

Kitāb Akhbār al-Qā'im* by 'Allān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī: A Source for Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī in Compiling *al-Kāfi

Hamid Bagheri
University of Tehran

Abstract

'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Abān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, known as 'Allān al-Kulaynī, was among the Imāmī narrators of the era of the Minor Occultation (260/874 to 329/940-941). Among the early Imāmī biographical scholars, only al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) provided his biographical account and explicitly affirmed his reliability. He has been identified as the maternal uncle of Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940), and many narrations from him are quoted in *al-Kāfi*. A considerable portion of these narrations appears in *Kitāb al-ḥujja* of *al-Kāfi*. According to a well-known view among Imāmī scholars, he collected the narrations of his book from earlier *ḥadīth* collections. Based on this, the question arises as to which book was his written source for transmitting these narrations. This article seeks to evaluate the hypothesis of 'Allān al-Kulaynī's transmission of narrations from a written source by al-Kulaynī through collecting and analysing these narrations. The documentary and content-based evidence of these narrations support their transmission from *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* by 'Allān al-Kulaynī. The content of a significant portion of these narrations concerns the twelfth Imam, which is in complete alignment with the title of his book.

Keywords: Shī'ī *ḥadīth* collections, sources of *al-Kāfi*, Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, 'Allān al-Kulaynī.

1. Introduction

The history of Imāmī *ḥadīth* indicates that the primary concern of the earliest narrators and *ḥadīth* scholars was writing down *ḥadīth* and preserving them in the form of small booklets. The exhortations of the Imams regarding the importance of writing, preserving, and disseminating these written materials were not without effect in this regard.¹ The companions always carried writing instruments with them so that they could immediately write down the words of the Imams upon hearing them.² This method was the customary practice of Imāmī narrators and *ḥadīth* scholars in the early centuries, to the extent that the transmission of knowledge during the era of the two truthful ones (al-ṣādiqayn), Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 114/733) and Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), through *ḥadīth* writings became a common practice among them. The result was that numerous written works were produced in the forms of *nuskha* (manuscript), *kitāb* (book), *aṣl* (foundational book), *muṣannaf* (compilation), *jāmi'* (comprehensive collection), *nawādir* (miscellanies), and *masā'il* (questions-and-answers), many of which have been catalogued and described in the bibliographical works (*fihrist*) of early scholars such as the *Fihrist* of Abū Ghālib al-Zurārī (d. 368/978), the *Fihrist* of Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Najāshī (d. 450/1058) and the *Fihrist* of Shaykh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067).

The *ḥadīth* writings of the era of the Imams' presence generally served as sources and references for later works. Important later *ḥadīth* sources—especially the early comprehensive *ḥadīth* collections such as the four canonical *ḥadīth* books (*al-kutub al-arba'a*)—were compiled and organised based on these writings. A look at *al-ku-*

¹ See, for example, Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, ed. 'Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya: 1363 Sh./1984), 1:52.

² Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs, 'Alī b. Mūsā, *Muhaj al-da'awāt wa manhaj al-'ibādāt* (Dār al-Dhakhā'ir: 1991), 219–220 and 834–835.

tub al-arbaʿa demonstrates this point. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (d. 381/991) explicitly states in the introduction to *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* that he derived the *ḥadīth* of his book from famous and reliable writings, and following this statement, he mentions the names of some of them.³ The statements of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in the *Mashyakha* of *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām* and *al-Istibṣār* also clearly show that he derived the *ḥadīth* of his books from written sources. Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329/940) also followed the same method in composing *al-Kāfi* and collected its *ḥadīth* from *uṣūl* and compilations (*taṣānīf*) that preceded him.

It is clear that these early written sources did not all enjoy the same level of credibility amongst later scholars. Some gained acceptance among *ḥadīth* scholars and *ḥadīth* schools because they had been presented to one of the Imams, who had confirmed the attribution of their contents to his ancestors, or by virtue of their widespread acceptance among *ḥadīth* scholars, their widespread acceptance in the community, and their agreement with commonly accepted books.⁴ Today, by identifying and retrieving *ḥadīth* from early *ḥadīth* writings in *ḥadīth* collections such as *al-kutub al-arbaʿa*, one can refer to the trust or distrust of earlier scholars in them as evidence for accepting or rejecting *ḥadīth*, in addition to the biographical qualities of their transmitters—a method that was not only considered by earlier scholars⁵ but was

³ Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Ṣadūq, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar Ghaffārī (Muʿassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1993), 1:3–4.

⁴ For these criteria, see Hamid Bagheri, “Manbaʿ-ī Muʿtabar wa Nishāna-hā-yi ān Nazd-i Muḥaddithān-i Mutaqaddim-i Imāmī: Nigāhī bi Jāyigāh-i Manbaʿ-ī Maktūb dar Ḥadīth-Pazhūhī-yi Qudamā,” *Pazhūhish-hā-yi Qurʾān wa Ḥadīth* 47, no. 1 (1393 Sh./2014), 7–20.

⁵ See, for example, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bahāʾī al-ʿĀmilī, *Mashriq al-shamsayn wa iksīr al-saʿadatayn*, ed. Mahdī Rajāʾī (Bunyād-i Pazhūhish-hā-yi Islāmī: 2008), 26–30; Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Rawḍat*

also employed by some later scholars such as Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī (d. 1070/1659). In *Rawḍat al-muttaqīn*, paying attention to this method, he considered and accepted *ḥadīth* as authentic in cases where he identified that they had come from the book of 'Ubaydullāh b. 'Alī al-Ḥalabī.⁶

The present article seeks to identify one of Shaykh al-Kulaynī's written sources in compiling *al-Kāfi*—namely *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* by 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī—by studying multiple pieces of textual and paratextual evidence. The importance of this book stems from several aspects. First, it was compiled during the era of the Minor Occultation (*al-ghayba al-ṣuḡhrā*), so due to its temporal proximity to its subject, it can be considered an important source for it. The trustworthiness (*wathāqa*) of its author is another point that increases the overall credibility and importance of the book. Also, Shaykh al-Kulaynī's kinship with the author and his direct access to this work adds to its importance.

2. Biography of 'Alī b. Muḥammad 'Allān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī

The available information about 'Allān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī's biography and life circumstances is very limited. Even this scant information is accessible through al-Najāshī's report. According to al-Najāshī, he is Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Abān al-Rāzī al-Kulaynī, known as 'Allān.⁷ Based on an *isnād* in *al-Kāfi*, 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-

al-muttaqīn fī sharḥ man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh, ed. Ḥusayn Mūsawī Kirmānī and 'Alī Panāh Ishtihārdī (Mu'assasa-yi Farhangī-yi Islāmī-yi Kūshānpūr: 1986), 14:55, 233 and 239.

⁶ Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Rawḍat al-muttaqīn*, 1:135 and 206, 2:211 and 4:347.

⁷ Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī (Fihrist asmā' muṣannifī l-shī'a)*, ed. Mūsā al-Shubayrī al-Zanjānī (Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1996), 260. 'Allāma al-Ḥillī's expression for recording the title "Allān" is as follows: "With the unpointed 'ayn vowelled with an *a*, the *lām* doubled, and

Kulaynī al-Rāzī heard a *ḥadīth* in the year 279/892 from Muḥammad and al-Ḥasan, the sons of ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm. Thus, he lived in the second half of the 3rd/9th century and during the era of the Minor Occultation. Therefore, his reports about the twelfth Shī‘ī Imam can be considered important and noteworthy due to their temporal proximity.

In biographical (*rijāl*) sources, several individuals from one family have been introduced under the title “‘Allān al-Kulaynī,” namely: ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm⁸, his father Muḥammad⁹, his brother Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm¹⁰, and their father Ibrāhīm b. Abān¹¹.

Apparently, “‘Allān” was Ibrāhīm’s title, and for this reason his children and grandson were also referred to by this title.¹² Thus, it is widely

the *nūn*” (Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, *Īdāḥ al-ishtibāh*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥassūn (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1991), 221).

⁸ See al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 260; Ḥasan b. Yūsuf al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl fī ma‘rifat al-rijāl*, ed. Jawād Qayyūmī (Mu’assasat Nashr al-Fiqāha: 1997), 187; Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, *Rijāl Ibn Dāwūd*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī Urmawī (Dānishgāh-i Tehran: 1342 Sh./1963), 248; Abū l-Qāsim al-Khū‘ī, *Mu‘jam rijāl al-ḥadīth* (n.p.: 1413/1993), 13:137–138.

⁹ See Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī*, ed. Jawād Qayyūmī (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1995), 439; ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣa*, 250; Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-ruwāt wa izāḥat al-ishtibāhāt ‘an al-ṭuruq wa-l-isnād* (Dār al-Aḍwā’: 1983), 2:44; al-Khū‘ī, *Mu‘jam*, 15:238.

¹⁰ See al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl*, 407; ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣa*, 69; Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, *Rijāl*, 23; al-Khū‘ī, *Mu‘jam*, 2:23.

¹¹ See Fayḍ al-Kāshānī, *al-Wāfi*, ed. Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Ḥusaynī (Manshūrāt Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī ‘alayhi al-salām al-‘Āmma: 1986), 1:33; al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-ruwāt*, 2:465; Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā’il al-rijāliyya*, ed. Mahdī Rajā’ī (Maktabat Masjid al-Sayyid bi-Iṣfahān: 1997), 503.

¹² For example, see Muḥammad Ja‘far al-Khurāsānī al-Karbāsī, *Iklīl al-manhaj fī taḥqīq al-maṭlab*, ed. Sayyid Ja‘far Ḥusaynī Ashkiwarī (Dār al-Ḥadīth: 2004), 477; al-Wahīd al-Bihbahānī, “*Ta’līqa ‘alā Manhaj al-maqāl*,” in *Manhaj al-maqāl fī taḥqīq aḥwāl al-rijāl*, Lithographic edition (1889), 406;

accepted that this belonged to all of the individuals.¹³

Al-Najāshī in his biographical note for Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī refers to the genealogical relationship between him and 'Allān al-Kulaynī, introducing 'Allān as al-Kulaynī's maternal uncle.¹⁴ According to many scholars, the intended meaning of "Allān al-Kulaynī" here is 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, from whom al-Kulaynī transmitted many reports directly in *al-Kāfi*.¹⁵

Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Ḥā'irī al-Māzandarānī, *Muntahā l-maqāl fī aḥwāl al-rijāl* (Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth: 1996), 7:415; Abū l-Hudā al-Kalbāsī, *Samā' al-maqāl fī 'ilm al-rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Qazwīnī (Mu'assasat Walī al-'Aṣr li-l-Dirāsāt al-Islāmiyya: 1999), 3:364–366). Such a viewpoint can also be inferred from the expressions of Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm; see Mahdī Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *Rijāl al-Sayyid Baḥr al-'Ulūm*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣādiq Baḥr al-'Ulūm (Maktabat al-Ṣādiq: 1363 Sh./1984), 3:82–83.

¹³ See al-Shahīd al-Thānī, "Ḥāshiyat Khulāṣat al-aqwāl," in Riḍā Mukhtārī (ed), *Rasā'il al-Shahīd al-Thānī* (Bustān-i Kitāb: 2002), 2:1051–1052; al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā'il*, 503. Also see Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Rawḍat al-muttaqīn*, 14:424; Mīr Dāmād, *al-Ta'līqa 'alā Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, ed. Mahdī Rajā'ī (al-Khayyām: 1983), 20; al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam*, 24:142. However, Fāḍil al-Astarābādī and Abū l-Hudā al-Kalbāsī opposed this view that 'Allān was also a title of Ibrāhīm; see Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Fāḍil al-Astarābādī, *Manhaj al-maqāl fī taḥqīq aḥwāl al-rijāl al-ma'rūf bi-l-Rijāl al-kabīr* (Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth: 2002), 237; Abū l-Hudā al-Kalbāsī, *Samā' al-maqāl*, 1:250–251; also see Abū l-Ma'ālī al-Kalbāsī, *al-Rasā'il al-rijāliyya*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dirāyatī (Dār al-Ḥadīth: 2002), 3:348.

¹⁴ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 377.

¹⁵ For examples, see Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, *Rawḍat al-muttaqīn*, 14:400; Muṣṭafā al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijāl* (Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth: 1998), 4:355; al-Karbāsī, *Samā' al-maqāl*, 477; Muḥammad Amīn al-Kāzīmī, *Hidāyat al-muḥaddithīn ilā ṭarīqat al-muḥammadiyyīn al-ma'rūf bi-Mushtarakāt al-Kāzīmī*, ed. Mahdī Rajā'ī (Maktabat Ayatollah al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī: 1985), 78; Baḥr al-'Ulūm, *Rijāl*, 3:83; al-Māzandarānī,

Al-Najāshī used two expressions to denote his reliability: “trustworthy” (*thiqa*) and “reliable” (*‘ayn*).¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, and others also described him using these same two expressions from al-Najāshī.¹⁷ According to al-Najāshī, ‘Allān was killed during his journey to Mecca.¹⁸ This was apparently the same pilgrimage journey for which, according to al-Najāshī’s report, he sought permission from the twelfth Imam, who instructed him to postpone it for that year and not to perform the pilgrimage, but he disobeyed and embarked on this journey.¹⁹ The reason implied for the Imam’s opposition to ‘Allān’s pilgrimage journey was his being killed during this journey. Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Māmaqānī (d. 1351/1932) believed that the attestations to the trustworthiness of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm from scholars of *rijāl* flatly contradicted the report of his non-compliance with the prohibi-

Muntahā l-maqāl, 5:50; Ḥusayn al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī, *Khātimat Mustadrak al-Wasā’il* (Mu’assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā’ al-Turāth: 1995), 5:236; Muḥammad Taqī al-Tustarī, *Qāmūs al-rijāl* (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 2004), 12:134–135. Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) considered this to be the famous opinion of his era; see Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshih al-samāwiyya*, ed. Ghulām Ḥusayn Qayṣariyyahā and Ni‘matullāh Jalīlī (Dār al-Ḥadīth: 2002), 107. He also repeated this statement in his commentary on the principles section of *al-Kāfi*, but he himself did not accept it. Rather, he believed that ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm was al-Kulaynī’s maternal cousin; see Mīr Dāmād, *Ta’līqa*, 19–20; also see Mīr Dāmād, *al-Rawāshih*, 174.

¹⁶ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 260.

¹⁷ See ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣa*, 187; Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, *Rijāl*, 248; al-Tafrishī, *Naqd al-rijāl*, 3:291; al-Ardabīlī, *Jāmi‘ al-ruwāt*, 1:596; ‘Alī al-Burūjirdī, *Ṭarā’if al-maqāl fī ma‘rifat ṭabaqāt al-rijāl*, ed. Mahdī Rajā’ī (Maktabat Ayatollah al-Mar‘ashī al-Najafī: 1990), 1:209; al-Khū’ī, *Mu‘jam*, 13:137–138.

¹⁸ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 261.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

tion of the twelfth Imam against going on pilgrimage, and he expressed amazement that this was accepted.²⁰ However, Ayatollah al-Khū'ī does not consider the report of 'Allān's seeking permission from the twelfth Imam for his intended pilgrimage journey to be incompatible with his trustworthiness as a narrator, because it is possible that he interpreted the Imam's "order" as "advisory guidance" (*amr irshādī*)—most of their commands to their companions were of this type—and not as an "authoritative command" (*amr mawlawī*).²¹

It should be mentioned that some scholars have cited evidence to authenticate Sahl b. Ziyād al-Ādamī as a narrator, which includes the transmission of distinguished scholars from him, who alongside narrators such as al-Faḍl b. Shādhān, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-'Aṭṭār al-Qummī, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṣaffār al-Qummī, 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, Muḥammad b. Ja'far al-Asadī, Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh al-Qummī, Sa'd b. 'Abdullāh al-Ash'arī al-Qummī, and others, transmitted from 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm known as 'Allān.²²

3. 'Allān al-Kulaynī's Narrations in *al-Kāfi*

The name of 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm 'Allān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī appears in the *isnāds* of many narrations in Imāmī *ḥadīth* books. The largest volume of narrations from him is found in al-Kulaynī's *al-Kāfi*.

Al-Kulaynī transmitted *ḥadīth* from him directly in two ways: one by explicitly mentioning his name in the chain of transmission, and the other through his presence among the group referred to as "a number of our companions from Sahl b. Ziyād" (*'idda min aṣḥābinā 'an Sahl*

²⁰ 'Abdullāh al-Māmaqānī, *Tanqīḥ al-maqāl fi aḥwāl al-rijāl*, lithograph edition (n.p.: n.d.), 2:302

²¹ Al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam*, 13:138.

²² Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣāliḥ al-Mu'allim, *Uṣūl 'ilm al-rijāl bayna l-nazariyya wal-taṭbīq (taqrīran li-baḥth samāḥat Ayatollah al-Ḥāj al-Shaykh Muslim al-Dāwarī)* (n.p.: 1996), 514.

b. Ziyād). Despite the explicit mention of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī’s fame by the nickname “Allān” in the *isnāds* of some *ḥadīths*,²³ it is surprising that al-Kulaynī in *al-Kāfi*, despite the many narrations he transmitted from him (see the discussion below), never introduced him with the title ‘Allān anywhere. Rather, only in one instance is the expression “‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī” seen in this book.²⁴

At the beginning of the *isnāds* of many narrations in *al-Kāfi*, the name “‘Alī b. Muḥammad” is seen.²⁵ Among al-Kulaynī’s teachers, in addition to ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm ‘Allān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, there were two others also named “‘Alī b. Muḥammad”: one was ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān and the other was ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī l-Qāsim Mājilawayh. In *al-Kāfi*, no *ḥadīth* is seen transmitted through ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān; rather, al-Kulaynī’s transmissions from him are limited to two narrations reported by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.²⁶ Apparently, al-Kulaynī sometimes refers to ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī l-Qāsim by the name “‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Bundār”²⁷ or “‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh.”²⁸ Accordingly, regarding “‘Alī b. Muḥammad” at the beginning of the *isnāds* of *ḥadīths* in *al-Kāfi*, there is the possibility that one of these two transmitters is intended—either ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī or ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Bundār. This matter has caused disagreement among scholars. Many scholars believe that the first person is intended by “‘Alī b.

²³ For example, see al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-ni‘ma*, ed. ‘Alī Akbar Ghaffārī (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1992), 2:485–486; al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Sayyid Hāshim Ḥusaynī Ṭīhrānī (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: n.d.), 159–160; al-Ṣadūq, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, ed. Ḥusayn A‘lamī (Mu’assasat al-A‘lamī li-l-Maṭbū‘āt: 1992), 1:125 and 145.

²⁴ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 5:541.

²⁵ For examples, see *ibid.*, 1:10, 20, 28; 2:5, 28, 157; and 3:37.

²⁶ Al-Ṣadūq, *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, 1:132; al-Ṣadūq, *al-Tawḥīd*, 176.

²⁷ For examples, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 2:241–242; 3:23.

²⁸ For examples, see *ibid.*, 1:11 and 31; 3:69 and 161; 4:6.

Muḥammad” at the beginning of the *isnāds* in *al-Kāfi*,²⁹ but Ayatollah al-Khū'ī holds that the second transmitter—namely 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Bundār, who is the same as 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Abī l-Qāsim 'Abdullāh b. 'Imrān al-Barqī—is intended.³⁰ The best evidence that “'Alī b. Muḥammad” at the beginning of the *isnāds* in *al-Kāfi* refers to 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī is that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq has transmitted some of al-Kulaynī's *ḥadīth* from *al-Kāfi* in his works and has rendered the unqualified “'Alī b. Muḥammad” in these *isnāds* as “'Alī b. Muḥammad al-ma'rūf bi-'Allān” (“'Alī b. Muḥammad known as 'Allān”).³¹ Another indication in this regard is the thematic agreement of many of these narrations with the title of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī's book, namely *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*.³²

Thus, his name appears at the beginning of al-Kulaynī's *isnāds* in three forms: 'Alī b. Muḥammad (493 narrations), 'Alī (10 narrations), and 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī (1 narration). Accordingly, the total number of narrations that Shaykh al-Kulaynī transmitted from him in *al-Kāfi* is 504 narrations.³³

One contemporary researcher has mentioned the titles “'Alī b.

²⁹ For examples, see Aḥmad al-Ardabīlī, *Majma' al-fā'ida wa-l-burhān fī sharḥ Irshād al-adhān*, ed. Muḥtabā 'Irāqī and others (Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: n.d.), 2:400; Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn al-'Āmilī, *Istiḡṣā' al-i'tibār fī sharḥ al-Istibṣār* (Mu'assasat Āl al-Bayt li-Iḥyā' al-Turāth: 1999), 3:237; Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Māzandarānī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, ed. 'Alī 'Āshūr (Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī: 2000), 1:78; al-Kāshānī, *al-Wāfi*, 1:81; Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ṭurayḥī, *Jāmi' al-maqāl fī-mā yata'allaq bi-aḥwāl al-ḥadīth wa-l-rijāl*, ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm al-Ṭurayḥī (Mu'assasat al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī: 2011), 113; al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā'il*, 504.

³⁰ Al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīth*, 13:135–136 and 162.

³¹ For examples see al-Ṣadūq, *al-Amālī* (Mu'assasat al-Ba'tha: 1997), 351; idem., *Uyūn akhbār al-Riḍā*, 1:132–135, 186; idem., *al-Tawḥīd*, 186. For these *ḥadīths* in *al-Kāfi*, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1:105 and 120–123.

³² This matter will be addressed further below.

³³ These counts are taken from the *Dirāyat al-Noor* software.

Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm” and “Alī b. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm,” from whom al-Kulaynī transmitted 4 and 1 narrations respectively,³⁴ but these names are not seen at the beginning of the *isnāds* of narrations in the existing *al-Kāfi*. The total number of narrations that Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī transmitted through *‘idda min aṣḥābinā ‘an Sahl b. Ziyād* comprises 1554 narrations.³⁵

Al-Kulaynī’s other narrations from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī are in the form of *‘idda min aṣḥābinā ‘an Sahl b. Ziyād*, and according to ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī’s report from al-Kulaynī, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad is among them:

Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī said in his book *al-Kāfi* in many reports ... and whenever I mention in my aforementioned book “*‘idda min aṣḥābinā ‘an Sahl b. Ziyād*,” they are ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b.³⁶ ‘Allān, Muḥammad b. Abī ‘Abdillāh, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, and Muḥammad b. ‘Aqīl al-Kulaynī.³⁷

This part of the *isnād* is among the famous *isnāds* that one contemporary researcher³⁸ has extracted as one of the famous *isnāds* of *al-ku-tub al-arba‘a*. The eleventh *isnād* of this collection is as follows:

Idda min aṣḥābinā ‘an Sahl b. Ziyād from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad

³⁴ ‘Abd al-Rasūl al-Ghaffār, *al-Kulaynī wa-l-Kāfi* (Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1996), 503.

³⁵ This count is taken from the *Dirāyat al-Noor* software.

³⁶ Fāḍil al-Astarābādī (as quoted by al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā’il*, 503; also see Abū l-Hudā Kalbāsī, *Samā’ al-maqāl*, 1:249) believes that the word “b.” here is superfluous and the correct title is “Alī b. Muḥammad ‘Allān.” However, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Shaftī opposed this possibility and believed that ‘Allān was the title of all four members of this family; see al-Shaftī, *al-Rasā’il*, 503.

³⁷ ‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, *al-Khulāṣa*, 430. For examples of al-Kulaynī’s narrations in this manner, see al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1:28; 2:4, 14, 16, 21, 26, 51 and 79.

³⁸ See Muḥammad Jawād al-Shubayrī, *Uṣūl al-rijāl*, (Dār al-Badhra: 2018), 88.

al-Ash'arī from 'Abdullāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh from Abī 'Abdillāh ...

Apparently, some *isnāds*, such as the following *isnād*, are another formulation of this same *isnād*:

Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan and 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād, and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, all from Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ash'arī from 'Abdullāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh, and 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm from his father from Hammād b. 'Īsā from al-Qaddāh from Abū 'Abdullāh ...³⁹

Sometimes al-Kulaynī transmitted the narration alone through 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl from Ja'far al-Ash'arī from Ibn Maymūn al-Qaddāh from Imam Ṣādiq:

'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād from Ja'far b. Muḥammad al-Ash'arī from 'Abdullāh b. Maymūn al-Qaddāh from Abū 'Abdullāh ...⁴⁰

Despite al-Kulaynī's numerous narrations from 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī in these two ways, it is surprising that Ayatollah al-Khū'ī in his biographical account of 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, after reporting al-Najāshī's statements and mentioning that he was al-Kulaynī's maternal uncle, and quoting 'Allāma al-Ḥillī's identification of *'idda min aṣḥābinā 'an Sahl b. Ziyād*, notes that although he was among Shaykh al-Kulaynī's teachers, he has not found any narration from Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb from him in *al-Kāfi* or any other book:

And accordingly, 'Alī b. Muḥammad known as 'Allān is among al-Kulaynī's teachers, but we have not found in *al-Kāfi* or elsewhere any narration of Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb from him ...⁴¹

³⁹ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1:34, "Chapter on the Reward of the Scholar and the Student," *ḥadīth* 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1:40, *ḥadīth* 3.

⁴¹ Ibid., 13:137.

The noteworthy point is that Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī did not include all his narrations from ‘Allān al-Rāzī in *al-Kāfi*. Evidence for this is a narration that Shaykh al-Ṣadūq transmitted through Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Iṣām al-Kulaynī from Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī from ‘Allān, which does not appear in *al-Kāfi*. The *isnād* and text of Shaykh Ṣadūq’s narration is as follows:

Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ‘Iṣām (may God be pleased with him) narrated to us, saying: Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī narrated to us, saying: ‘Allān al-Rāzī narrated to me, saying: “One of our companions informed me that when the servant girl of Abū Muḥammad became pregnant, he said: ‘You will bear a male child, and his name is Muḥammad, and he is the Qā’im (*al-Qā’im*) after me.”⁴²

4. Shaykh al-Kulaynī’s Source for Narrating the Reports of ‘Allān al-Kulaynī

We have said that Shaykh al-Kulaynī transmitted *ḥadīth* directly from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, known as ‘Allān al-Kulaynī, in two ways: one by explicitly mentioning his name at the beginning of *isnād*, and the other in the form “*idda min aṣḥābinā ‘an Sahl b. Ziyād.*”

The narrations of the first type encompass a wide and diverse range of doctrinal, jurisprudential, and ethical topics. Narrations from him have been transmitted in various sections of the *Uṣūl*, *Furū‘*, and *Rawḍa* of *al-Kāfi*. Among his narrations in the *Uṣūl* section, they are found in various chapters of *Kitāb al-ḥujja* (“Book of Proof”). The question is whether Shaykh al-Kulaynī derived these narrations from a written source authored by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī. Al-Najāshī mentioned only one work by him titled *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā’im* and had access to it through two intermediaries, namely Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Nu‘mān, known as Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413/1022),

⁴² Al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 2:408.

from Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh al-Qummī (d. 368/978): “Muḥammad informed us, saying: ‘Ja'far b. Muḥammad narrated to us, saying: ‘Alī b. Muḥammad narrated to us.’”⁴³

The title of this book corresponds with the subject matter of narrations from him in various chapters of *al-Kāfi*, so it is highly probable that this work was Shaykh al-Kulaynī's written source for transmitting these narrations. Muḥammad Ja'far b. Muḥammad Ṭāhir al-Khurāsānī al-Karbāsī (d. 1175/1761) is the first and only scholar to have called attention to this matter.⁴⁴ According to him, most of the existing narrations in *al-Kāfi* regarding the birth of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and the twelfth Imam that mention the name of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad at their beginning are derived from this book:

In *al-Kāfi*, most of the mentions of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad at the beginning of the *isnād* regarding the birth of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī and the birth of the Master correspond to his book.

Although according to one view, “considering the title of his book and the narrations transmitted from him in *al-Kāfi*, it appears that the *ḥadīth* from the two chapters on indication and explicit designation (*ishāra wa naṣṣ*) regarding the Imamate of Imam al-‘Askarī and the twelfth Imam were derived from his book,”⁴⁵ it should be noted that based on certain evidence, it is possible that Shaykh al-Kulaynī's narrations from this written source were not limited to the two chapters on the birth of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and the twelfth Imam—“Chapter on the Birth of Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī” (*Bāb mawlid Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī ‘alayhimā l-salām*) and “Chapter on the Birth of the Master” (*Bāb mawlid al-Ṣāhib ‘alayhi al-salām*)—or the two chapters on indication and explicit designation regarding the Imamate of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and Imam of the Age—“Chapter

⁴³ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 260–261.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 382.

⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Riḍā Ḥammādī and ‘Alī Riḍā Ḥusaynī, “Bāzshināsī-yi Manābi‘-i Kulaynī dar Tadwīn-i *Kāfi*,” *Ḥadīth Pazhūhī* 6, no. 11 (1393 Sh./2014), 185.

on Indication and Explicit Designation Regarding Abū Muḥammad” (*Bāb al-ishāra wa-l-naṣṣ ‘alā Abī Muḥammad ‘alayhi al-salām*) and “Chapter on Indication and Explicit Designation Regarding the Master of the House” (*Bāb al-ishāra wa-l-naṣṣ ilā Ṣāhib al-Dār ‘alayhi al-salām*).

Based on al-Najāshī’s reports on the chains of narration (*ṭuruq riwāyī*) of *ḥadīth* books, he does not have a prominent presence in their transmission.⁴⁶ His name is only seen in the chain of transmission for the books of two authors in al-Najāshī’s *Fihrist*; one is the book of his teacher in transmission, Abū Sa‘īd Sahl b. Ziyād al-Ādamī al-Rāzī, and the other is the books of Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Shammūn (d. 258/871). Al-Najāshī has introduced two books for Sahl b. Ziyād: *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* and *Kitāb al-nawādir*. His chain to the latter book is through ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī:

He has *Kitāb al-nawādir*. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad reported it to us, saying: ‘Ja‘far b. Muḥammad narrated to us, from Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, who said: “‘Alī b. Muḥammad narrated to us, from Sahl b. Ziyād, and a group narrated it from him.”⁴⁷

Al-Najāshī has also introduced three books for Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. Shammūn: *Kitāb al-sunan wa-l-ādāb wa makārim al-akhlāq*, *Kitāb al-ma‘rifā*, and *Kitāb nawādir*. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī narrated all these books through his teacher Sahl b. Ziyād from the author:

Aḥmad b. ‘Alī reported to us, saying: “Ibn Abī Rāfi‘ narrated to us, from Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad, from Sahl b. Ziyād, from Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Shammūn with

⁴⁶ It should be noted that according to al-Najāshī’s own statement, he did not intend in his catalogue to report all the chains of transmission for a *ḥadīth* book; see al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

all his books except the confused material (*takhlīṭ*).⁴⁸

Since most of the narrations of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī in *al-Kāfī* are transmitted from Sahl b. Ziyād, it is possible that he served as Shaykh al-Kulaynī's intermediary in transmitting narrations from Sahl b. Ziyād's book. According to one view:

In most cases, he played the role of a transmission chain (*ṭarīq*) to the books of others. Among these, 199 narrations in *al-Kāfī* were received from Sahl b. Ziyād and 70 narrations from Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ḥammād al-Rāzī. Sahl b. Ziyād was the author of the book *al-Nawādir*, which was transmitted to al-Kulaynī through 'Alī b. Muḥammad and made available to other teachers (*mashāyikh*). Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ḥammād also authored two books titled *Khuṭab Amīr al-Mu'minīn* and *al-Nawādir*. Most of Ibn Abī Ḥammād's narrations in *al-Kāfī* are from Imam al-Bāqir, Imam al-Ṣādiq and Imam al-Kāẓim, which appear to have been taken from his book *al-Nawādir*, and 'Alī b. Muḥammad is the transmission chain to his book.⁴⁹

Although this possibility is not far-fetched in cases such as the narrations of *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* in *al-Kāfī*, it seems unlikely, at least regarding some chapters of *Kitāb al-ḥujja*.

It appears that the life and activity of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī during the period of the Minor Occultation led him to compose a book about the twelfth Imam titled *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*. During this period, the Imāmī Shī'ī community faced a new crisis in the form of the Imam's occultation and a new style of leadership. Some narrations transmitted from him in *al-Kāfī* are also clearly related to this crisis—narrations that deal with the conceptualisation of the dual nature of the present and absent Imam and explicitly affirm the truth and reality of the Imam's occultation through the words of previous Imams.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 336.

⁴⁹ Ḥammādī and Ḥusaynī, "Bāzshināsī," 5.

The context for the emergence of these crises was the doubt and disagreement within the Imāmī Shī‘ī community regarding the existence of a male child for Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī. An example of these doubts is reflected in the treatise of Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Bashshār refuting the theory of the Imāmī Shī‘īs who followed Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and who, after that Imam’s martyrdom, believed in the Imamate and occultation of his son. He considers the claim of the special companions of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī that the Imam had a son to be baseless, asserting that before the Imam’s martyrdom, no one had seen such a child or heard anything about him, and since the time of claiming his existence, no one has yet seen him.⁵⁰ This issue, in turn, confronted the continuity of the Imamate with another challenge. The Imāmī Shī‘īs, who, based on narrations about the number of Imams believed in the Imamate of twelve Imams, became perplexed in determining the identity of the twelfth Imam. With the non-acceptance of the existence of a son for Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, ultimately one of that Imam’s brothers would be proposed as the bearer of the responsibility of imamate, just as a group of Shī‘īs after the Imam’s martyrdom came to believe in the Imamate of one of his two brothers, Muḥammad and Ja‘far. Ibn Bashshār was one of the followers of the sect called “Ja‘fariyya” who believed in the Imamate of Ja‘far.⁵¹ Although according to the Shī‘ī theory and analysis of the course of Imamate, the infallible Imam must be from the lineage of the Prophet, according to this same perspective, the succeeding Imam must always be the son of the preceding Imam. The exception to this rule is only in the case of Imam al-Ḥasan al-Mujtabā and Imam al-Ḥusayn, where the

⁵⁰ For a report of this claim and Ibn Qiba al-Rāzī’s response to it, see al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 1:51–63.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, 1:52–53. Regarding this sect, see Sa‘d b. ‘Abdullāh al-Ash‘arī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt wa-l-firaq*, ed. Muḥammad Jawād Mashkūr (Markaz-i Intishārāt-i ‘Ilmī wa Farhangī: 1361 Sh./1982), 101.

course of Imamate continued through the brother after the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥasan.

Given this issue, the narrations that 'Alī b. Muḥammad transmitted regarding the exclusivity of the Imamate of two brothers—one after the other—in Imam al-Ḥasan and Imam al-Ḥusayn can be interpreted as a response to the challenge of the era of the Minor Occultation and the claims of believers in the Imamate of the sons of Imam al-Hādī, namely Muḥammad and especially Ja'far, after Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī.

If we consider the efforts of 'Alī al-Kulaynī in this historical analytical context pertaining to the era of the Minor Occultation, the narrations transmitted from his book in *al-Kāfi* would not be limited to a few chapters and a few brief narrations. Accordingly, it can be hypothesised that the *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī contained two types of narrations. The first type consists of narrations that respond to the challenge of the era of the Minor Occultation and specifically to the existence and birth of a male child for Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī, the continuity of the course of Imamate in him, and his being seen by some Shi'īs—which we term “specific narrations” (*khāṣṣ*). These narrations are mostly reports with short *isnāds* whose reporters are the special companions of Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī. The other type consists of narrations that address some foundational or peripheral issues of the Imamate of the Imam of the Age, such as the exclusivity of the Imamate of two brothers in Imam al-Ḥasan al-Mujtabā and Imam al-Ḥusayn with an approach of negating the Imamate of Ja'far, the occultation of the twelfth Imam, emphasis on the dual concept of the present Imam and the absent Imam, and the validity of the Imamate of a young child—which we term “general narrations” (*āmm*). These narrations generally have long chains of transmission and recount the words of previous Imams. If this analysis is correct and 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī's book contained both types of narrations, its volume should be considered as extending beyond a few meagre narrations in a few limited chapters.

Before providing a detailed reference to the two types of narrations and their content analysis, it is necessary to emphasise that this categorisation is based on textual and *isnād*-based evidence and indicators, and in no way indicates certainty. Similarly, the demarcation between these two types of narrations is also based on evidence that is neither clear nor definitive.

It should be noted that in addition to al-Kulaynī, his student Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, known as Kātib al-Nu‘mānī (d. 380/990), in his book *al-Ghayba*,⁵² Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in his book *Kamāl al-dīn wa tamām al-ni‘ma*,⁵³ al-Khazzāz al-Qummī (one of the scholars of the 4th/10th century) in *Kifāyat al-athar*,⁵⁴ and Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in his *Kitāb al-ghayba*⁵⁵ have also transmitted narrations from the book of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī.

4.1 First Type: Specific Narrations

One of the chapters of *Kitāb al-ḥujja* in *al-Kāfi* that is completely consistent and harmonious with the title and subject of *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā’im* by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī is “Chapter on Indication and Explicit Designation of the Master of the House [the twelfth

⁵² For examples, see Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Nu‘mānī, *al-Ghayba*, ed. Fāris Ḥassūn Karīm (Anwār al-Hudā: 2002), 68–69, 95–96, 132, 137–138, 151–152 and 155–156. It is noteworthy that all these cases are through Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī.

⁵³ For examples, see al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-dīn*, 2:435–436: through Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī; also see *ibid.*, 2:437, 483, 485 and 486.

⁵⁴ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Khazzāz al-Qummī al-Rāzī, *Kifāyat al-athar fī-l-naṣṣ ‘alā l-a’immat al-ithnā ‘ashar*, ed. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Ḥusaynī (Intishārāt-i Bīdār: 1981), 293–294, quoting from Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī.

⁵⁵ For examples, see al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, *Kitāb al-ghayba*, ed. ‘Ibādullāh Ṭīhrānī and ‘Alī Aḥmad Nāṣiḥ (Mu’assasat al-Ma‘ārif al-Islāmiyya: 1991), 200, 268, 269, 284 and 297.

Imam]” (*Bāb al-ishāra wa-l-naṣṣ ilā ṣāhib al-dār*).⁵⁶ Among other evidence for Shaykh al-Kulaynī’s transmission from *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*, in addition to the contextual appropriateness and harmony of the content and substance of these narrations with the title of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s book, is that most of these narrations are transmitted by narrators other than Sahl b. Ziyād. Of the six narrations that Shaykh al-Kulaynī transmitted in this chapter, four of them—namely narrations numbers 1, 3, 4, and 6—are from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad. In the first narration, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad transmits from Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Bilāl that he received a message from Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī twice regarding that Imam’s successor: once two years before that Imam’s death and the second time three days before his death. In the third narration of the chapter, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad transmits from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Kūfī from Ja‘far b. Muḥammad al-Makfūf from ‘Amr al-Ahwāzī that Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī showed his son to him and explicitly states that he would be the master of the affair of the Imamate after that Imam. In the fourth narration, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad reports from Ḥamdān b. Aḥmad al-Qalānisī his conversation with ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd al-‘Amrī (d. before 267/880)—the first deputy (*nā'ib*) among the four deputies—regarding the death of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and the designation of his successor. In the sixth narration, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad transmitted from al-Ḥusayn and Muḥammad, the sons of ‘Alī b. Ib-rāhīm, from Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Abdī from ‘Abd Qays from Ḍaw’ b. ‘Alī al-‘Ijlī from a Persian man whose name he mentioned, reporting the account of his honour of being in the service of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and seeing that Imam’s son.

In addition to the last narration, it appears that ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī also transmits in his book reports concerning those who saw the twelfth Imam during the lifetime of his noble father or after it. This is because the “Chapter on Naming Those Who Saw Him

⁵⁶ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfi*, 1:328–329.

[the twelfth Imam]”⁵⁷—which comes after “Chapter on Indication and Explicit Designation of the Master of the House”—also has a similar situation to the previous chapter. On one hand, its title and the content of its narrations are completely aligned with the title of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī’s book, and on the other hand, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad transmitted its narrations from narrators other than Sahl b. Ziyād. Among the 15 narrations of this chapter, 12 narrations are transmitted from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad. As is evident from the text of the reports, narrations 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14 refer to seeing the twelfth Imam in childhood years and during the lifetime of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī, while narrations 6, 7, and 15 refer to seeing the twelfth Imam during the period of his Imamate and presumably in his youth and middle age. In narration 5, there is no indication or sign regarding the twelfth Imam’s age.

Other narrations transmitted from the book of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī appear in the chapter entitled “Chapter on the Prohibition of the Name” (*Bāb fī l-nahy ‘an al-ism*).⁵⁸ At the beginning of the *isnāds* of the first two narrations out of the four narrations in this chapter, the name of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad can be seen. Once again, the same two previous indicators are observable here as well: one structural-transmissional (transmission from narrators other than Sahl b. Ziyād) and the other being content alignment with the title of his *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā’im*. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad transmitted the first narration through two intermediaries from Imam al-Hādī. In this narration, the twelfth Imam first referred to the succession of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī and then stated that people would not see the successor of his successor with their eyes, prohibited mentioning his name, and recommended that they call him “the Proof from the Family of Muḥammad” (*al-Ḥujjat min Āl Muḥammad*). In the second narration,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1:329–332.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1:332–333.

reference is made to the reason and philosophy behind not mentioning his name. According to the report of 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ṣāliḥī, after the death of Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī, one of his companions asked him to inquire about the twelfth Imam's name and location. The answer came: "If you tell them the name, they will reveal it, and if they know the location, they will point it out."

The narrations of Shaykh al-Kulaynī from 'Alī b. Muḥammad in "Chapter on the Birth of the Master" (*Bāb mawlid al-ṣāhib*)⁵⁹ are almost certainly from his *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*. Among the 31 narrations in this chapter, 23 cases—narrations numbered 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 31—are transmitted from 'Alī b. Muḥammad. Among them, narrations numbered 8, 20, 26, 29, and 31 were reported by 'Alī b. Muḥammad without any intermediary whatsoever.

4.2. Second Type: General Narrations

Narrations from 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād al-Ādamī appear in two chapters: "The Indication and Explicit Designation of Abū Ja'far the Second" (*al-Ishāra wa-l-naṣṣ 'alā Abī Ja'far al-Thānī*)⁶⁰ and "The Indication and Explicit Designation of Abū Muḥammad" (*al-Ishāra wa-l-naṣṣ 'alā Abī Muḥammad*)⁶¹ in the *Kitāb al-ḥujja* of *al-Kāfi*. It is possible that these were taken from *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*, because firstly, in other related chapters (namely the chapters on indication and explicit designation regarding the Imamate of Imam 'Alī to Imam al-Riḍā and the chapter on indication and explicit designation regarding the Imamate of Imam al-Hādī), there are no narrations with this *isnād*. Secondly, the content of his narrations in these two chapters is somehow connected to the subject of the twelfth Imam. It is natural that the presence of explicit designations (*nuṣūṣ*) regarding

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:514–525.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1:320–323.

⁶¹ Ibid., 1:325–328.

the Imamate of Imam al-Jawād in the book of ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī should have a logical reason and justification. A common issue between the Imamate of Imam al-Jawād and the twelfth Imam could be the justification for this matter. We know that one of the important challenges facing the Imamate of Imam al-Jawād was the issue of childhood Imamate and the nature of his knowledge.⁶² A similar challenge has also been raised regarding the Imamate of the twelfth Imam. Perhaps this common challenge was a reason for ‘Alī b. Muḥammad to transmit the explicit designations indicating the Imamate of Imam al-Jawād in his book. The reference to the explicit designations of the Imamate of Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī could also be because a group of Shī‘īs, after the martyrdom of Imam al-Hādī, believed in the Imamate of his elder son, namely Sayyid Muḥammad (d. 252/866) known as “Sabu‘ al-Dujayl”⁶³—the uncle of the twelfth Imam.⁶⁴ If this claim is correct, the continuation of the line of Imamate and its connection to him would be disrupted and face a serious challenge.

A similar analysis can be made regarding the second narration in the chapter “The Establishment of Imamate in Descendants and That It Does Not Return to a Brother or Uncle or Others Among Relatives” (*Thabāt al-imāma fi l-a‘qāb wa annahā lā ta‘ūd fi akhin wa lā ‘ammin wa lā ghayrihimā min al-qarābāt*)⁶⁵ transmitted from ‘Alī b. Muḥa-

⁶² For example, see al-Ash‘arī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 95–99; Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Dalā’il al-imāma* (Mu’assasat al-Ba‘tha: 1993), 388–390.

⁶³ “Sabu‘ al-Dujayl” means “the lion of Dujayl.” “Dujayl” was the name of a populated region around a river of the same name in northern Iraq near Sāmarrā’; see Yāqūt b. ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥamawī, *Mu‘jam al-buldān* (Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī: 1979), 2:443.

⁶⁴ Al-Ash‘arī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 101 and 109–110; Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq al-shī‘a*, ed. Muḥammad Kāzīm Mūsawī (Markaz Karbalā’ li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth: 2018), 135–136, 141–142 and 146–147.

⁶⁵ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:286.

muhammad from Sahl b. Ziyād: 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād from Muḥammad b. al-Walīd from Yūnus b. Ya'qūb from Abī 'Abdillāh that he heard him say: "God has refused to place it [the Imamate] with two brothers after al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn."

The title of the chapter and the content of the narration clearly evoke the course of Imamate after the martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī. After his martyrdom, his brother Ja'far (d. 271/884) claimed the position of Imamate.⁶⁶ Some Shī'īs also believed in the Imamate of Muḥammad—the elder brother of Imam al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī—as the successor of Imam al-Hādī or even Imām al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī himself.⁶⁷ The narration, by emphasising the exclusive nature of Imamate between two brothers specifically regarding the two grandsons of the Prophet, shows bias regarding the denial of the claims to Imamate by Muḥammad and Ja'far during the period of the Imamate of the twelfth Imam. The other narrations in the chapter also allude to this same matter in some way.

The third narration from the three narrations of the next chapter—"A Miscellany on the State of Occultation" (*Bāb nādir fī ḥāl al-ghayba*)—has also been transmitted from 'Alī b. Muḥammad.⁶⁸ The narrations related to the occultation of the twelfth Imam constitute another category of narrations that Shaykh al-Kulaynī apparently transmitted from the book of 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī in the "Chapter on Occultation" (*Bāb fī l-ghayba*). His name appears at the beginning of the *isnāds* of six narrations out of 31 narrations in this chapter, namely narrations numbers 2, 7, 13, 14, 22, and 24.⁶⁹ As is evident from the title of the chapter, these narrations allude to the issue

⁶⁶ Al-Ṣadūq, *Kamāl al-Dīn*, 1:43–44 and 319; 2:475. Also see: al-Ash'arī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-Maqālāt*, 110–111; al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, 139–141.

⁶⁷ Al-Ash'arī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-maqālāt*, 101, 109–110; al-Nawbakhtī, *Firaq*, 135–136, 141–142 and 146–147.

⁶⁸ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:335.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:335–343.

of occultation and present recommendations in this regard from the Imams. In the second narration, Imam al-Kāẓim mentions preserving religion during the period of occultation; in narration number 7, the conversation of al-Aṣḡagh b. Nubāta with Imam ‘Alī regarding the duration of occultation and some conditions of that period; in narration number 13, part of a sermon of Imam ‘Alī regarding the necessity of the existence of God’s proof (*ḥujjat Allāh*) whether manifest or hidden; in the fourteenth narration, the exegesis of Q 67: 30 (“Say: Have you considered if your water should go down into the earth, then who would bring you flowing water?”) regarding the Imam’s occultation by Imam al-Kāẓim; the exegesis of Q 81:15 and Q 81:16 (“But nay! I swear by the stars that recede, that run their course and hide themselves”) regarding the Imam’s occultation in the year 260/874 by Imam al-Bāqir; and the statement of the condition for the appearance (*ẓuhūr*) by Imam al-Hādī in narration number 24. As is evident, the content of these narrations is aligned with the title of *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā’im*. Narrations 2, 7, 22, and 24 have been transmitted respectively from al-Ḥasan b. ‘Īsā b. Muḡammad, ‘Abdullāh b. Muḡammad b. al-Khālīd, Ja‘far b. Muḡammad, and “some of our companions” (*ba‘ḍ aṣḡābinā*), but narrations 13 and 14 have been transmitted from Sahl b. Ziyād.

The multiplicity and dispersion of the intermediaries and transmission chains of these narrations make it almost impossible that Shaykh al-Kulaynī transmitted them from a written source other than *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā’im* by ‘Alī b. Muḡammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī.

Apparently, the first narration of the “Chapter on the Dislike of Setting Times” (*Bāb karāhiyyat al-tawqīt*) is also from the book of ‘Alī b. Muḡammad. The content of this narration is a conversation between Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī and Imam al-Bāqir. He spoke to Abū Ḥamza about two instances of delay in the matter of appearance (*ẓuhūr*), one due to the killing of Imam al-Ḥusayn and the other because of the dis-

closure of this secret by some companions. After that, the time of appearance became a mysterious matter even for the Imams.⁷⁰

The sixth narration from the “Chapter on Purification and Testing” (*Bāb al-tamḥiṣ wa-l-imtiḥān*) in *Kitāb al-ḥujja* is also from 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād with a topic concerning the appearance of the saviour. In this narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq introduces conditions for the Shī'īs and Shī'ī community as prerequisites for his appearance, such as testing, sifting, despair of improvement in difficult conditions, and the happiness and wretchedness of the righteous and the wicked.⁷¹

The third and seventh narrations among the seven narrations of the chapter “That Whoever Knows His Imam Will Not Be Harmed Whether This Matter Comes Early or Late” (*Bāb annahu man 'araḥa imāmahu lam yaḍurrahu taqaddama hādhā l-amru aw ta'akhhara*)⁷² are from 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād, which apparently belong to the second type of narrations from *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* by 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī. In the third narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq spoke in response to Abū Baṣīr al-Asadī's question about the time of relief (*faraj*) and its meaning and explained its relationship with awaiting relief for him. In the seventh narration as well, he emphasised the necessity of knowing the Imam of one's time, stating that if one knows him, advancing or delaying in the matter of appearance will bring no harm to the individual, and knowing the Imam enables a person to find a place in the Imam's tent as one who awaits.

The fifth and final narration from the “Chapter on Whoever Worships God Almighty without an Imam from God, Exalted be His Majesty” (*Bāb fī-man dāna Allāh 'azza wa jalla bi-ghayr imām min Allāh jalla jalāluhu*) is also from 'Alī b. Muḥammad. In this narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq emphasised the necessity of recognising the true Imam and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 1:368.

⁷¹ Ibid., 1:370–371.

⁷² Ibid., 1:371–372.

avoiding divine punishment as a consequence of accepting his leadership (*imāma*), in contrast to the torment of the community due to accepting the leadership of a false Imam.⁷³

Two narrations numbered 4 and 5 from the “Chapter on the States of the Imams in Age” (*Bāb ḥālāt al-a’imma ‘alayhim al-salām fī l-sinn*) also relate in some way to the topic of the twelfth Imam. In these two narrations, reference is made to the possibility of leadership (*imāma*) for young children. In the fourth narration from Imam al-Ṣādiq, the possibility of leadership for a five-year-old child is mentioned, and in the fifth narration from Imam al-Jawād, the possibility of a child under seven or even five years old being an *Imam* is emphasised. These two narrations completely correspond with the age of the twelfth Imam at the time of his noble father’s death and the beginning of his period of leadership. It seems that in these two narrations, groundwork was laid for accepting this matter—the Imamate of the twelfth Imam at five years of age.⁷⁴

The first narration from the “Chapter on the Births of the Imams” (*Bāb mawālīd al-a’imma*) is narrated by ‘Alī b. Muḥammad from ‘Abdullāh b. Ishāq al-‘Alawī through his *isnād* from Imam al-Ṣādiq. In this *ḥadīth*, the Imam refers to drinking a special beverage on the night of the conception of his own seed, that of his fathers, and that of his son Imam al-Kāẓim, which was more fluid than water, softer than butter, sweeter than honey, cooler than snow, and whiter than milk, and which came from heaven through a divine unseen agent.⁷⁵ From the Imam’s expression, it can be understood that drinking this beverage was among the special characteristics of the infallible Imam at the time of his conception. Presumably with such an understanding, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad narrated this tradition in his book as a sign of leadership (*imāma*) that would also include the twelfth Imam. The seventh

⁷³ Ibid., 1:376.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 1:383–384.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1:385–387.

and final narration of this same chapter is also narrated by 'Alī b. Muḥammad from “*idda min aṣḥābinā*” and clearly speaks of the ten signs of leadership from the tongue of Imam Bāqir.⁷⁶ Apparently, he considered the implication of these *ḥadīth* to be generally inclusive of the twelfth Imam as well, and thus included them in his book.

Three narrations—the second, fifth, and seventh—from the “Chapter on the Jinn Coming to Them and Asking Them about the Landmarks of Their Religion and Seeking Their Guidance in Their Affairs” (*Bāb anna al-jinn ya'tihim fa-yas'alūnahum 'an ma'ālim dīnihim wa yatawajjahūn fī umūrihim*) are narrated by 'Alī b. Muḥammad through his *isnād* from Imam al-Ṣādiq, Imam al-Riḍā, and Imam al-Bāqir respectively, concerning the presence of a group of *jinn*s in the presence of the Imam and their raising of religious questions and inquiries about the lawful and unlawful to those noble ones.⁷⁷ Similar to the two previous narrations, apparently 'Alī b. Muḥammad considered this matter to be among the general characteristics of all the Imams, and therefore narrated it in his book.

The ninth *ḥadīth* narrated in the “Chapter on What Is Obligatory of the Imam's Right upon the People and the People's Right upon the Imam” (*Bāb mā yajib min ḥaqq al-imām 'alā l-ra'iyya wa ḥaqq al-ra'iyya 'alā l-imām*) is from 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād concerning the people's right upon the Imam. According to the statement of Imam al-Riḍā in this narration, a debtor who has borrowed money for a righteous cause should be given respite for up to one year. If he finds relief and can pay it himself, well and good; otherwise, the Imam must pay his debt from the public treasury.⁷⁸

The sixth narration of the “Chapter on All the Earth Belonging to the Imam” (*Bāb anna al-arḍ kullahā li-l-imām*) is also from 'Alī b. Muḥammad from Sahl b. Ziyād concerning the worldly share of the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 1:388–389.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1:394–397.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1:407.

Prophet. In this *ḥadīth*, Imam al-Ḥasan al-‘Askarī responded to Muḥammad b. Rayyān’s question about a narration stating that the Messenger of God has no share in the world except the one-fifth (*khums*), answering that the world and everything that revolves upon it belongs to the Messenger of God.⁷⁹ (This narration could also, from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s perspective, be expressing a general characteristic of the infallible Imam, which is why he included it in his book.)

The third narration in the “Chapter on the Imam’s Conduct Regarding Himself, Food, and Clothing When He Assumes Authority” (*Bāb sīrat al-imām fi nafsihi wa fi l-maṭ‘am wa-l-malbas idhā waliya l-amr*) is from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad from Ṣāliḥ b. Abī Ḥammād, reporting the argument of Imam ‘Alī with ‘Āṣim b. Ziyād regarding this matter. Apparently, ‘Āṣim had adopted an austere ascetic lifestyle and was being harsh on himself and his family in this regard. The Imam, referring to verses from the Qur’ān,⁸⁰ rebuked him for this deviation and harshness toward his children and wife. However, ‘Āṣim reminded him of his own way of being content with coarse food and rough clothing. The Imam responded by explaining to him one of the duties of the Imam: “Indeed, God Almighty has made it obligatory upon the leaders of justice to place themselves at the level of the weak and powerless people, so that poverty and hardship do not drive the poor from their place.”⁸¹ Apparently, this narration also, from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad’s perspective, expresses a general characteristic of the infallible Imam regarding the quality of life and the necessity of considering the condition of the needy in society, which is why he included it in his book.

Despite narrating several traditions from ‘Alī b. Muḥammad in the “Chapter Containing Points and Excerpts from the Revelation Concerning Authority” (*Bāb fīhi nukāt wa nutaf min al-tanzīl fi l-wilāya*)⁸²,

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1:409.

⁸⁰ Q 55:10–11, 55:19–20, 55:22, 93:11.

⁸¹ Al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, 1:410–411.

⁸² Ibid., 1:412–436, no. 28, 37, 38, 84, 85, 88 and 91.

narration number 75 can be considered related to the concept of the existence of two types of Imams—the present Imam and the absent Imam. In this narration transmitted from Imam al-Kāẓim, two Qur'ānic expressions “an abandoned well” (*bi'r mu'attala*) and “a lofty palace” (*qaṣr mashīd*) in Q 22:45 are respectively interpreted as referring to the silent Imam (*imām ṣāmit*) (another concept for “absent Imam”) and the speaking Imam (*imām nāṭiq*) (a substitute concept for “present Imam”).

The third narration among the three narrations in the “Chapter on All the Imams Standing by God's Command and Guiding to Him” (*Bāb anna al-a'immat 'alayhim al-salām kullahum qā'imūn bi-amri Allāh ta'ālā hādūn ilayh*)⁸³ is from 'Alī b. Muḥammad. Due to the close connection between the content of this narration and the title of 'Alī b. Muḥammad's book, it can be considered as Shaykh al-Kulaynī's source for transmitting this narration. In this narration, it is reported from Imam al-Ṣādiq in the exegesis of the concept of Imam in the verse “On the day We shall call every people by their Imam”⁸⁴ that what is meant is the Imam who is among them and who is the *Qā'im* of the people of his time. In this narration, every infallible Imam is introduced as the “standing Imam” (*imām qā'im*) of his era.

5. Conclusion

'Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Abān al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, who is known in the sources by the title 'Allān al-Kulaynī and whose trustworthiness is explicitly affirmed by al-Najāshī and others following him, is among the prolific narrators (*kathīr al-riwāya*) whose main narrations are transmitted in *al-Kāfi*. An examination of the narrations transmitted from him in *al-Kāfi* shows that a considerable number of them have thematic and content-related affinity with the title and sub-

⁸³ Ibid., 1:536–537.

⁸⁴ Q 17:71.

ject matter of *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im*. This indicates that in all likelihood, this book was Shaykh al-Kulaynī's source for transmitting them. Apparently, the narrations of this book were of two types in terms of theme and content. The first type comprises specific reports about him such as the birth of the twelfth Imam and the existence of a male child for Imam al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, the sighting of the twelfth Imam by some companions, and allusions and explicit designations (*naṣṣ*) regarding the imamate of Imam al-Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī and the twelfth Imam. Another general characteristic of these narrations is that they are reported with short *isnāds* from narrators who were direct witnesses to such matters related to the Imam. However, the second type consists of narrations from previous Imams containing general truths about the twelfth Imam and issues related to him, such as emphasis on the principle of the existence of occultation, the dual division of present Imam and absent Imam, the disapproval of setting times for his emergence (*karāhiyyat al-tawqīt*), and events and concepts applicable to the twelfth Imam such as the general characteristics and features of the infallible Imam and Imamate. The structural feature of the narrations of the latter category is that they mostly have long chains of transmission, and ʿAlī b. Muḥammad has generally transmitted them from Sahl b. Ziyād, unlike the first type, which ʿAlī b. Muḥammad has generally narrated from narrators other than Sahl b. Ziyād.

Another point is that the volume of narrations of the second type is greater than that of the first category. Here there are two possibilities. First, that *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* of ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī contained only narrations of the first type. According to this possibility, it must be said that this book did not have a large volume, unless it is said that Shaykh al-Kulaynī was content with transmitting only these few instances from it. The latter case seems somewhat unlikely, because due to Shaykh al-Kulaynī's direct access to the content of the book and his closeness to the author and his trustworthiness, the opposite is more probable. The other possibility is that both categories of narrations are from *Kitāb akhbār al-Qā'im* and its content

comprised both types of narrations. According to this possibility, it can be said that this book had a considerable volume—especially in the second section of narrations.

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