

Joint Narrators among the Sunni and Shi'ite Imamate

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Abstract. The two largest Muslim sect of the world, the Sunni and the Shi'ite have a totally different view and discipline on handling the Islamic Law. Thus, the qualities that determine acceptable narrators of the ahaadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh) are not shared between them. This paper deals with the identification of joint narrators and their proof of acceptance from both of the above-mentioned sects, by cross-referencing the narrators in the four main books of hadeeth among the Shi'ite, as well as the nine main books of hadeeth among the Sunni.

Keywords: Joint Narrators, Sunni, Shi'ite.

1. Introduction

The qualities and values that are set for an acceptable and reliable narrator from the perspective of both the Sunni and Shi'ite are totally varied. Though both sect accept some degree of leniency upon narrators that are known for their heretical view, in general understanding, both sect does not recognize a narrator that came from the opposite sect. The Sunni had outlined that *al-'adl* and *ad-dhobd* (Abu Lais, 2003, pp. 21) as the main criteria, and while the Shi'ite also outlined the same thing, they added another criteria, that is a narrator has to be an Imamate (Al-Hurri Al-'Amiliy, 1993, 30/260). This research, however, proves that narrators from the opposite sect do exist in their respective classical hadeeth books, both in Sunni's and Shi'ite's and that they are well accepted.

From the Sunni standpoint, a narrator that is known for his heresy is accepted so long as he is not known for urging other people towards his personal belief (Ibnu Katsir, 1/300). Thus we see some of Shi'ite narrators in the most infamous Sunni hadeeth book, Sahih Al-Bukhariy, namely 'Ubaidullah bin Musa, 'Abdul Razzaq As-San'aaniy and 'Auf bin Abi Jameela. The existence of such narrator does not, in any way, downgrade the quality of Sahih Al-Bukhariy (Ibnu Hajar, 1985, pp. 113), showing that they are well accepted, though in some cases, the function of the various *sanad* comes into play.

From the Shi'ite standpoint, a valid hadeeth should be narrated by a chain of narrators that are all Imamate in faith (Al-Hurri Al-'Amiliy, 1993, 30/258). However, it should be noted that even though a narrator that is not a Shi'ite appeared in a chain of *sanad*, it does not entirely invalidates the validity of the hadeeth. In fact, in the Shi'ite sect there is a special type of hadeeth, known as *Al-Muwassaq*, that is defined by "a hadeeth that fulfills the criteria of *sahih*, but it is narrated through a narrator that was not an Imamate, and this condition is only on a single stage of *sanad*" (As-Sadri, 1998, pp.235). This method of classifying hadeeth surely gives a little space and flexibility upon the Shi'ite in accepting any hadeeth that came from a narrator from the opposite sect. Therefore, it is not beyond our grasp of thinking that joint narrators must exist between the two.

2. Joint Narrators

2.1. Muhammad bin Muslim Bin Syihab Az-Zuhriy

One of the most famous scholar among the Sunni, for he is the first person ever known to collect the ahadeeth of the Prophet (pbuh) (Al-Bukhariy, 1987, 1/35). Majority of the scholars showered praises on him. Ibnu Sa'ad said: "He was a trusted man, narrated tons of hadeeth, a great jurist in all sorts of fileds" (Al-Mizzi, 1980, 26/41). Abu Zanad said: "We used to write down regarding *halal* and *haram*, and Az-Zuhriy

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used to write down everything that he heard. When the time came that I needed to listen to him, I knew that he was the most knowledgeable of men” (*Ibid.*). Umar ‘Abdul ‘Aziz said: “No one from the past that possessed knowledge as much as he did” (*Ibid.*). Malik bin Anas said: “He used to be one of the most generous man” (*Ibid.*). Al-Bukhariy quoted from his teacher ‘Ali bin Al-Madiniy: “He had around 10,000 hadeeth in his collection” (*Ibid.*).

From the standpoint of the Shi’ite, Ibnu Syihab Az-Zuhriy was “one of the Imaam of hadeeth” and “he was a companion of Ja’far As-Sadiq” (At-Tafrishiy, 1989, 3/230).

All the authors of Sunni classical hadeeth books, including Al-Bukhariy, Muslim, Abu Daud, Ibnu Majah, At-Tirmidziy and An-Nasa’i all reported hadeeth from Muhammad bin Syihab Az-Zuhriy. While Al-Kulayniy reported around 50 hadeeth from Az-Zuhriy in his infamous book Al-Kaafiy.

2.2. Abbaan bin Taghlab Ar-Rub’i.

His real name was Abban bin Taghlab bin Riyaah Ar-Rub’i, a resident of Kufah. Like Az-Zuhriy, Abbaan bin Taghlab also did received high praises from various scholars in the Sunni sect. Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal narrated from his father, also Yahya bin Mu’in, Abu Hatim and An-Nasa’i: “A trusted narrator”, and Abu Hatim added: “Pious” (Al-Mizzi, 1980, 2/8). Abu Ahmad bin ‘Adiy said: “He had a lot of ahaadeeth, and generally all of them are valid, as long as they are reported from him by trusted narrators. And he was among the trusted narrators in his narrations, even though his mazhab was Shi’ah, and he had reported around 100 hadeeth, and he is valid in his narrations, there is nothing wrong with him” (*Ibid.*).

At-Tafrishiy of the Shi’ite said: “Abban bin Taghlab, a trusted, pious, holy and a great scholar among our sect. He had studied under ‘Ali bin Husayn and Ja’far As-Sadiq. Al-Baqir used to say to him, “Sit down in the town’s mosque, and give your advisory opinion to the people. Verily I would like to see a man like you in our sect” (At-Tafrishiy, 1989, 1/40). When the news about his death came, Ja’far As-Sadiq was reported saying: “By Allah! Verily my heart is weeping for the death of Abbaan” (Al-‘Allamah Al-Hilliy, 1988, 1/22). An-Najaashiy said in his book: “A trusted man, destined to be great, and a very high status among our sect” (An-Najaashiy, 1990, 7/11).

All of the Sunni scholars narrated from him, with the exception of Al-Bukhariy. Abbaan was also one of the most narrated transmitter of hadeeth in Al-Kaafiy by Al-Kulayniy, as well as Tahzibul Ahkam and Al-Istibsaar by At-Tuusiy, with thousands of hadeeth narrated through him.

2.3. Sulayman bin Mihran Al-Asadiy.

His full name was Sulayman bin Mihran Al-Asadiy Al-Kaahiliy, better known as Al-A’masy among the Sunni scholars. His father came to Kufah, and a man from Bani Asad bought and freed him (Al-Mizzi, 1980, 12/76). The teacher of Al-Bukhariy, ‘Ali bin Al-Madiniy said: “Hadeeth reported from him was around 1300 hadeeth. The keeper of knowledge for the people of Muhammad (pbuh) are six persons; for the people of Mekah there is Umar bin Dinar, for the people of Madinah there is Muhammad Az-zuhriy, for the people of Kufah they are Abu Ishaq As-Sabi’iy and Sulayman bin Mihran Al-A’masy, and for the people of Basrah they are Yahya bin Abi Katsir andn Qataadah” (*Ibid.*). Ibnu ‘Uyaynah said: “Al-‘Amasy is better than the rest of his companions in three things; he is the most fluent with Al-Quran, the strongest memory in hadeeth and the most knowledgeable in inheritance” (Al-Baghdadiy, 5/48).

From the Shi’ite’s perspectives, Al-‘Allamah Al-Hilliy said: “Verily among our scholars that had written about the transmitters of hadeeth had left out Al-‘Amasy. He is worthy of mentioning, for his grace and virtues, and indeed the Sunni had mentioned him in their books and declared that he was a Shi’ite” (Al-‘Allamah Al-Hilliy, 1988, 10/182). Said Al-Muhsin Al-Amin brought a long discussion on Al-‘Amasy, which indicated the same thing that had been highlighted previously by Al-‘Allamah Al-Hilliy (Al-Muhsin Al-Amin, 1991, 7/318).

2.4. Musa bin Saalim.

His name was Musa bin Saalim Abu Jahduhum the freed slave of Ali ‘Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib. Ibnu Hibban mentioned him in his book Ats-Tsiqaat (Ibnu Hibban, 1975, 7/452). Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal said: “My father said there is nothing wrong with him. I asked him “trusted?” he said: “Yes” (Ibnu Hajar,

1984, 10/306). Yahya bin Mu'in and Abu Zar'ah said: "Trusted" (Al-Mizzi, 1980, 29/24). Abu Hatim said: "His hadeeth is good and valid, and he is a trustworthy man" (Ibnu Hajar, *op. cit.*). Ibnu Hajar said: "There is no dispute that he is a trustworthy man" (*Ibid.*).

At-Tafrishiy said: "Musa bin Saalim, he was among the trusty companion of As-Sadiq" (At-Tafrishiy, 1989, 3/434).

2.5. Harb bin Sariih bin Al-Mundzir Al-Munqiriy.

Harb bin sariih was also another narrator that was accepted by both sects. Abu Al-Walid At-Toyaalisiy said: "He was our neighbour, but I did not narrate any hadeeth from him" (Al-Mizziy, 1980, 5/522). Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal used to say: "There is nothing wrong with him" (*Ibid.*). Ishaq bin Mansur narrated from Yahya Bin Mu'in: "He is a trusted man" (*Ibid.*). Ahmad bin 'Uday said: "He does not has a lot of hadith, and most of his hadeeth are gharaaib, and I do not see anything wrong with him" (*Ibid.*). Ibnu Hajar said: "He made a lot of mistake that he cannot be accepted if he is singled out" (Ibnu Hajar, 1984, 2/196).

While a record of him in the books of the Shi'te is not much. Al-Khu'ei said: "He was among the companions of As-Sadiq" (Al-Khu'ei, 1998, 1/385).

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