



Semantics of "Ḥadīthunā"

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Abstract

The phrase "Ḥadīthunā" appears in several categories of well-known hadiths, including the difficult and complex traditions. The texts and Isnad of these hadiths are generally reliable, and there is no serious doubt about attributing them to the impeccable Imams (AS). What is questionable, however, is the meaning of this phrase and the intended message of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). In this article, an attempt has been made to first identify the juristic conceptualization of the apparent and initial meaning of "Ḥadīthunā" based on the process outlined in the book "Ḥadīth Understandin Method." Then, internal and external indicators, especially within the hadith tradition, have been examined. Based on this endeavor, we have concluded that "Ḥadīthunā" refers to the exalted status of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and their unparalleled virtues and perfections. This conclusion contradicts a few traditions in which "Ḥadīthunā" are translated as the sublime and scientific content of their words. However, this initial conflict is resolvable. The proposed solution is to consider the lofty sciences and knowledge found in their words as part of their existential virtues.

Keywords: Semantics of "Ḥadīthunā," Ahl al-Bayt's Command, Hadith of Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

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Introduction

Numerous traditions have conveyed commandments using the phrase "Ḥadīthunā." The sources of these narrations include books such as "Mahāsin Barqī," "Baṣā'ir al-Darajāt," "Kāfī," and some of Shaykh Ṣadūq's works, which are considered ancient and reliable sources of hadith (cf. Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 40, chapter 11; Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 401). The frequency of these traditions and the credibility of their sanad reassure us of their general issuance, rather than needing to discuss each one individually.

The question arises as to the meaning of "Ḥadīth" in the compound phrase "Ḥadīthunā" in the composite traditions. 'Why do the Imams (AS) consider it difficult and complexity, and why have they refrained from disclosing and disseminating it?' 'Is the intended meaning of "Ḥadīthunā" the words of the Ahl al-Bayt and the idiomatic meaning of hadith?' If so, many of the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt should be difficult and complexity to understand, which we do not observe. 'Is another meaning and concept intended?'

The basis for answering this question is the same method of Ijtihadi understanding the words (cf. Masoudi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: Lessons 9-13) and a part of the eight-step process of understanding hadith (ibid: Part three: The process of understanding hadith). In the meantime, we cannot ignore the semantics of the other elements placed alongside the phrase "Ḥadīthunā."

1. Background

74 Some hadith scholars and commentators have directly or indirectly

addressed this issue. Among them are Fayḍ Kāshānī, the great hadith scholar and author of "al-Wāfi," Allamah Muḥammad Taqī Majlisī and his illustrious son, Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī. He has addressed this issue in his own commentaries, scattered and from different perspectives and expressed his view. Among contemporaries, the renowned philosopher and commentator, Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, has addressed this issue in his treatise "al-Wilāyah," and Ayatollah Jawadi Amoli has addressed it in his commentary on the same treatise (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 128). Additionally, Ayatollah Āṣif Muḥsinī has addressed the semantics of these hadiths and sometimes criticized them in the second volume of his book "Mashra'ah Bihār al-Anwār." The closest article to the present writing can be attributed to Dr. Mohsen Khoshfar in the eighth issue of the Hadith Andisheh journal. The title of this article is different, but it has suitable content in common with the subject of this writing.¹

The point to be noted is that the narrations containing the phrase "Ḥadīthunā" fall into several categories. In one category, the disclosure and dissemination of "Ḥadīthunā" have been considered as false and leading to worldly humiliation and entry into hell.² In another category, they refer to the difficulty (Ṣa'b) and complexity

1. His article was published under the name "Semantics of Ṣa'b and Mustāṣ'ab Hadiths."
2. Like narration of Mu'allā b. Khunays: Qāla Abū 'Abdillāh: Yā Mu'allā Uktum Amranā wa lā Tudi'hu fainnahū man Katama Amranā wa lam Yudi'hu A'azzahullāhu fiddunyā wa Ja'alahū Nūran bayna 'Aynayhi fil Ākhirati Yaqūduhū ilal Jannati. Yā Mu'allā man Adhā'a Ḥadīthanā wa Amranā wa lam Yaktumhā Adhallahullāhu bihī fiddunyā wa Naza'annūra min bayni 'Aynayhi fil Ākhirati wa Ja'alahū Zulmatan Taqūduhū ilannāri (Maḥāsin Barqī: 1, 255, H. 286).

(Mustaṣ'ab) of "Ḥadīthunā" in a way that not everyone can bear it.¹ This second category, known for its difficult and complex traditions, is so abundant that their number alone exceeds the total of other categories. Based on this, the understanding of the phrase "Ḥadīthunā" is largely dependent on the understanding of its difficulty and complexity. Therefore, first, we will explore this meaning.

2. The Semantics of Difficulty (Ṣu'ūbat)

In Arabic, "Ṣa'b" is said to be a rebellious animal that cannot be ridden (Farāhīdī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 311; Jawharī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 163; Ibn Fāris, 1984 AD/1404 AD: 3, 286; Zamakhsharī, 1979: 529). "Mustaṣ'ab" is used in a similar sense to this concept (Rāzī, 1986: 192; Ibn Athīr, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 2, 243 and 4, 38; Ibn Manzūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 1, 504 and 523). This concept is also mentioned in some narrations related to this subject. The narration attributed to Imam Bāqir (AS) is as follows: "Ammal Ṣa'bu fahuwalladhī lam Yurkab ba'du wa ammāl Mustaṣ'abu fahuwalladhī Yahrabu minhu idhā Ra'ā," "Ṣa'b" to mean an animal in which no one is traveling, and "Mustaṣ'ab" to mean an animal with a raised chassis that reveals its undercarriage, as it causes someone to perceive it (Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 44, 16). This interpretation does not differ much from the original and literal meaning. Therefore, the subject of discussion is the practical meaning and ultimate purpose of the Imams from this category of narrations.

1. Like this narration of Imam Ṣādiq (AS): Inna Ḥadīthanā Ṣa'bun Mustaṣ'abun lā Yaḥtamilahū illā Ṣudūrun Munīratun aw Qulūbun Salīmatun aw Akhlāqun Ḥasanah (al-Kāfi: 1, 403, H. 1).

3. The Difficulty of "Ḥadīthunā"

The Difficulty of "Ḥadīthunā" refers to the collection of the opinions of scholars who have referred to these traditions, considering two possible meanings. One possibility is the scientific difficulty and complexity of the "Ḥadīth." The other possibility is the difficulty in accepting and tolerating "Ḥadīthunā," referring to the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt. Each of these two possibilities can be further divided into two subsidiary meanings. It is possible to consider the difficulty of understanding as referring to a part of the narrations and not all of them, and it is possible to consider the difficulty of understanding in all the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt but in the inner and underlying layers. The proponents of the second possibility are also divided into two categories. Some consider it to refer to the greatness and exceptional virtue of the divine Vilayat of the Imams, and some consider it to be general and referring to all their virtues and excellences. We will examine these possible meanings and then present the accepted meaning.

3.1. Scientific Difficulty

Believers in the scientific difficulty consider the contents of the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt to be beyond the general scientific horizon and consider this to make understanding difficult. They take the term "Ḥadīth" in the phrase "Ḥadīthunā" in their own technical sense and consider its addition to "Nā" or "Āli Muḥammad." Based on this interpretation, the phrase "Ḥadīthunā" becomes synonymous with the words uttered by the Ahl al-Bayt, and as a result, understanding

the words of the Ahl al-Bayt appears difficult and inaccessible. Allamah Muhammad Taqī Majlisī has sporadically referred to these traditions in his book "Rawḍatul Muttaqīn" and the way he uses these traditions shows his inclination towards this meaning (Majlisī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 5, 463 and 464; 13, 224). The statement of Imam Ali (AS) addressing Ḥudhayfah ibn Yamān can be a good example of this meaning. We present a part of it here:

"Yā Ḥudhayfah, lā Tuḥaddithinnāsa bimā lā Ya‘rifūna fa Yatghaw wa Yakfurū inna minal ‘Imi Ṣa‘ban Shadīdan Maḥmiluhū law Ḥamalathul Jibālu ‘Ajazat ‘an Ḥamlihī inna ‘Imanā Ahl al-Bayti Sayunkaru wa Yubattalu wa Tuqattalu Ruwwātuhū wa Yusā’u ilā man Yatlūhu Baghyan wa Ḥasadan lima Faḍḍalallāhu bihī ‘Itratal Waṣīyyinnabī (Nu‘mānī, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 144, H. 3): O! Ḥudhayfah, do not tell people about what they do not know, lest they become rebellious and disbelieving. Indeed, some knowledge is extremely difficult to bear, so much so that if mountains were to bear it, they would fail to do so. Indeed, our knowledge, the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt, will be denied, invalidated, and its narrators will be killed, and those who recite it will be treated unjustly and enviously, due to what Allah has favored the progeny of the guardian and the guardian of the Prophet."

Investigation

The primary issue is that Arabic speakers do not use the word "Probability (Iḥtimāl)" to express the difficulty of understanding a problem. In Arabic, "Probability" means endurance and resilience. This meaning is supported by ancient Arabic texts (e.g. Ibn Muqaffa‘, (n.d.): 75; Abū Hilāl ‘Askarī: 1,

307; Shantirīnī: 1, 157; Ābī, 2003 AD/1424 AH: 1, 191 and 4, 122) and has various valid applications.¹ The word "Acknowledgment," used in some narratives, also relates to belief, involving not only intellectual understanding but also heartfelt acceptance. In other words, one can understand a simple matter well but not accept it, or understand and believe a difficult matter despite its challenges.

The uses of "Probability" and "Acknowledgment" indicate that the difficulty referred to in all narrations is not necessarily scientific difficulty. It is worth mentioning that some contemporary scholars have interpreted the Ṣa‘b and Mustaq‘ab narrations as hidden scientific difficulties in the hadiths of the Ahl al-Bayt (Rahimi, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 1, 128). This means that the outward meaning of the narratives is understandable to everyone, but their inner meaning is only comprehensible to specific individuals.

Although this interpretation has inherent potential and evidentiary possibility, as the hadiths of the Ahl al-Bayt, like the Quran, have both an outward and an inner meaning, we have not found evidence to support this claim. Furthermore, it has been stated that the combination of the words "Ṣa‘b" and "Probability" is not used to indicate scientific difficulty. Therefore, the meaning of scientific difficulty in both forms lacks linguistic-cognitive support in all narratives.

1. Like Hadith: "Iḥtimālul Jāhili Ṣadaqatun." (Biḥār al-Anwār: 54, 345) Some narration of first chapter of Ghaybah Nu‘mānī like the narration of Ibn A‘yun from Imam Ṣādiq (AS): Inna Iḥtimāla Amrinā laysa Huwa al-Taṣdīqun bihī wal Qabūlu lahū faqaṭ inna min Iḥtimāli Amrunā Satratun wa Ṣīyānatihī ‘an Ghayri Ahlih (Ghaybah Nu‘mānī: 41).

3.2. Existential Difficulty

The second meaning is to understand the Bāb hadīths in relation to the existential perfections and status of the Ahl al-Bayt in the eyes of God. In this case, the addition of "Ḥadīth" to its subject through "Fī" is a type of prepositional phrase, and the expression "Ḥadīthunā" or the "Ḥadīth of the Āli Muḥammad" means a narration about the Ahl al-Bayt, not a narration issued by them. Some of the expressions of Allamah Muhammad Bāqir Majlisī can be understood in this sense, i.e. as referring to the existential perfections of the Ahl al-Bayt. He has written under a narration quoted from Ma'ānī al-Akḥbār (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 187, H. 7): La'allal Murād al-Iqrār al-Tām alladhī Yakūnu 'an Ma'rifatin Tāmmatin bi 'Uluwwi Qadrihim wa Gharā'ibi Sha'nihim (Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 185): Perhaps the intention is to acknowledge the complete recognition of the exalted status of the Ahl al-Bayt and the wonder of their affairs. It is worth mentioning that he considers these narrations to encompass several Ṣa'b and Mustas'ab subjects and has provided different explanations under the narratives (cf. Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 184, 192, and 194). In his commentary on al-Kāfī, he has written: "Wa Hādhihil Aḥādīth Aktharuhā fī Gharā'ibi Shu'ūnihim wa Nawādiri Aḥwālihīm wa Mu'jizātihīm wa Ba'ḍahā fī Ghawamiḍi 'Ulūmil Mabda' wal Ma'ād wa 'Awīṣāu Masā'ilil Qaḍā'i wal Qadari wa Amthālu Dhālika mimmā Tu'jazu 'an Idrākihā al-'Uqūl (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 4, 313): Most of these narratives are about the wondrous status of the Ahl al-Bayt and their extraordinary states and miracles. Some narratives also discuss the difficult sciences of origin,

resurrection, and complex issues of fate and destiny, which the human intellect is incapable of grasping."

Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī also, in addition to his comments on Allamah Majlisī's statements¹ and in the treatise "al-Wilāyah," considers "Ḥadīthunā" as a reference to the status of the Ahl al-Bayt in the sight of God, which is accompanied by the intuitive perception of absolute monotheism and divine authority (Javadi Amoli, 2019 AD/1398 SH: 128: "Huwa Maqāmuhum min Allāh Subḥānahū ḥaythu lā Yaḥidduhū Ḥaddun wa Huwal Wilāyatul Muṭlaqah"). This meaning can be considered compatible with the use of the words "Ṣa'b" and "Probability." Internal and external evidence also supports this meaning. We can list them.

Internal textual evidence

In a narration from Kulaynī from Imam Ṣādiq, we read:

"Inna Ḥadīthanā Ṣa'bun Mustas'abun lā Yaḥtamilahū illā Ṣudūrun Munīratun aw Qulūbun Salīmatun aw Akhlāqun Ḥasanatun inna Allāha Akhadha min Shī'atinā al-Mīthāqa kamā Akhadha 'Alā Banī Ādama (Alastu bi Rabbikum) faman Wafā lanā Wafayillāha lahū bil Jannati wa man Abghaḍanā wa lam Yu'addi ilaynā Ḥaqqanā fa finnāri Khālidan Mukhalladan: Our hadiths are difficult and not everyone can

1. The first interpretation: "Bal al-Murād bil Iqrār Naylu mā 'indahum (AS) min Ḥaḥiqatiddīni wa Huwa Kamāluttawḥīd alladhī Huwal Wilāyati fainnahū Amrun Dhū Marātib wa lā Yanālul Kāmilati minhā illā man Dhakarūhu bal Yuḍharu min Ba'dil Akhbāri mā Huwa A'lā min Dhālika wa Aghlā wa li Sharḥi Dhālika Maqāmun Ākhar" (Bihār al-Anwār: 2, 185, footnote 1); the second interpretation: Wa Hādhal Khabar Huwalladhī Asharanā fil Ḥāshiyatil Maktūbati 'alal Khabaril Marqūm 8 inna lil Amrilladhī 'indahum Martabatun 'Alīyyan min Fahmi Hā'ulā'il Firaqi al-Thalāth wa Huwa Ḥaḥiqatu al-Tawḥīdīl Khāṣṣati binnabīyyi wa Ālihī lā mā Dhakarāh (al-Majlisī) minal Umūril Gharībah." (Bihār al-Anwār: 2, 192, footnote 1).

bear it, except for the luminous chests, the sound hearts, or the good manners. God has made a covenant with our Shia [regarding our Wilāyah], just as He made a covenant with the children of Adam [regarding His lordship] and said, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ Based on this, whoever fulfills his covenant with us, God will fulfill his promise of Paradise that He has given to him, and whoever opposes us and does not fulfill our rights will be in eternal and everlasting fire.” (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 401, H. 3)

Based on the relationship between the main text and its explanation, it can be shown that the mentioned difficulty lies not in understanding but in fulfilling the covenant; the covenant of the Wilāyah of the Imams, which was taken from humans in the primordial covenant.¹ According to the narration, this requires clear hearts, sound hearts, and good morals, and I see that it is not about teaching and thinking.

In some narrations, the word "Amranā" (our command) is used instead of "Ḥadīthunā," and it is considered bearable only for these kinds of individuals. These narrations have established the condition of bearing the "Amrun Mustaṣ‘abun Ahl al-Bayt" as the establishment of faith in the heart.² This means that the Amrun Mustaṣ‘ab is

1. For interpretation of covenant to Wilāyah cf.: al-Wāfi: 3, 645; Mir’āt al-‘Uqūl: 4, 317; Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt, chapter Nādirun fī anna Amrahum Ṣa‘un Mustaṣ‘abun, H.2: Abān b. ‘Uthmān: Qāla Abū Ja‘far (AS): Inna Amranā Hādhā Mastūrun Muqni‘un bil Mīthāq min Hatkihī Adhillatullāh.

2. Different hadiths in the Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt are such: ‘An Abī Baṣīr ‘an Abī ‘Abdallāh (AS) Qāla: Inna Amranā Ṣa‘bun Mustaṣ‘abun lā Yaḥtamilahū illā man Kataballāhu fī Qalbihī al-Īmān (Baṣā’ir al-Darajāt: 47, H.2); we will show in the following of the article that the word Amranā and Ḥadīthunā are the same.

something that requires more faith to bear, not just teaching and learning, although part of faith requires knowledge and understanding.

Other evidence is the establishment of a contradict relationship between the achieving of the narration of the family of Muhammad and its denial. Please pay attention to these two narrations:

Rasūlullāh: Inna Ḥadītha Āli Muḥammadīn Ṣa‘bun Mustas‘abun lā Yu‘minu bihī illā Malakun Muqarrabun aw Nabīyyun Mursalun aw ‘Abdun Imtaḥanallāhu Qalbahū lil Īmāni famā Warada ‘Alaykum min Ḥadīthi Āli Muḥammad (PBUH) fa li Anta lahū Qulūbukum wa ‘Araftumūhu fa Aqbalūhu wa mā Ishma’azzat minhu Qulūbukum wa Ankartumūhu fa Ruddūhu ilallāhi wa ilā al-Rasūli wa ilā al-‘Alimi min Āli Muḥammadīn wa innamā al-Ḥālīku an Yuḥaddatha Aḥadukum bi shay’in minhu lā Yaḥtamiluhū fa Yaqūlu: Wallāhi mā kāna Hādhā wallāhi mā kāna Hādhā wal Inkāru Huwal Kufru (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 401, H. 1; Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1421 AH; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 25, 366): The Prophet of God said: "The narration of the family of Muhammad is difficult and complexity. No one brings faith in it to God except for the close angels, the sent prophets, or a believer whose heart has been tested for faith. Therefore, whenever something from the narration of the family of Muhammad reaches you, and your hearts soften towards it and you understand it, accept it. And if your hearts harden against it and you do not understand it, return it to God, the Prophet, and the knowledgeable family of Muhammad. It is destruction for someone to be told a narration that they cannot bear and say, I swear by God, this is not true, I swear by God, this is not true. Denial is disbelief."

Another narration is from Imam Baqir (AS) who said:

"Inna Ḥadīthanā Ṣa‘bun Mustas‘abun Ajradu Dhakwānun Wa‘run Sharīfun Karīmun fa idhā Sami‘tum minhu Shay’an wa Lānat lahū Qulūbukum fa Iḥtamilūhu wa Iḥmadūllāha ‘alayhi wa in lam Taḥtamilūhu wa lam Tuṭiqūhu fa Ruddūhu ilal Imamil ‘Ālimi min Āli Muḥammadin fa innamā al-Shaqīyyul Hālikulladhī Yaqūlu: Wallāhi mā kāna Hādihā. Thumma Qāla: Yā Jābiru innal Inkāra Huwal Kufru billāhil ‘Azīm (Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 22, H. 9; cf. Kashshī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 439, H. 341): O! Jābir, our narration is difficult, complexity, straightforward, and requires sharpness of mind, without confusion, precious and valuable. So whenever you hear something from it that softens your heart accepts it and thanks God for it. And if you cannot bear it and do not accept it, return it to the knowledgeable Imam from the family of Prophet Muhammad, for it is the unfortunate one who is destroyed and says, I swear by God, this is not true. The Imam then said: O! Jābir, denial is disbelief and a betrayal of the great God."

It is clear that if bearing the difficult narration means understanding it, the opposite of that is not denial, but rather not understanding.

Problem and Answer

If someone says, "Denial sometimes means not knowing and not understanding," and the condemnation of the Imam is also related to this point, that in the state of not understanding, one should pause, not deny; we say: Both narrations have considered denial as leading to leaving the religion and disbelief. It is clear that denial in the sense of

not understanding some difficult-to-understand hadiths or some virtues cannot lead to such a severe commandment. The denial that leads to leaving the religion is the same as fabricating virtues and denying the status of Imamāt, which if done consciously and considering its divine origin, should return to necessary denial of religion and lead to leaving the religion.

External Textual Evident

There are other categories of narrations that contain the phrase "Amranā" (our command). These narrations have considered the command of the Ahl al-Bayt as Ṣaʿb and Mustafʿab instead of "Ḥadīthunā."¹ The authentic source of these narrations is Baṣāʿir al-Darajāt, which is the oldest and richest source of Ṣaʿb and Mustafʿab narrations. An interesting point is the similarity in the ruling issued regarding the "Ḥadīth" and "Amr" of the Ahl al-Bayt. Both have been considered Ṣaʿb and Mustafʿab, and bearing them and believing in them has been considered difficult for everyone except for three groups; these three groups have also been exempted with the same name in both categories of the mentioned narrations. The exempted groups are the messengers, the close angels, and the tested believers.

Additionally, in the narration of Jābir from Imam Bāqir, "Amr" has been compared to "Ḥadīth." The Imam (AS) first mentioned the difficulty of "Ḥadīthunā" and then demanded not to reject "Amranā."

1. It is interesting to note that these hadiths are placed in the book Baṣāʿir al-Darajāt, immediately after the eleventh chapter, i.e. the chapter on the difficulty of the Ahl al-Bayt hadith (Baṣāʿir al-Darajāt: 1, 26, chapter 12, chapter in Imams of the family of Muhammad, peace be upon him, their command is Ṣaʿb and Mustafʿab).

Yā Jābiru, Ḥadīṭunā Ṣa‘bun Mustaş‘abun Amradu Dhakwān Wa‘run Ajradun lā Yaḥṭamiluhu wallāhi illā Nabīyyun Mursalun aw Malakun Muqarrabun aw Mu‘minun Mumtaḥanun faidhā Warada ‘alayka yā Jābiru Shay’un min Amrinā Falāna lahū Qalbuka faḥmadillāha wa in Ankartahū faruddahū ilaynā Ahlal Bayti wa lā Taqul Kayfa Jā’a Hādhā? Wa Kayfa Kāna? Wa Kayfa Huwa? Fainna Hādhā wallāhi al-Shirku billāhil ‘Azīm (Kashshī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 266, H.341): O! Jābir, our narration is difficult, complexity, straightforward, and uncompromising, manly [or valiant and passionate], and uncompromising. By God, no one can bear it except for the sent Prophet, the close angels, or the tested believer. So whenever, O! Jābir, something of our command comes to you and your heart softens towards it, thank God. And if you do not understand it, return it to us, the Ahl al-Bayt, and do not say: How has this happened? What was this? What is this? By God, this act is associating partners with the almighty God (Kashshī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 439, H. 341).

In the narration of Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī from Imam Bāqir (AS), this comparison is also seen.

Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī ‘an Abī Ja‘far Qāla: Inna Ḥadīthanā Ṣa‘bun Mustaş‘abun lā Yaḥṭamilahū illā Thalāthun: Nabīyyun Mursal aw Malakun Muqarrab aw ‘Abdun Mu‘minun Imtaḥanallāhu Qalbahū lil Īmān. Thumma Qāla yā Abā Ḥamzah allā Tarā annahū Ikhtāra li Amrinā minal Malā’ikatil Muqarrabīn wa min al-Nabīyyīn al-Mursalīn wa min al-Mu‘minīn al-Mumtaḥinīn? (Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 25, H. 19): Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī: I heard Imam Bāqir

(AS) saying, "Our narration is difficult and complexity, and only three individuals can bear it: The sent Prophet, the close angels, or the tested believer in faith." Then he said, "O Abū Ḥamzah, do you not see that the Lord has chosen from among the close angels for our command, from among the prophets for our message, and from among the believers, the tested ones?"

It may be said that this narration is another abbreviated version, and in the detailed text, the phrase "Ḥadīthunā" is not present, and the beginning and end of the narration are only about "Amranā."

In response, it can be said that this abbreviation may indicate the understanding of the narrators and transmitters of the hadith as having the same meaning for "Amranā" and "Ḥadīthunā" in this category of narrations. We present the detailed text and leave the judgment to the readers:

Amrunā Ṣa‘bun Mustaṣ‘abun lā Yaḥtamilihū illā Thalāthun: Malakun Muqarrabun aw Nabīyyun Mursalun aw ‘Abdun Imtaḥanallāhu Qalbahū lil Īmān. Thumma Qāla: Yā Abā Ḥamzata ‘a Lasta Ta‘lamu fil Malā’ikati Muqarrabīna wa ghayra Muqarrabīna wa fī al-Nabīyyīna Mursalīna wa ghayra Mursalīna wa fī al-Mu‘minīna Mumtaḥinīna wa ghayra Mumtaḥinīna? Qultu: Balā. Qāla: Alā Tarā ilā Ṣifati Amrinā? Innallāha Ikhtāra lahū minal Malā’ikati Muqarrabīna wa min al-Nabīyyīna Mursalīna wa minal Mu‘minīna Muntahinīn (Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 28, H. 9): Our command is difficult and complexity, and no one can bear it except a sent prophet, a close angel, or a servant whose heart God has tested with faith. O! Abū Ḥamzah, do you not know that there are angels,

both close and distant, and that some prophets are sent while others are not, and that believers are both tested and not tested? I said: Why not? He said: Do you not see the uniqueness of our command? God has chosen from among the angels, the close ones, from among the prophets, the sent ones, and from among the believers, the ones who have been tested.

Another narration also indicates the unity of "Ḥadīth" and "Amr." This narration has tied our issue to the uprising of Imam Mahdi (AJ). Its text, as narrated by Ṣaffār from Imam Bāqir (AS), is as follows:

"Ḥadīthunā Ṣa‘bun Mustaṣ‘abun lā Yaḥtamilahū illā Malakun Muqarrabun aw Nabīyyun Mursalun aw Mu‘minun Mumtaḥanun aw Madīnatun Ḥaṣīnatun faidhā Waqa‘a Amrunā wa Jā’a Mahdīyyunā kāna al-Rajulu min Shī‘atinā Ajrā min Laythin wa Amḍā min Sināni Yaṭa’ ‘Aduwanā bi Rijlayhi wa Yaḍribuhū bi Kaffayhi wa dhālika ‘inda Nuzūli Raḥmatillāhi wa Farajihī ‘alal Ibād (Ṣaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 1, 24, H.17): Our hadīth is difficult and complexity, and no one can bear it except a close angel, a sent prophet, a tested believer, or a city with fortifications and defenses. And when the matter of uprising occurs and our Mahdi appears, each of our followers will be braver than a lion and stronger than a spear, they will defeat our enemies and strike them with their own hands; and this will happen at the time of the descent of divine mercy and the opening of affairs for the servants." (Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 116; Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 840; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 52, 336, H. 70)

In addition to being extra textual evidence, this narration also has an internal criterion. To demonstrate this internal criterion, we focus

on the relationship between the beginning of the hadith and its end. If the purpose of receiving the hadith at the beginning is to understand its content, then why does the end of the hadith speak of physical strength and military power? If the main issue is the intellectual ability to understand, then why talk about defeating and striking the enemy?

Now, if we understand the purpose to be the acceptance of the guardianship and the recognition of the global leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt, it becomes clear that the power of the believers in the time of the reappearance causes the insolence and denials of the enemies to be set aside, and divine mercy will encompass the whole world and all the servants of God in the garment of relief and the guardianship of the Ahl al-Bayt.

4. Choosing a View

In an initial view, the relative abundance of the second category of hadiths and the greater number of criteria lead the researcher to choose the second opinion. That is, the understanding and acceptance of the virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt, whether in a general sense or some specific virtues such as Imamate and divine Wilāyah, both in terms of creation and legislation of the Imams.

However, a few scattered hadiths are related to the first opinion (such as the hadiths of Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 1, 401; Nu‘mānī, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 142, H. 3), meaning that "Ḥadīthunā" refers to the lofty knowledge and recognition of the Ahl al-Bayt, which is beyond the understanding and endurance of ordinary people.

Considering the existence of both categories of hadiths, it can be

understood that both meanings refer to the Ahl al-Bayt. These two meanings do not conflict with each other; because the unconventional teachings and knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt can also be considered part of their existential perfections. In this case, the ultimate purpose of the issuance of these hadiths becomes the prevention of disclosure and transmission to those who either do not have the capacity to understand or cannot safeguard them. In this way, the internal harmony and coordination among all the hadiths can be observed.

Accordingly, some hadiths can be understood to refer to the same purpose.¹ The common theme of both hadiths is that the transmission

1. Like hadith of Kāfi: 1, 401, H. 4: *Innamā Ma'nā Qawli al-Ṣādiq ay lā Yaḥtamilahū Malakun wa lā Nabīyyun wa lā Mu'minun innal Malaka lā Yaḥtamilahū ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā Malakin ghayrihī wa al-Nabīyyu lā Yaḥtamilahū ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā Nabīyyin ghayrihī wal Mu'minu lā Yaḥtamilahū ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā Mu'minin ghayrih.*

The meaning of the statement of Imam Ṣādiq that no angel, prophet, or believer is able to comprehend it fully signifies that no angel possesses the capacity to contain it within itself. Instead, it is passed on to another angel. Likewise, no prophet can fully grasp it within himself; rather, he transfers it to another prophet. And a believer cannot fully comprehend it either, but rather shares it with another believer. *Ma'ānil Akhbār: 188, H. 3: Innamā Ma'nāhu: Annal Malaka lā Yaḥtamilahū fī Jawfihī ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilal Malaki Mithlihī wa laā Yaḥtamilahū Nabīyyun ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā Nabīyyin Mithlih, wa lā Yaḥtamilahū Mu'minun ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā Mu'minin Mithlihī innamā Ma'nāhu an lā Yaḥtamilahū fī Qalbihī min Halāwati mā Huwa fī Ṣadrihī ḥattā Yukhrijahū ilā ghayrih: The angel being does not bear it within itself, until it entrusts it to an angel similar to itself. The prophet does not bear it, until he passes it on to a prophet akin to himself. Similarly, a believer does not bear it, until they bestow it upon a believer resembling themselves. The essence of the narration is that the sweetness of what one discovers in their heart from our teachings, they do not hold onto it, but rather, they reserve it for another.*

of these teachings and the disclosure of these virtues should only be for someone who is at the same level of knowledge and can convey the hadith. In other words, if someone has reached such knowledge and has endured the virtues and knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt, they will not transmit these teachings to anyone other than a similar and equivalent individual. In other words, without interpreting the phrase "Lā Yaḥtamiluhū" as a prohibition in the Imam's statement, we can still derive the same meaning from it. That is, the prohibition of transmitting Ṣaʿb and Thaḳīl speech to anyone other than an equal and counterpart. Yes, some experiential teachings can only be transferred from one Imam to another. This is considered part of the trust of Imamate in the Shia perspective.

It should be noted that a rare hadith about Khums also supports the previously mentioned meaning. Abū Ḥamzah Thumālī recites the verse of Khums to Imam Bāqir (AS) and the Imam says:

"Mā kāna lillāhi fahuwa li Rasūlihī wa mā kāna li Rasūlihī fahuwa lanā. Thumma Qāla: Laqad Yassarallāhu ʿalal Muʿminīna annahū Razaqahum Khamsata Darāhima wa Jaʿalū li Rabbihim Wāḥidan wa Akalū Arbaʿatan Ḥalālan, thumma Qāla: Hādhā min Ḥadīthinā Ṣaʿbun Mustāṣʿabun, lā Yaʿmalu bihī wa lā Yaṣbiru ʿalayhi illā Mumtaḥanun Qalbhū lil Īmān: What is from God is for His Prophet, and what is from the Prophet of God is for us. Then he said: God has made it easy for the believers, that he gives them five dirhams as sustenance, and they give one dirham for their God and consume the remaining four dirhams. Then he said: This is from our difficult and complexity hadith, which should not be acted upon and adhered to by anyone

whose heart has not been tested with faith in performing and enduring it." (Şaffār Qumī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 29, H. 5; Ḥillī, 2000 AD/1421 AH: 127; Majlisī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 96, 191, H. 7)

The final phrase of the hadith: "Hādhā min Ḥadīthinā Şa‘bun Mustaş‘abun, lā Ya‘malu bihī wa lā Yaşbiru ‘alayhi," is another indication that the difficulty of the hadith of the Ahl al-Bayt is more related to acceptance and endurance of acting upon it, rather than understanding and comprehending it.

Conclusion

Based on what has been said, "Ḥadīthunā" refers to all the virtues and existential perfections of the Ahl al-Bayt, not just their words and sciences. The difficulty in these narrations arises from the difficulty of accepting such perfections in the Ahl al-Bayt. Some rare hadiths also express the difficulty of understanding and comprehending the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, presenting it as part of their scholarly perfection.

The primary purpose of these hadiths is likely to be the careful transmission and caution accompanying this category of hadiths. Where "Ḥadīthunā" becomes difficult and complexity, the narration should only be conveyed to those who have the capacity to tolerate and accept its meanings and act upon it.

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