



The Introduction to

Dirayatul Hadith

The Guideway to the Primary
Source of Islamic Hadith
Sciences



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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds, who sent His final Messenger, Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him and his purified progeny), as a mercy to mankind, a guide to the truth, and the Seal of all Prophets. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his noble Ahlul Bayt, the divinely guided Imams, who preserved and conveyed the message of Islam in its purest form.

One of the highest and most important fields of Islamic study is the science of hadith. It is how the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and the Imams (PBUT) are recognized, preserved, and comprehended. Distinct yet an added support to 'Ilm al-Rijal (the study of narrators and their reliability), Dirayat al-Ḥadith (the study of hadith comprehension and analysis) plays a significant function within this wide-ranging science. If the authenticity of a hadith's chain of transmission (sanad) is the focus of 'Ilm al-Rijal, then the content (matn) and the rules guiding the analysis and application of hadith are the focus of Dirayat al-Ḥadith. Islam's scholars, especially those of the Ahlul Bayt school, have stressed the importance of analyzing hadith comprehensively. Even though a narrative's chain could be deemed weak (da'eef), contextual and logical examination can support its meaning, giving it a legitimate source of guidance. On the other hand, internal contradictions, problems with established standards, or disagreements with the Qur'an may cause a narrative with a seemingly sound chain to be rejected. This demonstrates how important Dirayat al-Ḥadith is in ensuring that our knowledge of Islam is shaped only by factual and applicable traditions. In this work, we delve into Dirayat al-Ḥadith's depths, exploring its principles, methodologies, and practical applications. We shall examine how scholars determine the coherence, contextual validity, and intended implications of narrations. We will address critical questions: Is a hadith meant to be general or specific? Was it revealed under particular circumstances? Does it harmonize with the Qur'an and established rational principles? What rhetorical tools did the infallibles employ, and how do they affect the interpretation of their words? These are but a few of the intricate layers of this science that we shall uncover. Through Allah's guidance and the blessings of the Ahlul Bayt, we strive to provide this research in a way that is both helpful to the general population of the Muslim nation and accessible to the student of knowledge. I pray that my humble initiative may foster greater awareness of the vast body of knowledge provided by our scholars and protect the integrity and comprehension of the divine word. We pray to Allah, the Most High, to accept this initiative, to support us in our sincere quest for knowledge, and to bestow wisdom and understanding on the readers. The Lord of the worlds, Allah, deserves all the glory.

Author's Note:

The reader is encouraged to approach this work with reflection, patience, and an open heart. The science of Dirayatul Hadith is vast, requiring diligence and careful analysis. As we navigate its principles, let us remember that the ultimate goal is not merely academic knowledge but the attainment of divine guidance through the words of the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and his pure progeny. May Allah grant us success in this noble endeavor.

And Allah knows best.

Chapter One: Definition and Scope of Dirayatul Hadith

1.1 What is Dirāyatul Ḥadīth?

Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth refers to the science that studies the meanings, contexts, and applications of hadith. It analyzes the linguistic, rhetorical, historical, and thematic elements of narrations to ascertain their proper understanding. Unlike *‘Ilm al-Rijāl*, which focuses on the reliability of narrators, *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* ensures that the content of a hadith aligns with rational, theological, and contextual principles before being applied as a source of Islamic rulings or beliefs. This field has several subfields, such as classifying hadith based on textual analysis, analyzing meaning uncertainties, evaluating inconsistencies with other Hadith reports, and differentiating between literal and metaphorical interpretations. To correctly recognize the meanings of a hadith, it also looks at the sociopolitical situations in which it was narrated.

1.2 Who Wrote About Dirāyatul Ḥadīth first?

According to what is commonly known and accepted, Jamal al-Dīn Ahmad ibn Musa ibn Ja‘far ibn Ṭāwūs is acknowledged as the first scholar to write a work in the field of Dirāyat al-Hadith. He taught al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī and Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī with distinction and was the father of the distinguished scholar ‘Abd al-Karīm ibn Ahmad ibn Musa ibn Ṭāwūs. Ibn Ṭāwūs introduced critical methodologies for studying narrations and was a pioneer in the Imami tradition's systematic classification of hadith. His impact can be seen in the contemporary writings of scholars such as Ibn Dāwūd al-Ḥillī, who improved upon these ideas in his *Kitāb al-Rijāl*, and al-‘Allāma al-Ḥillī, who drew on Ibn Ṭāwūs's insights in his *Khulāṣat al-Aqwāl*. Moreover, his methods served as a basis for other researchers, such as the author of *Ma‘ālim al-Dīn*, who blended his ideas in *al-Taḥrīr al-Ṭāwūsī*. Ibn Ṭāwūs's work, *Ḥall al-Ishkāl*, is considered a great contribution in the field, serving as a crucial reference for later scholars. His rigorous approach to both *‘Ilm al-Rijāl* and *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* demonstrates his scholarly precision, shaping the evolution of hadith authentication within the Shia tradition. ¹

1.3 The Purpose and Importance of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

The ultimate objective of *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* is to ensure that the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and Imams (peace be upon them) are correctly conveyed and interpreted. Certain narrations can have been misinterpreted, changed, or even fabricated for personal, theological, or political reasons. By using the methods of this science, scholars can:

- Identify distortions or fabrications in meaning.

¹ *Usool Al-Hadith wa Ahkamuh fi Dirayatul Hadith*, pg 23

- Determine whether a hadith was meant for a specific time and place or if it is universally applicable (General for everyone).
- Resolve apparent contradictions between different narrations.
- Understand the rhetorical and linguistic styles used in the hadith's body.
- Ensure that a hadith does not contradict the Qur'an, rational principles, or established religious doctrine.
- Assess the narrators' ability to transmit meanings accurately, ensuring that the wording and essence of the hadith remain intact.

1.4 Historical Development of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

Early Islamic periods saw a necessity for Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, especially when hadith fabrication became common due to political and sectarian conflicts. Scholars from the Ahlul Bayt school stressed the importance of closely examining narrations, not just by analyzing the transmission chain but also by critically reviewing the text's substance itself. The Imams of Ahlul Bayt themselves gave the needed guidance on how to tell the difference between reliable and faulty narrations. Famously, Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S) told us to reject everything that contradicted the Qur'an and to compare narrations with it. Furthermore, understanding hadith content was highly valued by early hadith scholars like Sheikh al-Kulayni, Sheikh al-Saduq, and Sheikh al-Tusi. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth methods were also spoken by Sheikh al-Mufid and Allama al-Hilli. Such science has been considered so important and consistent, that it has been preached by later Ayatollahs and Allamahs to this very day, and even heavily studied in Howzas (Islamic Schools).

1.5 The Relationship Between Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth and 'Ilm al-Rijāl

Although the two sciences cooperate to confirm the hadith, they have different functions:

- The reliability of the narrators is guaranteed by 'Ilm al-Rijāl.
- Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth guarantees that a hadith's meaning and significance are authentic and relevant.

A hadith with a strong chain (*sanad ṣaḥīḥ*) can still be rejected if its content contradicts the Qur'an or reason/logic. Likewise, a hadith with a weak chain (*sanad ḍa'eef*) may still be accepted if its meaning is corroborated by multiple authentic sources. Any sincere student of Islamic knowledge has to know Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth. It keeps hadith from being misused, guarantees that the Prophet's and Imams' sayings are interpreted correctly, and guards against the faith being misrepresented. We shall examine the key concepts and methods employed by scholars in this field to effectively analyze hadith in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter Two: Principles and Methodologies of Dirāyat al-Hadīth

2.1 The Core Principles of Dirāyat al-Hadīth

The study of Dirāyat al-Hadīth has its foundation on an organized set of principles intended to guarantee that narrations are accurately understood and applied. These guidelines help scholars evaluate the hadith's significance, background, and implications. Among the most basic ideas are the following:

1. Conformity with the Qur'an:

A narration must not be in conflict with the Holy Qur'an's clear and important meanings. The Qur'an is the final source of divine guidance, so any hadith that contradicts its teachings is either fabricated, misunderstood, or requires contextual clarification, according to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S) He said: **‘Everything must be referred back to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah, and any hadith that does not agree with the Book of Allah is a worthless embellishment (Statement).’**²

2. Aligned with Established Logical Principles:

Islam maintains that the main way of comprehending divine law is reason (‘aql). A hadith should be carefully examined for potential fabrication or misinterpretation if it contradicts reasonable requirements or leads to absurd conclusions.

3. Historical and Contextual Analysis:

Every hadith was spoken within a particular historical and social context. Scholars must consider:

- Was the hadith general or specific to a certain event?
- Was it a response to a particular issue?
- Did the Prophet (PBUH) or the Imams (PBUT) mean it as a binding ruling (Mulzam), or was it circumstantial guidance?³

4. Linguistic and Rhetorical Examination:

Language is essential to comprehending hadith. Arabic is a complex language that requires careful study of:

2. Al-Kāfi, Volume 1 Book 2, Chapter #22

3. Meaning: was it a general rule for all or specific for a person or a certain time depending on the condition?

- The difference between literal and metaphorical meanings.
- Rhetorical methods for persuasion, emphasis, or exaggeration.

5. Comparative Hadith Analysis:

No hadith should be examined in isolation. Instead, scholars compare hadiths to ensure:

- Internal consistency in a narration.
- Consistency with other authentic hadith on the same topic.
- If several narratives offer more details or limits to one another.

2.2 Categories of Hadith in Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

In Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, scholars categorize hadith according to its content, consistency, and legal importance. In determining whether a hadith has binding authority in matters of religion and how to interpret it, these criteria are helpful.

A. Classification by Authenticity of Meaning

1. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ma‘nā (Sound in Meaning): A hadith with an acceptable meaning that complies with Islamic principles, even if its chain is weak.
2. Mushkilat al-Ma‘nā (Problematic in Meaning): A hadith that, although seemingly at contradiction with Islamic doctrine, calls for a more careful interpretation.
3. Mustaḥeel al-Ma‘nā (Impossible in meaning): A hadith that is fabricated if its interpretation deviates from the Qur'an, rationality, or other core Islamic principles.

B. Classification by Scope of Application

1. Āmm (General): A narration meant to apply universally across all times and situations.
Example: The Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: **“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.”**⁴
2. Khāṣṣ (Specific): A narration meant for a specific person, event, or time period.
Example: Abu ‘Abd Allah (A.S), has said, **“Eat eggplant because it removes illnesses and does not cause any illness.”**⁵

C. Classification by Clarity of Meaning

1. Muḥkam (Clear and Unambiguous) : A hadith whose meaning is explicit and not open to multiple interpretations.

⁴ Al-Majlisi Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 1, p. 177 / Al-Kafi vol 1, page 30

⁵ Al-Kāfi, Volume 6, Book 5, Chapter #128 The Eggplant (Aubergine)

2. Mutashābih (Ambiguous or Symbolic): A hadith requiring deeper interpretation due to its metaphorical nature.

2.3 Methodologies of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

To achieve correct comprehension, scholars examine hadith using a variety of methods such as:

1. Contextual Analysis: (Asbāb al-Wurūd)

Asbāb al-Wurūd refers to the context in which a hadith was spoken, just as Asbāb al-Nuzūl aids in comprehending the revelation of the Qur'an. This approach aids in responding to:

- What was the religious, political, or societal background?
- Was the hadith addressing a particular event or issue?

Example: The famous hadith, **“Whoever dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies the death of ignorance”**⁶ was narrated in response to the necessity of following divinely appointed leadership. Its misinterpretation by some has led to disastrous applications.

2. Analysis of Contradictions (Ta'āruḍ al-Aḥādīth)

Two authentic narrations can at times appear contradictory. Reconciliation strategies employed by scholars include the following:

- Al-Jam' (Reconciliation): If two narrations can be matched, both are accepted.
- Al-Tarjīḥ (Preferential Selection): If two narrations contradict, preference is given based on alignment with the Qur'an, rationality, or reliability of narrators.

Example:

- A narration says, **“It's not total free will, nor fatalism. Its a matter between both.”**⁷
- Another states, **“Every person is born upon the fitrah of Islam.”**⁸

By reconciliation, scholars conclude that while humans have free will, their innate nature inclines toward truth.

3. Linguistic and Rhetorical Examination

⁶ Biḥār al-Anwār, vol. 23, p. 89

⁷ Mizanul Hikmah, Muhammad Al-Rayshahri, part 1, p. 363

⁸ Sharh Nahjul Balagha by Ibn Abi al-Hadid, vol. 4, p. 114

Eloquence, rhetoric, and grammar in Arabic must all be comprehended. Scholars examine:

- The literal vs. figurative meaning of words.
- The use of metaphors, hyperboles, and allegories.
- Sentence structure to determine emphasis and implication.

Example:

- The hadith **“Fasting is a shield”**⁹ is metaphorical, meaning fasting protects against sins, not a literal shield.

4. Comparative Analysis with Other Hadith

By collecting multiple narrations on the same topic, scholars determine the intended meaning more accurately.

- Example: A narration states: **“I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate.”**¹⁰
- Another states: **“I am the house of wisdom, and Ali is its door.”**¹¹
- By analyzing both, scholars affirm Imam Ali’s (A.S) unique role as the gateway to the Prophet’s knowledge.

2.4 The Role of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth in Fiqh and Theology

The use of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth goes beyond scholarly research. It forms the foundation of Islamic theology and jurisprudence (fiqh).

1. In Fiqh (Islamic Law):
 - It helps determine whether a narration carries legal authority.
 - It resolves conflicts between narrations that affect *ijtihād* (jurisprudential reasoning).
2. In Theology (‘Aqīdah):
 - It protects beliefs from fabricated narrations that misrepresent doctrine.
 - It ensures theological concepts align with Qur’anic principles.

Example: The fabricated hadith, **“My companions are like stars; follow any and you will be guided”**¹² contradicts the Qur’anic principle that guidance is through divine

9 Mizanul Hikmah, Muhammad Al-Rayshahri, Part 2, p. 1685

10 Al-Amaali, Sheikh al-Sadooq, p. 655, hadith no. 891

11 Ghayat Al Maraam, Sayyid Hashim Al Bahrani, vol 5, p. 235

12 Al Ihkam fi usool al Ahkam, Abu muhammad al andalusi, vol. 2, p. 251

appointment and following those from the pious companions, not mere companionship in of itself.

The discipline of *dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* is essential for ensuring that the Ahadith are interpreted correctly. Scholars maintain the purity and integrity of Islamic teachings by evaluating hadith according to context, coherence, language, and authenticity. In the quest for true knowledge, this science continues to serve as a compass, shielding the Muslim world from misunderstanding and deviation.

Chapter Three: The Core Objectives of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

3.1 The Purpose and Necessity of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

The Holy Qur'an, the infallible Word of Allah, and the traditions (aḥādīth) of the Prophet (PBUH) and his Ahlul Bayt (PBUT) are the two main sources that preserve the glorious religion of Islam. However, the hadith corpus needs to be properly examined to confirm its validity, right understanding, and proper application, just as the Qur'an needs to be interpreted (tafsīr) by people chosen by God to clarify its contents. This sacred purpose is fulfilled by the science of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, which provides organized and intellectual methods for examining the contexts, possibilities, and interpretations of said narrations and traditions. Although its goals are numerous, they all work toward the same fundamental goal: maintaining the integrity of divine guidance by making sure that only authentic and accurately interpreted narrations influence Islamic philosophy and practice.

3.2 Ensuring the Correct Interpretation of Hadith

Preventing misinterpretations is one of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth's primary goals. Therefore, it should be understood that not every statement attributed to the Imams (PBUT) or the Prophet (PBUH) is to be interpreted in its literal context. Literal, allegorical, symbolic, and at times even protective dissimulation (taqiyyah) were among the types of discourse used by the infallibles. A hadith that appears to support certain guidelines might really be contextual or requires additional study before its actual meaning can be understood and then accepted.

For example, Imam Ali (A.S) states: **"Do not stand while drinking water."**¹³ A surface-level reading might lead one to conclude that standing while drinking is strictly forbidden. However, through Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, scholars analyze:

- Whether this was a general prohibition or a circumstantial piece of advice.
- Whether there are other narrations clarifying this statement.
- Whether this hadith was stated due to a specific health or hygiene concern of that era.

After extensive investigation, scholars come to the conclusion that, although standing while drinking is not prohibited, it is generally discouraged unless absolutely necessary. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth therefore guards against the misuse of religious doctrines.

3.3 Filtering Fabricated or Distorted Hadith

Forgery and distortion of hadith are among the worst threats to the Islamic history and narrations. Many false traditions have been fabricated and attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) and

¹³ Wasail al shia, p.25, pg. 242. Hadith no:31800

the Imams (PBUT) as a result of political agendas, sectarian hatred, and personal ambitions stemming from greed and hypocrisy. For example, during the Umayyad era, narrations were fabricated to praise tyrannical rulers or to diminish the status of the Ahlul Bayt especially in non shia transmitted narrations. Similarly, certain narrations were altered to justify specific ideological positions. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth plays a crucial role in detecting and rejecting such forgeries by analyzing:

- Contradictions with the Qur'an or rational principles.
- Inconsistencies with known historical events.
- Unusual linguistic styles that do not match prophetic or imamic speech.

A well-known fabricated narration states: **"I am the city of knowledge, and Abu Bakr is its foundation, Umar is its walls, and Uthman is its roof, while Ali is its door."**¹⁴

This hadith was created as an alteration of the authentic narration: **"I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is its gate."**¹⁵

Through the principles of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth as what was already explained above, scholars identify such distortions and reject them accordingly.

3.4 Resolving Contradictions Among Hadith

Occasionally, there seems to be a contradiction between two or more narrations. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth offers organized approaches to resolving these disputes in a number of ways, including:

- Reconciling the meanings: Sometimes, what appears contradictory is actually complementary when the context is understood.
- Determining which hadith is abrogated (*mansūkh*) and which is abrogating (*nasikh*): Some rulings were given for a temporary period before being replaced by later rulings.
- Prioritizing widely accepted principles: If two hadith oppose each other and one is in harmony with well-established Islamic doctrines, it takes precedence.

There are narrations where the Imams (A.S) declared that wudū' (ablution) becomes invalid if one touches a woman, but other narrations indicate that mere physical contact does not cancel wudū'. Through Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, scholars examine the grammatical, contextual, and theological aspects of these narrations. They investigate whether the term "touch" (Mass) refers to physical contact or sexual interactions. Scholars conclude that the actual meaning of these narrations is intimate contact rather than simple touching after comparing them to the Qur'an,

14 Musnadul Firdaws, Hadith: 105

15 As mentioned above in Al Amaali

logical principles, and other hadiths. Thus, unlike some non-Shia schools that take the hadith at face value for the most part since some schools either put rijal studies as their primary source of authentication or other recent ideologies that deviated and chose to take ahadith without any rational or methodological principles, Shia scholars determine these narrations based on Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, that simply touching a woman does not invalidate wudū’.

3.5 Distinguishing Between Universal and Contextual Rulings

In Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, determining whether a hadith transmits a broad concept or a ruling limited to a specific time, location, or event is another important goal. Due to societal conditions, political oppression, or even taqiyyah (dissimulation), numerous narrations were released. Confusion or even misinformation would result from applying such narrations universally without taking into account their distinct circumstances.

For example, there is a hadith that states: **"I asked Imam Abu ‘Abdillah (A.S) about a man who was opposed by two people of his own faith in an issue that they both narrated. One of them said it to be obligatory, and the other said it was prohibited. I asked: How can it be solved? The Imam replied: "He must wait until he finds one who would inform him, and until then he is not under any pressure."** ¹⁶

With this in mind, one should look at some steps to understand the concept of distinguishing between universal and contextual rulings and even sometimes ideological issues within a narration of a similar kind, the following basic steps are as follows:

Step 1: Identifying the issue at hand:

In this narration, two narrators who both claim to be transmitting from an infallible source are presenting contradicting reports. One narrator asserts that a certain activity is required, whereas the other asserts that it is forbidden. The believer becomes confused as a result of this clear contradiction in practice.

Step 2: Linguistic and Contextual Analysis

The first response from the Imam suggests waiting until the matter is clarified. The second hadith, however, states that one may follow either of the two positions. At first glance, these statements seem contradictory—should a person wait for further clarification, or can they act upon either ruling?

To resolve this, Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth examines:

¹⁶ Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 66

- The linguistic structure of the Imam's words
- The historical context in which the hadith was narrated
- Other narrations that discuss conflicting reports

Step 3: Using Shia Principles and Other Hadith to Cross-Reference

According to the Shia methods, when there is a narrative discrepancy, scholars should first:

- Attempt to reconcile the two reports (Jam3 al Daleelayn)
- Set priorities according to outside evidence (such as the Qur'an or the established Sunnah).
- Use logical and legal principles such as having the choice to follow either opinion (takhyīr)

One must also further verify that it is consistent with other reliable hadith. When an Imam reports on a subject more than once, scholars examine which rulings are most commonly found outside of politically dangerous circumstances, and to analyze whether the decision is consistent with fundamental Shia beliefs. Some beliefs were specific to Shias, such as the acceptance of praying with the hands at the sides (sadr al-yadayn). It is frequently regarded as an instance of taqiyyah when an Imam's narrative supports a non-Shia custom (like crossing one's arms in prayer).

3.6 Strengthening the Reliability of Religious Knowledge

The integrity of Islamic knowledge is ultimately strengthened by Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, which filters fabrications, resolves inconsistencies, and ensures that hadith are interpreted correctly. It guarantees that scholars use an unadulterated, meticulously examined, and accurate collection of hadith to produce religious rulings (fiqh), theological principles ('aqedah), and moral codes (akhlāq). For this reason, esteemed scholars like as Allama al-Majlisi, Sheikh al-Kulayni, and Sheikh al-Saduq devoted their life to the religion and its sciences and methods. Because they used the strict methods of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, hence their writings continue to be foundational pieces of hadith studies and has been passed down and became more detailed each further generation.

Chapter 4: Scholars of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth, Hadith Evidence for its Use, Hadith Gradings, and Qarā'in al-Ḥadīth

4.1 Scholars Who Emphasized Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

Many scholars have acknowledged the importance of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth in evaluating and comprehending narrations throughout Islamic history. Scholars from the past and present who have either written directly about this science or used it considerably in their writings are highlighted in this section.

Sheikh al-Kulayni: The compiler of *al-Kāfī*, one of the most important collections of hadith in the Shia tradition. He did not simply collect narrations but carefully arranged them in a manner that suggests a deep concern for their coherence, logical structure, and alignment with Qur'anic doctrine. These are considered basic principles and objectives that are considered as huge parts of the different structural methodologies regarding Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth. He even states in his own words while also bringing some narrations as follows: *Know O brother, may Allah grant you guidance, that there is no other way to sort out the confusion that comes from the variation of the narrations from the Ulama (i.e. Imams) except by the help of the principles that the Alim (i.e. Imam of Ahlulbayt) had set when he said - "Compare a narration with the text of the Holy Quran. Whatever agrees with the Holy Quran is acceptable and what does not agree is rejected." he had also said, - "Leave alone what agrees with the views of the others because the right is in what is opposite to them." Also, what he has said of his words - "Follow what is unanimously agreed upon because there is no harm in what is unanimously agreed upon." And we are only able to apply such principles except to very few of such cases. And we do not find anything better and more precautionary (when dealing with the majority of cases) other than to refer all these cases to the Imam and accept that which is within the limit of his words, "Whichever you would follow in submission and obedience is excusable for you."*¹⁷

Sheikh al-Saduq: Known for his hadith compilation *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruḥu al-Faqīh*, he was mindful to make sure that narrations were relayed by credible narrators and that they made logical and rational sense in light of Islamic law and history. Furthermore, in his book *Al-Itiqadat*, he heavily alludes to issues that exists in a multitude of narrations. He states: *"Our belief regarding the medical reports is that they come in different forms. Some of them were said based on the climate of Mecca and Medina, and thus should not be applied in other climates. Some were informed by the (Imam A.S) based on what he knew of the nature of the messages, without exceeding its proper context, as he was more knowledgeable about its nature than others. Some were distorted by opponents in books to tarnish the image of the doctrine in the eyes of people. Some contain errors made by the transmitter. Some were partially preserved and partially forgotten."*¹⁸

¹⁷ Introduction to al-Kafi, Vol. 1, pp. 8-9

¹⁸ Al'itiqadat fi deen al Imamamiyah p. 115

Sheikh al-Mufid: The pioneer and the main compiler of Shia Islamic Ideology during a time where the ideological narratives of Shiism were scattered around, and one of the best theologians and hadith specialists, he wrote extensively on the principles of hadith criticism, frequently displaying *Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth* in his legal and theological discourse. There are to examples that will be given regarding what Sheikh al-Mufid says regarding *diraya*. For the first example, he states: *“The evidence in reports is what knowledge necessitates by examining the authenticity of their content and eliminating doubt and uncertainty. Any report whose authenticity cannot be established through careful consideration is not valid as evidence in religion, nor is it obligatory to act upon it under any circumstance. The reports that require knowledge-based examination fall into two categories:*

Mutawatir (Mass-transmitted) reports: These are reports whose transmission makes it impossible for them to be based on falsehood without prior agreement, or something equivalent in terms of consensus.

Single reports (Khabar al-Wahid): These are individual reports accompanied by evidence equivalent to the strength of mass transmission, proving the authenticity of their content and the absence of falsehood or corruption.

*The Mutawatir reports we described are those transmitted by groups so numerous and widespread that it is inconceivable, according to common custom, for them to have collectively agreed upon a lie, just as it is unlikely for two people to coincidentally spread the same false rumor. This is a standard recognized by anyone familiar with social norms. It is also possible for a group smaller than the previously mentioned number to transmit a report whose authenticity can be recognized by observing their demeanor, the manner of their speech, their outward expressions, and their intentions, indicating that they did not conspire. This is due to the impossibility of prior acquaintance or consultation among them. Thus, the knowledge of their condition serves as evidence of their truthfulness and resolves any ambiguity in their report, even if they do not reach the previously mentioned level of numerical strength. As for the single report that removes any excuse for doubt, it is one accompanied by evidence that leads the examiner to certainty about its authenticity. This evidence may be a logical obligation (*Hujja min Aql*), a recognized testimony, or a consensus without dissent. However, if a single report lacks any indication that establishes the authenticity of its content, then, as previously stated, it is not valid as evidence.”*¹⁹

There is another historical story regarding an instance in which Sheikh al-Mufid debated Sheikh al-Rammani (a mutazili scholar who was one of al-Mufid's teachers). The mutazili scholar debated a man and answered using an example of *dieaya*. Sheikh al-Mufid entered the

¹⁹ *Al tadhkirah b-Usool al fiqh* pp. 44-45

debate after the man, and he used the same exact logic regarding diraya to defeat Sheikh al-Rammani. The story goes as follows: *Sheikh al-Mufid attended, for the first time, a lesson taught by his teacher Ali ibn Isa al-Rummani. A man from Basra stood up and asked al-Rummani about the report of Ghadir and the Cave. Al-Rummani replied, "The incident of the Cave is based on dirayah (knowledge and understanding), while the report of Ghadir is based on riwayat (narration). Narration does not carry the same weight as knowledge-based understanding." The man from Basra fell silent, having no response. When the gathering ended, al-Mufid approached al-Rummani—whom he had not known before this—and asked him about someone who fought against a just Imam. Al-Rummani said, "He is a disbeliever (kafir)," then corrected himself and said, "He is a sinner (fasiq)." Al-Mufid then asked, "What do you say about Ali ibn Abi Talib—peace be upon him—and the Battle of the Camel, and Talha and Zubayr?" Al-Rummani replied, "They repented." Al-Mufid responded, "The incident of the Camel is based on dirayah, while the report of their repentance is based on riwayat." This left al-Rummani speechless, and he could not provide any answer except to ask, "Were you present during the Basran man's question?" Al-Mufid replied, "Yes."* ²⁰

Sheikh al-Tusi: The author of Tahdhib al-Ahkam and al-Istibṣār, he made contributions to Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth and ‘Ilm al-Rijāl, making sure that hadith were evaluated from the viewpoints of both sanad (chain) and matn (content). Scholars. In reality, Sheikh al-Tusi was the first to have addressed the duty surrounding contradicting narrations. who, in this regard, wrote the book al-Istibṣar, citing treatises on the subject of contradicting hadiths that were compiled. Sheikh al-Tusi also heavily addressed topics regarding hadith sciences including diraya in his works, such as in his book ‘Idatal-Usul.²¹ In the book, Shiekh al-Tusi provided an in-depth discussion on the definition of reports (*khobar*), their classifications, their role in imparting knowledge, and other related topics. These discussions span from page 63 to 143 of the first volume, covering approximately 80 pages! Therefore, the reader must extensively read through his work regarding it there.

The list is too huge to cover, yet our humble research concludes that there are at least 30 scholars that spoke, researched and brought importance to the science of diraya, such as Allama al-Hilli, Mirza Husayn al-Nuri, Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khoei, Shaheed al-Sadr, and Contemporary Ayatollahs.

4.2 Hadiths That Emphasize the Use of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

The importance of critically assessing hadith is directly mentioned in several narrations from the Imams (PBUT). We will mention a few of them.

²⁰ Al munadharat fi al imamammah, debate no. 51, pp. 301-302

²¹ Reminder: please revise from page 63 to page 143 of vol. 1 in idatal usul

It is narrated from Abu Abdullah (Imam Jafar al-Sadiq), peace be upon him, that he said: **"A single Hadith that you understand is better than a thousand Hadiths that you narrate. And a man among you will not become a true jurist until he comprehends the subtleties of our speech. Indeed, a single word from our speech can have seventy different interpretations, and for all of them, there is a valid meaning."** ²²

Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said: **"Recognize the status of the Shia according to the extent of their narrations and their understanding, for understanding (ma'rifah) is the comprehension (dirayah) of the narrations."**²³

And from the words of Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful), Imam Ali (A.S): **"Strive for understanding (dirayat), not merely for narrations (riwayat). The concern of the foolish is narration, while the concern of the scholars is comprehending (dirayat)."** ²⁴

It is narrated from Talha ibn Zayd, who said: Abu Abdullah (Imam Jafar al-Sadiq), peace be upon him, said: **"The narrators of the Book are many, but their true guardians are few. How many are those who copy Hadiths while being heedless of the Book! The scholars are grieved by the pursuit of understanding (dirayah), while the ignorant are grieved by the pursuit of narration (riwayah)."** ²⁵

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH&HF) said: **"May Allah brighten (the face of) a servant who hears my words, comprehends them, and then conveys them (to others). For how many are those who carry knowledge (fiqh) but are not themselves knowledgeable (faqih), and how many are those who carry knowledge to one who is more knowledgeable than them."** ²⁶

4.3 Hadith Grading Terminologies in Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth and 'Ilm al-Rijāl

According to Shia methodology, hadith are categorized using many dimensions, but we will focus on two primary dimensions:

1. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth uses a logical-based classification system that focuses on every aspect of the whole hadith structure. This assesses the compatibility with recognized Islamic principles, rational coherence, the issues that can happen with rijal even if they are considered reliable and hadith reliability.
2. 'Ilm al-Rijāl' uses a Sanad-based classification This investigates narrators' credibility, sectarian affiliation etc.

22 Ma'ānī al-Akhbār vol. 1, p. 2.

23 Bihar al Anwar, vol. 1, p. 106. Ma'ānī al-Akhbār (2/3) and (1/2).

24 Kanz ul fawa'id, vol. p 31

25 Bihār al-Anwār vol 2 p 160-161.

26 Kanz al-'Ummāl (29163), Amālī al-Mufid (186/13) with slight variation in wording.

I. Sanad-Based Grading (Used in ‘Ilm al-Rijāl)

This categorization is based on the authenticity of the chain of transmission (isnād).

1. Ṣaḥīḥ (صحيح - Authentic): All narrators in the chain are Twelver Shia, just (‘ādil), and precise (ḍābiṭ). Considered the highest category in sanad-based grading.
2. Ḥasan (حسن - Good): Narrators are trustworthy (thiqa), but at least one is not explicitly proven to be just (‘ādil). Generally accepted for jurisprudential purposes.
3. Muwaththaq (موثق - Reliable but Non-Shia): All narrators are trustworthy (thiqa), but some belong to non-Twelver sects (e.g., Zaydi, Sunni, Mutazila etc.) Shia scholars often accept muwaththaq hadith if it does not contradict stronger narrations.
4. Ḍa‘īf (ضعيف - Weak): One or more narrators are: Unknown (majhūl). Weak (ḍa‘īf). Accused of lying (kadhdhāb). Exaggerators (ghulāt). Cannot be used unless supported by external evidence (qarā’in).
5. Mursal (مرسل - Disconnected): A hadith with one or more missing narrators in the chain. Common among hadith transmitted by early scholars like al-Saduq and al-Kulayni.
6. Maqtū‘ (مقطوع - Stopped): A narration whose chain ends at a Tabi‘i rather than an infallible Imam.
7. Mawqūf (موقوف - Suspended): A narration that stops at a companion and is not attributed to the Prophet or an Imam.
8. Muḍṭarib (مضطرب - Conflicting): A hadith with contradictory narrations from the same source. Weak unless one version is demonstrably stronger.
9. Shaadhhdh (شاذ - Isolated or Rare): A hadith that contradicts more authentic narrations. Considered unreliable unless external evidence (qarā’in) supports it.
10. Mudraj (مدرج - Contaminated): A hadith where later narrators inserted words that were not originally part of the hadith.
11. Maqlūb (مقلوب - Inverted): A hadith where names of narrators are swapped or phrases are misordered.
12. Musahhaf (مصحف - Altered by Spelling Mistakes): A hadith that contains spelling errors due to copyist mistakes.
13. Muhmal (مهمل - Neglected): A hadith where a narrator is mentioned in books of hadith but without any assessment of their reliability.
14. Mawḍū‘ (موضوع - Fabricated): A hadith proven to be falsely attributed to the Prophet or Imams. Rejected outright.

II. Logical-Based Grading (Used in Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth)

Logical-based grading evaluates the whole structure of a hadith rather than its chain alone.

1. Mutawātir (متواتر - Mass-Transmitted): Narrated by so many chains that it is impossible for all narrators to have fabricated it. The most reliable category of hadith.
2. Aḥād (أحاد - Single-Chained): A hadith transmitted by a limited number of people. Weaker than mutawātir, but still accepted if supported by external indicators.

Types of Aḥād:

Mashhūr (مشهور - Well-Known): Narrated by many, but not enough to be mutawātir.

‘Azīz (عزيز - Rare) – Narrated by only two or three chains.

Gharīb (غريب - Uncommon) – Narrated by only one person.

3. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Matn (صحيح المتن - Textually Sound): The content aligns with Qur’an, rationality, and other authentic hadith.

4. Maqbūl (مقبول - Acceptable): The hadith does not meet the highest standard, but it is not rejected outright.

5. Mu‘aḍḍad (مُعَضَّد - Strengthened): A hadith that was weak initially, but it gains strength due to supporting evidence (qarā’in).

6. Mu‘aḍ‘af (مُضْعَف - Weakened): A hadith that was strong, but contradictions in other narrations weaken its credibility.

7. Mu‘awwal (مُؤَوَّل - Interpreted): A hadith that appears contradictory but can be reconciled through interpretation.

8. Mardūd (مردود - Rejected): A hadith that contradicts Qur’an, logic, or stronger hadith.

9. Maḥfūz (محفوظ - Preserved): A hadith with no textual or transmission errors.

10. Ma‘rūf (معروف - Recognized): A hadith with a widely accepted chain and text.

11. Mushābih (مشابه - Similar): A hadith whose wording closely resembles other authentic narrations.

12. Majhūl al-Ḥāl (مجهول الحال - Uncertain Status): A hadith where one narrator’s trustworthiness is unclear.

13. Ma‘dūm (معدوم - Lost): A hadith known to exist historically but missing from existing collections.

4.4 Qāraʾin al-Ḥadīth and Their Role in Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth

The idea of Qāraʾin al-Ḥadīth, or contextual indicators in hadith interpretation, is one of the most crucial elements of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth. Scholars use these qarāʾin as proof to assess a narration's accuracy, authenticity, and appropriate interpretation. Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth assesses the hadith's internal coherence and contextual importance, whereas ʿIlm al-Rijāl concentrates on the transmitters' exterior credibility. Strong qarāʾin can elevate a hadith's rank and make it acceptable as evidence in the fields of ethics (akḥlaq), ideology (ʿaqāʾid), and jurisprudence (fiqh) when its chain of transmission (sanad) is weak. On the other hand, if a hadith deviates from accepted qarāʾin, even an apparently sound chain could be deemed inauthentic.

Qarāʾin can be divided into a number of types, each of which has a distinct function in hadith interpretation and authenticity. These comprise literary, linguistic, historical, and logical clues that offer a more profound comprehension of the narrations.

1. Qurʾanic Corroboration (al-Muwāfaqa maʿa al-Qurʾān): The primary criterion in hadith acceptance is its alignment with the Qurʾan. The Imams (A.S) have emphasized that any narration contradicting the Qurʾan should be rejected.

2. Rational Acceptability (al-Muwāfaqa lil-ʿAql): A hadith must not contradict rational principles (badīhiyyāt ʿaqliyya). If a narration asserts something irrational or logically impossible, it is dismissed. For instance, any report suggesting that Allah performs an unjust act or that an infallible Imam forgets a fundamental aspect of religion would be rejected, as such claims violate both reason and theological principles.

3. Conformity with Established Sunnah (al-Muwāfaqa lil-Sunnah al-Thābita): Hadiths that align with the properly documented sayings and actions of the Prophet and Imams are more likely to be authentic. If a narration contradicts well-known and widely transmitted Sunnah (sunnah mutawātirah), it is subjected to scrutiny. For example, if a hadith claims that performing Witr prayer after Isha is prohibited, scholars would reject it because it contradicts the well-established practice of the Prophet (PBUH&HF).

4. Historical Context (al-Siyāq al-Tārīkhī): Many hadiths were narrated under specific historical circumstances that must be considered when interpreting them. Scholars of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth analyze the political, social, and theological environment in which a narration was reported. For instance, some narrations prohibiting engagement in political matters were issued under duress during oppressive regimes, such as the rule of the Abbasids. Understanding this context prevents misapplication of the hadith.

5. Repetition Across Multiple Chains (al-Tawātur al-Maʿnawī wa al-Lafzī): A narration gains credibility if it has been reported through multiple independent chains (tawātur) conveying the same message (tawātur maʿnawī). Even if the exact wording differs, the recurring theme strengthens its reliability. For example, the principle of *Wilāyat Ahl al-Bayt* (Divinely appointed

leadership of the Imams) is confirmed by numerous mutawātir narrations, even though their wording varies.

6. Agreement with Established Jurisprudential Principles (al-Muwāfaqa lil-Fiqh al-Imāmī): Hadiths that contradict fundamental Shia legal principles raise suspicion. For example, any narration prohibiting Taqiyyah absolutely is rejected because the principle of Taqiyyah is firmly established in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

7. Use of Unusual or Anachronistic Language (al-Ishkāl al-Lughawī wa al-Iṣṭilāḥī): If a narration contains words or phrases that were not in use during the Prophet's or the Imams' time, scholars suspect fabrication. Similarly, if a hadith contains technical terminologies that emerged centuries later, its authenticity is questioned.

8. Conflict with Known Historical Facts (al-Mukhālafah ma'a al-Tārīkh al-Muḥaqqaq): A narration is invalid if it conflicts with well-established historical realities. For instance, a hadith that claims Imam al-Baqir (peace be upon him) met Imam al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) would be dismissed because they lived in different time periods.

9. Absence in Early Reliable Sources (al-Fuqdān fī al-Maṣādir al-Ulā): If a narration only appears in later sources but is absent in early, well-documented books, scholars question its authenticity. For instance, if a hadith on a fundamental religious obligation is found only in a 13th-century source and is missing from earlier primary books like al-Kāfī, Man Lā Yahḍuruḥu al-Faqīh, or Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām, its credibility is weakened.

10. Thematic Inconsistency within the Imāmī Hadith Corpus (al-Tanāquḍ ma'a Turāth Ahl al-Bayt): If a hadith contradicts the overall pattern and style of Ahl al-Bayt's narrations, it is questioned. The Imams spoke with consistency in doctrine, ethics, and jurisprudence. Any narration that sharply deviates from this established tone is treated with skepticism.

Because it enables scholars to evaluate narrations beyond simple chain verification, the idea of qarā'in is essential to Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth. Many false narrations have chains that appear to be reliable, but they don't pass the qarā'in test. For instance, Politically motivated fabrications that inserted praise for tyrants like Mu'āwiyah into hadith collections served to advance Umayyad monarchs. Another example is some extreme groups created falsehoods that violate Tawḥīd by claiming that Imams have divine attributes. A final example is Ahl al-Bayt's opponents misrepresented hadith in order to challenge Imam Ali's authority.

Conclusion

The preservation and comprehension of the noble narratives that serve as the cornerstone of Islamic knowledge are supported by the science of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth. The words of the Prophet and the Imams (peace be upon them) are protected from fabrication, misrepresentation, and distortion by this discipline. Sincere truth-seekers cannot accept reports without first confirming their authenticity, context, and meaning, nor can they passively rely on the transmission of narrations without careful evaluation. Shia scholars have devoted their lives to strengthening the principles of hadith research throughout history. They have made sure that only trustworthy and sound narrations are used to derive Islamic rulings and theological understandings. A thorough and accurate approach for differentiating between what is authentic and what is weak has been made possible by the combination of Dirāyat al-Ḥadīth with ‘Ilm al-Rijāl and the use of contextual indicators (qarā’in). As the enemies of truth have always sought to distort divine knowledge, it is the duty of every believer to uphold the intellectual legacy left by the Imams (peace be upon them) and their scholars. The study of hadith is not merely an academic endeavor but a means of preserving the divine guidance that leads to salvation. The importance of this science will remain until the time of the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance), when he shall clarify the truth and remove the doubts that have crept into the religious sciences. May Allah grant us the wisdom to understand His revelation correctly, the sincerity to seek the truth in all matters, and the strength to uphold the teachings of the Prophet and his purified household (peace be upon them). And may He make us among those who recognize the truth and follow it with certainty.

والحمد لله رب العالمين