

## A review and analysis of the evaluation of *Munfarid* traditions in theory and practice

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Received: 03/04/2022

Accepted: 07/06/2022

### Introduction

A large number of traditions on various issues such as religious rules and beliefs have been narrated only from one chain of transmission and by a single transmitter, which are referred to as *Munfarid* in Hadith terminology. This type of tradition is so important that some consider it useful to discuss the reliability and unreliability of transmitters when the transmitter in question has transmitted one or more *Munfarid* tradition(s). Although it is often assumed in theory that a single tradition may not cause the rejection of a tradition, a group of scholars consider this a sign of illusion and weakness of the transmitter and in many cases such traditions are regarded as defective because of having a single transmitter. A case study of many rejected *Munfarid* traditions can determine the authenticity of the Hadiths narrated by a single transmitter and the conditions for their acceptance or non-acceptance. Thus, this research seeks to clarify the authenticity of *Munfarid* traditions and their relationship with the character and state of the single transmitter.

### Materials and methods

This research used a descriptive-analytical method and by a case study of many rejected *Munfarid* traditions, it discovered their authenticity and the conditions for their acceptance or non-acceptance.

### Results and findings

Although it may seem that weakness of transmitters along with *tafarrud* in tradition can reject a Hadith, one cannot claim that *Munfarid* Hadiths transmitted by weak transmitters are always rejected; nor can it be claimed that *Munfarid* Hadiths transmitted by reliable transmitters are always accepted; sometimes the evidence of authenticity might be stronger than

assuming a single or weak transmitter, while a reliable Hadith might be in conflict with the certain evidence or consensus of experts. It is often said that if a weak transmitter is not the sole one in tradition, his tradition will be acceptable; however, what is accepted in these cases actually results from other characteristics of the tradition (such as being narrated through reliable transmitters or the fame and multiplicity of traditions) which lead to its acceptability; therefore, it can be argued that if a group of weak transmitters transmit a single tradition, though it will not be *Munfarid* anymore, it will not have the requirements of a Hadith unless other evidence such as successive transmission or *tadafur* accompany that. Although the rejection of *Mutafarridāt* is not specific to traditions that always have contradictory evidence, the conflict between *Munfarid* and commonly transmitted Hadiths is the most important factor that causes the rejection of these Hadiths; if the transmitter is the most reliable of all reliable transmitters but his sole tradition is accompanied with the opposition of the companions or it is in conflict with the common transmission, it will be rejected; it seems that the dissemination of traditions in the context of the Islamic community and especially among Shia, solely reflects the evidence for authenticity and transmitters of Muslim Hadiths and Hadith scholars weigh and evaluate the traditions transmitted from the transmitters with the hadiths disseminated throughout the community. A case that may lead to the non-acceptance of *Mutefarrid* traditions is when such a Hadith states a ruling on a widespread situation ('Am al-Balwā). There are numerous cases where such traditions are rejected because of having a single transmitter and it can be argued that there is no controversy over the non-acceptance of *Munfarid* Hadiths concerning the widespread situations and the statement attributed to 'Allāme Ḥillī is not right; however, it is noteworthy that the vast majority of such cases are used for argumentation and rejection of the evidence of the opponents. The reason for this can be found in the knowledge of scholars of many factors that made the widespread transmission and dissemination of Shia traditions impossible; among other things are Taqīyyah, impact of unfavorable factors on the fields of Hadith and cautious treatment and considerations of the religious elders in communicating with their students, common understanding of community, etc.; while such restrictions did not and do not exist for Sunni traditions.

### **Conclusion**

Studies show that rejected *Munfarid* traditions are always accompanied with other evidence of weakness, particularly the weakness of the transmitter and opposition to the generally received tradition. Sometimes, despite the reliability of the transmitter, different standards of selection and tradition by the transmitter and others have led to the rejection of *Munfarid* traditions. If a widespread situation (that affects all) is accompanied with *tafarrud* in

tradition, it will place the tradition under suspicion and doubt and, not to mention that, when this factor contradicts the opponents' opinion can lead to the rejection of *Munfarids* and it can be argued that knowledge of the factors involved in the impossibility of the widespread dissemination of some traditions has caused many *Munfarid* traditions characterized by widespread situation not to be affected.

**Keywords:** Mutefarrid, Munfarid, authenticity of traditions, rejected traditions, widespread situation ('Am al-Balwā).