



# Validating of Belief in Luminous Bodies of Impeccable Imams in Narrative Sources of Farīqayn (Shia and Sunni); a Case study: Belief in the Absence of Shadow<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In narrative sources and Sirah books, numerous narrations about the physical characteristics of the impeccable Imams have been reported. In some of them, there are narrations indicating denial of their physicality. Among these narrations, there are reports in which the existence of a shadow for the Imams has been denied. In other words, when the Prophet and Imams were in front of light, they had no shadow. The narrators of these hadiths have considered this characteristic as a part of the miracles and virtues of the Imams, attributing it to their "Being of Light," as mentioned in other narrations. The narrations transmitted in Sunni sources are without Sanad. In the narration chain of some Shia narrations, there are unknown narrators and sometimes

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even exaggerators (Ghulāt). According to the Fiqh al-Hadith science, these hadiths face various challenges. Asserting this belief contradicts the Quran, which explicitly describes the Prophet as a human being like others and only distinguishes him in receiving revelation. This fundamental weakness is also evident from a rational perspective, as a permanent feature for a physical being with physical needs such as food, sleep, etc., which are mentioned in the impeccable Imams' definite Sirah, is not acceptable. The Imams' being of light, emphasized in the Quran and hadiths, refers to their giving illumination in darkness and guidance towards perfection, just as it applies to God. Therefore, the luminosity of the impeccable Imams does not imply their non-physicality. Finally, disregarding the weakness of the narration chain and the content, it can also be suggested that the lack of shadow for the impeccable Imams is a metaphor for their exalted status and does not refer to their physical body. The present study, using a descriptive-analytical method and with a critical approach, examines the narrations indicating the absence of a shadow for the impeccable Imams in the sources of both sects, utilizing library sources.

**Keywords:** Narrations, Physicality, Light, Impeccable Imams, Shadow, Exaggerate, Fariqayn (Two sects).

## Introduction

In the Sirah books and narrative sources of both sects, there are descriptions attributed to the impeccable Imams which require examination and contemplation from various perspectives. Undoubtedly, the exaggerators, who have always been condemned by the religion leaders, are among the groups that have fallen into this issue. However, not all of these reports can be attributed to the exaggerators or extremist lovers; perhaps the process of transmission and understanding of the hadith in the next classes has led to a misunderstanding in later generations. For example, using the

**170** rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, and allusion by the

narrator of the hadith has later been understood and expressed literally. Therefore, a scientific examination of these narrations using accepted methods of *Dirāyah al-Hadith* and *Fiqh al-Hadith* for validating and presenting the correct meaning is necessary.

The noble religion of Islam is a rationalist religion, far from extremism and negligence (al-Baqarah:143); so, it has paid special attention to reason and rationality, to the extent that it has mentioned reason as the inner and esoteric Messenger (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 1, 15) and commanded to follow it. Among the issues that must be considered using reason in understanding and criticizing them, are the reports and hadiths. The repeated recommendations of the impeccable Imams are based on this principle (Sayyid Raḍī, *Ḥikmat* 98). Not adhering to this principle in dealing with narrations and merely quoting them leads to the weakening of the religion and sometimes becomes the cause of criticism from opponents (Soleimani, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 129-146). In the hadith sources of both sects, there are narrations stating that the Prophet and the impeccable Imams did not have a shadow when they were in the presence of light. These scattered narrations in the sources have led some authors and prominent scholars to introduce it as one of the miracles of the Prophet (PBUH) (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 41, 166-191).

God has condemned exaggeration in religion in the Quran (al-Nisā': 171; al-Mā'idah: 77), and likewise, the impeccable Imams vehemently opposed it in any situation. Imam Riḍā (AS) described them as irrelevant to the religion, quoting the Prophet (PBUH) (Ṣadūq, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 2, 203), and Imam Ali (AS) referred to them as

the worst creatures of God (Şadūq, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 1, 72). However, all exaggerators are not the same; some claim divinity for the Prophet and Imams, while others attribute superhuman qualities and characteristics to them.

In the face of such discussions, the Quran is the best criterion. God in the Quran never considered the Prophet (PBUH) to have different physical characteristics from others; rather, He introduced him as a human being to whom revelation is sent (al-Kahf: 110). However, in contrast, the Quran speaks of the greatness and excellence of the Prophet's (PBUH) soul, his ethical and intellectual qualities that set him apart from everyone else. He is considered to have great morals (al-Qalam: 4) and is described with the attribute of mercy for all the worlds (al-Anbīyā': 107) and as a shining light and a guide for humanity (al-Aḥzāb: 21).

Therefore, what makes the Prophet the noblest of creatures is his boundless servitude and knowledge of God, so human attention and care should be focused on emulating his ethical and worshipful model.

The writer's entire effort in this research was to critically analyze the narrations in accordance with scientific standards and criteria without trying to impose their mindset on understanding the hadith. Therefore, after extensive examination of the Shia and Sunni sources and extracting the narrations related to this subject, steps have been taken in accordance with what scholars and hadith experts have presented in the standards of criticism and understanding of the hadith. Hence, both the chain of narration and the content of the hadith have been scrutinized in the examination of the narrations.

## 1. Background

Since the doubt about the supernatural nature of the Prophet (PBUH) by the followers of exaggerators and the doubt about the Prophet's distinction in all physical and spiritual aspects from other people by the deniers have always been raised, research has been conducted in this regard. For example, Hadi Zeini Malekabad, Nosrat Nilsaz, and Hossein Khakpour in an article titled "Investigating the Doubt of Being Human of the Prophet (PBUH)" published in the *Research in the Interpretation of Quran* magazine have responded to these two doubts and emphasized that the physical characteristics of the Prophet do not differ from other humans, and the difference lies in spiritual attributes and the connection with the unseen and the ability to receive revelation. Mohammad Taghi Shaker and Mahdi Yarmohammadi, in an article titled "Rereading the Essence of Prophets Being Supernatural" published in the *Islamic Theology and Religious Studies* journal, have examined various perspectives and ultimately concluded that it can be inferred from the total verses of the Quran that the prophets had a human essence, and fundamentally, the possibility of sending a non-human prophet to humans does not exist.

The distinction of the prophets from other human beings lies not in their specific worldly abilities, but in their spiritual superiority and divine selection. In relation to the specific case discussed in the article, there has not been an independent research effort, except for an article by Muḥammad Zīyād b. ‘Amr al-Takle in the *al-Watan Kuwaitiyya* journal in 2007. However, the main topic of this article was the rejection of Sufism and their belief that the Prophet's (PBUH) body is

luminous. The majority of this research focused on examining the narrations regarding the absence of a shadow for the Prophet (PBUH), which the author believes to be fabricated and invented.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the present study distinguishes itself from the aforementioned article by not only examining Sunni traditions but also scrutinizing Shia traditions regarding the absence of shadow, particularly concerning the hidden Imam. All these traditions have been analyzed from both a documentary and critical perspective.

## 2. Method

This research utilized a descriptive-analytical method with a critical approach and relied on library resources. Additionally, various editions of the book "Nawādir al-‘Uṣūl," which is the primary source for most of the Sunni narrations about the Prophet's lack of a shadow, were examined and compared considering the research's specific needs.

Before delving into the evaluating the narration chain and content of the discussed narrations, it is essential to review the transmission of these narrations in Shia and Sunni sources.

## 3. Examination of Sunni Sources

Sunni sources that have transmitted the narrations about the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow often refer to the book "Nawādir al-‘Uṣūl fī Ma‘rifati Aḥādīth al-Rasūl" by Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, which is one of the oldest books to mention this hadith, albeit with different wording. After careful examination of various editions of this book, no

narration with this content was found.<sup>1</sup> However, it can be inferred through scholarly references that such a hadith did exist in this book, as prominent authors such as Suyūṭī, Qaṣṭalānī, and Qāḍī ‘Ayāḍ have referred to this book when quoting the narration (further references to these books will be made in the continuation of this article). One possibility is that the hadith may have existed in the handwritten manuscripts of this book but was lost during the printing process.

Despite the importance of quoting from this source considering the author's precedence (d. 320), since the narration with the discussed content was not found in it, we refrain from discussing it and focus on later sources from this book.

In the book "Al-Wafā' bi Aḥwāl al-Muṣṭafā" by Ibn Jawzī (d. 597), it is mentioned: "An Ibn ‘Abbās Qāla: Lam Yakun li Rasūlillāhi Ḍillun wa lam Yaquṃ ma‘a Shamsin Qiṭṭun illā Ghalaba Ḍaw’uhū Ḍaw’u al-Shams wa lam Yaquṃ ma‘a Sirājin Qiṭṭun illā Ghalaba Ḍaw’uhū ‘alā Ḍaw’u." (Ibn Jawzī, 1997 AD/1418 AH: 412)

This hadith has been transmitted without mentioning any source from Ibn ‘Abbās.

In the book "Al-Shifā' bi Ta‘rīf Ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā," which was also compiled in the same sixth century AH, it is narrated without mentioning a chain of narration that: "Innahū Kāna lā Ḍillun Shakhṣuhū fī Shamsin wa lā Qamarin liannahū Kāna Nūran." (‘Ayāḍ, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 1, 368)

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1. Three editions have been published: (1) With an edition by Ismā‘īl Ibrīhim Mutawallī ‘Awaḍ, published by Maktabat al-Imām al-Bukhārī, Cairo, 2008 AD; (2) With a preface by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ‘Umayyrah, published by Dār al-Jayl, Beirut, 1992 AD; and (3) Published by Dār al-Ṣādir, Beirut.

This statement is also transmitted without mentioning a chain of narration, although it includes a reference to the reason for this occurrence. Considering the forthcoming textual criticism of the narrations, we refrain from discussing the statement in this context.

Such narrations are also found in two works from the ninth century AH. Firstly, in the book "Imtā' al-Asmā'" who writes in a chapter titled "The Characteristics of the Prophet (PBUH) as a Light, and When Walking Under the Sun and Moon, He Has No Shadow" by quoting Ibn Sab' as saying: "Innahū Kāna Nūran wa Kāna Idhā Mashā fishshamsi wal Qamari lā Yuḏharu lahū Ḍillun." (al-Maqrīzī, 1999 AD/1420 AH: 10, 308) Then, to document this narration, the book refers to verses and narrations that refer to the Prophet (PBUH) as a light.

Secondly, in the book "al-Inṣāf" by al-Mardāwī (d. 885 AH), it is narrated from Ibn 'Aqīl that: "Wa Dhakara b. 'Aqīl Innahū lam Yakun lahū Fay'un fīShamsin wa lā Qamara li annahū Nūrānīyyun wal Ḍillu Naw'u Ḍulmiḥī." (al-Mardāwī, 1985 AD/1406 AH: 8, 43)

These narrations have also been transmitted in later Sunni sources. For example, the book "Subul al-Hudā wa al-Rashād" has a chapter titled "Fī Mashyihī Ṣallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam wa innahū lam Yakun Yarā lahū Ḍillun," which includes two narrations with similar content from different sources.

1) It is narrated from Dhakwān that "Lam Yarā li Rasūlillāhi Ḍillun fī Shamsin wa lā Qamar." (Ṣāliḥ Shāmī, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 2, 90) It is likely that this narration was taken from the book of Tirmidhī without mentioning the source, and then Dhakwān was mentioned as the source.



2) It is narrated from Ibn Sab' in his book "al-Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubrā" that "In Zillihī Kāna lā Yaqa' 'alal Arḍi wa innahū Kāna Nūran wa Kāna Idhā Mashā fil Shamsi wal Qamari lā Yazharu lahū Zillun." It should be noted that in another place, this narration is attributed to Ibn Jawzī from Ibn 'Abbās (ibid: 40).

Suyūṭī also narrates this hadith in his book "Khaṣāiṣ al-Kubrā" from Ḥakīm Tirmidhī and Ibn Sab' (Suyūṭī, 1984 AD/1405 AH: 1, 117). Additionally, Qaṣṭalānī mentions in his book "Al-Mawāhib al-LadunnīYyah" that during a discussion on the quality of the Prophet's (PBUH) walking, it was mentioned that he did not have a shadow when walking under the sunlight or moonlight (Qaṣṭalānī, (n.d.): 2, 85).

In his commentary on the book "al- Mawāhib al-LadunnīYyah," Zurqānī, without referring to the sources of these narrations and attempting to authenticate them, only uses verses from the Quran and the sayings of the elders to argue that the Prophet (PBUH) was a light, so as not to weaken the above-mentioned narrations (Zurqānī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 5, 524-525). Additionally, Imam Burhān al-Dīn Ḥalabī in "Sīrat al-Ḥalabīyyah" (Ḥalabī, 2006 AD/1427 AH: 3, 381) and Bahūtī in "Kashf al-Qinā'" (Bahūtī, 1968: 5, 32) have also addressed this topic.

#### 4. Evaluating Shia Sources

Contrary to the Sunni tradition, where there is no narration in their six books and other authentic works about the Prophet (PBUH) not having a shadow, we encounter such narrations in reputable Shia books. Continuing the discussion in chronological order, we will

quote the narrations in these books:

The book "al-Kāfī" is a source that first narrates a hadith in the chapter on "Bāb Mawlūd al-Nabī wa Wafātihī" that refers to the Prophet (PBUH) not having a shadow:

"Alīy b. Muḥammad wa Ghayruhū ‘an Sahl b. Zīyād ‘an Muḥammad b. al-Walīd Shabāb al-Ṣayrafi ‘an Mālik b. Ismā‘īl al-Nahdī ‘an ‘Abdissalām b. Ḥārith ‘an Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣata al-‘Ijlī ‘an Abī Ja‘far Qāla Kāna fī Rasūlillāhi Thalāthatun lam Takun fī Aḥadin Ghayrihī lam Yakun lahū Fay’un wa Kāna lā Yamurru fī Ṭarīqi fa Yamurru fīhi Ba‘da Yawmayni aw Thalāthatin illā ‘Urifa annahū qad Marra fīhi liṭībi ‘Arfihī wa Kāna lā Yamurru bi Ḥajari wa lā Bishajari illā Sajada lahū." (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 1, 442)

This narration has also been found in important late Shia sources, as Allamah Majlisī in the chapter "Faḍā’ilihī wa Khaṣā’ishī wa mā Imtanna Allāh bihī ‘alā ‘Ibādihī" book "Biḥār al-Anwār" directly quotes this narration from the book "al-Kāfī" and then briefly explains it (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 16, 368). We will discuss and critique it in the textual criticism section.

It should be noted that Majlisī also mentions this same narration without a source, and with additions compared to the narration quoted in al-Kāfī, in another part of Biḥār al-Anwār (ibid: 249). Additionally, in the chapter "Jawāmi‘ al-Mu‘jizātih" he repeats this same narration verbatim (ibid: 17, 346).

After al-Kāfī and before the emergence of the late hadith collections, other late sources have also quoted this narration. Sources such as "Makārim al-Akhlāq" by Ṭabarsī (Ṭabarsī, 1991 AD/1412

AH: 34) and "al-Manāqib" by Ibn Shahr Āshūb Māzandarānī" (Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 1, 124), both written in the sixth century AH, have narrated this hadith with changes in wording and without a source. Ibn Shahr Āshūb also has a brief argument, which we will address in the textual criticism section. The author of the supplement to the book "Sunan al-Nabī" also discusses this hadith, quoting it from al-Kāfi (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 406-407).

The second early hadith researcher who has addressed this topic is Shaykh Ṣadūq, with the difference that he introduces this characteristic as one of the signs of the Imam in a hadith. Considering the definition of hadith in Shia and the complete relevance of the topic, we will address it further:

Shaykh Ṣadūq in the book "Man lā Yaḥḍuruhul Faqīh" narrates a hadith from Imam Riḍā (AS), part of which is as follows:

"Wa Rawā Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Kūfī Qāla Ḥaddathanā 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. Faḍḍāl 'an Abībi 'an Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā Qāla lil Imām 'Alāmātun Yakūnu A'lamannāsi wa Aḥkamannāsi wa Atqannāsi wa Aḥlamannāsi wa Ashja'annāsi wa Askhannāsi wa A'badannāsi wa Yūladu Makhtūnan wa Yakūnu Muṭahharan wa Yarā min Khalfihī Kamā Yarā min Bayni Yadayhi wa lā Yakūnu lahū Zill." (Ṣadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 4, 418)

Shaykh Ṣadūq has also quoted this same narration with the same text and sanad in his other works (Ṣadūq, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 1, 212; Ṣadūq, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 2, 527). Other authors such as Rāwandī (Rāwandī, 1988 AD/1409 AH: 314; 1988 AD/1409 AH: 2, 507), Ṭabarsī (Ṭabarsī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 2, 346), and Irbilī (Irbilī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 2, 209)

have also mentioned this narration in their books.

Shaykh Ṣadūq has also narrated another hadith in his book "al-Khiṣāl" in the chapter on the ten characteristics of the Imam:

"Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Haytham al-‘Ajli Qāla Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Zakarīyā al-Qaṭān Qāla Ḥaddathanā Bakr b. ‘Abdallāh b. Ḥabīb Qāla Ḥaddathanā Tamīm b. Buhlul Qāla Ḥaddathanā Abū Mu‘awīyah ‘an Sulaymān b. Mihrān ‘an Abī ‘Abdallāh Ja‘far b. Muḥammad Qāla ‘Ashara Khiṣālin min Ṣifāt al-Imām al-‘Ismah wa al-Nuṣūṣ wa an Yakūna A‘lamannās wa Atqāhum Lillāh wa A‘lamahum bi Kitābillāh wa an Yakūna Ṣāhibal Waṣīyyati al-Zāhirati wa Yakūna laḥū Fay’un wa Yarā min Khalfiḥi Kamā Yarā min Bayni Yadayhi..." (Ṣadūq, 1983 AD/1403 AH: 2, 428)

He has also provided an explanation for this narration, and Allamah Majlisī has mentioned this hadith along with its explanation in "Biḥār al-Anwār." (Majlisī, 1984 AD/1404 AH: 25, 140-141)

In his book "Kamāl al-Dīn," Shaykh Ṣadūq narrates a hadith about the signs and characteristics of the awaited Imam (AJ), part of which we have mentioned here:

"Ḥaddathanā Aḥmad b. Zīyād b. Ja‘far al-Hamdānī Qāla Ḥaddathanā ‘Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāshim ‘an Abīhi ‘an ‘Alī b. Ma‘bad ‘an al-Ḥusayn b. Khālid Qāla Qāla ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā:... Yawma Khurūja Q’imunā Ahlal Bayt faman Taraka al-Taḳīyyata Qabla Khurūji Qā’imunā fa Laysa minnā Faḳīla laḥū yā Ibna Rasūlillāh wa minal Qā’imi minkum Ahlal Bayti Qāla al-Rābi‘u min Waladī Ibn Sayyidah al-Imā’ Yaṭharullāhu bihil Arḍu min Kulli Jawrin wa Yaḳdisuhā min Kulli Zulmin wa Huwalladhī Yashukkunnāsa fī Wilādatihī wa Huwa Ṣāhibul Ghaybati Qabla Khurūjihī

fa Idhā Kharaja Ashraḡat al-Arḡa bi Nūrihī wa Waḡa‘a Mīzānal ‘Adli Baynannāsi falā Yazlima Aḡadun Aḡadā wa Huwalladhī Taṡwā laḡul Arḡa wa lā Yakūna laḡū Zill..." (Ṣadūq, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 2, 371-372)

## 5. Critique and Analysis

In the previous sections, we briefly reviewed the narrations found in Shia and Sunni sources regarding the topic of the Prophet's (PBUH) having no shadow. The above narrations evaluate in terms of their chain of narration and text.

### 5.1. Chain of Narration (Sanad) Critique

To evaluate the authenticity or weakness of sanad, we will discuss the transmitted narrations separately for Shia and Sunni sources.

#### 5.1.1. Narrations Transmitted in Sunni Sources

Looking at the narrations mentioned regarding the Prophet (PBUH) lack of shadow, we notice that none of them have any sanad. Moreover, they do not trace back to the Prophet (PBUH) himself, but rather some of them are narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās, who is one of the companions, and others are narrated by Dhakwān, who is a successor and has not transmitted the chain of narrators until to this narrator. Although some sources have mentioned a sanad for this narration in "Nawādir al-‘Uṣūl" by Tirmidhī, we have not found this narration after extensive research. Therefore, it is natural that we cannot evaluate the authenticity and reliability of this narration.

The greatness and reliability of Ibn ‘Abbās is beyond doubt, but some scholars have explicitly stated that considering his greatness,

efforts have been made throughout history to attribute unknown or distorted hadiths to Ibn ‘Abbās in order to address the weaknesses and criticisms associated with them. This has led to some doubts about the reliability of Ibn ‘Abbās, despite the fact that this esteemed companion and prominent student of the Ahl al-Bayt school is free from any fabrication or distortion (Ma‘rifat, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 1, 218-227).

It is also worth mentioning that some Sunni scholars have authenticated the narrations of Dhakwān, who was a slave of ‘Āyishah and later freed by her (Dhahabī, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 1, 78; ‘Asqalānī, 1994 AD/1415 AH: 1, 287), and praised him for the abundance of narrations, most of which were transmitted from ‘Āyishah or Abū Hurayrah (Suyūṭī, 1899 AD/1410 AH: 31).

It is notable that since the hadiths about the Prophet not casting a shadow are not mentioned in the Six Books and other early and late Sunni narrative collections, it can be inferred that these hadiths did not have sufficient authenticity to be included in their books. The possibility that these scholars did not have access to these hadiths seems highly unlikely. Therefore, the absence of these hadiths in their books is evidence of their sanad or their texts rejection according to the authors.

### 5.1.2. Narrations Transmitted in Shia Sources

The outstanding feature of Shia hadiths is their reliance on chains of narration. This feature is also present in the hadiths under discussion. Considering that all the hadiths transmitted in Shia sources on the issue of the Prophet not casting a shadow are connected to a chain of narration, we will examine the authenticity of all of them:

The first narration is transmitted in the book *al-Kāfī*. This connected sanad is considered weak due to the existence of some narrators who are weakened and unreliable in the chain. For example, Sahl b. Zīyād Ādamī, who is considered weak in hadith and untrustworthy by Najāshī, and is said to have been exiled from Qom to Rey regarding exaggeration and lying (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 185), and Ibn Ghaḍā'irī, who introduced him as corrupt in narration and religion and someone who narrated hadith Mursal and trusted to unknown narrators (Ibn Ghaḍā'irī, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 67); also, Muḥammad ibn al-Walīd Shabāb al-Şīrafī, whom Allāmah Ḥillī considered weak (Ibn Dāwūd Ḥillī, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 257). Malik ibn Ismā'īl al-Nahdī and 'Abdul Salām ibn Ḥarb al-Nahdī are also unknown (Ṭūsī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 237). Finally, Sālim ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, who was a Zaidi Battery, in addition to narrating a hadith, considered him one of those who lied about Imam Şādiq (AS) and Imam cursed him (Kashshī, 1969 AD/1348 SH: 230).

Considering the Rijālī evaluation of the above hadiths, except for Ali ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abān Kulaynī, who was a Shaykh of Kulaynī and is authenticated, none of the narrators of Kulaynī's narration were authenticated, but some were declared weak. Apart from the connected chain of narration, this narration must be considered one of the weak hadiths in *al-Kāfī* according to the textual criticism. Another point is that this narration is not mentioned in any other source, either because it is single or because of its weakness, it has not been mentioned by scholars and narrators.

The next narration is transmitted in the book *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhul Faqīh*, in which Imam Riḍā (AS) enumerates some signs of the Imam, one of which is that the Imam does not cast a shadow. The narrators of this hadith are all authenticated, except for Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ishāq Ṭāliqānī, whom Ayatollah Khu'ī considers having a good belief but whose reliability is not proven (Khu'ī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 14, 220; Ṭūsī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 409; Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 94; Ibn Dāwūd Ḥillī, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 114 and 483) and remains authentic. Therefore, by examining the chain of narrators of this hadith, we can judge the reliability of the narrators and the authenticity of the sanad, and consider the hadith as authentic. However, we should note that Shaykh Kulaynī narrates a hadith from Imam Ṣādiq (AS) in the section *Mawālīd al-A'imma al-Kāfi* regarding the signs of the Imam. It is important to note that in that narration, just like the narration under discussion, ten signs are mentioned, and multiple signs are also applicable to the narration of Shaykh Ṣadūq from Imam Riḍā (AS), with the difference that the phrase "Wa lā Yakūnu lahū Zill" is not mentioned in the narration in *al-Kāfi*. Considering the soundness of the sanad in *Al-Kāfi* and all the narrators being Imamiyyah, and the authenticity of the hadith, this narration is in a better position in terms of the sanad compared to the narration in *al-Faqīh* book. This statement does not indicate the weakness of the narration in *al-Faqīh*, but it raises the possibility that either this phrase is not from an Imam source, or its meaning cannot be a literal absence of a shadow.



Khiṣāl from Imam Ṣādiq (AS). It has a connected chain of narration, but only the reliability of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham al-‘Ajlī (Khu’ī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 2, 323) and Sulayman ibn Mihrān (ibid: 8, 282) rather ruled implicitly (Ibn Dāwūd Ḥillī, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 177) and remain narrators are unknown (Najāshī, 1986 AD/1407 AH: 109; Khu’ī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 6, 306).

Therefore, considering the lack of authentication and reliability of some narrators of this hadith, we cannot definitively judge the authenticity of the chain and consequently the authenticity of the entire hadith.

The last narration that addresses the examination of its chain is a narration transmitted from Imam Riḍā (AS) in the book "Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni‘mah" regarding the signs of Imam Mahdi (AJ), one of which is the lack of a shadow. The sanad of this narration is connected, and there is no criticism of the narrators (Khu’ī, 1989 AD/1410 AH: 2, 120).

Considering the connection of sanad and absence of the narrators’ criticism, we cannot conclude that the chain is weak or questionable. However, a discussion of the Fiqh al-Hadith can be raised regarding this narration, which will be addressed in the next section.

## 5.2. Textual Critique

### 5.2.1. Semantic Analysis of the Term "Zill"

The key term in the hadiths regarding the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow is the word "Zill" (shadow), and sometimes "Fay'" is used. Although there are differences in the meanings of these two words,

such as "Zill" being more general than "Fay'," and "Zill" being used wherever sunlight does not reach, while "Fay'" is not used except after the decline of the sun (Rāghib Iṣfahānī, 1991 AD/1412 AH: 535), these differences do not have a significant impact on the subject under discussion (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993 AD/1414 AH: 11, 465). The important point is that both terms in the Persian language mean "Shadow," and most authors and narrators who have quoted the hadiths about the Prophet's lack of a shadow have only considered this meaning. It is the same shadow that does not have a real existence but is rather the absence of light regarding the prevention of light radiation.

Now, if we accept that the transmitted hadiths on the subject of the Prophet's lack of a shadow, their issuance are definite, we need to know whether the intention of the term "Zill" is the same as the technical shadow, or if another meaning is also possible, and whether it could be a metaphor or allegory.

In response to this question, and for an understanding of the usage of the term "Zill" (shadow) in the hadiths, we refer to some combinations in which the term "Zill" has been used and has been narrated in authentic hadiths:

"Fī Zilli Rawāqil Qā'im," (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 1, 371) "Zill al-Qā'im," (ibid: 465) "Fī Zilli 'Arshellāh Yawma lā Zilla illā Zillatun," (ibid: 2, 147) "Allāhumma Aẓillanī fī 'Arshika Yawma lā Zilla illā Zilluk," (Ṣadūq, 1992 AD/1413 AH: 2, 535) "Taḥta Zill al-Sayf," (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 6, 122) "Kāna fī Zilli Raḥmatillāh," (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1898 AD/1409 AH: 5, 377) and many other examples that are apparent in the hadiths. These examples indicate the fact that

the term "Zill" is not always meant in the sense of a shadow caused by the obstruction of light, but is sometimes used metaphorically or allegorically. 'Does the Throne of God or God Himself have a shadow?' 'Does the mercy of God have a shadow?' And 'Does the flag of Imam Mahdi (AJ) have such a shadow that thousands of people can find shelter under it?' It is clear that none of these are meant to be a literal shadow, but rather the extent of God's mercy, or the protection under the shadow of the sword.

Therefore, in hadiths where there is no weakness in their chain of narration, the term "Zill" can be interpreted in one of these meanings. For example, a hadith narrated from Kamāl al-Dīn, in which one of the signs of the Imam of the Time (AJ) is that "Lā Yakūnu lahū Zill" can be interpreted as at the time of the Imam's reappearance, his power, mercy, and justice will be so widespread that everyone will find a place within it, or that no one will be equal to him. This interpretation is also valid for the narrations related to the signs of the Imam.

### 5.2.2. Presenting Hadiths on the Quran

The most important and steadfast method of textual criticism of hadiths is to present them on the Quran, which serves as a clear criterion for evaluating the content of the hadiths, away from any distortion and interpretation, as the Quran is an illuminating guide for everything (al-Nahl: 89). Numerous narrations also emphasize the necessity of presenting hadiths on the Quran, as narrated from the impeccable Imams (Kulaynī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 1, 69). Therefore, the first step in critiquing the content of hadiths is to present them on the Quran.

The Quran contains numerous verses that introduce the Prophet (PBUH). While it is not possible to mention all of these verses, quoting some of them seems essential for a better understanding of the topic under discussion.

Prophets in the Quran are introduced like other people (Ibrāhīm: 11; al-Kahf: 11), and this fact has been criticized by the opponents. For instance, the nobles and leaders opposing Nūḥ said that he was a human like them and sought superiority, and if God wanted to send a messenger, He would have sent angels down to them (al-Mu'minūn: 24). They also objected to the prophets and said that they were human beings like themselves, eating and drinking what they eat and drink (al-Mu'minūn: 33); even regarding the Seal of Prophets (PBUH), they made sarcastic remarks, questioning 'How he could be a prophet when he eats food and walks in the marketplaces?' They asked 'Why an angel had not been sent down to them?' (al-Furqān: 7). In response to these objections, God says that He did not send any messengers before the Prophet (PBUH) except that they ate food and walked in the marketplaces. God answers: *Wa Qālū law lā Anzala 'alayhi Malakun wa law Anzalnā Malakan Laquḍīyal Amru Thumma lā Yunzarūna wa law Ja'alnāhu Malakan la Ja'alnāhu Rajulan wa Lalabasnā 'alayhim mā Yalbisūn* (al-An'ām: 8-9).

Furthermore, the Quran emphasizes the Prophet's (PBUH) humanity, stating that he is a human being just like the rest of us, and the only difference is that he receives divine revelations (al-Kahf: 110). Another note is that the Quran forbids exaggeration in religion.

**188** By reflecting on the verses mentioned earlier, it can be inferred that

such claims regarding the Prophet (PBUH) would be considered as part of exaggeration. God holds the people of the Book responsible for exaggeration in religion (al-Mā'idah:77). In particular, Christians are subjected to severe scrutiny due to some considering Jesus to be God and some considering him to be one of the three Gods and his son (al-Nisā': 171).

It is clear from the Quranic verses and narrations that claiming extraordinary and unproven characteristics for the Prophet (PBUH) is a form of excessive devotion and is not compatible with the Quran. The messengers were human beings like everyone else, and there were no physical differences between them and other people. The essence of the Quranic verses shows that people could not accept someone who was just like them as a messenger of God and the leader of society. This does not deny their impeccability, spiritual greatness, unique qualities, and virtues. Their inner qualities are what made them worthy of their mission. This fact was also accepted by the general public, as they often accepted and followed the messengers before their proclamation of prophet hood, but they were not born with a special and different nature from other people.

### **5.2.3. Evaluating the Report with Definite Tradition**

Given that the hadiths on the topic of the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow fall under the categories of similitude, miracles, and the Prophet's (PBUH) characteristics, it is impossible to find opposing hadiths in the sources of hadith. Therefore, it can be generally said that the evaluation of the mentioned reports has no place in the

established tradition on this matter. However, it is necessary to mention another group of hadiths that have very close content to the discussed reports in this research. They are contrary to the mentioned reports regarding the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow. These hadiths consider the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow as a result of a perpetual cloud casting a shadow over him.<sup>1</sup> In other words, if the Prophet (PBUH) did not have a shadow, it was not due to his luminous body, but because a cloud specifically cast a shadow over him, leaving no shadow of his body as the cloud obstructed the light.

Certainly, the beginning of this event goes back to the story of the Prophet's (PBUH) journey before his Bi‘that and his encounter with Buḥayrā the monk. At that time, a piece of cloud had cast a shadow over him, and after witnessing this event, Buḥayrā gave glad tidings of prophethood to his cousin, Abū Ṭālib (Majlisī, 1983 AD/1404 AH: 15, 200-220).

There is no doubt that if this event occurred,<sup>2</sup> it would be considered one of the miracles of the Messenger of God (PBUH).

1. According to the author, except for a few instances, this occurrence is not continuous, and this group of hadiths is inherently weak in terms of their chains of narration and texts and maybe there is a sign of exaggeration. However, considering the objective of this research, we are indifferent to the authenticity or otherwise, or the reliability or otherwise, of these reports - which do not require further scholarly investigation - and we are merely examining the contradictory reports.
2. It should be noted that this incident is well-known, but it lacks a reliable chain of narration. As a result, many Shia and even some Sunni scholars do not believe in its authenticity (Zamānī, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 148). However, our reference to this occurrence is not for the purpose of endorsing it, but rather for the sake of examining its scholarly implications and analyzing its divergent interpretations.

However, there are also hadiths that indicate the perpetual shadow casting of a cloud over the Prophet (PBUH). For example, Allamah Majlisī, in *Biḥār al-Anwār*, quotes from the book *al-‘Adad al-Qawīyyah*, a detailed account of Ḥalīma Sa‘dīyya, which states that Ḥalīma said, "I never took him (the Prophet) out under the sunlight unless a cloud cast a shadow over him." (ibid: 15, 341)

Another example is a very detailed narration found in *Al-Iḥtijāj* by Ṭabarsī, with a suspended chain of narration from Imam Kāẓim (AS), who quotes Imam Ḥusayn (AS) in a dialogue with a Jew. The Jew said, "A cloud casts a shadow over Moses," and Imam Ali (AS) replied, "The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) was also like this, even more so. The Prophet (PBUH) was superior to Moses because from the day he was born until the day his soul was taken, whether on a journey or at home, a cloud always cast a shadow over him." (Ṭabarsī, 1982 AD/1403 AH: 1, 319)

Both narrations have been mentioned in the appendices of the book *Sunan al-Nabī*, chapter "Bāb al-Shamā'il" by Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1995 AD/1416 AH: 402). Faced with these two groups of narrations - the narrations indicating the Prophet's (PBUH) lack of a shadow and the narrations indicating that a cloud cast a shadow over him - we are confronted with the following categorizations:

1) Accept both groups of narrations, which are fundamentally impossible, with the explanation that if the Prophet (PBUH) did not have a shadow, there would be no reason for a cloud to cast a shadow over him;

2) Accept the second group and set aside the first group, which

would lead us to the purpose of the research;

3) Accept the first group and set aside the second group. This would not be acceptable, considering the firmness of the event of Buḥayrā the monk and the fact that if the Prophet (PBUH) did not have a shadow, such a phenomenon should not have occurred - while historical narrations and quotes prove its authenticity. This means that at least once during the Prophet's (PBUH) lifetime, a cloud cast a shadow over him, which is evidence of his, having a shadow;

4) Set aside both groups, which would prove the hypothesis of this research.

### 5.2.3. Evaluating the Khabar with Reason

As for evaluating the news with reason, just as the Quran has repeatedly pointed out, the prophets of different nations were human beings and there was no difference in their bodies from those of others. It is also a rational fact that the human body is opaque and creates a shadow when light shines on it. Therefore, rationally, the prophets also had a shadow when exposed to light, which is considered the absence of light. Since some authors have tried to prove rationally the phenomenon of the Prophet (PBUH) and the impeccable Imams (AS) not having a shadow when narrating hadiths, it is necessary to present and critically examine their reasons in this section.

Without exception, all authors who have discussed these hadiths have reasoned their statements with verses and narrations that state that the Prophet (PBUH) is light, including the verse:

192 Yā Ayyuha al-Nabī innā Arsalnāka Shāhidan wa Mubashshiran wa



Nadhīran wa Dā'īyan ilallāhi bi Idhnihi wa Sirājan Munīran (al-Aḥzāb: 45-46).

And also, a part of the prayer that the Prophet (PBUH) taught to Imam Ali (AS) for the day of 'Arafah, which has been cited by most authors, is:

Allāhumma Ij'al fi Qalbī Nūran wa fi Sam'ī wa Baṣarī Nūran wa Laḥmī wa Damī wa 'Izāmī wa 'Urūqī wa Maq'adī wa Maqāmī wa Madkhalī wa Makhrajī Nūran wa A'zim lī Nūran yā Rabbi Yama Alqāka innaka 'alā Kulli Shay'in Qadīr (Ṭūsī, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 5, 183).

The light mentioned by these authors is the same as the light that radiates from shining objects like the sun and the moon, which does not have a shadow of its own, and instead, opaque objects that are placed in front of it create a shadow. However, it should be noted that this meaning is only one of the many common meanings of the word "Light." To further explain this issue, we look at the use of the word "Light" in the Quran.

### 5.2.5. Application of "Light" in the Quran

Light has following meaning in the Quran:

1) God: The Almighty God has introduced Himself as "Nūr" (al-Nūr: 35);

2) Heavenly books, especially the Quran: Several verses of the Quran describe the heavenly books that have been revealed to the prophets as "Nūr." This interpretation has been used more frequently in reference to the Quran (al-Mā'idah: 15, 44, 46; al-Nisā': 174; al-An'ām: 91; al-Shurā: 52);

3) Guidance: Another use of the word "Nūr" in the Quran is to refer to guidance towards happiness and perfection (al-Nūr: 40; al-An‘ām: 146; al-Zumar: 22);

4) Faith: The word "Nūr" has also been used to describe the quality of faith (al-Baqarah: 257);

5) The Prophet of Islam (PBUH) (al-Aḥzāb: 44);

6) Illumination: This use is the same as the technical and literal use of the word "Nūr" in the Quran (Yūnus: 5; Nūḥ: 16).

We see that the use of the word "Nūr" in the Quran is very extensive and broad, and it can even be said that the use of the word "Light" for illumination is much less than other cases. It should be noted that the reason for using the word "Light" for God, heavenly books, and guidance is that each of them removes ignorance and darkness and shows the truth and happiness. When God is described as "Light," it is because He is the illuminator of the universe, and through Him, truths that were not clear become visible (Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 15, 122). The Quran is light because it is illuminating and revealing, and guidance is light because it guides humans towards perfection (Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 14, 473).

#### **5.2.6. Conceptology of Using Word "Nūr" for the Prophet**

The fact that the Quran describes the Prophet (PBUH) as "A Sirājan Munīrā" is because he is a shining light that testifies for himself, and no one but Allah testifies for him, and he testifies for all nations (al-Nisā’: 41), removing darkness and ignorance (Makarem Shirazi, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 17, 364). He, like light, is the cause of growth, movement, and guidance, and he is light because through him, people are guided

to happiness and the path of salvation from the darkness of misery and misguidance (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 16, 330).

Therefore, as Allamah Ṭabāṭabā'ī believes, the interpretation of "Light" for the Prophet (PBUH) is a metaphorical expression (ibid.), and it is not that because the Prophet (PBUH) is light and, on the other hand, light has no shadow, therefore, the Prophet's (PBUH) body has no shadow. At least, the activity that a narrator or the author of a hadith book should do is the discussion of *Fiqh al-Lughah* or the linguistics of a narration, and one cannot attribute every word to the first meaning that comes to mind. Neglecting this issue makes it difficult for us to understand the hadith. 'Was it not narrated that the narrators who transmitted this hadith paid attention to the semantic range of the word "Nūr" so that if the hadith's sanad is authentic, they could not find such a characteristic of the Prophet (PBUH) from its text?' A researcher narrator is expected to, when narrating a hadith that is likely to be misunderstood or has an incomplete understanding of its text, discuss the meanings, contexts, and various aspects of a word, and after investigation and considering other possibilities, reach its true meaning.

'Can it be accepted that the Prophet (PBUH) had a luminous body and no shadow remained from him, but on the other hand, he suffered from other earthly bodily afflictions such as injuries, wounds, and death?'

### **5.3. Evaluating a Theory**

Some believe that the Prophet (PBUH) not having a shadow was a

miracle, and because a miracle is an extraordinary event, we can accept that one of the miracles of the Prophet (PBUH) or the impeccable Imams (AS) was that they did not have a shadow. However, before examining and critiquing this theory, it is necessary to become familiar with the concept of miracle and its characteristics. It has been defined that a miracle is the proof of something that is not ordinary and usual, or denial of something that is not ordinary and usual, provided that it is accompanied by the breaking of established norms and is in line with the claim of prophethood (Ḥillī, 1996 AD/1417 AH: 350). Additionally, a miracle is accompanied by a challenge (Taḥaddī), meaning it invites confrontation and opposition (Subḥānī, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 258). Therefore, the two main conditions for a miracle are:

- 1) Accompanied by the claim of prophethood;
- 2) Accompanied by a challenge (Taḥaddī).

The absence of a shadow does not align with either of these two conditions. It is important to note that the Prophet (PBUH) never used this miracle as an argument in his debates with opponents. Furthermore, there is no evidence in any reliable source or in the biographical (Sirah) literature that a challenge was made in this regard.

If we accept that this phenomenon is a miracle of the Prophet, we can consider it as occurring in a specific period and for a specific purpose, rather than as a permanent characteristic of the Prophet (PBUH). In other words, we cannot consider the absence of a shadow as an everlasting miracle throughout the Prophet's (PBUH) life.

the only everlasting miracle of the Prophet (PBUH) is the Quran, which preserves its miraculous nature forever. Therefore, if we accept the miraculous nature of this event, we must consider it as a momentary occurrence, not a permanent characteristic resulting from the luminous nature of the Prophet's (PBUH) body.

Another point to consider is that if we accept this as a miracle, it must have occurred after the Prophet's (PBUH) mission (Bi'that) began. In other words, the Prophet (PBUH) had a shadow before being chosen as a prophet, and after his mission began, he did not have a shadow. Interestingly, this important event has been overlooked in history.

If we consider this phenomenon as a miracle for the Prophet, 'How do we justify the narrations about the signs of the Imams, one of which is the absence of shadow?' We know that the divine proof of the position of Imamat is not dependent on the occurrence of a miracle. Therefore, we should consider it as a permanent honor for the Imams, and this claim lacks sufficient evidence for acceptance.

## **Conclusion**

Narrations that have denied the existence of a shadow for the impeccable Imams exist in both Shia and Sunni sources, with the difference that in Sunni sources, this attribute is mentioned only for the Prophet of Islam, while in Shia sources, it is also attributed to the impeccable Imams, especially the Hidden Imam. The narrations in Sunni sources lack a reliable chain of narration, while the narrations in Shia sources have sanad, but these sanads are not all credible. Additionally, among the narrators, there are individuals who are

unknown in the field of hadith transmission and others who have been described as exaggerator or corruption in their beliefs. Therefore, by and large, the credibility of the sanad for these narrations is questionable. From a content perspective, these narrations face serious challenges. The Quran explicitly describes the Prophet as a human being like others who eats food, walks in the markets, and the only difference is that he receives revelation. In the books of Sirah and in reliable narrations, the physical characteristics and bodily needs of the impeccable Imams, such as food, clothing, and even the illnesses they suffered from, have been repeatedly mentioned. These narrations are considered certain and are strong and credible compared to the narrations under discussion, and they should be given precedence. Furthermore, accepting the narrations of the absence of shadow is unacceptable from a rational perspective. The luminosity of the impeccable Imams does not refer to a physical light or radiation emanating from a source, but rather signifies enlightenment in the path of human guidance, just as the luminosity of God also means the same. Another point is that these narrations suffer from textual inconsistency, and from a content perspective, they are severely weak. Accepting these narrations in a way opens the door to exaggeration and challenges the emphasis on rationality by the leaders of the Islamic faith. The only way to resolve the content conflict of these narrations is to consider the absence of shadow not in a literal sense, but as a metaphor for their elevated status, in which case, it still does not negate the belief in the physical nature of the impeccable Imams.

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