

Is Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ Authentic? A Discussion in ‘Ilm al-Rijāl

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the authenticity of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ from a Biographical Studies (*‘ilm al-rijāl*) perspective. The first part is primarily devoted to an analysis of the reporters in the *ziyārah*’s chains of transmission as reported in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* and *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*. The article then examines some other related *rijālī* matters, such as the different approaches and methods used for evaluating the authenticity of traditions; the much-debated passage in Ibn Qūlawayh’s Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*; the opinions of contemporary *marāji‘* on the *ziyārah*’s authenticity; the different standards used for deriving rulings on obligatory and unlawful matters compared to those used for determining the reliability of *ziyārats* and *du‘ā*’s; and the principle of leniency in evidence for recommended acts (*qā‘idat al-tasāmuḥ fī adillat al-sunan*).

KEYWORDS: Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’, authenticity, chain of transmission, Biographical Studies, *‘ilm al-rijāl*, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*

1. Introduction

Arguably the most well-known and oft-recited *ziyārah* (salutation) among Shi‘i Muslims is Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’. For some, the *ziyārah* is an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt (a), a renewal of allegiance to them, and a reminder of the afflictions that befell Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) in Karbala. For others, it is a prescription for spiritual growth, a guide to understanding what God wants from them, and a means to attaining immense rewards.² Still others will recite the *ziyārah* for all these reasons, seeing it as an extensive pronouncement of religious feeling, belief, and devotion.

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² For example, one of the reports that will be discussed in this paper – namely, the report pertaining to Chain 5 – states that God will record for the reciter the reward of a) one hundred million degrees; b) being martyred with Imam al-Ḥusayn (a); and c) every prophet, messenger, and person who has visited him.

Nevertheless, the authenticity of the *ziyārah* has been the subject of much discussion. Sometimes, the focus of debate has been on the content (*matn*) of the *ziyārah*; other times, questions have been raised about its chain of transmission (*sanad*). In response, scholars have presented various types of evidence and indicators to establish the *ziyārah*'s authenticity. These include:

- it being considered reliable by the highest authorities in Shi'i jurisprudence;
- its content complying with verses of the Qur'an;
- its content existing in other authentic *ziyārahs*;
- its recitation being the practice of generations of believers;
- numerous reports of people experiencing extraordinary blessings from reciting it regularly; and
- its chain of transmission being sound.

This article investigates the last of these. It first analyses the reporters in the *ziyārah*'s chains of transmission and then examines some other matters pertaining to the *ziyārah*'s authenticity from a Biographical Studies perspective.

2. Biographical Studies (*'ilm al-rijāl*)

Biographical Studies is one of the most important disciplines of Hadith Studies. It is the study and application of principles used for determining the status of reporters of traditions (*aḥādīth*). In short, it is the science of evaluating hadith reporters. It aims to answer questions such as 'How can a reporter's reliability be established?' and 'Is such and such reporter reliable?'

3. The four-fold classification of traditions

The four terms used in the classification of traditions, as described in the table below, are said to have been first coined by Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265) and then popularised by his student 'Allāmah al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).³

³ See, for example, Subḥānī (2019) p. 139; al-Īrawānī (2017) p. 143; and Islamic Text Institute (2012) v. 1, p. xxxii.

Classification	Description
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> (Authentic)	Complete chain of transmission (<i>sanad</i>) ⁴ to the Prophet (s) or Imam (a); each reporter in the chain possesses moral probity (<i>‘ādil</i>), ⁵ is accurate in his retention and transmission (<i>dābit</i>), and is Imāmī ⁶
<i>Ḥasan</i> (Good)	Complete chain consisting of accurate and commended Imāmī reporters but the moral probity of one or more of them has not been explicitly affirmed
<i>Muwaththaq</i> (Reliable)	Complete chain consisting of accurate and reliable reporters but one or more of them is non-Imāmī
<i>Da‘īf</i> (Weak)	Does not fulfil the requirements of the three categories above ⁷

As it can be seen, this classification focuses purely on the characteristics of the reporters and the completeness of the chain of transmission. As such, ‘authentic’ does not mean it was definitely said, just as ‘weak’ does not mean it was definitely not said; rather, the terms simply refer to the soundness, or lack thereof, of the chain of transmission.

The four-fold classification would have been entirely unfamiliar to scholars of the formative period of Shi‘i scholarship, such as the compilers of the Four Books.⁸ For them, ‘*ṣaḥīḥ*’ referred to a tradition that could be confidently attributed to an Infallible even if

⁴ The *sanad* represents the transmission path between the first narrator of the tradition and the collection into which the tradition culminates.

⁵ An ‘*ādil*’ person is someone who has deep-rooted God-wariness (*taqwā*) and consequently does not commit major sins nor persists in committing minor ones (Subḥānī (2019) p. 141).

⁶ ‘Imāmī’ here refers to a person who believes in the imamate of the Imam of his time (Ibid).

⁷ al-Īrawānī (2017) p. 143; Faḍlī (2011) pp. 115-117; and Subḥānī (2019) pp. 138-142. Subḥānī adds that the first three categories are sometimes subdivided into ‘the highest’ (*al-a‘lā*), ‘the middle’ (*al-awsat*), and ‘the lowest’ (*al-adnā*) (p. 143).

⁸ The Four Books are the most reliable early collections of Shi‘i hadith. They are: *Kitāb al-Kāfī* by Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328/940 or 329/941 AH); *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh* by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991); *Taḥḍīb al-Aḥkām fī Sharḥ al-Muqni‘ah* by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067); and *al-Istibṣār fīmā Ukhtulifa min al-Akḥbār* also by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

the chain of transmission was weak. For example, if a tradition with weak individuals or a disjointed chain was repeated in several unrelated sources, they might have seen this as indicative of the tradition originating from an Infallible.⁹

As we shall see later, some scholars go beyond a purely *sanadī* (chain-focused) approach when evaluating traditions and consider other indicators and supporting evidence as well. Therefore, when one hears terms such as ‘authentic’ and ‘weak’ being mentioned about a *ziyārah*, *du‘ā*’ (supplication), or other religious text, it is important to keep in mind that a text may be deemed weak by one scholar but authentic by another based on the different approaches and methods they use for evaluating narrations.

4. Where is Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ originally reported?

Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ is originally reported in two famous works by two illustrious scholars:

1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* by Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 367/977). *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* is a collection of hadith on various aspects of *ziyārah*, such as its rewards, etiquette, and recitational texts. A large portion of the work is devoted to the *ziyārah* of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and matters relating to his martyrdom. As for its author, al-Najāshī describes Ibn Qūlawayh as ‘among our reliable fellow Shias and among the esteemed of them in jurisprudence and hadith’.¹⁰
2. *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid wa Salāḥ al-Muta‘abbid* by Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067). *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid* is a primary work on *du‘ā*’s, *ziyārahs*, certain ritual acts of worship, and recommended practices for specific days and months. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, known as ‘Shaykh al-Ṭā’ifah’ (Head of the Sect), is described by al-Najāshī as ‘esteemed among our fellow Shias; reliable; eminent; [and] among the students of our teacher Abū ‘Abd Allāh’.¹¹

5. The chains of transmission relating to Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’

It is not uncommon to find authors mentioning different figures for the number of chains of transmission for Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ – four, five, and six chains are mostly cited. The differences are mainly due to the way the chains appear in the two works and the decisions taken by the authors to count some of them together or to treat them separately. For instance, in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, the first two chains are mentioned together

⁹ Islamic Text Institute (2012) v. 1, p. xxxii.

¹⁰ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 123.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 403.

in one passage, and the third chain is mentioned later in the text without a separate hadith number allocated to it (all three come under hadith number 8 in the Dār al-Murtaḍawīyyah edition referenced in this paper). In *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*, the three chains are mentioned separately but all of them appear in the same body of text under one heading (‘An explanation of the *ziyārah* of Abā ‘Abd Allāh (a) on the day of ‘Āshūrā’ from near and afar’).

In this paper, six chains are analysed. Two of the chains, namely Chain 3 and Chain 5, report the text of the *ziyārah* itself. One further chain, Chain 6, reports that Ṣafwān b. Mihrān recited the same *ziyārah* from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) that ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad reported from Imam al-Bāqir (a). The other three chains report matters concerning visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and the day of ‘Āshūrā’.

The content of each report is summarised in the table below.

Chain	What the report mentions
<p><i>First two chains in Kāmil al-Ziyārāt</i></p> <p>(‘Chain 1’ and ‘Chain 2’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir (a) states the rewards for visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) on the day of ‘Āshūrā’; he explains what one should do on that day if they cannot go to the shrine and says he will be the guarantor and assurance for whoever does these things; he explains how one should offer condolences on the day of ‘Āshūrā’; he says if possible, one should abstain from fulfilling their worldly needs and procuring provisions for their home on that day and states the rewards for doing so.</p>
<p><i>Third chain in Kāmil al-Ziyārāt</i></p> <p>(‘Chain 3’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir (a) tells ‘Alqamah the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyārah</i> and what should be done before reciting it; he then teaches him the text of the <i>ziyārah</i> and recommends that he recite it every day.</p>
<p><i>First chain in Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid</i></p> <p>(‘Chain 4’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir (a) states the rewards for visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) on the day of ‘Āshūrā’; he explains what one should do on that day if one cannot go to the shrine and says he will be the guarantor and assurance for whoever does those things; he explains how one should offer condolences on the day of ‘Āshūrā’; he says if possible, one should abstain from fulfilling their worldly needs and procuring provisions for their home on that day and states the rewards for doing so.</p>

<p><i>Second chain in Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid</i></p> <p>(‘Chain 5’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir (a) tells ‘Alqamah the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyārah</i> and what should be done before it; he then teaches him the text of the <i>ziyārah</i> and recommends that he recite it every day.</p>
<p><i>Third chain in Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid</i></p> <p>(‘Chain 6’)</p>	<p>Sayf b. ‘Amīrah reports the circumstances leading up to Ṣafwān performing the <i>ziyārah</i> as Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) had shown him; he explains that Ṣafwān recited the same <i>ziyārah</i> that ‘Alqamah reported from Imam al-Bāqir (a) and that Ṣafwān then read what is widely known as the ‘Supplication of ‘Alqamah’ – this <i>du‘ā</i>’ is quoted in full; Sayf further reports the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyārah</i> and the <i>du‘ā</i>’; he also reports that the <i>ziyārah</i> is <i>ḥadīth qudsī</i>¹² and narrates the glad tidings that were conveyed to the Prophet (s) by Jibrīl when he brought the <i>ziyārah</i> to him.</p>

5.1 Chain 1 and Chain 2

As both of these chains are mentioned in one passage, the second chain is marked in red below to distinguish it from the first.

حَدَّثَنِي حَكِيمُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ وَعَيْرُهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُوسَى الْهَمْدَانِيِّ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدِ
الطَّيَالِسِيِّ عَنْ سَيْفِ بْنِ عَمِيرَةَ وَصَالِحِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ جَمِيعاً عَنْ عَلْقَمَةَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ **وَمُحَمَّدِ**
بْنِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ عَنْ مَالِكِ الْجُهَنِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرِ الْبَاقِرِ ع قَالَ...

Ḥakīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥakīm and others reported to me [Ibn Qūlawayh] from Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī from Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Ṭayālīsī from both Sayf b. ‘Amīrah and Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah from ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī. **And Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl from Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah from Mālik al-Juhanī** that Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir (a) said...¹³

¹² That is, speech of God that is not part of the Qur’an.

¹³ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 (solar)/1977) p. 174.

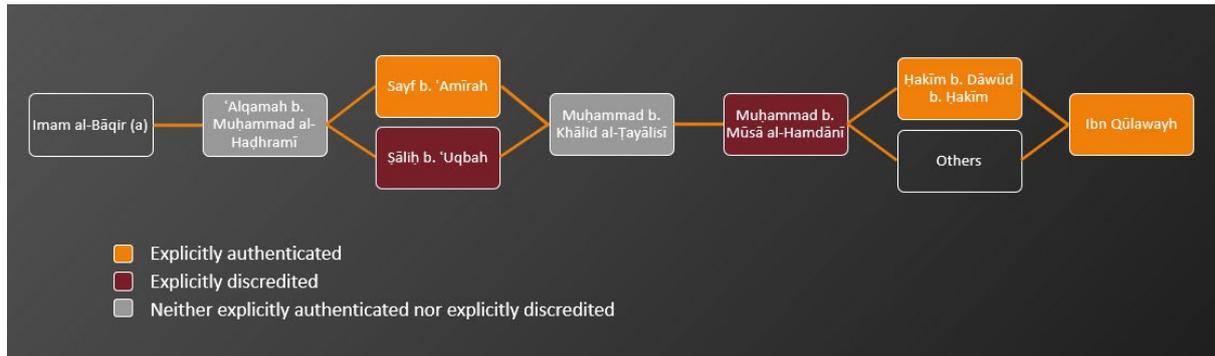


Diagram of Chain 1

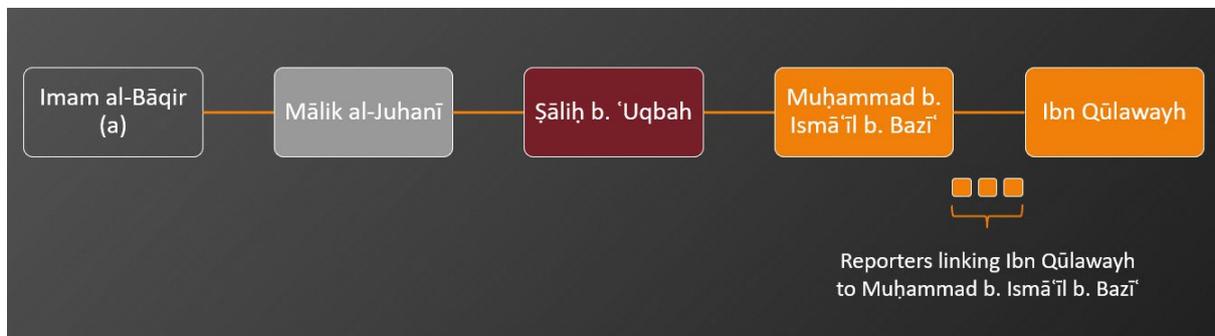


Diagram of Chain 2

5.2 Biographical analysis of reporters: Points to note

With regard to the biographical analysis that will be presented in the following sections, it is important to note:

1. The phrase 'Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited' means the works of early (or 'classical') bibliographers do not explicitly state whether the reporter was reliable or unreliable.¹⁴
2. The focus of attention in the analysis is on reporters who have not been explicitly authenticated or have been explicitly discredited by the early bibliographers, as it is these reporters over whom opinions are divided. As for the explicitly authenticated reporters, references to early biographical works are given.

¹⁴ There are eight principal collections of Shi'i *rijāl*. The foremost of these are: *Rijāl al-Kashshī* by Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, known as al-Kashshī (d. circa 340/951-2); *Rijāl al-Najāshī* by Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. 'Alī, known as al-Najāshī (d. after 463/1071); *al-Rijāl* by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067); and *al-Fihrist* also by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

3. For the sake of brevity, what was considered to be the main supporting evidence for establishing the reliability of reporters who have not been explicitly authenticated has been mentioned. Further details can be found in Subhānī (n.d.), al-Zanjānī (2020), Ray-shahrī (1388 (solar)/2009), IslamQuest (2012), Qurbānī-Muqaddam (1395 (solar)/2016), Yadullāh-pūr (1387 (solar)/2008), Muḥammadī-Muẓaffar (1385 (solar)/2006), and al-Khūʿī (1410 (lunar)/1990).
4. As shall be explained later, not all scholars accept all the supporting evidence.

5.3 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 1 and Chain 2

Reporter	Status
Ḥakīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥakīm	Explicitly authenticated ¹⁵
Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī	Al-Najāshī states the Qummīs discredited him. ¹⁶ Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī discredits him. ¹⁷ However, it has been argued that al-Najāshī was doubtful about the discreditation levelled at al-Hamdānī. ¹⁸ As for the discreditation by Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī, this has been seriously questioned or dismissed entirely. ¹⁹

¹⁵ This is based on the opinion that Ibn Qūlawayh authenticated all his teachers in his Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* (1356 (solar)/1977, p. 4). See also al-Tustarī (1411 (lunar)/1990) v. 3, p. 635.

¹⁶ al-Najāshī writes, ‘The Qummī’s have considered him weak due to [him having] an extremist (*ghuluww*) stance. Ibn al-Walīd says, ‘He would fabricate hadith’, and God knows best (*wa allāhu a’lam*). He has a book on what has been reported about the days of the week, and a book on refuting the extremists (*al-ghulāt*), reported to us by Ibn Shādhān from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā from his father from him via his books.’ (1418 (lunar)/1997, p. 338). It should be noted, however, that the Qummīs, of whom Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, known as Ibn al-Walīd, was the chief, are said to have taken a very strict stance against anyone who narrated a tradition that did not concur with their beliefs on Imamate. See also footnote 19 below.

¹⁷ Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghaḍāʿirī (*fl.* 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries), known as Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī, was a scholar of *rijāl*. Referring to Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī, Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī writes, ‘He is weak and reports from weak people’ (1422 (lunar)/2001, pp. 94-95).

¹⁸ Sayyid al-Khūʿī posits that al-Najāshī stops short of classing Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī weak because after al-Najāshī mentions how some have considered him weak, he says, ‘And God knows best’. This expression suggests that al-Najāshī was doubtful about the discreditation (1410 (lunar)/1990, v. 17, p. 283).

¹⁹ For example, Subhānī (n.d.) states that Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī is known to have criticised many trustworthy people and that he ‘... had some unique beliefs and ideas about the twelve Imams and whoever disregarded these views or narrated a tradition on the topic of the Imamate which did not agree with his beliefs, tended to be described by him as an extremist and as a liar.’ For instance, Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī considered reporters who transmitted *karāmāt* by the Imams (a) to be unreliable. Furthermore, according to Sayyid al-Khūʿī, it is not even established that the book attributed to Ibn al-Ghaḍāʿirī was in fact his work (1410 (lunar)/1990, v. 9, p. 79).

	<p>Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. ‘Umrān al-Ash‘arī, the author of <i>Nawādir al-Ḥikmah</i> and a teacher of al-Kulaynī, reports from him. • Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-‘Aṭṭār al-Qummī, another teacher of al-Kulaynī, also reports from him. <p>It is unlikely that such eminent authorities would report from him if he were unreliable.</p>
<p>Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Ṭayālīsī</p>	<p>Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.²⁰</p> <p>Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:</p> <p>a) The following eminent scholars report from him:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Faḍḍāl • Sa‘d b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Qummī • Ḥamīd b. Ziyād. Al-Ṭūsī says in his <i>Rijāl</i>, ‘Ḥamīd transmits many <i>uṣūl</i>²¹ from him.’²² • ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī • Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Maḥbūb. In the words of al-Zanjānī, ‘Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Maḥbūb, one of the pillars of the community, narrates al-Ṭayālīsī’s books. This indicates

²⁰ In the terminology of the later scholars, such a narrator is classed ‘*majhūl*’, i.e. one who has been mentioned in the books of *rijāl* but has not been praised nor criticised. *Majhūl* is sometimes confused with ‘*muhmal*’, which refers to a narrator who has been mentioned in a chain of transmission but not in the books of *rijāl*.

²¹ ‘*Uṣūl*’ is plural of ‘*aṣl*’. An *aṣl* (‘foundational text’ or ‘principle’) is a collection of traditions from an Imam by one of his students who either heard them directly from the Imam or from someone who heard them directly from the Imam.

²² al-Ṭūsī (1430 (lunar)/2008) p. 441.

	<p>his reliance upon [al-Ṭayālisī].²³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ma‘ādī • Mu‘āwiyā b. Ḥakīm <p>b) For some prominent reporters, he is the source to books of hadith, such as the books of Sayf b. ‘Amīrah and Muḥammad b. Ma‘rūf. For example, Muḥammad b. Ja‘far al-Razzāz, one of the most well-regarded scholars of his time, reports both books from al-Ṭayālisī.</p> <p>Other notable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a companion of Imam al-Kāzim (a).
Sayf b. ‘Amīrah	Explicitly authenticated ²⁴
Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah	<p>An entry in an early biographical work discredits him.²⁵ However, this discreditation has been rebutted.²⁶</p> <p>Indicator used to establish his reliability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eminent authorities like Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘ and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abī al-Khaṭṭāb report from him. <p>Other notable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq (a).
‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍhramī	<p>Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.</p> <p>Indicator used to establish his reliability:</p>

²³ al-Zanjānī (2020).

²⁴ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 189; al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 140.

²⁵ Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī says about him, ‘Extremist (*ghāīl*), liar (*kadhḍāb*), he is not to be paid any attention to (*lā yultaḥatatu ilayh*)’ (1422 (lunar)/2001, p. 69).

²⁶ Sayyid al-Khū‘ī considers him reliable as he was authenticated by ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī (1410 (lunar)/1990, v. 9, p. 79). As for Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī’s criticisms, see footnote 19 above.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the third report in <i>Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid</i> (see Section 5.13 below), Sayf b. ‘Amīrah says to Ṣafwān b. Mihrān that the <i>du‘ā</i>’ he recited was not reported by ‘Alqamah from Imam al-Bāqir (a). Ṣafwān replies that he heard it from Imam al-Ṣādiq (a). If ‘Alqamah was not reliable, Sayf would not have presented ‘Alqama’s report as an argument; in other words, when Sayf said to Ṣafwān that the supplication does not appear in the report of ‘Alqamah from Imam al-Bāqir (a), he was using ‘Alqamah’s report as the standard for evaluating Ṣafwān’s report; hence, Sayf clearly considered ‘Alqamah reliable. Further, if ‘Alqamah was unreliable, Ṣafwān would have commented on his unreliability in his response to Sayf. Ṣafwān’s report is therefore an endorsement of the <i>ziyārah</i> reported by ‘Alqamah. <p>Other notable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a).
Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī ^c	Explicitly authenticated ²⁷
Mālik al-Juhanī	<p>Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.</p> <p>Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:</p> <p>a) ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī and Muḥammad b. ‘Isā report from</p>

²⁷ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 330; al-Ṭūsī (1430 (lunar)/2008) p. 364.

	<p>him, as do two Companions of Consensus (<i>aṣḥāb al-ijmāʿ</i>):²⁸ ‘Abd Allāh b. Muskān and Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.</p> <p>b) He appears in the chains of traditions in all the Four Books.</p> <p>Other notable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (a).
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5.4 Ibn Qūlawayh’s path to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘

There is some debate as to what exactly the words ‘And Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl’ in the chain of transmission follow on from. Some scholars have suggested ‘And’ here is a coordinating conjunction of ‘Ḥakīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥakīm’ at the start of Chain 1; i.e. Ibn Qūlawayh is reporting a new chain beginning with Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl.²⁹ Unlike Ḥakīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥakīm, however, Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl was not a teacher of Ibn Qūlawayh; hence, we need to investigate the path of transmission from Ibn Qūlawayh to him.

Ibn Qūlawayh most likely reported the *ziyārah* from Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘’s book in the same way that al-Ṭūsī did (see Section 5.8 below).³⁰ In any event, in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, Ibn Qūlawayh mentions reliable paths which link him to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl. One of these paths is quoted below – it comprises solely of explicitly authenticated narrators:³¹

‘His father [Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh]³² from Sa‘d b. ‘Abd Allāh³³ from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā³⁴ from Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘.’³⁵

²⁸ The Companions of Consensus are an esteemed group of eighteen narrators who were companions of one or more of the Imams from Imam al-Bāqir (a) through to Imam al-Riḍā (a). Scholars of *rijāl* consider them to be of the highest rank of reliability.

²⁹ Subḥānī (n.d.); IslamQuest (2012). The authors mention other possibilities as well. See also Muḥammadī-Muẓaffar (1385 (solar)/2006) for a more detailed discussion.

³⁰ Subḥānī (n.d.); IslamQuest (2012).

³¹ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 (solar)/1977) pp. 91, 172, 182, 183, 189, and 331.

³² al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997), p. 123.

³³ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997), p. 177; al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 215; al-Ṭūsī (1430 (lunar)/2008) p. 427.

³⁴ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997), p. 82; al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 60; al-Ṭūsī (1430 (lunar)/2008) p. 351.

³⁵ As mentioned in Section 5.3.



5.5 Chain 3

قَالَ صَالِحُ بْنُ عُقْبَةَ الْجُهَنِيِّ وَسَيْفُ بْنُ عَمِيرَةَ قَالَ عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيُّ قُلْتُ لِأَبِي
جَعْفَرٍ ع عَلِّمْنِي...

Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah al-Juhanī and Sayf b. ‘Amīrah reported that ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī said, ‘I requested Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] (a), “Teach me...”³⁶

We understand from what is mentioned in Chain 2 that Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī reports from Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah al-Juhanī and Sayf b. ‘Amīrah. The chain of transmission is illustrated below.

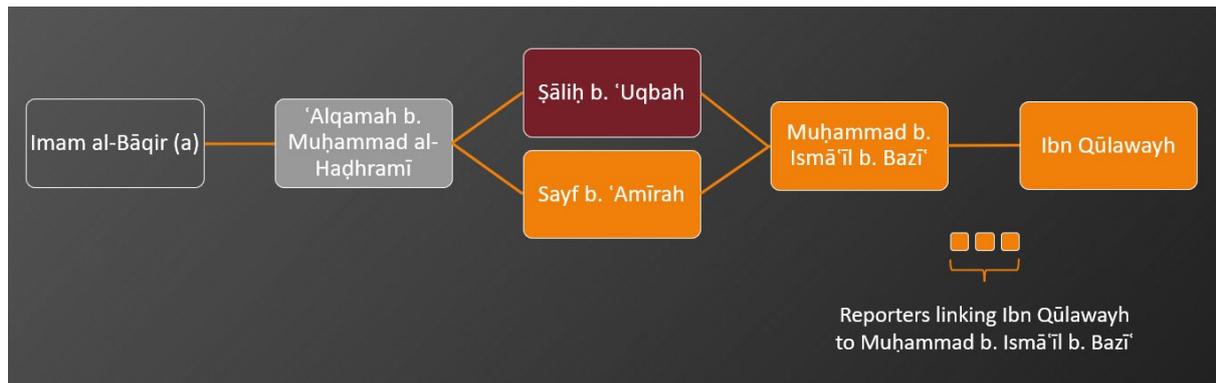


Diagram of Chain 3

5.6 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 3

All the reporters in Chain 3 are mentioned in Chain 1 and Chain 2. Their biographical analysis was discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.4 above.

5.7 Conclusion regarding the chains in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*

An analysis of the narrators in Chain 3, which reports the *ziyārah* itself, shows the route of transmission through Sayf b. ‘Amīrah to be sound. All the narrators on that route have been explicitly authenticated except ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī, for whom there is strong supporting evidence.

³⁶ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 (solar)/1977) p. 175.



As for Chain 1 and Chain 2, which report on matters pertaining to visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn (a) and the day of ‘Āshūrā’, if one were to accept the arguments in defence of Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī and Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah, then the chains would be acceptable; otherwise, they would be deemed weak.

In Section 6.3, an important interpretation of a passage in Ibn Qūlawayh’s Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* will be presented, which, if accepted, would increase one’s trust in the reports even if it were conceded that there are weaknesses in the chains.

5.8 Chain 4

رَوَى مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ بَرِيْعٍ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع قَالَ...

Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī^c reports from Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah from his father [‘Uqbah b. Qays] that Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] (a) said...³⁷

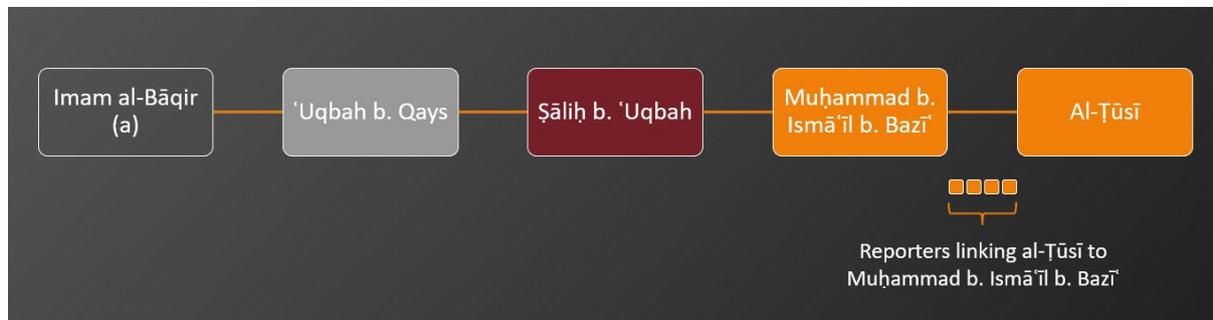


Diagram of Chain 4

5.9 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 4

Reporter	Status
Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī ^c	See Section 5.3
Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah	

³⁷ al-Ṭūsī (1411 (lunar)/1990) p. 772.

<p>‘Uqbah b. Qays</p>	<p>Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.</p> <p>Notable information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir (a) and/or Imam al-Şādiq (a)
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5.10 Shaykh al-Ṭūsī’s path to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘

In his *Fihrist*, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions three reliable paths from him to Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘.³⁸ One of them is quoted below; all the reporters in it have been explicitly authenticated:

Ḥusayn b. ‘Ubaydullāh al-Ghadā‘irī³⁹ from al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamzah al-‘Alawī⁴⁰ from ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī⁴¹ from Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim al-Qummī.⁴²

5.11 Chain 5

Chain 5 is the same as Chain 3 except the latter also mentions the demonym of Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah (‘al-Juhanī’).

قَالَ صَالِحُ بْنُ عُقْبَةَ وَسَيْفُ بْنُ عَمِيرَةَ قَالَ عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيُّ قُلْتُ لِأَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع
عَلَّمَنِي ...

Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah and Sayf b. ‘Amīrah reported that ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī said, ‘I requested Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] (a), “Teach me...”⁴³

³⁸ al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 215 and p. 236.

³⁹ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 69.

⁴⁰ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 64; al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 104.

⁴¹ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 260.

⁴² al-Ḥillī (1388 (solar)/2010) p. 49. Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs claims there is consensus (*ijmā‘*) on him being reliable (al-Khū‘ī (1410 (lunar)/1990) v. 1, p. 317).

⁴³ al-Ṭūsī (1411 (lunar)/1990) p. 773.

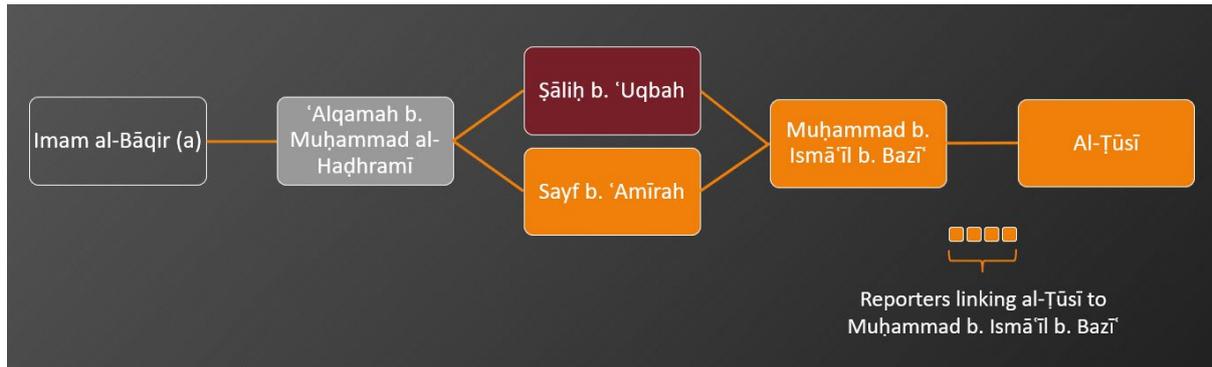


Diagram of Chain 5

5.12 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 5

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Bazī was discussed in Section 5.10. The biographical analysis of the other reporters was discussed in Section 5.3.

5.13 Chain 6

وَرَوَى مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ خَالِدِ الطَّيَالِسِيِّ عَنْ سَيْفِ بْنِ عَمِيرَةَ قَالَ خَرَجْتُ مَعَ صَفْوَانَ بْنِ مِهْرَانَ الْجَمَّالِ وَعِنْدَنَا جَمَاعَةٌ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا إِلَى الْعَرَبِيِّ بَعْدَ مَا خَرَجَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فَسِرْنَا مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ فَلَمَّا فَرَعْنَا مِنَ الزِّيَارَةِ صَرَفَ صَفْوَانُ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى نَاحِيَةِ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ ع فَقَالَ لَنَا تَزُووْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ ع مِنْ هَذَا الْمَكَانِ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَأْسِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع مِنْ هَاهُنَا أَوْ مَأَى إِلَيْهِ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الصَّادِقُ ع وَأَنَا مَعَهُ قَالَ فَدَعَا صَفْوَانُ بِالزِّيَارَةِ الَّتِي رَوَاهَا عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيُّ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ ع فِي يَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ

And Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī reports from Sayf b. 'Amīrah that he said, 'I rode out with Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl towards al-Gharī [Najaf], and a group of our companions were with us. This was after Abū 'Abd Allāh [al-Ṣādiq (a)] had left. Later, we set out for Medina from al-Ḥīrah. When we had completed performing the pilgrimage rites, Ṣafwān turned his face in the direction of the grave of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (a) and said to us, "Salute al-Ḥusayn (a) from this place, from the place of the head of the grave of the Leader of the Faithful [Imam 'Alī (a)], for Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣādiq (a) pointed towards it [i.e. the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn (a)] from right here while I was with him.'" He [Sayf b. 'Amīrah]

said, ‘Then Şafwān recited the salutation that ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍramī reported from Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] (a) for the Day of ‘Āshūrā’.’⁴⁴



Diagram of Chain 6

5.14 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 6

Reporter	Status
Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī	See Section 5.3
Sayf b. ‘Amīrah	
Şafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl	Explicitly authenticated ⁴⁵

5.15 Shaykh al-Ṭūsī’s path to Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī

In his *Fihrist*, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī states his path to Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī as follows.⁴⁶ Only Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yahyā al-‘Aṭṭār has not been explicitly authenticated.

⁴⁴ al-Ṭūsī (1411 (lunar)/1990) p. 777.

⁴⁵ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 198.

⁴⁶ al-Ṭūsī (1417 (lunar)/1996) p. 228.

Al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ubaydullāh [al-Ghaḍā‘irī]⁴⁷ from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā [al-‘Aṭṭār] from his father [Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-‘Aṭṭār]⁴⁸ from Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Maḥbūb from him [Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il b. Bazī’].⁴⁹

As for Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-‘Aṭṭār, supporting evidence used to establish his reliability include the fact that:

- He was a teacher of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, who quotes many traditions from him and adds ‘*raḍī allāh ‘anhu*’ (may God be pleased with him) after his name.
- He was a Master of Permit (*shaykh al-ijāzah*).⁵⁰

Furthermore, as al-Zanjānī points out, it appears that Shaykh al-Ṭūsī had personally verified the attribution of the narration to al-Ṭayālīsī. This is because Shaykh al-Ṭūsī says in the active voice, ‘Muḥammad b. Khālīd narrated’ (*rawā Muḥammad ibn Khālīd...*) instead of using the passive form, ‘It has been reported by Muḥammad b. Khālīd’ (*ruwiya ‘an Muḥamad ibn Khālīd...*); this indicates Shaykh al-Ṭūsī’s confidence in the report coming from al-Ṭayālīsī.⁵¹

5.16 Conclusion regarding the chains in *Miṣbāḥ al-Mutahajjid*

All the narrators in Chain 6 have either been explicitly authenticated or have strong supporting evidence pointing to their reliability. The same could be said for the narrators in Chain 5 if one were to take the route of transmission through Sayf b. ‘Amīrah rather than Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah.

As for Chain 4, even if one were to accept the counterarguments concerning the discreditation levelled at Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah, the chain still suffers from the presence of ‘Uqbah b. Qays about whom very little is known.

Another route through solely explicitly authenticated narrators can also be presented by combining Chain 5 and Chain 6, both of which report on the *ziyārah* itself. This route is made possible due to there being more than one narrator at each *ṭabaqah* (stage or generation of transmission):

1. First stage: ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī and Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl
2. Second stage: Sayf b. ‘Amīrah and Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah

⁴⁷ Ibn Ṭāwūs (1363 (solar)/1984) p. 97.

⁴⁸ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 353.

⁴⁹ al-Najāshī (1418 (lunar)/1997) p. 349.

⁵⁰ When a teacher permits a student to narrate from him the narrations he has recorded in his book, the term for the author of the book is ‘Master of Permit’ (*shaykh al-ijāzah*). See also Section 6.2 below.

⁵¹ al-Zanjānī (2020).

3. Third stage: Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī^c and Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī

Consequently:

- At the first stage, even if we assume the reliability of ‘Alqamah b. Muḥammad al-Haḍhramī is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl.
- As for the second stage, even if we assume the reliability of Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqbah is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Sayf b. ‘Amīrah.
- And in the third stage, even if we assume the reliability of Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī^c.⁵²

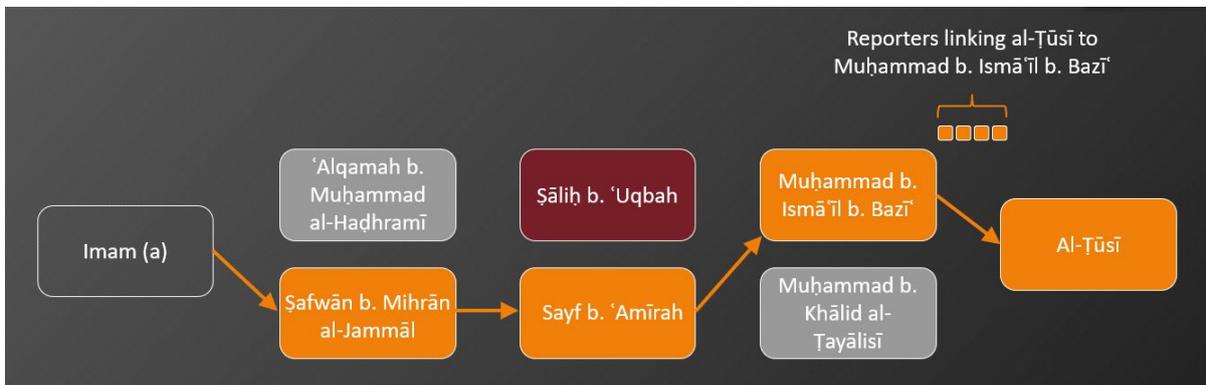


Diagram of possible route when Chain 5 and Chain 6 are combined

6. Other related *rijālī* matters

6.1 Approaches to evaluating narrations

There are two general approaches to evaluating the authenticity of narrations:

1. Reliability of the chain of transmission/the reporters (*wuthūq sanadī/mukhbirī*)

With this approach, the reliability of a narration is solely or primarily determined by its chain of reporters. Among the advocates of this approach was Sayyid Abū al-Qāsim al-Khū‘ī (d. 1992).

⁵² IslamQuest (2012).

2. Reliability of issuance/the report (*wuthūq ṣudūrī/khabarī*)

Here, the reliability of a narration is determined by accumulated indicators and evidence, including its chain of reporters. Among the advocates of this approach is Sayyid ‘Alī al-Ḥusaynī al-Sīstānī.

Sayyid al-Sīstānī maintains that if through rational means we attain confidence (*iṭmi’nān*) that a particular narration was issued by an Infallible, it will be probative/authoritative (*ḥujjah*) for us.⁵³ Hence, while it is necessary to study the chain of transmission, it is not sufficient. In other words, the *rijālī* status of the reporters in the chain helps to judge whether a narration was issued by an Infallible, but it is not the only factor to consider.

6.2 Methods for evaluating reporters

In addition to the two approaches mentioned above, there are differences of opinion on the methods and criteria that should be used for evaluating reporters. Consequently, different conclusions are reached depending on what a *rijālī* scholar’s stance is on questions such as:

1. Is the testimony of later scholars (*al-muta’akhhirīn*) about the reliability of a reporter to be accepted?
2. What is the significance of considering the Companions of Consensus reliable?
3. Does being an agent (*wakīl*) of an Imam (a) indicate reliability?
4. When a reliable person reports from someone, does it mean that the other person is also reliable?
5. Does ‘Mastership of Permit’ (*shaykhūkhat al-ijāzah*) indicate reliability?
6. Can all the reporters in *Tafsīr al-Qummī* be deemed reliable?
7. Can all the reporters in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* be deemed reliable?
8. If a member of the Banī Faḍḍāl⁵⁴ appears in a chain, does it render the report reliable?
9. Are all the Masters of al-Najāshī reliable?
10. If one of the Three Narrators⁵⁵ report from someone, is it evidence of that person’s reliability?⁵⁶

⁵³ Mu’assasīh-yi bi-Sūyi Ijtihād (2021).

⁵⁴ The Banī Faḍḍāl are said to have been a group of individuals from the Faḥḥīyyah sect. Another view is that they were companions of Imam al-Kāẓim (a), Imam al-Riḍā (a), Imam al-Hādī (a), and Imam al-Askarī (a), or they were Faḥḥīyyah initially but later believed in the imamāte of these four Imams and became their companions.

⁵⁵ They are Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Umayr, Ṣafwān b. Yaḥyā, and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr al-Bazaṭī.

⁵⁶ For more information on these topics and the different opinions about them, see al-Īrawānī (2017) pp. 77-133, and Subḥānī (2019) pp. 19-109.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss these issues here, but one example, relating to the chains of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’, will be mentioned to give an idea of the different opinions that exist and the implications they have on a scholar’s assessment of a narration’s reliability. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā is in the *ziyārah*’s path of transmission from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Ṭayālīsī (see Section 5.15 above). Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā has neither been explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited, but he is known to have held Mastership of Permit. However, according to Sayyid al-Khū’ī (d. 1992), Mastership of Permit is not sufficient for establishing reliability; hence, based on his methodology, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā is not reliable.⁵⁷ According to other experts, however, Mastership of Permit is sufficient for establishing reliability; hence, for them, the presence of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā in the chain is not problematic.⁵⁸

6.3 The much-debated passage in Ibn Qūlawayh’s Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*

In his Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, Ibn Qūlawayh writes:

وقد علمنا أنّنا لا نحيط بجميع ما روي عنهم في هذا المعنى ولا في غيره لكن ما وقع لنا من
جهة الثقات من أصحابنا رحمهم الله برحمته ولا أخرجت فيه حديثاً روي عن الشذاذ من
الرجال يؤثر ذلك عن المذكورين غير المعروفين بالرواية المشهورين بالحديث والعلم.

We acknowledge that we have not encompassed everything which has been narrated from them [the Infallibles] about this topic [*ziyārah*] nor any other topic [for that matter]; rather, we have included what we have come across from reliable reporters from among our companions, may God be merciful to them with His mercy. I have not reported in it [this book] any tradition that has been narrated from irregular reporters (*shudhdhādh*) who have not been quoted for their reports from the aforementioned persons by those known for reporting and famed for their traditions and knowledge.⁵⁹

The meaning of this passage has been subject to lengthy discussion in Biographical Studies. Three main opinions on what Ibn Qūlawayh intended have emerged:

⁵⁷ al-Khū’ī (1410 (lunar)/1990) v. 2, p. 328.

⁵⁸ al-Īrawānī (2017) p. 114.

⁵⁹ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 (solar)/1977) p. 4.

1. Ibn Qūlawayh meant to authenticate all the reporters mentioned in the chains of narrations in his book (388 reporters). Al-Ḥurr al-‘Āmilī (d. 1104/1693) held this opinion. It was also Sayyid al-Khū’ī’s initial opinion.
2. Ibn Qūlawayh meant to authenticate only his *shaykhs* (teachers), i.e. the first reporters in the chains (32 reporters). Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī (d. 1320/1902) was of this opinion. It was also Sayyid al-Khū’ī’s later opinion.
3. Ibn Qūlawayh neither meant to authenticate all the reporters nor only his teachers; instead, he was explaining why the narrations in his book are reliable. This opinion is held by Sayyid al-Sīstānī. He writes:

The meaning of the passage is that he [Ibn Qūlawayh] did not include narrations from weak and criticised reporters in his book. This is because such narrations [i.e. from weak and criticised reporters] were not reported by reliable reporters famed for their traditions and knowledge, known as the ‘critical experts of hadith’ (*nuqqād al-aḥādīth*),⁶⁰ like Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Walīd and Sa’d b. ‘Abd Allāh. Even if some of these experts – be they his teachers or the teachers of his teachers – did report such narrations, he clearly trusted them and included them in his book. It seems he – may his soul be sanctified – sufficed in his trust of narrations from irregular reporters, as he says, when they were included [in the works of] some of these great critical experts of hadith.⁶¹

In support of this interpretation, one can see that the same approach was used by other distinguished scholars as well, i.e. they too trusted in the assessment of reliable critical experts of hadith and reported traditions that those experts had deemed reliable even if there were individuals in the chains who were irregular. These scholars include:

- al-Kulaynī (d. 329/941) in *al-Kāfī*
- al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) in *al-Muqni’* and *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (a)*
- Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1266) in *Falāḥ al-Sā’il*
- ‘Imād al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (d. 6th/12th century) in *Bishārat al-Muṣṭafā li-Shī‘at al-Murtaḍā*⁶²

According to this interpretation, Ibn Qūlawayh was expressing his belief in the reliability of the narrations in his book, not the narrators. It is possible that the critical experts of hadith relied on certain evidence that was passed down to them, such as a

⁶⁰ The critical experts of hadith were known for their ability to distinguish authentic reports from non-authentic ones, even if there were one or more weak reporters in the chain.

⁶¹ al-Sīstānī (2014) pp. 21-22.

⁶² al-Sīstānī, M.R. (1437 (lunar)/2016) pp. 122-124.

reliable book or a reliable verbal transmission, and on the basis of that evidence they deemed the narrations reliable; evidence that may not have reached us today. Such an interpretation is significant because, if accepted, it would increase one's confidence in the reliability of even those reports in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* that are deemed to have weaknesses in their chains.

6.4 Opinions of *marāji'* on the *ziyārah's* authenticity

Sayyid al-Sistānī's opinion about the authenticity of Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' is unequivocal, as seen in the following response to a question about the chain and text of Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' and al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabīrah:

Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' and al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabīrah are among the most important, best, and authentic *ziyārats* from the perspective of their chain of transmission (*sanad*) and text (*matn*). Their content is mentioned in many authentic narrations. Therefore, the believers should persevere in reciting them, and they should not pay attention to the deceiving arguments of those who pursue their own agendas.⁶³

Many other *marāji'* have also spoken unreservedly about the authenticity of Ziyārat 'Āshūrā'. For example, Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mūsā Shubayrī al-Zanjānī, one of the foremost authorities on *rijāl* today, states:

Disregarding what has been narrated from reliable sources about its endorsement from the unseen realm (*al-ta'yidāt al-ghaybiyya*), which in itself suffices as a proof of the authenticity of this sacred Ziyārat, the chain of narration mentioned in *Misbāh al-Mutahajjid* after this Ziyārat is veracious.⁶⁴

One of the most decisive responses to the question of the *ziyārah's* reliability is from Grand Ayatollah Waḥīd Khurāsānī:

According to jurists (may God elevate their rank), Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' is indisputable and is therefore reliable and does not need a chain of transmission.⁶⁵

The views of some other contemporary *marāji'* are mentioned below:

- Grand Ayatollah Nāṣir Makārim-Shīrāzī:

⁶³ al-Baldāwī (2013) p. 26.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Khalfan (2009) pp. xlv-xlvi.

⁶⁵ Khurāsānī (2007).

Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’, in addition to its lofty content and meaning, is renowned and possesses acceptable chains of transmission. Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ is as it is written in its current form in reliable books.⁶⁶

- Grand Ayatollah Ja‘far Subhānī:

A consideration of the sum-total of these chains results in strengthening some of them with the others and grants knowledge or approximate certainty of the origins of these traditions from the Infallibles.⁶⁷

- Grand Ayatollah Ishāq-Fayyād:

These narrations [about Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’] are so numerous that they reach the level of *tawātur ijmālī*.⁶⁸ As a consequence, every Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’, short and long, is authentic and reliable.⁶⁹

- Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Ḥakīm:

Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ is reliable from the perspective of its chain of transmission and text.⁷⁰

- Grand Ayatollah Mirzā Jawād Tabrīzī presents 12 reasons why the *ziyārah* is authentic.⁷¹

6.5 Different standards for determining reliability

The standards employed in jurisprudence (*fiqh*) to determine the reliability of traditions for the purposes of deriving rulings on what is obligatory (*wājib*) and unlawful (*ḥarām*) are different to those used for determining the reliability of *ziyārats* and *du‘ā*’s. Stringent standards are used for the former, not the latter.

⁶⁶ Makārim-Shīrāzī (n.d.) Makārim-Shīrāzī also explains that some of the earliest extant manuscripts include the section beginning with ‘*allāhumma khuṣṣa anta awalla ḡālimin bil-la‘ni minnī...*’ – a section which some have claimed is not an authentic part of the *ziyārah*. He goes on to suggest that it was probably because of *taqiyyah* that some other early manuscripts do not mention this part. (Makārim-Shīrāzī (n.d.) and Makārim-Shīrāzī (n.d.a))

⁶⁷ Subhānī (n.d.) p. 30.

⁶⁸ ‘Non-specific wide-scale transmission’. *Tawātur* (wide-scale transmission) refers to a narration that has so many reporters at each stage of its transmission that it leads to certainty about its authenticity. *Ijmālī* (non-specific) here means the reports are different but they all speak of a common subject. The view being expressed by the Grand Ayatollah is that there are so many reports of the *ziyārah* that one attains certainty in the *ziyārah*’s authenticity even though there are differences in the reports.

⁶⁹ Shafaqna (2020).

⁷⁰ al-Baldāwī (2013) p. 29.

⁷¹ al-Tabrīzī (1432 (lunar)/2010) pp. 76-87.

For a jurist to use a tradition pertaining to *wājib* and *ḥarām* acts, the tradition has to meet specific criteria of authentication and be subject to extensive scrutiny. This is because of the consequences of abiding by, or not abiding by, obligations and prohibitions in the Hereafter. Hence, the tradition must usually have an unbroken chain of transmission that traces back to an Infallible, and the reliability of each reporter in the chain must be independently verified.

Applying the same stringent standards to supplications and salutations can be likened to using the same standards to assess the cleanliness of the kitchen at a friend's house where you have been invited for dinner, and the cleanliness of a strictly controlled laboratory where medical tests are done; and then objecting that the kitchen fails to match the level of sterilisation found in those laboratories!⁷²

6.6 The principle of leniency in evidence for recommended acts (*qā'idat al-tasāmuḥ fī adillat al-sunan*)

According to this principle, traditions attributed to an Infallible whose chains of transmission are weak can be relied upon if they state a certain act merits reward and there is no evidence to indicate it is not permitted.

The principle is derived from narrations known as '*akhbār man balagh*' ('reaches a person reports').⁷³ One such report is the Saḥīḥ of Ḥishām b. Sālim in which Imam al-Ṣādiq (a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ بَلَغَهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ص شَيْءٌ مِّنَ الثَّوَابِ فَعَمِلَهُ كَانَ أَجْرُ ذَلِكَ لَهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص
مَمْ يَفْعَلُهُ

If any [promise of] reward reaches a person from the Prophet (s), and he acts on it, he shall get the reward for that act even if the Messenger of God (s) did not [in fact] say it.⁷⁴

Based on these reports, if a narration states a certain act merits reward, and there is nothing to indicate it is forbidden, and one performs the act with the intention of attaining its reward, then he will get that reward. Therefore, according to this principle, even

⁷² Slightly modified version of the example given by Modarresi (2021).

⁷³ A case could also be made on purely rational grounds: Reason dictates that trying to attain a benefit, albeit a potential benefit, is good. The greater the benefit at stake is, the more reason deems it good to make an attempt at achieving it.

⁷⁴ al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (1367 (solar)/1988) v. 1, section 18, tradition 184. This is one of 9 such traditions in the section.

though such a narration may not be ‘authentic’ in the strict *fiqhī* sense, one would be justified in acting on it.

Even scholars who do not take the view that the principle can be used for deeming an act ‘recommended’ (*mustahabb*) say that one may still perform the act with the intention of *rajāʿ*, i.e. in the hope that it is desired by Allah.⁷⁵

7. Conclusion

The different approaches, methods, and criteria used by scholars of *rijāl* for evaluating the status of a narration’s reporters impact considerably on their final assessment of the narration’s reliability. While a few scholars have deemed the chains of Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ weak based on a strict application of the *wuthūq sanadī* approach,⁷⁶ most experts regard it as reliable based on their methods of assessment. An additional case is also made for the second and third chains of the reports quoted by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in which there is more than one individual at each stage of the chain’s transmission; therefore, even if one of those individuals were deemed to be weak, the alternative route could be taken, thereby maintaining the integrity of the chain.

Sayyid al-Sistānī’s interpretation of Ibn Qūlawayh’s statement in his Introduction to *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* is significant, as it would mean that critical experts of hadith had scrutinised the reports and judged them to be reliable. Perhaps one other message that could be derived from his interpretation is the need to trust in the judgement of the foremost specialists in issues about which one does not have sufficient knowledge or evidence at hand.

Furthermore, as Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’ does not concern a *wājib* or *ḥarām* action, the most stringent standards of verification need not be applied. Even if one were to deem the chains weak, the narrations reporting the *ziyārah* could still be relied upon according to the principle of leniency in evidence for recommended acts, or, at the very least, the

⁷⁵ ‘In Islamic jurisprudence, when a jurist declares something ‘*mustahabb*’ or ‘*makrūh*’, it means that in his or her opinion the action has an established legal status, i.e. it is something that the sharia has legislated as being ‘recommended’ or ‘disapproved’. A jurist will only make such a declaration if he or she is convinced that there is sufficiently strong evidence to support it. If, on the other hand, the jurist deems the evidence weak but finds no reason to suggest the act should not be performed/avoided, then he or she may say [...] that it can still be enacted but with the intention of ‘*rajāʿ*’ (shorter form of ‘*rajāʿ al-maṭlūbiyyah*’), i.e. in the hope that it is desired by Allah. In this way, the jurist has not attributed something to the sharia that may not have actually been sanctioned by it, nor has he or she dissuaded their followers from performing/avoiding the action just in case in reality it is something that has been divinely legislated and carries with it abundant blessings and rewards’ (al-Sistānī (2017) Ruling 12, Translator’s footnote number 15).

⁷⁶ See, for example, Hobbollah (2020), who applies Sayyid al-Khūʿī’s methodology to the reporters in the chains of the *ziyārah* and concludes that the chains are weak. Nevertheless, when it came to giving a legal opinion on the matter, Sayyid al-Khūʿī ruled that the narration in either *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* or *Miṣbāh al-Mutahajjid* could be recited with the intention of *rajāʿ*.



ziyārah could be recited with the intention of *rajāʿ*². By doing so, one would not be closing off a route that has the potential for showering reciters with tremendous rewards and blessings.

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