

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī in the Mirror of *al-Maḥāsin**

Majid Maarif

University of Tehran

Reza Qorbani Zarrin

University of Tehran

Abstract

In the present work, after an investigation into the personality of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī and his father Muḥammad b. Khālīd in the books of biographical evaluation (*rijāl*) and bibliographies (*fihrists*), as well as an examination of the chains of transmission (*isnāds*) in the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin* in comparison with the *isnāds* in *al-Kāfi*, it is concluded that Aḥmad al-Barqī was among the reliable authorities (*thiqāt*) and trustworthy figures in the matter of *ḥadīth*, and his extensive narration from weak transmitters (*ḍu‘afā’*) has little reflection, at least in the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin*. Likewise, the collection of books comprising *al-Maḥāsin* is among the reliable *ḥadīth* sources, and the decrease or deficiency reported in it relates to the smaller or greater number of its constituent books, not to alterations in their texts. Furthermore, a comparison of the extent of al-Barqī’s narration from his teachers (*mashāyikh*) in the two books *al-Maḥāsin* and *al-Kāfi* can be considered an indication of the authenticity of the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin*.

Keywords: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd, al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, sources of *al-Kāfi*, authentication (*tawthīq*).

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1. Statement of the Problem

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī is a renowned Shīʿī *ḥadīth* scholar of the 3rd/8th century. Together with his father [Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī], he engaged in the narration of many *ḥadīth* books and compiled from his vast collection of narrations a monumental work entitled *al-Maḥāsin*. Although only a small portion of this book survives today, the personalities of both father and son have been surrounded by ambiguities that have long been recounted in the statements of bibliographers and biographical evaluators (*rijāliyyūn*). According to these accounts, they narrated from weak transmitters (*ḍuʿafāʾ*) and relied upon interrupted *ḥadīths* (*marāsīl*; *mursal* denotes a *ḥadīth* with a break in its *isnād*)—a matter that even led to Aḥmad al-Barqī’s expulsion from Qom.

On the other hand, their reliability (*wathāqa*) in themselves has been affirmed. Some later scholars have attempted to clarify this ambiguity by suggesting that their problem lay in acquiring manuscript copies through finding (*wijāda*) without hearing (*samāʿ*) or reading (*qirāʾa*). This article aims to answer the following questions by utilizing the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin* and other evidence:

1. Are son and father reliable (*muwaththaq*) and trustworthy?
2. Were they, as some later scholars have conjectured, careless in transmitting manuscript copies of books?
3. Is the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin* authentic?
4. Are the reports transmitted about them also reflected in *al-Maḥāsin*?

It goes without saying that through answering these questions, the ambiguities raised concerning their personalities will be largely resolved and the truth of the matter will become clear.

2. Introduction to the al-Barqī Family and al-Barqī (the Father)

The ancestor of the al-Barqī family, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī, was from the people of Kufa and was killed by al-Ḥajjāj after the incident of Zayd b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (a.s.). After him, his son ‘Abd al-Raḥmān fled with his own son Khālīd to the land of Qom. He settled in Barq-rūd, one of the districts of Qom.¹ Among the sons of Khālīd, the following individuals are known: Muḥammad (with the *kunya* Abū ‘Abdullāh), al-Ḥasan (with the *kunya* Abū ‘Alī), and al-Faḍl (with the *kunya* Abū l-Qāsim).²

Among them, al-Ḥasan has been given authentication (*tawthīq*) by al-Najāshī, who mentioned his book *Kitāb al-nawādir*.³ al-Ṭūsī also counted him as the author of several books.⁴ The grandson of al-Faḍl, named ‘Alī b. al-‘Alā’, was also known as a jurist (*faqīh*).⁵

However, the most famous of these individuals must be considered Muḥammad b. Khālīd. He was a man of letters (*adīb*) and knowledgeable about reports and Arab sciences.⁶ Al-Najāshī mentions numerous books by him, the titles of some of which are consistent with his knowledge of history and Arab reports, including two books *Makkah wa-l-Madīna* and *Ḥurūb al-Aws wa-l-Khazraj*, as well as a book entitled *al-Khuṭab*, which may to some extent indicate his literary accomplishments. However, no important jurisprudential (*fiqhī*) work appears in al-Najāshī’s account. In contrast, al-Ṭūsī mentions only his *Kitāb al-nawādir*,⁷ which was a well-known title for naming *ḥadīth* (jurisprudential) books.

¹ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Najāshī, *Rijāl* (Intishārāt-i Jāmi‘a-yi Mudarrisīn: 1986), 76; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist* (al-Maktabat al-Murtaḍawīyya: 1937), 51.

² Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 335.

³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 126.

⁵ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 335.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 335.

⁷ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 54.

Careful attention to the titles of his books according to al-Najāshī's detailed account also reveals his theological inclinations. A book on the knowledge of Allāh (*ilm al-bārī*) and a book entitled *al-Tanzīl wa-l-ta'bīr* (or *al-Tanzīl wa-l-taghyīr?*) can indicate an aspect of these inclinations.

However, the most important discussion concerning him is his weakening (*taḍ'īf*) or authentication (*tawthīq*) as a transmitter of *ḥadīths*. The importance of this discussion stems from the fact that he is considered the most important *ḥadīth* teacher (*shaykh*) of his son.

Regarding Muḥammad b. Khālid, an explicit *tawthīq* of him has been made by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. Al-Ṭūsī, while mentioning him among the companions of Imam al-Riḍā (a.s.), calls him trustworthy (*thiqa*).⁸

In contrast, al-Najāshī considers him weak (*ḍa'īf*) in the matter of *ḥadīth*.⁹ Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī also calls some of his *ḥadīths* objectionable (*munkar*), pointing to his extensive narration from *ḍu'afā'* and his reliance on *marāsīl*.¹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd mentions him among the praised (*mamdūḥ*) and *muwaththaq* narrators,¹¹ and 'Allāma al-Ḥillī accepts his *tawthīq*.¹² Ayatollah al-Khū'ī considers his *tawthīq* by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī to be without opposition and does not regard al-Najāshī's statement as clearly indicating the *taḍ'īf* of Muḥammad b. Khālid; rather, he considers this *taḍ'īf*, according to the text, to be directed at his *ḥadīths*, meaning that *ḍa'īf* and *munkar* reports are found in his *ḥadīths*. He then reinforces this point by citing Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī.¹³ Thus, the person of Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī himself was reliable and

⁸ Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl al-Ṭūsī* (al-Maktabat al-Ḥaydariyya: 1961), 363.

⁹ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl al-Najāshī*, 335.

¹⁰ Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *Rijāl* (Mu'assasa-yi Ismā'īliyān: 1364 Sh./1985), 1:93.

¹¹ Ḥasan b. 'Alī Ibn Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Rijāl* (Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tehran: 1963), 309.

¹² 'Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl fī ma'rifat al-rijāl* (Dār al-Dhakhā'ir: 1990), 139.

¹³ Abū l-Qāsim al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam rijāl al-ḥadīth wa-tafṣīl ṭabaqāt al-ruwāt* (Markaz-i Nashr-i Āthār-i Shī'a: 1989), 16:66–67.

trustworthy, but his extensive narration from *du‘afā’* and reliance on *marāsīl* initially diminishes the credibility of his *ḥadīths*—unless he narrates *ḥadīth* from a reliable individual.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, as previously mentioned, lists him among the companions of Imam al-Kāẓim, al-Riḍā, and al-Jawād (a.s.).¹⁴ However, in the chapter on the companions of Imam al-Hādī (a.s.), he makes no mention of him. The same is true of his status in *Rijāl al-Barqī*, whose author was from his own family.¹⁵ Accordingly, his death should be estimated at approximately the year 220/835-836 at the latest.

Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī (d. 2015) has a statement about him and also about his son Aḥmad, which will be discussed in what follows.

3. Introduction to al-Barqī (the Son)

Al-Barqī (the son), or Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd, was born, according to some estimates, around the year 200/815-816.¹⁶ He is counted among the companions of Imam al-Jawād and Imam al-Hādī (a.s.).¹⁷ He also lived through the time of Imam al-‘Askarī (a.s.) and the Minor Occultation (*al-ghayba al-ṣughrā*).

According to al-Najāshī’s report from Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, the year of his death was 274/887, and according to his report from al-Barqī’s grandson through his daughter, ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Mājilawayh, it was 280/893.¹⁸

He was a great *ḥadīth* scholar (*muḥaddith*) who, in addition to learning from his father, received *ḥadīth* from numerous teachers. The

¹⁴ Al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl*, 343, 363, and 377.

¹⁵ Sayyid Muḥammad Jawād Shubayrī, “Barqī,” *Dānishnāma-yi Jahān-i Islām*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd Al-Barqī, *Rijāl* (Intishārāt-i Dānishgāh-i Tehran: 1963), 57 and 59; al-Ṭūsī, *Rijāl*, 373 and 383.

¹⁸ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 77.

number of his teachers has been mentioned as approximately 200.¹⁹

His reliability (*wathāqa*) in himself is confirmed by al-Najāshī,²⁰ al-Ṭūsī,²¹ and Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī.²² However, all have noted his narration from *ḍu'afā'* and reliance on *marāsīl*. Al-Ṭūsī explicitly mentions the abundance of his narrations from *ḍu'afā'*.²³ Thus, he too, like his father, has been deemed trustworthy in himself. Nearly all later scholars have also accepted his *wathāqa*.²⁴

Of course, his narration from *ḍu'afā'* has also caused him some problems. Among these, Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī reports that Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā expelled him from Qom. Although there is no explicit statement about the precise reason for this expulsion, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā later brought him back to Qom and apologised.²⁵ Ibn Dāwūd and 'Allāma al-Ḥillī refer to Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Īsā's presence at his funeral procession barefoot and without a turban in order to make amends for what he had done to him.²⁶

Thus, his reliability is confirmed by the majority of scholars of biographical evaluation (*'ulamā' al-rijāl*) and *ḥadīth* and has rarely been subject to doubt.²⁷

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 76.

²¹ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 51.

²² Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *Rijāl*, 39.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ From the first category, one can refer to the following: al-Bahā'ī, *Mashriq al-shamsayn wa-iksīr al-sa'adatayn* (Maktabat Baṣīratī: n.d.), 277; al-Shahīd al-Thānī, *al-Ri'āya fī 'ilm al-dirāya* (Maktabat Ayatollah al-'Uzmā al-Mar'ashī al-Najāfī: 1987), 370–371; 'Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl*, 15; Ḥasan b. Zayn al-Dīn, *Muntaqā l-jumān fī aḥādīth al-ṣiḥāḥ wa-l-ḥisān* (Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī: 1982), 43.

²⁵ Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī, *Rijāl*, 39.

²⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *Rijāl*, 40; 'Allāma al-Ḥillī, *Khulāṣat al-aqwāl*, 14.

²⁷ Perhaps the only remaining point in his possible weakening is a phrase at

Al-Bahbūdī, while confirming the *wathāqa* of both father and son, has provided an explanation for the weakness of their *ḥadīth*. He interprets the expression attributed to Ibn al-Ghaḍā'irī regarding Muḥammad b. Khālīd as follows: What is meant by his *ḥadīth* being “known” (*ma'rūf*) is narration through direct *samā'* and *qirā'a*, while the *munkar* portion refers to al-Barqī's acquisition by way of *wijāda* from the books and early foundational collections (*uṣūl*) of the companions.²⁸

Likewise, regarding al-Barqī (the son), after quoting the statements of the biographical evaluators, he concludes that he was neither a liar nor someone who concealed his sources (*mudallis*), but rather sometimes proceeded to acquire books by way of finding without sufficient care in identifying authentic manuscripts.²⁹

His view regarding this narrator is roughly the same as regarding his father, and he emphasises their acquisition of manuscripts of *uṣūl* by way of *wijāda*.

In evaluating his view, it must be said that this conclusion is not explicitly stated in the biographical works and is largely of an interpretive (*ijtihādī*) nature. Perhaps one could extend the carelessness in acquiring *ḥadīth* from *ḍu'afā'* and reliance on *marāsīl* to laxity in relying on manuscripts as well; however, it should be noted that laxity in relying on manuscripts is not a logical consequence of narrating from *ḍu'afā'*. Given the emphasis of some early scholars on preserving the *ḥadīth* heritage, acquiring narrations from *ḍu'afā'* and recording *marāsīl* is conceivable because they contain *ḥadīth* from the *Ahl al-*

the end of one of the narrations in *al-Kāfi*, in which Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā tells another narrator that he wished this narration had been transmitted through a route other than al-Barqī. Regarding the explanation of this (not entirely clear) statement and its lack of contradiction with al-Barqī's reliability, see al-Khū'ī, *Mu'jam*, 2:265–266.

²⁸ Muḥammad Bāqir al-Bahbūdī, *Ma'rifat al-ḥadīth* (Markaz-i Intishārāt-i 'Ilmī wa Farhangī: 1362 Sh./1982), 203.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

Bayt (a.s.); but at the same time, care in obtaining authentic and reliable manuscripts—where possible—has no conflict with the aforementioned approach. This is also seen to some extent in the practice of many classical authorities on *ḥadīth*, such as ‘Allāma al-Majlisī. But apart from this point, which indicates the somewhat conjectural nature of al-Bahbūdī’s interpretation, there is ample evidence demonstrating the incorrectness of this assertion as well.

The first indication is that according to the explicit statement of Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī,³⁰ the criticism was not directed at al-Barqī himself, but only concerned the individuals from whom he narrated.³¹ Now, if al-Barqī had relied on manuscripts acquired by way of *wijāda*, the criticism would have been directed at him, whereas in fact it was directed at his teachers.

The second indication is that al-Najāshī’s practice in mentioning chain of transmission (*ṭarīq*) for books is one of complete brevity, and for this purpose he suffices with mentioning only one or two chains.³² Accordingly, in presenting the chains of transmission for books, as a rule he selects the most reliable chain. By consulting al-Najāshī’s *Fihrist* [*Rijāl al-Najāshī*], it is observed that in many cases, when mentioning the chains of transmission for books, he mentions a chain containing Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd or his father and confines himself to that. In total, in his work, in 76 instances, the chain presented contains Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd or his father. Among these, in 40 instances the name of Aḥmad appears alone in the chain. The name of Muḥammad b. Khālīd appears alone in 7 instances, and Aḥmad’s narration from his father is mentioned in 29 instances. Among these 76

³⁰ Ibn al-Ghaḍā’irī, *Rijāl*, 39.

³¹ The people of Qom criticised him, but the criticism is not directed at him. Rather, the criticism is directed at those from whom he narrates, for he did not care from whom he took narrations, following the method of the traditionists (*ahl al-akhbār*).

³² Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 3, 116, and 231.

instances, in 37 cases the author of the book has been given *tawthīq*, in 6 cases he has been weakened (*taḍʿīf*), and in the remaining cases no authentication or weakening has been mentioned.³³

Accordingly, it is observed that al-Najāshī, in mentioning the chains of transmission for books and compilations, readily cites Muḥammad b. Khālid and his son, and even adopts this practice in transmitting the books of reliable narrators (*thiqāt*).

Among the noteworthy instances of reliance on a chain containing Muḥammad b. Khālid or his son, despite the existence of other chains, is the following. Al-Najāshī, regarding Muḥammad b. Murāzīm b. Ḥakīm,³⁴ Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbd al-Khāliq³⁵ and Muḥammad b. al-Haytham,³⁶ explicitly states that their books were narrated by a group of companions, yet he has selected the chain containing Muḥammad b. Khālid or his son.³⁷ Another similar case concerns Bakr b. Ṣāliḥ's *Nawādir*, where al-Najāshī points to the variation in the book according to its narrators

³³ Some of the reliable narrators (*thiqāt*) whose books are transmitted through chains containing either son or father are listed in al-Najāshī's *Rijāl* with these numbers: 50, 125, 147, 256, 276, 353, 463, 470, 637, 713, 925, 986, 1074, 1178, 1202, 1217, 1221, 1228. Likewise, examples of weak narrators whose books are transmitted through chains containing al-Barqī the son or the father include: 56, 593, 863, 942. Others are also listed with these numbers: 33, 70, 108, 110, 126, 128, 129, 789, 790, 1238, 1241, 1242, 1244, 1246, 1249, 1250, 1255, 1263.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 365.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 362.

³⁷ Of course, as an exception to this method, one should mention the books of Ḥusayn b. Saʿīd, in which al-Najāshī, quoting from his teacher Ibn Nūḥ, presents various chains for his books (including a chain containing al-Barqī), and then adds from his words that what is customary among the companions is the chain of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿIsā al-Ashʿarī (*ibid.*, 59).

and presents al-Barqī's chain.³⁸

Another indication is that an expression similar to that used for both father and son has been mentioned regarding Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. ʿImrān al-Ashʿarī,³⁹ however, when examining his books, only unreliable narrators (*ghayr muwaththaq*) have been excluded,⁴⁰ which indicates the soundness of his transmission from *thiqāt*. Al-Bahbūdī has also not suggested the possibility of his acquiring manuscripts by way of *wijāda*.⁴¹

Accordingly, it must be concluded that al-Barqī son and father were among the reliable transmitters of the *uṣūl* and compilations (*muṣannafāt*) of earlier scholars, and their transmission from reliable narrators is entirely trustworthy.

Regarding the levels of knowledge and piety of al-Barqī (the son), two other expressions from al-Najāshī are also noteworthy. In introducing Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbdullāh, after describing him as a man of merit, learning, and knowledge, and counting him as the author of unparalleled books, he refers to his relationship with al-Barqī (the son) and considers him to have been raised by al-Barqī.⁴² Similar is his expression regarding al-Barqī (the son)'s grandson through his daughter, named ʿAlī b. Abī l-Qāsim ʿAbdullāh b. ʿImrān, where after authenticating him and noting that he was a *faqīh*, *adīb*, and scholar (*fāḍil*), he mentions that he was raised by al-Barqī (the son).⁴³

Among the other indications of his renown is a report that Shaykh ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Qazwīnī has cited in his work known as *al-Naqḍ*, quoting from the author of *Baʿd faḍāʾih al-rawāfiḍ*. In this statement, he attributes the Imāmī school of thought to a number of Shīʿī notables and

³⁸ Ibid., 109.

³⁹ Ibid., 348.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 189–191.

⁴² Ibid., 97.

⁴³ Ibid., 261.

mentions Ibn al-Barqī among them.⁴⁴ Ibn al-Nadīm has also counted both father and son as Shīʿī jurists.⁴⁵

4. *Al-Maḥāsin*

The collection of books known as *al-Maḥāsin* is the most important work of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī. This book was very large and extensive. In composing this work, al-Barqī had in view the compilation of religious knowledge.⁴⁶ Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in introducing the *Kitāb al-ādāb* from Ibn ʿUqda, calls it a large book comprising numerous books similar to *al-Maḥāsin*.⁴⁷

It has been demonstrated that *ḥadīth* books, from early books and *uṣūl* of the companions to the final compilation in the form of the Four Books (*al-kutub al-arbaʿa*), have passed through different stages. One of the important developments in this process was the writing of comprehensive works (*kutub jāmiʿ*) using the *ḥadīth* heritage. There were many writers of comprehensive works before the authors of *al-kutub al-arbaʿa*.⁴⁸ Al-Barqī, by virtue of the book *al-Maḥāsin*, should be counted among the most important writers of comprehensive works in the 3rd/9th century. The multiplicity of his works and their comprehensiveness inspired the composition of many later books and also served as a reference for their composition, and this book remained accessible even in later centuries. Shaykh al-Ṭūsī in the book *al-Fihrist*

⁴⁴ Al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, Introduction.

⁴⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 276–277.

⁴⁶ Muḥammad Ibn Idrīs, *Mustaṭrafāt al-sarāʾir* (Intishārāt-i Jāmiʿa-yi Mudarrisīn: 1990), 640.

⁴⁷ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 69.

⁴⁸ For further acquaintance with the phenomenon of compiling comprehensive collections (*jāmiʿ*-writing) and earlier authors of *ḥadīth* compilations, see Majid Maarif, *Pazhūhishī dar Tārīkh-i Ḥadīth-i Shīʿa* (Muʿassasa-yi Farhangī-Hunari-yi Darīḥ, Tehran: 1376 Sh./1997), 452–456; Kāzīm Ṭabāṭabāʾī and ʿAlī Riḍādād, “Jāmiʿ-*Nivīsān-i Pīsh az Kulaynī*,” *Ulūm-i Ḥadīth* 51 (1388 Sh./2009), 9–35.

explicitly states his access to a number of the books of *al-Maḥāsin*, and then adds the names of other books from the list of Ibn Buṭṭa,⁴⁹ while al-Najāshī merely mentions the names of the books according to Ibn Buṭṭa's list.⁵⁰ In comparing these two lists of names, it should be said that the names of 47 books from al-Najāshī's list appear exactly in the list of books that al-Ṭūsī had at his disposal, which are:

Al-Tarāḥum wa-l-ta'āṭuf, al-Tabṣira, al-Rafāhiyya, al-Zayy, al-Zīna, al-Marāfiq, al-Marāshid, al-Ṣiyāna, al-Firāsa, al-Ḥaqa'iq, al-Ikhwān, al-Khaṣā'is, al-Ma'ākil, Maṣābiḥ al-ẓulm, al-Thawāb, al-'Iqāb, al-Ma'isha, al-Nisā', al-Ṭīb, al-'Uqūbāt, al-Safar, Adab al-naḥs, al-Taḥdhīr, al-Taḥdhīb, al-Tasliya, Adab al-mu'āshara, Makārim al-akhlāq, Madhām al-akhlāq, Madhām al-af'āl, al-Ḥayā⁵¹, al-Ṣaḥwa, al-Furūq, al-Gharā'ib, al-'Ajā'ib, al-Manāfi', al-Dawājin wa-l-rawājin, al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā', al-Nujūm, al-Zajr wa-l-fa'l, al-Du'ā', al-Ajnās wa-l-ḥayawān, Faḍl al-Qur'ān, al-Amthāl, al-Tārīkh, al-Naḥw, al-Afānīn wa-l-nawādir.

The names of 16 other books in al-Najāshī's list appear in al-Ṭūsī's list with some kind of change and alteration, which are presented comparatively in Table 1.

A remarkable point is that al-Najāshī mentions 18 books that al-Ṭūsī has not mentioned, nor has he cited their names from the supplement to Ibn Buṭṭa's list. These books are:

Al-Najāba, al-'Uways, al-Mashārib, al-Ṭabaqāt, Afāḍil al-a'māl, Akhaṣṣ al-a'māl, al-Masājid al-arba'a, al-Hidāya, Makārim al-af'āl, al-Ihtijāj, al-Laṭā'if, al-Maṣāliḥ, Ṣawm al-ayyām, al-Buldān wa-l-masāḥa, al-Azāhīr, Aḥkām al-anbiyā' wa-l-rusul, al-Aṣfiya wa-l-riwāya.

⁴⁹ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 52–53.

⁵⁰ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 77.

⁵¹ Al-Ṭūsī also reports that this book was called *al-Nūr wa-l-raḥma* (al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*.)

No.	<i>Fihrist [Rijāl] al-Najāshī</i>	<i>Fihrist al-Ṭūsī</i>	Notes
1	<i>al-Tablīgh wa-l-risāla</i>	<i>al-Iblāgh</i>	
2	<i>al-Mawā'iz</i>	<i>al-Zuhd wa-l-mawā'iz</i>	
3	<i>al-Mawāhib</i>	<i>al-Mawāhib wa-l-ḥuḏūḏ</i>	
4	<i>Tafsīr al-ḥadīth</i>	<i>Tafsīr al-aḥādīth wa-aḥkāmihā</i>	
5	<i>Aḥādīth al-jinn wa-Iblīs</i>	<i>Bad' khalq Iblīs wa-l-jinn</i>	
6	<i>al-Awāmīr wa-l-zawājir</i>	<i>al-Zawājir</i>	
7	<i>Ma'ānī l-ḥadīth wa-l-taḥrīf</i>	<i>al-Ma'ānī wa-l-taḥrīf</i>	
8	<i>Ilal al-ḥadīth</i>	<i>Ikhtilāf al-ḥadīth</i>	
9	<i>al-Ansāb</i>	<i>al-Ma'āthir wa-l-ansāb</i>	
10	<i>al-Maghāzī</i>	<i>Maghāzī l-Nabī</i>	
11	<i>al-Maḥbūbāt</i>	<i>al-Maḥbūbāt wa-l-makrūhāt</i>	Two books merged into one in <i>Fihrist al-Ṭūsī</i> .
12	<i>al-Makrūhāt</i>		
13	<i>al-Samā'</i>	<i>Khalq al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ</i>	Two books merged into one in <i>Fihrist al-Ṭūsī</i> .
14	<i>al-Araḍīn</i>		
15	<i>al-Taḥrīf</i>	<i>al-Takhwīf</i>	Likely one is a scribal error for the other.
16	<i>Ta'bīr al-ru'yā</i>	<i>al-Ta'bīr/al-Ru'yā</i>	Al-Ṭūsī mentions two separate books.

Table 1. Comparison of the titles of 16 other books of *al-Maḥāsīn*.

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī also, in the supplement he quotes from Ibn Buṭṭa's list, mentions the names of 9 books from the books found in al-Najāshī's list; however, he also mentions the names of 4 books: *al-Ṭibb*,

al-Tibyān, *al-Tahānī*, and *al-Ta'āzī*, the first two of which are not mentioned in al-Najāshī's list, and the latter two are not part of *al-Maḥāsin* but are included among al-Barqī's other works. This situation also exists regarding the book *Akḥbār al-umam*, because al-Ṭūsī places this book under the name *Ansāb al-umam* among *al-Maḥāsin*, but al-Najāshī considers it among his other works.

Likewise, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī mentions the names of 22 books in the collection to which he himself had access, which are not mentioned in al-Najāshī's quotation from Ibn Buṭṭa's list. These books are:

Al-Makāsib, *al-Ma'ārīd*, *al-Shawāhid min Allāh 'azza wa-jalla*, *al-Sawm (al-Shawm)*, *al-Arkān*, *al-Mā'*, *al-Fahm*, *al-Ṭlal*, *al-'Aql*, *Gharīb kutub al-Maḥāsin*, *al-Ta'wīl*, *al-Imtiḥān*, *al-'Ayn*, *al-'Iyāfa wa-l-qiyāfa*, *al-Ṭayr*, *al-Ḥiyal*, *al-Taḥwīd*, *Thawāb al-Qur'ān*, *al-Muntakhabāt*, *al-Du'āba wa-l-mizāḥ*, *al-Targhīb*, and *Banāt al-nabī ṣallā Allāh 'alayhi wa-ālih wa-azwājuh*.

Thus, according to al-Najāshī's account, the books of *al-Maḥāsin* comprise 90 books, while according to Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's account, they number more than 100 books. Close examination of the titles of the books shows that *al-Maḥāsin*, in addition to its unparalleled comprehensiveness in *ḥadīth*, also encompasses matters somewhat beyond the sphere of *ḥadīth*, addressing in some of its books topics such as biographical evaluation and biographical classes (*ṭabaqāt al-rijāl*), genealogies (*ansāb*), military expeditions (*maghāzī*), and others, which brings the book considerably close to being a type of encyclopaedia.⁵²

Given the magnitude and scope of this book, it appears that in its transmission through subsequent generations, there was to some extent both addition and omission in the number of books. The expressions of al-Najāshī and al-Ṭūsī indicate this very matter:

⁵² Among the evidence that the late Muḥaddith Armawī presented in the introduction to *al-Maḥāsin* for this matter are the references made by al-Mas'ūdī in *Murūj al-dhahab* and al-Rāfi'ī in *al-Tadwīn fī dhikr akḥbār al-Qazwīn* from al-Barqī (the son); see al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, Introduction.

[Al-Najāshī:] He compiled books, among them *al-Maḥāsin* and others, and additions and omissions have been made to *al-Maḥāsin* ...⁵³

[Al-Ṭūsī:] He compiled many books, among them *al-Maḥāsin* and others, and additions and omissions have been made to *al-Maḥāsin*. So, among what has reached me of them: ...⁵⁴

However, al-Bahbūdī reads this expression as *zayyada* and attributes it to the author himself, explaining that al-Barqī sometimes included some of his books as part of *al-Maḥāsin* and sometimes did not.⁵⁵

In any case, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī's expression clarifies that what is meant by "additions and omissions" (*zīd wa-naqṣ*) is not changes in the text of the books of *al-Maḥāsin*, but rather in the number of its books; for after mentioning this phrase, he proceeds with the particle *fa* ("so") to list the names of the books of *al-Maḥāsin*. This point is consistent with the increase and decrease in the number of books, not with changes in their texts.

Among other descriptions of the book *al-Maḥāsin*, one must note the important statement of al-Ṣadūq in the introduction to *Kitāb man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*, where he considers *al-Maḥāsin* to be among the well-known books, a reference and relied-upon work among the Shī'īs, and also among his own sources in composing *Kitāb man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh*.⁵⁶ This matter gives extraordinary importance to this book. This point shows that there was not much variation in manuscripts or disorder in these books up to the time of al-Ṣadūq. Otherwise, calling them a reference and relied-upon work would be somewhat meaningless.

⁵³ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 76.

⁵⁴ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 52.

⁵⁵ Al-Bahbūdī, *Ma'rifat*, 166.

⁵⁶ Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Ṣadūq, *Kitāb man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh* (Daftar-i Intishārāt-i Islāmī: 1992), 3.

In the biography of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh b. Ja‘far al-Ḥimyarī, al-Najāshī has brought another important point about *al-Maḥāsin*. ‘Abdullāh b. Ja‘far, the author of *Qurb al-isnād*, is among the distinguished figures of Qom who also attained extensive hearing of *ḥadīth* in Kufa.⁵⁷ Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh is also called *thiqa* and reliable (*wajh*) by al-Najāshī.⁵⁸ Muḥammad—whose access must have been very extensive due to his father’s extensive hearing of *ḥadīth*—regarding the motivation for composing the books *al-Ḥuqūq*, *al-Awā’il*, *al-Samā’*, *al-Ard*, *al-Masāḥa wa-l-buldān*, *Iblīs wa-junūduh*, and *al-Ihtijāj*, said that he had lost the books of *al-Maḥāsin* on these subjects and could not obtain them; therefore, by referring to *uṣūl* and *muṣannaḥāt*, he produced works similar to the books of *al-Maḥāsin*.⁵⁹

Two important points become clear from this statement. First, that by possessing al-Barqī’s books, he considered himself free from needing to refer to the original sources, and the more important point is that the narrations of al-Barqī’s book could be obtained from the original sources and early compilations—even by another reliable narrator. This matter indicates the authenticity of al-Barqī’s sources and references in composing *al-Maḥāsin*.⁶⁰

In the statements of later scholars such as Qāḍī Nūrullāh al-Shūsh-tarī and Muḥammad Taqī al-Majlisī, there are also descriptions of this

⁵⁷ Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 219–220.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 354.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 355

⁶⁰ The only unclear point in this matter is that Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh, two generations after al-Barqī (he usually narrates from Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālid through his father), states that copies of some of the books of *al-Maḥāsin* were not available, which is not entirely consistent with al-Ṣadūq calling these books well-known (*mashhūr*), though this should certainly be understood as referring to some of the books of *al-Maḥāsin*.

book which we refrain from mentioning here.⁶¹

5. The Extant *al-Maḥāsin*

A large portion of *al-Maḥāsin* has been lost over time. What remains of this book at present is only 11 books, which are:

- *Kitāb al-ashkāl wa-l-qarā'in*, containing narrations in which the numbers 3 to 10 are used, as well as the testaments of the Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a.s.).

- *Kitāb thawāb al-a'māl*, containing narrations about the reward for good deeds.

- *Kitāb 'iqāb al-a'māl*, containing narrations about the punishment for reprehensible deeds.

- *Kitāb al-ṣafwa wa-l-nūr wa-l-raḥma*, containing narrations about the station and rank of the Messenger of God and the *Ahl al-Bayt* (a.s.) and their followers.

- *Kitāb maṣābiḥ al-ẓulam*, containing discussions on the recognition and knowledge of truth.

- *Kitāb al-'ilal*, containing the reasons and wisdoms of religious rulings.

- *Kitāb al-safar*, containing rulings and narrations about travel.

- *Kitāb al-ma'ākil*, concerning the rulings on foods and drinks.

- *Kitāb al-mā'*, containing rulings on waters.

- *Kitāb al-manāfi'*, containing rulings on seeking guidance (*istikhāra*) and consultation.

- *Kitāb al-marāfiq*, containing rulings on dwellings, cleanliness, and means of transportation.

Careful attention to the titles of the books of *al-Maḥāsin* shows that al-Barqī considered many innovative and interesting subjects in composing *ḥadīth* books, and *ḥadīth* scholars after him, such as al-Ṣadūq, also undertook more extensive compilations on titles close to his

⁶¹ See al-Barqī, *al-Maḥāsin*, Introduction, 10–11.

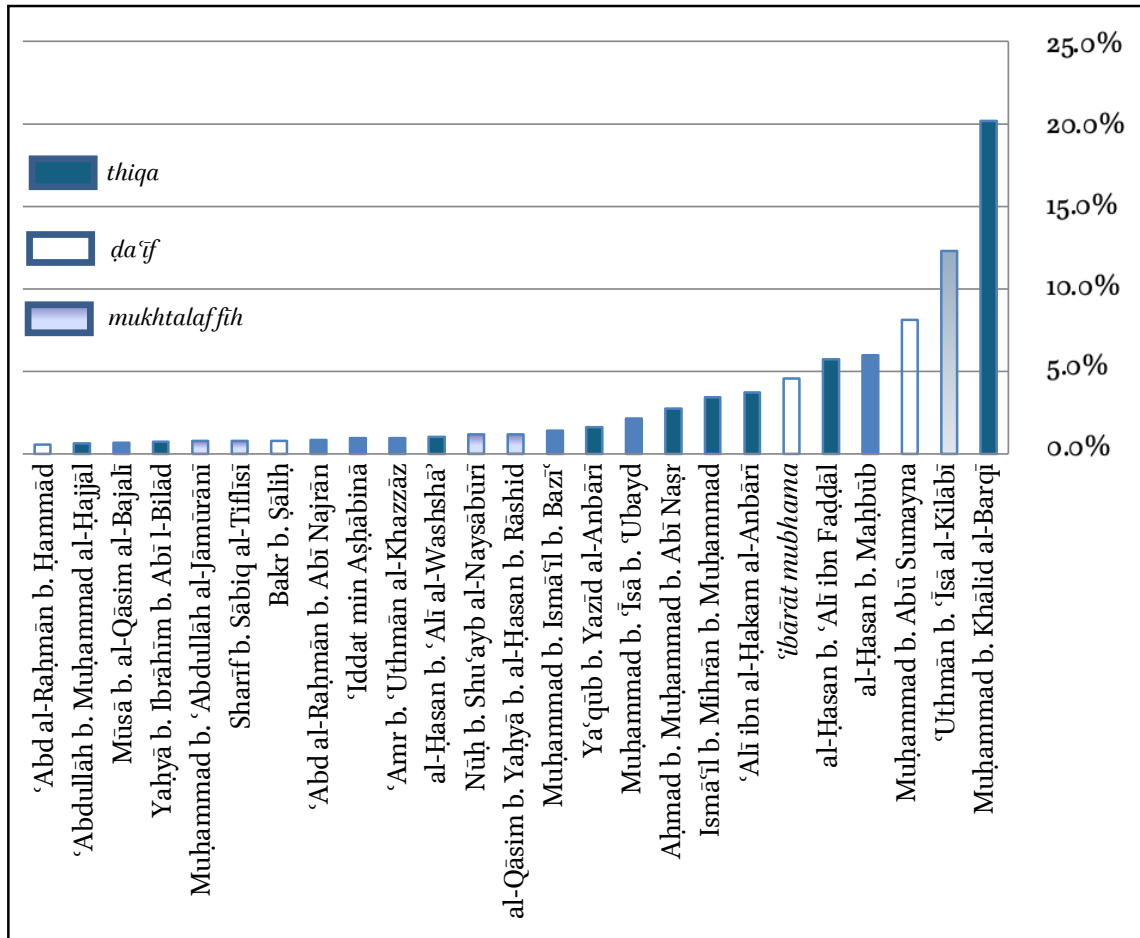
works.

6. The Teachers of al-Barqī

Regarding the teachers of al-Barqī (the son), two collections can be of assistance. First, the remaining parts of *al-Maḥāsīn*, and second, the book *al-Kāfi*, which contains many narrations from al-Barqī. The search for the number of narrations from each of al-Barqī's teachers in *al-Maḥāsīn* was conducted with the help of the *Noor Jāmi' al-Aḥādīth* software version 2.5, and all the *ḥadīth* teachers of Aḥmad al-Barqī (the son) from whom 10 or more narrations have been transmitted are included in these statistics. In total, more than 80 percent of the narrations in *al-Maḥāsīn* are taken from these teachers. Among these teachers, the most important teacher of Aḥmad al-Barqī must be considered his father. In total, 27.9 percent of the narrations in *al-Maḥāsīn* are transmitted from Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī. Graph 1 below represents the important teachers of al-Barqī in *al-Maḥāsīn*. In this chart, the empty columns represent teachers who were weakened by al-Najāshī, and individuals without *tawthīq* or *taḍīf* are also identified.

It is observed that the highest statistics relate to authenticated individuals, and in total 56.8 percent of al-Barqī's teachers in the narrations of *al-Maḥāsīn* have been considered authenticated by al-Najāshī. Also, 11.7 percent belong to teachers who have not been authenticated or weakened by al-Najāshī. Likewise, 13.1 percent are among the teachers weakened by al-Najāshī.

Based on these statistics, it must be said about Aḥmad al-Barqī that his extensive transmission from *ḍu'afā'* has not occurred, at least in the remaining portion of *al-Maḥāsīn*, and perhaps it appeared in his other works.



Graph 2. Teachers of al-Barqī (the son) as cited in *al-Kāfi*.

Other statistics can be obtained using the narrations transmitted from Aḥmad al-Barqī in *al-Kāfi*. The results of these statistics are seen in Graph 2.

To compare these two statistics with each other, important points must be noted: First, it is possible that al-Kulaynī's narration from al-Barqī in some cases was in the form of *shaykh ijāza* ("authorisation from a teacher"), and in reality, he narrated the book of one of al-Barqī's teachers through him in *al-Kāfi*. As a clear example of this type, reference should be made to Sharīf b. Sābiq al-Tiflīsī, who was the narrator of the book of Faḍl b. Abī Qurra,⁶² and al-Barqī's narrations from him in *al-Kāfi* relate to the book of Faḍl b. Abī Qurra and have no connection to *al-Maḥāsīn*.

⁶² Al-Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 308.

No.	Name of <i>Shaykh</i>	Percent of al-Barqī's narrations from the shaykh in <i>al-Maḥāsīn</i>	Percent of al-Barqī's narrations from the shaykh in <i>al-Kāfi</i>
1	Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barqī	27.9	20.2
2	Muḥammad b. 'Alī Abū Sumayna	7.1	8.1
3	al-Ḥasan b. Maḥbūb al-Sarrād	4.7	6
4	al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Faḍḍāl al-Tamīmī	4.9	5.8
5	Vague expressions (<i>'ibārāt mubhama</i>)	4.3	4.6
6	'Alī b. al-Ḥakam al-Anbārī	2.7	3.7
7	Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr al-Bazanī	0.6	2.8
8	Muḥammad b. 'Isā b. 'Ubayd	2.2	2.1
9	Ya'qūb b. Yazīd al-Anbārī	3.3	1.6
10	Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl b. Bazī'	0.8	1.4
11	al-Qāsim b. Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan b. Rāshid	1.5	2.1
12	Nūḥ b. Shu'ayb al-Naysābūrī	0.7	1.2
13	al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Washshā'	1.8	1.0
14	'Amr b. 'Uthmān al-Khazzāz	0.4	1.0
15	<i>'idda min aṣḥābinā</i>	1.3	1.0
16	'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Najrān	0.4	0.8
17	Bakr b. Ṣāliḥ	0.7	0.8
18	Yaḥyā b. Ibrāhīm b. Abī l-Bilād	0.4	0.7
19	Mūsā b. al-Qāsim al-Bajalī	0.6	0.7
20	'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Ḥajjāl	0.5	0.6
21	'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥammād	0.4	0.6

Table 2. Comparison of the percentages of al-Barqī's narrations from his *shaykhs* in *al-Kāfi* and *al-Maḥāsīn*.

For other cases of this type, reference should be made to probable cases such as ‘Uthmān b. ‘Īsā al-Kilābī in narrating the book of Samā‘a b. Mihrān, Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh al-Jāmūrānī in narrating the book of Ḥasan b. ‘Alī b. Abī Ḥamza, and also the book of Ismā‘īl b. Mihrān,⁶³ which was narrated by al-Barqī (the son).

By not considering these individuals among these two lists, it becomes clear that there is considerable similarity between these two lists of teachers. More importantly, the percentage of narrations belonging to each teacher relative to the total chains in *al-Maḥāsin* and *al-Kāfi* has very little difference. Table 2 above shows a comparative comparison between these two lists along with their differences.

The numerous similarities between these two lists of teachers and the proportion of narrations from them can, in addition to demonstrating al-Kulaynī’s use of *al-Maḥāsin* in composing *al-Kāfi*, also serve as evidence for the authenticity of the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin*. Of course, this matter requires more extensive research, which will be undertaken at another opportunity.

7. Conclusion

In this article, through an examination of biographical sources, while introducing the important al-Barqī family, the *wathāqa* of two of their most important members—namely Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī (the father) and Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Khālid al-Barqī (the son)—was investigated and evidence was presented. On the other hand, the attribution of narrating from manuscript copies (*nusakh wijāda*) by them was critically examined and its incorrectness was demonstrated with some evidence.

Given the ambiguities surrounding *al-Maḥāsin*, by examining the *isnāds* of the surviving portion of the book, it was shown that although narration from *du‘afā’* exists in *al-Maḥāsin*, the highest proportion of

⁶³ Al-Ṭūsī, *al-Fihrist*, 35.

narrations belongs to reliable teachers. On the other hand, in a comparison between the list of al-Barqī's teachers in the extant *al-Maḥāsin* on the one hand and al-Kulaynī's narrations from him in *al-Kāfi* on the other, evidence can be presented for the authenticity of the surviving portion of *al-Maḥāsin*.

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