

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

Mohammed Ali Ismail (DProf)¹

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 ziyāra’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 ziyāra’s authenticity; the different standards used for deriving rulings on obligatory and unlawful matters compared to those used for determining the reliability of ziyāras and du‘ā’s; and the principle of leniency in evidence for recommended acts (qā‘idat al-tasāmuḥ fi 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 *ziyāra* (salutation) among Shī‘ī Muslims is *Ziyārat ‘Āshūrā’*. For some, the *ziyāra* is an expression of love for the Ahl al-Bayt, a renewal of allegiance to them, and a reminder

¹ Director of Research and Publications, The Islamic College, London, UK.
Email: m.ismail@islamic-college.ac.uk

of the afflictions that befell Imam al-Ḥusayn 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 *ziyāra* for all these reasons, seeing it as an extensive pronouncement of religious feeling, belief, and devotion.

Nevertheless, the authenticity of the *ziyāra* has been the subject of much discussion. Sometimes, the focus of debate has been on the content (*matn*) of the *ziyāra*; 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 *ziyāra*'s authenticity. These include:

- it being considered reliable by the highest authorities in Shī‘ī jurisprudence;
- its content complying with verses of the Qur’an;
- its content existing in other authentic *ziyāras*;
- 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 *ziyāra*'s chains of transmission and then examines some other matters pertaining to the *ziyāra*'s authenticity from a Biographical Studies perspective.

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

Biographical Studies is one of the most important disciplines of Ḥadīth 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 ḥadīth reporters. It aims to answer questions

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; and c) every prophet, messenger, and person who has visited him.

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 following table, are said to have been first coined by Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664/1265) and then popularised by his student ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī (d. 726/1325).³

Classification	Description
<i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> (Authentic)	Complete chain of transmission (<i>sanad</i>) ⁴ to the Prophet or Imam; each reporter in the chain possesses moral probity (<i>‘ādil</i>), ⁵ is accurate in his retention and transmission (<i>ḍābit</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.

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

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 (Sobhani (2019), p. 141).

⁶ “Imāmī” here refers to a person who believes in the imamate of the Imam of his time (ibid).

<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 Shī‘ī 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 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

⁷ Al-Īrawānī (2017), p. 143; Faḍlī (2011), pp. 115-7; and Sobhani (2019), pp. 138-142. Sobhani 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 Shī‘ī ḥadīth. They are: *Kitāb al-kāfī* by Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 328/940 or 329/941); *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, known as Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991); *Taḥdhīb al-aḥkām fī sharḥ al-muqni‘a* by Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, known as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067); and *al-Istibṣār fīmā ukhtulifa min al-akhbār* also by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

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

indicators and supporting evidence as well. Therefore, when one hears terms such as “authentic” and “weak” being mentioned about a *ziyāra*, *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 ḥadīth on various aspects of *ziyāra*, such as its rewards, etiquette, and recitational texts. A large portion of the work is devoted to the *ziyāra* of Imam al-Ḥusayn and matters relating to his martyrdom. As for its author, al-Najāshī describes Ibn Qūlawayh as “among our reliable fellow Shī‘a and among the esteemed of them in jurisprudence and ḥadīth.”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, *ziyāras*, certain ritual acts of worship, and recommended practices for specific days and months. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, known as “Shaykh al-Ṭā’ifa” (Head of the Sect), is described by al-Najāshī as “esteemed among our fellow Shī‘a; reliable; eminent; [and] among the students of our teacher Abū ‘Abdullāh.”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,

¹⁰ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 123.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 403.

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 in one passage, and the third chain is mentioned later in the text without a separate ḥadīth number allocated to it (all three come under ḥadīth number 8 in the Dār al-Murtaḍawiyya 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 *ziyāra* of Abā ‘Abdullāh 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 *ziyāra* itself. One further chain, Chain 6, reports that Ṣafwān b. Mihrān recited the same *ziyāra* from Imam al-Ṣādiq that ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad reported from Imam al-Bāqir. The other three chains report matters concerning visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn and the day of ‘Āshūrā’.

The content of each report is summarised in this table.

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 states the rewards for visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn 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> (‘Chain 3’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir tells ‘Alqama the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyāra</i> and what should be done before reciting it; he then teaches him the text of the <i>ziyāra</i> and recommends that he recite it every day.</p>
<p><i>First chain in Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid</i> (‘Chain 4’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir states the rewards for visiting Imam al-Ḥusayn 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> (‘Chain 5’)</p>	<p>Imam al-Bāqir tells ‘Alqama the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyāra</i> and what should be done before it; he then teaches him the text of the <i>ziyāra</i> and recommends that he recite it every day.</p>
<p><i>Third chain in Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid</i> (‘Chain 6’)</p>	<p>Sayf b. ‘Amīra reports the circumstances leading up to Ṣafwān performing the <i>ziyāra</i> as Imam al-Ṣādiq had shown him; he explains that Ṣafwān recited the same <i>ziyāra</i> that ‘Alqama reported from Imam al-Bāqir and that Ṣafwān then read what is widely known as the “Supplication of ‘Alqama” – this <i>du‘ā</i>’ is quoted in full; Sayf further reports the rewards for reciting the <i>ziyāra</i> and the <i>du‘ā</i>’; he also reports that the <i>ziyāra</i> is <i>ḥadīth qudsī</i>¹² and narrates the glad tidings that were conveyed to the Prophet by Jibrīl when he brought the <i>ziyāra</i> to him.</p>

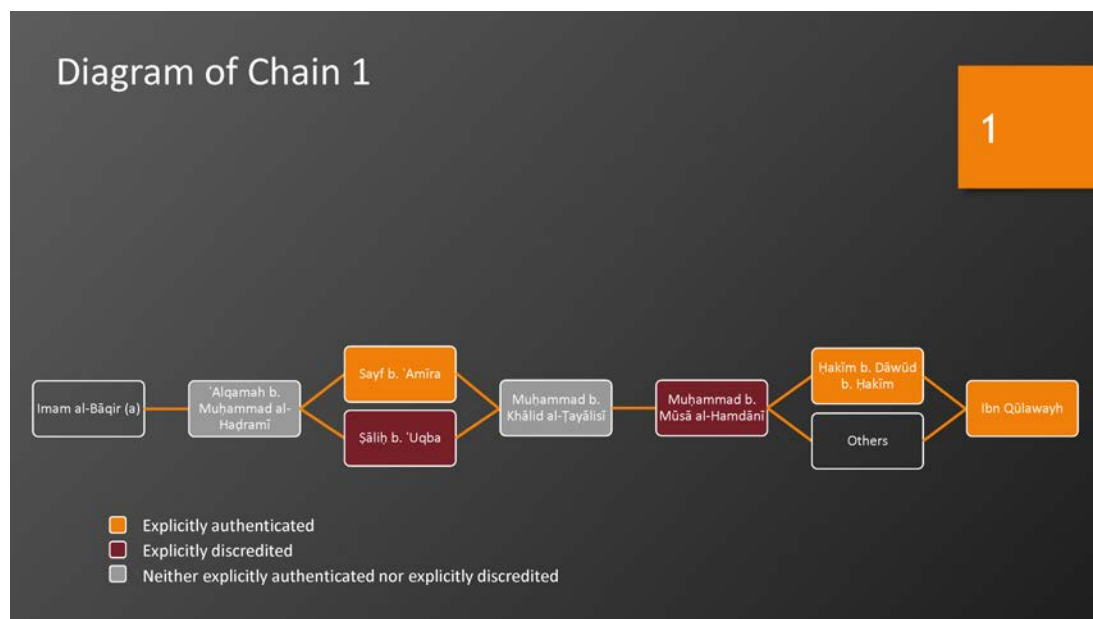
¹² That is, speech of God that is not part of the Qur’an.

5.1 Chain 1 and Chain 2

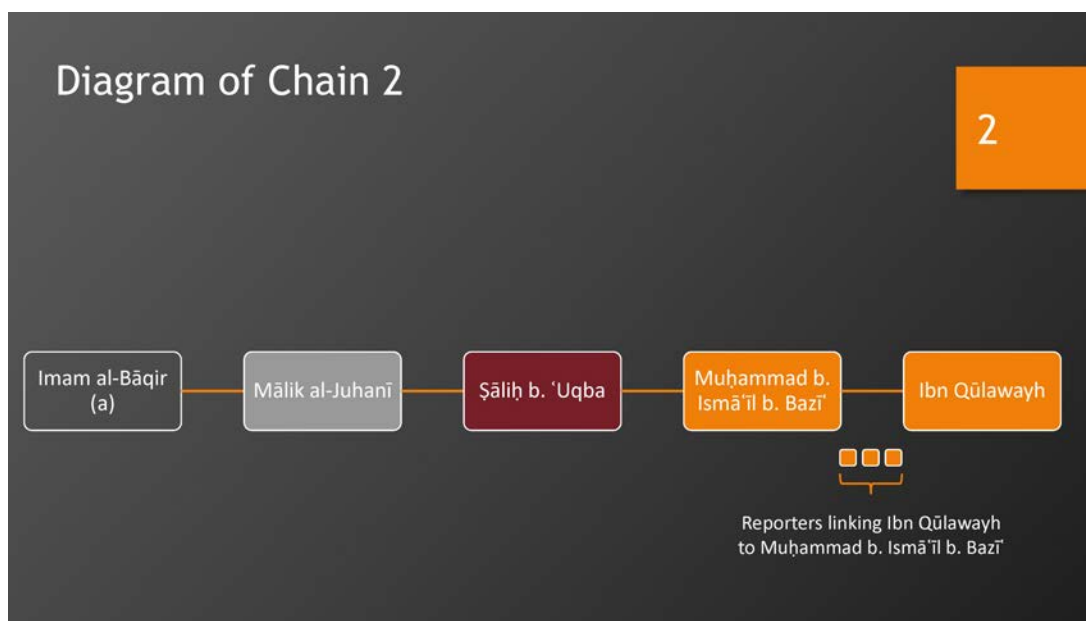
As both of these chains are mentioned in one passage, the second chain is marked in red to distinguish it from the first.

حَدَّثَنِي حَكِيمُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ بْنِ حَكِيمٍ وَغَيْرُهُ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُوسَى الْهَمْدَانِيِّ عَنْ
مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ خَالِدِ الطَّيَالِسِيِّ عَنْ سَيْفِ بْنِ عَمِيرَةَ وَصَالِحِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ جَمِيعًا عَنْ
عَلْقَمَةَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ 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. ‘Amīra and Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba from ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī. And Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl from Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba from Mālīk al-Juhanī that Abū Ja‘far al-Bāqir said ...¹³



¹³ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 SH/1977), p. 174.



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.
3. For the sake of brevity, what was considered to be the main supporting evidence for establishing the reliability of reporters

¹⁴ There are eight principal collections of Shī'ī *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 l-'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.

who have not been explicitly authenticated has been mentioned. Further details can be found in Sobhani (n.d.), al-Zanjānī (2020), Ray-shahrī (1388 SH/2009), IslamQuest (2012), Qurbānī-Muqaddam (1395 SH/2016), Yadullāh-pūr (1387 SH/2008), Muḥammadī-Muẓaffar (1385 SH/2006), and al-Khoei (1410/1990).

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

Ḥakīm b. Dāwūd b. Ḥakīm: Explicitly authenticated.¹⁵

Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī: Al-Najāshī states the Qummīs discredited him.¹⁶ Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī 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-Ghaḍā’irī, this has been

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

¹⁶ Al-Najāshī writes: “The Qummīs have considered him weak due to [him having] an extremist (*ghuluww*) stance. Ibn al-Walīd says: ‘He would fabricate ḥadīth,’ 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” (1418/1997, 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.

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

¹⁸ Sayyid al-Khoei posits that al-Najāshī stops short of classing Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Hamdānī weak because after al-Najāshī mentions how some have

seriously questioned or dismissed entirely.¹⁹

Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:

- Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. ‘Umrān al-Ash‘arī, the author of *Nawādir al-ḥikma* 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.

It is unlikely that such eminent authorities would report from him if he were unreliable.

Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Ṭayālīsī: Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.²⁰

Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:

a) The following eminent scholars report from him:

- ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Faḍḍāl
- Sa‘d b. ‘Abdullāh al-Qummī
- Ḥamīd b. Ziyād. Al-Ṭūsī says in his *Rijāl*, “Ḥamīd transmits

considered him weak, he says, “And God knows best.” This expression suggests that al-Najāshī was doubtful about the discreditation (1410/1990, v. 17, p. 283).

¹⁹ For example, Sobhani (n.d.) states that Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī 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-Ghaḍā’irī considered reporters who transmitted *karāmāt* by the Imams to be unreliable. Furthermore, according to Sayyid al-Khoei, it is not even established that the book attributed to Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī was in fact his work (1410/1990, v. 9, p. 79).

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*.

many *uṣūl*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 his reliance upon [al-Ṭayālīsī].”²³
 - Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ma‘ādī
 - Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥakīm
- b) For some prominent reporters, he is the source to books of ḥadīth, such as the books of Sayf b. ‘Amīra 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-Ṭayālīsī.

Other notable information:

- He was a companion of Imam al-Kāzīm.

Sayf b. ‘Amīra: Explicitly authenticated.²⁴

Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba: An entry in an early biographical work discredits him.²⁵

However, this discreditation has been rebutted.²⁶

Indicator used to establish his reliability:

- Eminent authorities like Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘ and

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 (1430/2008), p. 441.

²³ Al-Zanjānī (2020).

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

²⁵ Ibn al-Ghaḍā‘irī says about him: “Extremist (*ghāl*), liar (*kadhhdhāb*), he is not to be paid any attention to (*lā yultafatu ilayh*)” (1422/2001, p. 69).

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

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Abī l-Khaṭṭāb report from him.

Other notable information:

- He was a companion of Imam al-Ṣādiq.

‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī: Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.

Indicator used to establish his reliability:

- In the third report in *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* (see Section 5.13), Sayf b. ‘Amīra says to Ṣafwān b. Mihrān that the *du‘ā* he recited was not reported by ‘Alqama from Imam al-Bāqir. Ṣafwān replies that he heard it from Imam al-Ṣādiq. If ‘Alqama 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 ‘Alqama from Imam al-Bāqir, he was using ‘Alqama’s report as the standard for evaluating Ṣafwān’s report; hence, Sayf clearly considered ‘Alqama reliable. Further, if ‘Alqama was unreliable, Ṣafwān would have commented on his unreliability in his response to Sayf. Ṣafwān’s report is therefore an endorsement of the *ziyāra* reported by ‘Alqama.

Other notable information:

- He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq.

Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘: Explicitly authenticated.²⁷

Mālik al-Juhanī: Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.

Supporting evidence used to establish his reliability:

- a) ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī and Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā report from him, as do two Companions of Consensus (*aṣḥāb al-ijmā‘*):²⁸

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

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 through to Imam al-Riḍā. Scholars of *rijāl* consider them to be of the highest

‘Abdullāh b. Muskān and Yūnus b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.

- a) He appears in the chains of traditions in all the Four Books.

Other notable information:

- He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir and Imam al-Ṣādiq.

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 *ziyāra* from Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘’s book in the same way that al-Ṭūsī did (see Section 5.8).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 hereunder – it comprises solely of explicitly authenticated narrators:³¹

“His father [Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh]³² from Sa‘d b. ‘Abdullāh³³ from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā³⁴ from Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b.

rank of reliability.

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

³⁰ Sobhani (n.d.); IslamQuest (2012).

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

³² Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 123.

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

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

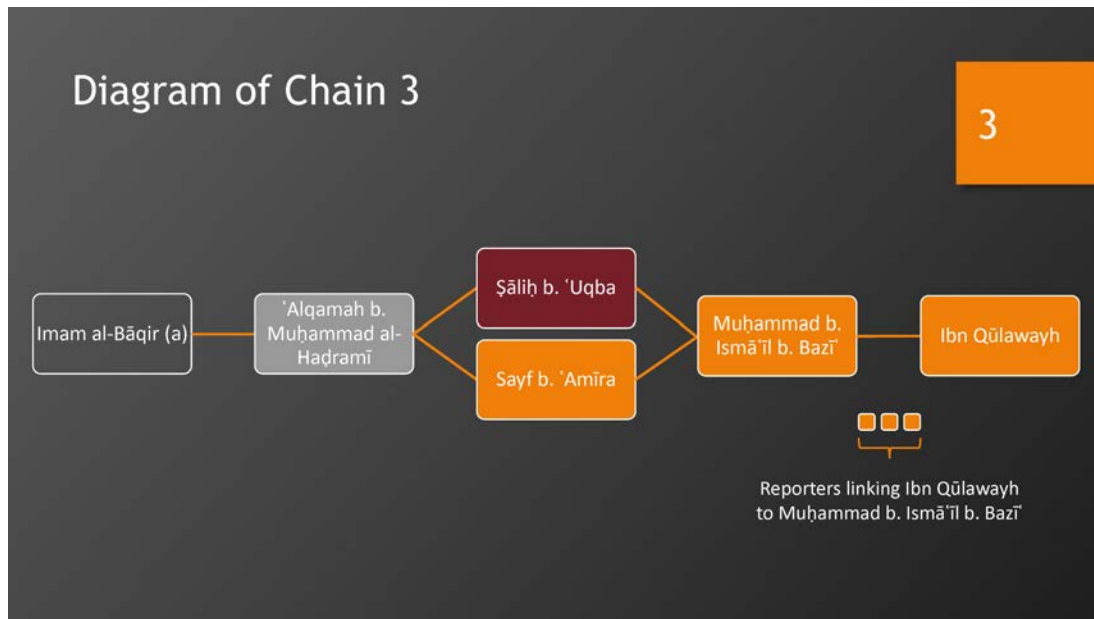
Bazī'.”³⁵

5.5 Chain 3

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

Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqba al-Juhanī and Sayf b. ‘Amīra reported that ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī said, “I requested Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir], “Teach me ...”³⁶

We understand from what is mentioned in Chain 2 that Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī' reports from Şāliḥ b. ‘Uqba al-Juhanī and Sayf b. ‘Amīra. The chain of transmission is illustrated as follows:



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 earlier in Sections 5.3 and 5.4.

³⁵ As mentioned in Section 5.3.

³⁶ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 SH/1977), p. 175.

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

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

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

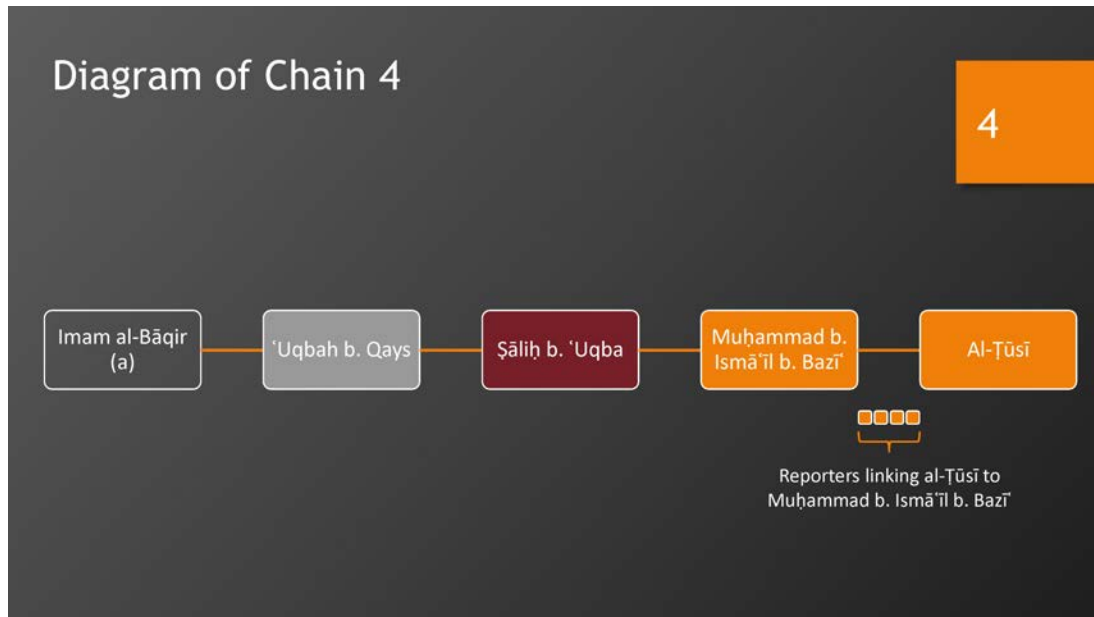
In Section 6.3, an important interpretation of a passage in Ibn Qūlawayh’s Introduction to *Kāmil al-ziyārāt* will be presented, which, if accepted, would increase one’s trust in the reports even if it were conceded that there are weaknesses in the chains.

5.8 Chain 4

رَوَى مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ بْنِ بَزِيْعٍ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ
(ع) قَالَ...

Muḥammad b. Ismā‘il b. Bazī‘ reports from Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba from his father [‘Uqba b. Qays] that Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] said ...³⁷

³⁷ Al-Ṭūsī (1411/1990), p. 772.



5.9 Biographical analysis of reporters in Chain 4

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Bazī: See Section 5.3

Šāliḥ b. 'Uqba: See Section 5.3

'Uqba b. Qays: Neither explicitly authenticated nor explicitly discredited.

Notable information:

- He was a companion of Imam al-Bāqir and/or Imam al-Šādiq.

5.10 Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's path to Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Bazī^c

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 hereunder; all the reporters in it have been explicitly authenticated:

Ḥusayn b. 'Ubaydullāh al-Ghaḍā'irī³⁹ from al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamza al-'Alawī⁴⁰ from 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī⁴¹ from Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim

³⁸ Al-Ṭūsī (1417/1996), p. 215 and p. 236.

³⁹ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 69.

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

⁴¹ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 260.

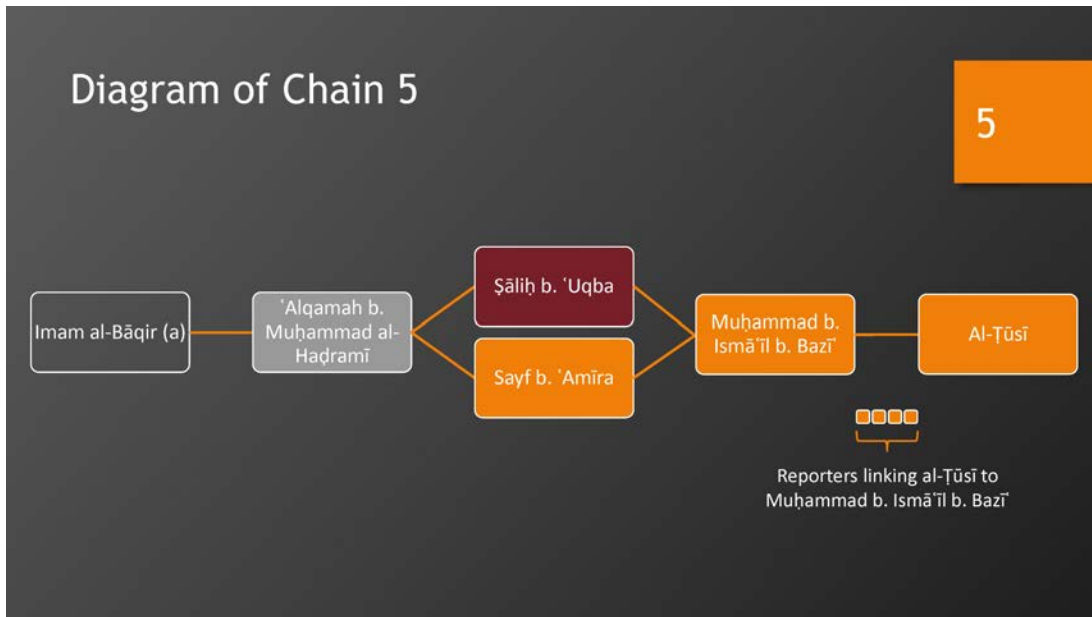
al-Qummī.⁴²

5.11 Chain 5

Chain 5 is the same as Chain 3 except the latter also mentions the demonym of Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba (“al-Juhanī”).

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

Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba and Sayf b. ‘Amīra reported that ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī said, “I requested Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir], “Teach me ...”⁴³



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.

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

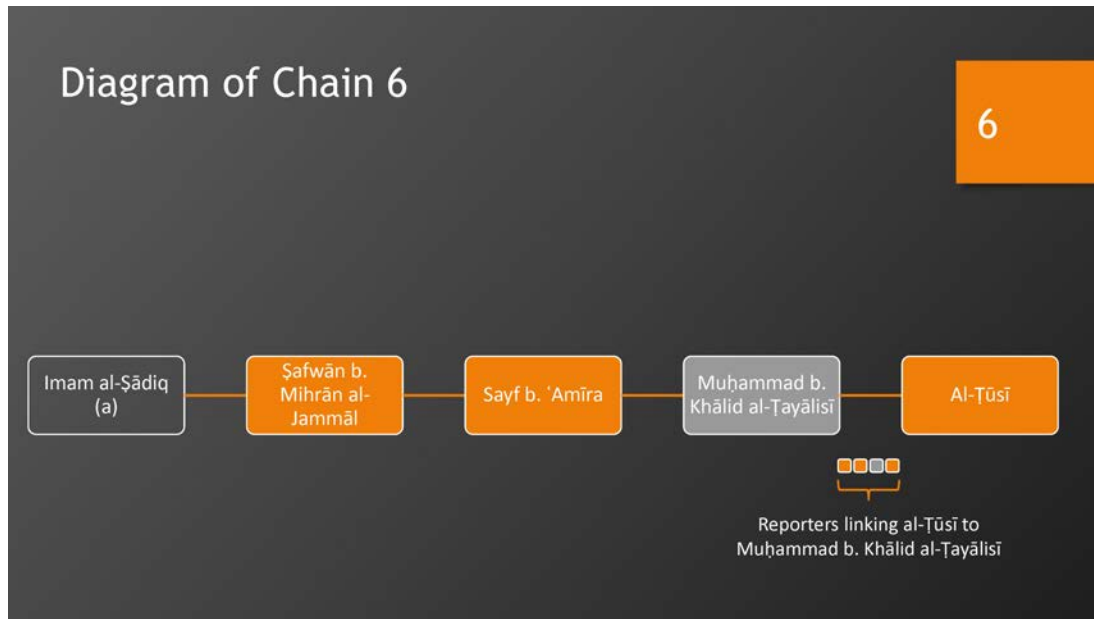
⁴³ Al-Ṭūsī (1411/1990), p. 773.

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 الْغُرِيِّ بَعْدَ مَا خَرَجَ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (ع) فَسِرْنَا مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ، فَلَمَّا فَرَعْنَا مِنَ الزِّيَارَةِ صَرَفَ صَفْوَانٌ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى نَاحِيَةِ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ (ع)، فَقَالَ لَنَا تَزُورُونَ الْحُسَيْنَ (ع) مِنْ هَذَا الْمَكَانِ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَأْسِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (ع) مِنْ هَاهُنَا، أَوْ مَا إِلَيْهِ أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الصَّادِقِ (ع) وَأَنَا مَعَهُ، قَالَ: فَدَعَا صَفْوَانٌ بِالزِّيَارَةِ الَّتِي رَوَاهَا عَلْقَمَةُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيُّ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (ع) فِي يَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ.

And Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī reports from Sayf b. ‘Amīra 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 ‘Abdullāh [al-Ṣādiq] had left. Later, we set out for Medina from al-Ḥīra. When we had completed performing the pilgrimage rites, Ṣafwān turned his face in the direction of the grave of Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn and said to us, ‘Salute al-Ḥusayn from this place, from the place of the head of the grave of the Leader of the Faithful [Imam ‘Alī], for Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ṣādiq pointed towards it [i.e. the grave of Imam al-Ḥusayn] from right here while I was with him.’” He [Sayf b. ‘Amīra] said, “Then Ṣafwān recited the salutation that ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī reported from Abū Ja‘far [al-Bāqir] for the day of ‘Āshūrā’.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Al-Ṭūsī (1411/1990), p. 777.



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. Yaḥyā al-‘Aṭṭār has not been explicitly authenticated.

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‘īl 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.

⁴⁵ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 198.

⁴⁶ Al-Ṭūsī (1417/1996), p. 228.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ṭāwūs (1363 SH/1984), p. 97.

⁴⁸ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 353.

⁴⁹ Al-Najāshī (1418/1997), p. 349.

- He was a Master of Permit (*shaykh al-ijāza*).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. Khālid narrated” (*rawā*) instead of using the passive form, “It has been reported by Muḥammad b. Khālid” (*ruwiya ‘an*); 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. ‘Amīra rather than Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba.

As for Chain 4, even if one were to accept the counterarguments concerning the discreditation levelled at Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba, the chain still suffers from the presence of ‘Uqba 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 *ziyāra* itself. This route is made possible due to there being more than one narrator at each *ṭabaqa* (stage or generation of transmission):

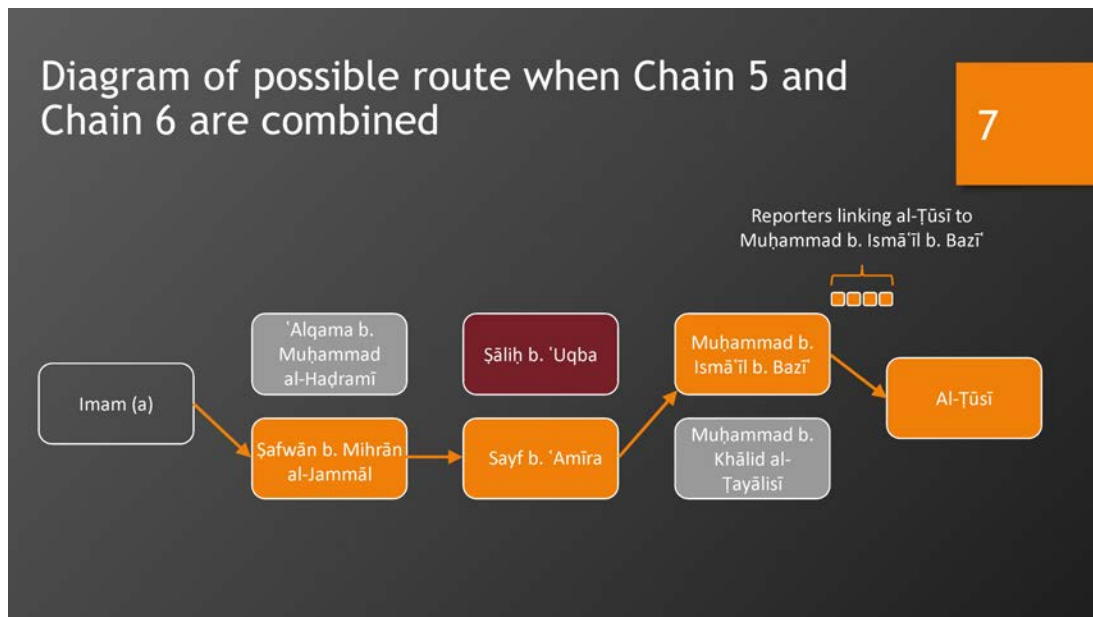
1. First stage: ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī and Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl
2. Second stage: Sayf b. ‘Amīra and Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba
3. Third stage: Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī‘ and Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī

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-ijāza*). See also Section 6.2.

⁵¹ Al-Zanjānī (2020).

Consequently:

- a) At the first stage, even if we assume the reliability of ‘Alqama b. Muḥammad al-Ḥaḍramī is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Ṣafwān b. Mihrān al-Jammāl.
- b) As for the second stage, even if we assume the reliability of Ṣāliḥ b. ‘Uqba is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Sayf b. ‘Amīra.
- c) And in the third stage, even if we assume the reliability of Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Ṭayālīsī is not established, the chain of transmission is correct through Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl b. Bazī⁵²



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*)

⁵² IslamQuest (2012).

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 l-Qāsim al-Khoei (d. 1992).

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-Sistani.

Sayyid al-Sistani 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 (*ḥujja*) 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 earlier, 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 indicate reliability?
4. When a reliable person reports from someone, does it mean that the other person is also reliable?

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

5. Does “Mastership of Permit” (*shaykhūkhat al-ijāza*) 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

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 *ziyāra*’s path of transmission from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Ṭayālīsī (see Section 5.15). 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-Khoei (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.

⁵⁴ The Banī Faḍḍāl are said to have been a group of individuals from the Faḥḥiyya sect. Another view is that they were companions of Imam al-Kāzīm, Imam al-Riḍā, Imam al-Hādī, and Imam al-‘Askarī, or they were Faḥḥiyya initially but later believed in the imamate 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-Bazanṭī.

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

⁵⁷ Al-Khoei (1410/1990), v. 2, p. 328.

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:

وَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا أَنَّا لَا نُحِيطُ بِجَمِيعِ مَا رُوِيَ عَنْهُمْ فِي هَذَا الْمَعْنَى وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهِ لَكِنَّا مَا وَقَعْنَا مِنْ جِهَةِ الثَّقَاتِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا رَحِمَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ، وَلَا أَخْرَجَتْ فِيهِ حَدِيثًا رُوِيَ عَنِ الشُّذَّازِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ يُؤْتَرُ ذَلِكَ عَنْهُمْ عَنِ الْمَذْكُورِينَ غَيْرِ الْمَعْرُوفِينَ بِالرِّوَايَةِ، الْمَشْهُورِينَ بِالْحَدِيثِ وَالْعِلْمِ.

We acknowledge that we have not encompassed everything which has been narrated from them [the Infallibles] about this topic [*ziyāra*] 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:

1. Ibn Qūlawayh meant to authenticate all the reporters mentioned in the chains of narrations in his book (388 reporters). Al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1104/1693) held this opinion. It was also Sayyid al-Khoei's initial opinion.
2. Ibn Qūlawayh meant to authenticate only his *shaykhs* (teachers),

⁵⁸ Al-Īrawānī (2017), p. 114.

⁵⁹ Ibn Qūlawayh (1356 SH/1977), p. 4.

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-Khoei’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-Sistani. 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 ḥadīth” (*nuqqād al-aḥādīth*),⁶⁰ like Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Walīd and Sa‘d b. ‘Abdullāh. 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 ḥadīth.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 ḥadīth 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*

⁶⁰ The critical experts of ḥadīth 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-Sistani (2014), pp. 21-2.

- al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) in *al-Muqni*⁶² and *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*
- 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-shi'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 ḥadīth relied on certain evidence that was passed down to them, such as a 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 *ziyāra*'s authenticity

Sayyid al-Sistani'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'a al-Kabīra*:

Ziyārat 'Āshūrā' and *al-Jāmi'a al-Kabīra* are among the most important, best, and authentic *ziyāras* 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*

⁶² Al-Sistani, M.R. (1437/2016), pp. 122-4.

⁶³ Al-Baldāwī (2013), p. 26.

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 *ziyāra*, the chain of narration mentioned in *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* after this *ziyāra* is veracious.⁶⁴

One of the most decisive responses to the question of the *ziyāra*’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 herewith:

Grand Ayatollah Nāṣir Makārim-Shīrāzī:

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

Grand Ayatollah Ja‘far Sobhani:

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

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

⁶⁵ Khurāsānī (2007).

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 zālimin bi-l-la‘ni minnī ...*” – a section which some have claimed is not an authentic part of the *ziyāra*. He goes on to suggest that it was probably because of *taqiyya* that some other early manuscripts do not mention this part. (Makārim-Shīrāzī (n.d.) and Makārim-Shīrāzī (n.d.a))

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 twelve reasons why the *ziyāra* 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 *ziyāras* and *du‘ā’s*. Stringent standards are used for the former, not the latter.

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,

⁶⁷ Sobhani (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 *ziyāra* that one attains certainty in the *ziyāra’s* authenticity even though there are differences in the reports.

⁶⁹ Shafaqna (2020).

⁷⁰ Al-Baldāwī (2013), p. 29.

⁷¹ Al-Tabrīzī (1432/2010), pp. 76-87.

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 Ṣaḥīḥ of Ḥishām b. Sālīm in which Imam al-Ṣādiq is reported to have said:

مَنْ بَلَغَهُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (ص) شَيْءٌ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ، فَعَمِلَهُ كَانَ أَجْرُ ذَلِكَ لَهُ، وَإِنْ كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (ص) لَمْ يَقُلْهُ.

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

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-‘Āmilī (1367 SH/1988), v. 1, section 18, tradition 184. This is one of

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 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 *rajā'*, 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

nine such traditions in the section.

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 ‘*rajā'*’ (shorter form of ‘*rajā' al-maṭlūbiyya*’), 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-Sistani, (2017) Ruling 12, Translator’s footnote number 15).

⁷⁶ See, for example, Hobbollah (2020), who applies Sayyid al-Khoei’s methodology to the reporters in the chains of the *ziyāra* and concludes that the chains are weak. Nevertheless, when it came to giving a legal opinion on

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-Sistani’s interpretation of Ibn Qūlawayh’s statement in his Introduction to *Kāmil al-ziyārāt* is significant, as it would mean that critical experts of ḥadīth 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 *ziyāra* could still be relied upon according to the principle of leniency in evidence for recommended acts, or, at the very least, the *ziyāra* could be recited with the intention of *rajā’*. 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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the matter, Sayyid al-Khoei ruled that the narration in either *Kāmil al-ziyārāt* or *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* could be recited with the intention of *rajā’*.

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