teacher of Shaykh al-Saduq (May Allah SWT have mercy on them). He believed that to reject the fact the Prophet (May Allah SWT send blessings on him and his family) could unintentionally make a mistake (*nafyu sahw*) is the first degree of ghuluw (religious exaggeration). At that, he considered rejecting the fact that the Prophet could unintentionally make a mistake or to overlook a matter to be ghuluw; although, this was his personal view.

The evidence behind the fact that this was a personal view is that no book has ascribed this view to anybody other than Shaykh al-Saduq and his teacher Muhammad ibn al-Hassan ibn al-Walid.

This means that the mainstream view, and the definition of ghuluw according to our righteous scholars, is the first meaning which we explained.

This is the first point.

Secondly: When one says that the majority of our narrations are narrations of ghuluw, this person is either a jahil, an ignorant, who has no knowledge about our narrations, or God forbid, he is a liar.

This is because when we take the oldest book of hadith that we have, which is Al-Kafi of Shaykh al-Kulayni, we see that Al-Kafi is divided into [Usul al-Kafi](#) and [Rawdhatul Kafi](#).

Rawdhatul Kafi consists of a few volumes, all of which are related to the rulings of worship and transactions.



Then, we come to the *Usul al-Kafi*, which includes chapters about:

- knowing Allah (SWT) (ma'rifatul-Allah) and His attributes;
- chapters on knowing the Prophet (saw), and
- chapters about knowing Ahlul Bayt (a).

When we come to the chapters regarding knowing Ahlul Bayt (a), we find that many of them are related to:

- providing special evidence from the Holy Prophet (saw) about them; and
- describing their personal characteristics and personalities, virtues and praiseworthy traits.

However, we have **not** found any narrations that bear *ghuluw*, if there were any *ghuluw* based narrations. If there was, then the proportion and the percentage compared to the narrations that described the Ahlul Bayt (a) and the characteristics of the Ahlul Bayt (a) is very, very low.

Then how can someone come to say that the majority of ahadith about Ahlul Bayt (a) in the books of hadith are narrations that bear *ghuluw*?

We challenge any truthful person who has performed a complete survey and research and reached to this alleged conclusion.

Thirdly, when one says that the majority of our narrations are based on *ghuluw*, this means that there must be a methodology that they base this claim on; in other words, one cannot say that the content of this narration has *ghuluw*, except if they have a special methodology to categorize and distinguish *ghuluw*-based narrations from other narrations.

If I have a methodology based on, and supported by evidence and proofs, which would distinguish *ghuluw*-based narrations from other narrations, and I come across narrations which contradict this methodology and criteria, which I may have adopted, only then can I say that these narrations have *ghuluw* content.



However, [the current] scientific research and methodology [show] that these narrations are supported with evidence. The narrations that discuss:

- *the infallibility of Ahlul Bayt (a);*
- *their [supernatural] knowledge of the unseen; and*
- *of them performing supernatural feats and miracles .*

these are all authentic narrations with sound chains, and are supported with rational evidence, which is mentioned by our righteous scholars in their books.

When you refer to the book *“Dalail al-Sidq”, by Shaykh al-Mudhaffar*, or the book *“Al-Shafi fil-Imamah” by Sayyed al-Murtadha, or Shaykh al-Mufid’s* book in which he explains the beliefs of Shaykh al-Saduq, you find that they presented rational evidence to prove these beliefs.

So if there is any scientific refutation and discussion, then one should refute these proofs.

But to merely claim and say that the books of hadith consist of and contain narrations that have ghuluw and religious exaggeration, and as a result we cannot rely on them – such a claim is not scientific and is not supported by any scientific rational methodology.

The scientific methodology requires you to go to the books that discuss these beliefs and present the evidence and proof to support them - and then for you to refute their proofs and evidence, if you truly have such a scientific and rational level.

