

Defending the Authenticity and Credibility of the Historical Hadith Tradition of *Qaḍīb Mamshūq*

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Introduction

The historical tradition of *Qaḍīb Mamshūq*, which refers to Prophet Muhammad's demand for retribution during the final days of his life, is among the ethically oriented reports in the Prophetic sīra. This account, transmitted in both Sunni and Shi'i sources, has over the centuries—particularly in modern times—been subjected to serious critiques of its chain of transmission, textual content, jurisprudential implications, and theological foundations. The earliest well-known critique was offered by Ibn al-Jawzī, followed by other critics who, citing the weakness of transmitters such as 'Abd al-Mun'im Ibn Idrīs and the incompatibility of the content of the report with jurisprudential principles and the doctrine of prophetic infallibility, have judged it to be fabricated or weak. The present study, while acknowledging that this report belongs to the category of *akhbār muntaqila* (reports transmitted from Sunni sources into Shi'i tradition), seeks to defend the authenticity and validity of its core tradition, arguing that the criticisms raised—especially when distinguishing between the ethical and jurisprudential aspects of the account—can be adequately addressed.

Materials and Methods

This research employs a descriptive-analytical method with a library-based approach. Its primary aim is to evaluate and critique the arguments of the detractors and subsequently defend the credibility of the *Qaḍīb Mamshūq* tradition, with particular focus on Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's transmission in *al-Amālī*. The research corpus consists of primary hadith and historical sources from both Sunni and Shi'i traditions (notably *al-Amālī* of al-Ṣadūq, al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, and the works of critics such as Ibn al-Jawzī and contemporary scholars). The sample under study is the *Qaḍīb Mamshūq* tradition itself and the critiques associated with it. Data collection tools include extraction of information from primary texts and secondary studies.

The analytical method proceeds as follows: first, the transmission history of the tradition in Shi'i and Sunni sources is briefly outlined. Next, critiques of the chain of transmission (particularly concerning al-Ṭabarānī and *al-Amālī*) and textual critiques

(such as conflicts with jurisprudential rules of retribution and the foundations of infallibility) are systematically identified and categorized. In the subsequent stage, through comparative isnād analysis, the chain of transmission in al-Ṣadūq's *al-Amālī*—which lacks transmitters accused of fabrication such as 'Abd al-Mun'im Ibn Idrīs—is examined through rijāl evaluation, and its strength is demonstrated. Finally, by means of content analysis and lexical study of key terms such as “qīṣās,” and by distinguishing historical-ethical perspectives from purely jurisprudential ones, the textual critiques are addressed. An exploration of the motives of certain critics also forms part of this analysis.

Results and findings

The findings of this study can be presented in two domains: chain of transmission (isnād) and textual/content analysis.

1. **Findings pertaining to Isnād:** Examination shows that the main critique of Sunni scholars (such as Ibn al-Jawzī) is directed at al-Ṭabarānī's chain, which includes 'Abd al-Mun'im Ibn Idrīs—a transmitter accused of fabrication. However, the chain of the same report in Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's *al-Amālī* follows a different and more reliable path: *Muḥammad Ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ṭalāqānī* → *Muḥammad Ibn Ḥamdān al-Ṣaydalānī* → *Muḥammad Ibn Muslimah al-Wāsiṭī* → *Yazīd Ibn Hārūn* → *Khālīd al-Ḥadhdhā* → *Abū Qalābah* ('Abd Allāh Ibn Zayd al-Jarmī) → *Ibn 'Abbās*. Rijāl analysis of this chain indicates that its transmitters are largely trustworthy figures within Sunni tradition, and Shi'i rijāl authorities have not raised serious objections against them. Therefore, the judgment of weakness or fabrication applied to al-Ṭabarānī's chain cannot be extended to the distinct and earlier transmission of Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.
2. **Findings from Textual and Content Analysis:** In response to content-based critiques, the findings demonstrate:
 - **Distinction between Ethics and Jurisprudence:** The core of the defensive argument lies in separating the ethical-pedagogical dimension of the tradition from jurisprudential inference. The Prophet, at the height of piety and sensitivity toward *ḥuqūq al-nās* (the rights of others), sought to remove even the slightest trace of unintended harm, even though Islamic law does not impose retribution (*qīṣās*) for unintentional acts or striking with a staff. This conduct reflects the Prophet's “exalted character” (*khuluq 'aẓīm*), not a legal ruling. Supporting this view is the fact that al-Ṣadūq did not include this report in his jurisprudential works such as *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*.
 - **Analysis of the Term “Qīṣās”:** The usage of *qīṣās* in this tradition corresponds to its lexical meaning (pursuit, retaliation, or compensation for an act), rather than its technical juridical sense (specific corporal punishment). Internal textual indicators—such as references to “retribution in the Hereafter” and the request for a substitute to undergo retribution—support this lexical interpretation.
 - **Implicit Acceptance by Scholars:** The citation of passages from this tradition by numerous classical and contemporary Shi'i jurists (such as Ayatollah Nā'īnī, al-Khū'ī, and Makārim Shīrāzī) in various jurisprudential and ethical discussions indicates their implicit acceptance of the report's credibility, or at least the absence of any definitive conflict with foundational principles.

- **Positive Transmitted Reports:** Although this tradition qualifies as a *khavar muntaqal* (a report transmitted from Sunni sources into Shi'i tradition), it belongs to the category of sound and acceptable transmitted reports. Its shared transmission across traditions strengthens rather than weakens its credibility.

Conclusion

Based on the isnād and textual analyses presented, it can be concluded that the *Qaḍīb Mamshūq* tradition—at least in Shaykh al-Ṣadūq's transmission—possesses a defensible degree of credibility. The isnād critiques are primarily directed at other transmissions (such as that of al-Ṭabarānī), while the chain in *al-Amālī* demonstrates relative reliability. On the other hand, the major textual critiques are resolved when one considers the fundamental distinction between the Prophet's ethical conduct and jurisprudential inferences, as well as through a lexical interpretation of the key term *qīṣāṣ*. This tradition, rather than serving as a jurisprudential precedent, symbolizes the Prophet's utmost sensitivity and piety regarding the rights of others, and his effort to clear his conscience even of unintended effects. Accordingly, it may be accepted as a credible historical-ethical report, and its positive transmission from Sunni to Shi'i sources can be regarded as a sign of shared values in honoring the Prophetic sīra.

Keywords: Qaḍīb Mamshūq, transmitted reports (*akhbār muntaqila*), qīṣāṣ, ethical Prophetic sīra, Shaykh al-Ṣadūq.