

## Method of Recognizing the Sect of Transmitters; a Case Study of the Sect of Qāḍī Abū Bakr al-Ji'ābī

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### Introduction

Knowing the sect of the transmitter has an undeniable role in validating his hadiths. If the transmitter is "Thaqah" but a follower of the other sect than Imamism, his hadith is considered "Muwathaq" and when it conflicts with the ṣaḥīḥ hadith (i.e. the narration of Imami Thaqah), according to some views, the ṣaḥīḥ narration is preferred. It should also be said that the sect of the transmitter forms a part of his personality which can be used to understand better his traditions and also makes us pay more attention when he quotes unbiased hadiths towards other branches of Islam. Because by knowing the transmitter's sect, so that our confidence in those hadiths decreases or increases according to the cases.

### Materials and Methods

In order to discover the sect of a transmitter, usually above all, one relies on the opinion of the authors of rijālī sources about him, while there can also be various other evidences that do not deal directly with the sect of the transmitter, but nevertheless, but it can be said that in some cases, even from the words of the old rijālī, they get more accurate data about his sect, because many of these evidences are based on sense, while some of the opinions of the early rijālīs are likely to be the result of guess and ijtihād; Therefore, based on these clues, it is even possible to judge the views of the early rijālīs. Some of these proofs are as follows:

The content of a transmitter's hadiths: The presence of specific Shia or Sunni themes in the transmitter's hadiths raises the possibility of him following that sect, especially if the hadiths are from his own books.

Using the specific literature of a religious sect: for example, using the term "Ijmā' Ahl al-Bayt" which is used in Zaydīah atmosphere can indicate the transmitter's adherence to this sect, or at least he was influenced by it.

The city and neighborhood of the transmitter's life: for example, the transmitter's life in a city like Qum, which was almost the exclusive residence of the followers of the Imāmī religion, can be an important clue in this context.

Relatives of the transmitter: If we discover that the relatives of the transmitter, especially his very close relatives, followed a certain sect, the possibility of his following that sect is worthy of attention, especially if several of his relatives follow

a certain sect. Also, the companions of a transmitter can also be worthy of attention to some extent in this context.

The absence of who carries specific sect among transmitter's masters and geography of his travels for hadiths: for example, if we see a Muḥaddith in Baghdād, despite having easy access to the great Imāmī transmitters, he did not receive any hadith from them, this is a significant proof of his non-Imāmī. Also, if we understand that he did not travel to a city like Qum, which is one of the important centers of Imāmī hadith, despite his many travels, it can be another proof in this field.

Tarahḥum and Taraddī: Considering the fact that Islamic scholars usually do not use the terms "raḥamahu allah" and "raḍīya allahu 'anhu" for the followers of other sects, if we see that these terms are used in their words about a Muḥaddith, it can indicate that the Muḥaddith follows their sect (at least in their belief).

The method of funeral rites and prayer of the transmitter: In the same way, if there are reports of Muḥaddith's funeral and rites regarding his death in a way that was only compatible with a particular sect, it can be a proof in this field.

### **Results and Discussion**

The Muḥaddith that we are going to study in this article is Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Ji'ābī (d. 355 AH). He is considered one of the great Muḥaddithun of Baghdād and one of the scholars of rijāl in Sunni sources, who is also praised in Imāmī sources. The existence of massive data about his life and education, on one hand, and the differences of opinion about his sect (whether he is an Imāmī or not), on the other hand, make him a worthy example to find out his true sect by implementing the aforementioned methods. And by studying these elements, it becomes clear that al-Ji'ābī – unlike what some researchers think – cannot be an Imāmī: al-Ji'ābī collected the commentary (Tafsīr) of Malīk ibn 'Anas (d. 179), in a book, and also authored another book about the hadiths of Abū Hanīfah (d. 150), with no comments on their quotations. He's also written a book called "*man ḥaddatha 'an al-nabī huwa wa abūhu 'aw ea 'āhu*" which by looking through its contents we can see that it has no compatibility with the beliefs of the Imāmīs. In addition, he narrated various hadiths about the virtues of the three calīphs. In addition, al-Ji'ābī's uncles and probably his father were Sunnis. In addition, al-Ji'ābī was also the judge of Mūṣil, and such a position in a city like Mūṣil is not compatible with him being an Imāmī. It is also worth noting that although al-Ji'ābī was fascinated by traveling (for hadiths), he never traveled to Qum, the stronghold of Imāmī Hadith, and he did not narrate Hadith from any of the Imāmī Sheikhs even in Baghdad itself. Moreover, al-Ji'ābī lived in the neighborhood of Bāb al-Baṣra in Baghdad, which belonged to the fanatical Sunnis and was known for decades with this characteristic, and the funeral prayer for him after his death was held in the Jāmi' al-Manṣūr mosque, which was always a place for Sunnis to hold funerals, and Shiites have no connection with it.

### **Conclusion**

Given this number of different clues, it seems that al-Ji'ābī's Shia tendencies (which made someone like Nadīm (d. 385 AH) consider him a Shia), mean general Shiism (not Twelver Shiism exclusively) and he was not an Imāmī, or at least, it cannot be proved that he was an Imāmī.

**Keywords:** Sect of Transmitters, al-Ji'ābī, Imāmī Shiism, General Shiism.