

## Multifaceted encounter with reporters: a case study of Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kathir

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### Introduction

The multifaceted encounter with the reporters is a way to know them more precisely in order to reach a customary certainty. Such certainty is obtained from the accumulation of various evidences and information about the reporter and in addition to the usual sources in the review of the authority of a reporter, sources such as the type of the reporter's works, the content of his traditions, and his position among the Imams are also taken into consideration. Also, cases such as the subordination of the reporter in the chain of Isnads and to extract traditions that are aligned with the traditions of the reporter. Typology discussions are another source that reveals the tendency and role of the reporter in various tendencies of his time. The approach of certainty, which is also interpreted as the density of suspicion, is one of the bases and approaches of Rijali Judgments. In the current research, this approach has been used to identify Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kathir, one of the direct reporters of Imam Sadiq (as), who there are conflicting opinions upon his authenticity.

### Material and methodology

In this research, Abd al-Rahmān's personality is examined from several aspects and information is obtained. This information is analyzed from the point of view of corroboration and the indication of his validity or weakness, and finally, by combining these corroborations, we reach a conventional certainty about his trustworthiness or lack of trustworthiness. Among the

investigated aspects is Abd al-Rahmān's place in Isnads, which leads to obtaining information about Abd al-Rahmān's teachers and students. The view of the earlier Rijals towards Abd al-Rahmān is also done by referring to Shia Rijal books and sources such as Abu Ghhalib Zorari's Book and Ibn Ghadā'eri's al-ḍuafa'i and some of Ṣadūq's books. The traditions of Imams (as) are also examined in terms of the presence of any praise towards Abd al-Rahmān and the position he had among them. The scope of the search for these traditions is all the traditional sources available in Jame' al-Ahadith Shi'a. The collection of Sunni traditions is also searched with the help of Maktaba al-Shamilah software and Sunni men's books such as Mīzān al-'Iṭidāl of Dhahabi due to the presence of an article about Abd al-Rahmān. The topic classification of Abd al-Rahmān's hadiths and the number of hadiths in each category are also investigated. The content of the two books Faḍl innā anzalnāhu and book al-aḍillah attributed to him will also be considered. Regal rules or general endorsements are also examined for the possibility of applying them to Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kathir along with the opinions of scholars regarding the validity of these rules. Being primary or secondary reporter in the chain of Isnad of traditions that is used in the List analysis is also taken into consideration in the case of Abd al-Rahmān. Another matter is the extracting the traditions aligned with Abd Al-Rahmān's traditions and finally the historical studies that determine the role of Abd Al-Rahmān in his contemporary religious trends.

### **Results and findings**

Rijali's investigations indicated his weakness and accused Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Kathir of fabricating hadith. The only Hadith that could be in the benefit of him for being praised by Imam was narrated by him himself, and in addition to that, there were contradictions between this and another Hadith. Although some of his hadiths indicated that he was very close to the Imam, they were only narrated by him. Some Rijal rules could be applied to Abd al-Rahmān, and according to scholars such as Vaḥīd Bihbahānī and Muḥaddith Nūrī, they indicated his approval, but the validity of these rules was disputed by many scholars like Khūī who did not accept them. Examining the content of his hadiths showed that seventy-seven percent of his hadiths are related to the topic of Imamate, more than half of them are mentioned in the interpretation of a verse of the Qur'an, and only three of his hadiths can be included in the subject of jurisprudence. There were only a few hadiths from him in other subjects that only Kuliynī has recorded in different chapters of Kāf. The esoteric interpretation of the Qur'anic verses, having few jurisprudential hadiths and dealing with issues such as the imams' unlimited knowledge and their superhuman power were evidences of his orientation towards Tafwīd. The attribution of the two books Faḍl innā anzalnāhu and

book al-aḍillah to him, and the examination of the content of these books, which were respectively dedicated to an exaggerated interpretation of the Imamate and the subject of transmigration and reincarnation, and the personality of the authors to whom books on these subjects were attributed, also yielded similar results. The list analysis of Abd al-Rahmān's hadith Isnads showed that he was the main and not subordinate in the chain of hadith Isnads and did not lead to obtaining credit for some of his hadiths. Although extracting traditions aligned with his traditions showed consistency with the traditions of reliable reporters, but some others, such as his traditions regarding the virtues and miracles of the Imams and their superhuman power, or the strange things that are mentioned in the Book Baṣā'ir, have themes that they were narrated only by him or that they were similar to the content of the hadiths of weak or weak reporters. The investigation of the Shia trends showed that Abd al-Rahmān, along with Mufaḍal ibn Umar, Jaber ibn Yazid, Ali ibn Hasan and Muhammad ibn Urmah, was in the spectrum called Mufaḍal and had exaggerated tendencies towards Imams (as). Characteristics such as the esoteric interpretation of the verses of the Quran, a few jurisprudential hadiths from him and dealing with issues such as the imams' unlimited knowledge and their superhuman power are another confirmation of his orientation towards the authority.

### **Conclusion**

The multifaceted encounter with Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kathir gave us some information about this reporter. Putting these evidences together allowed us to know him more precisely and to obtain a conventional certainty about his character. Rather than testifying to his trustworthiness, these references indicated his weakness and tendency to extravagance of the type of tafwīd. In the meantime, although some scholars emphasized his trustworthiness by relying on some Rijal rules, the controversial nature of these rules and the weight of the evidences proving his status could not bring him trustworthiness. In this way, the accumulation of partial and scattered information obtained in this research led to the accumulation of suspicion and the achievement of a customary certainty regarding the unreliability of Abd al-Rahmān ibn Kathir and his tendency to exaggerate. Such assurance could not be obtained from the famous Khabar Vāḥid approach, in which Rejali's words are considered as an empirical report of the reporter's contemporaries and are limited to that.

**Keywords:** Tafwīd, Mufawwiḍah, Shia, Mufaḍal ibn Umar.